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## **BOROUGH OF TELFORD & WREKIN**

### **Minutes of a meeting of the Borough of Telford & Wrekin held on Thursday, 12 July, 2012 at 6.30 p.m. at the Civic Offices, Telford.**

#### **PRESENT:**

Councillors K.R. Guy (Mayor), S. Bentley, K.T. Blundell, S.P. Burrell, E.J. Carter, E.A. Clare, S. Davies, B.H. Duce, N.A. Dugmore, A.J. Eade, C.B.A. Elliott, A.R.H. England, N.A.M. England, I.T.W. Fletcher, V.A. Fletcher, G.M. Green, E.J. Greenaway, T.J. Hope, M.B. Hosken, M.G. Ion, A.S. Jhawar, R.T. Kiernan, A. Lawrence, J. Loveridge, A.A. Mackenzie, C.N. Mason, A.D. McClements, W.A.M. McClements, A.A. Meredith, J.C. Minor, C.P.R. Mollett, L.A. Murray, R.A. Overton, F.R. Picken, G.C.W. Reynolds, S.A.W. Reynolds, H. Rhodes, K.S. Sahota (Leader), R.G. Scammell, J.M. Seymour, R.J. Sloan, C.F. Smith, A.J. Stanton B.J. Thompson, K.L. Tomlinson, W.L. Tomlinson, C.R. Turley, P.R. Watling and D.R.W. White.

#### **16. MINUTES OF THE COUNCIL**

**RESOLVED** – that the minutes of the meeting of the Annual Meeting of the Council and the Special Meeting of the Council held on 24 May, 2012, be confirmed and signed by the Mayor.

#### **17. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Councillors R.K. Austin, F.M. Bould, D.G. Davies, R.C. Evans and M.J. Smith

#### **18. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

None

#### **19. LEADER'S REPORT & ANNOUNCEMENTS**

- a) Co-operation agreement between Telford & Wrekin Council and Telford & Shropshire Asian Business Association (TSABA).

The Leader asked Members to note the recently signed co-operation agreement between the Borough Council and TSABA which aimed to encourage businesses to promote Fairtrade products and to provide opportunities for businesses to use Fairtrade products. Councillor V.A. Fletcher gave members more information on the agreement and spoke in support of the principles of Fairtrade. Sherrell Fikeis, representing TSABA, thanked Members for their support.

- b) Leader's Report

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The Leader told Members that Councillor Keith Austin, who had recently been taken seriously ill, had now returned home after a spell in hospital. The Leader, together with all Members, wished Councillor Austin a speedy recovery. The Olympic torch had recently passed through the town where 40,000 people had turned out to celebrate the event. The Leader thanked the people of the Borough for their contribution to such a memorable and momentous day.

The Leader reminded Members that central funding for Local Councils was shrinking and that Councils would need to look at new ways of providing services and new income streams. He told Members that the Council would shortly be advertising for Commercial Enterprise Manager in the near future, someone who would bring the skills and experience needed to help bring businesses and jobs in to the town. At a Borough level the Leader noted some current achievements:

- Ironbridge Park & Ride facility had now opened
- Ice Rink refurbishment had commenced
- Hadley & Oakengates regeneration commenced
- Brookside regeneration
- Contractor appointed for next years Ercall School build
- Small Business Loans fund

The Leader also told Members he had attended the Queen's Jubilee celebrations at RAF Cosford and that everyone involved had enjoyed a wonderful day.

## **20. MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

### **(a) Mayoral Engagements**

The Mayor asked Members to note his recent engagements and the final engagements undertaken by the outgoing Mayor. He told Members that he intended to change the emphasis of this part of the meeting and would look to focus mainly on informing Members of upcoming events and engagements.

Earlier in the day the Mayor, together with a number of other Council members had attended the Queen's Jubilee celebrations at RAF Cosford. The Mayor told Members that all concerned had had a wonderful day, especially the many young people who were in attendance. He paid tribute to Psyche Hudson, Arts & Culture Manager and all of those involved in the excellent organisation of the event. Members were also reminded that that the Ironbridge Festival was due to take place in September.

## **21. CABINET DECISIONS MADE SINCE THE LAST MEETING OF THE COUNCIL**

Members received the report on the Cabinet decisions made since the last meeting of the Council on 3 May, 2012.

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Referring to the Waste Management Services Procurement report from 31 May Cabinet, Councillor N.A. Dugmore asked what other models had been considered and whether detailed figures could be provided. Councillor S. Davies Cabinet Member: Neighbourhood Services & Co-operative Council, replied that the Council was working closely to ensure that any contract was fit for purpose and provided the best deal. Councillor A.J. Eade was concerned about income generation in relation to the Waste Management Service and asked whether the Leader would put all procurement and contract work on hold so that all options could be properly considered. The Leader replied that procurement work would not be put on hold. Councillor S.P. Burrell, referring to the report on Planning School Places from 26 April Cabinet asked about the future vision for Pupil Referral Units. Councillor P.R. Watling, Cabinet Member: Children, Young People & Families, replied that the review was ongoing and that all options were being considered.

## **22. RECOMMENDATION FROM CABINET**

### **28 June 2012 Cabinet**

#### **Financial Monitoring Outturn Report**

Councillor W.A.M. McClements, Cabinet Member: Resources & Service Delivery, presented the report of the Head of Finance, Audit & Information Governance which sought approval for the Revenue outturn position and related virements and Capital outturn position and delegated authority for the Managing Director to approve bids against the Capacity & Environmental Works reserves. In addition, the report presented information on performance against income targets for noting by Council. The Council faced further financial pressures next year, particularly due to the increasing cost of providing Adult Social Care.

The gross revenue budget for 2011/12 was £409m and the net budget for reporting purposes was just over £129m. Revenue outturn position. The main pressures experienced were:

- The cost of Adult Social Care purchasing - a net overspend of £0.993m which was after offsetting other funding available from vacancies and one off reserves and additional NHS grants against the impact of the PCT's withdrawal of funding for some cases of continuing healthcare needs and the use of one off balances available in 2011/12. Most of the cost of supporting these people then falls on the Council. It also takes into account the £0.490m one off winter pressure funds announced by the Government in early January.
- The cost of Children in Care – an overspend of £1.5m relating to both placements and the use of agency workers
- The cost of Specialist Education – an overspend of £0.664m relating to stated provision

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- Income shortfalls – a shortfall of £1.9m, the majority relating to PIP rentals, planning fees, building control fees and school meals income.

Councillor W.L. Tomlinson suggested that he would be happy to be part of a joint delegation from Telford & Wrekin that could go to London to lobby against the budget cuts which had disproportionately affected Local Councils. Councillor Sahota welcomed the idea of a joint delegation from all political groups. Councillor McClements noted that the Borough was subsidising other authorities with regard to the collection of Business Rates and thought that a joint delegation was a good way of raising this issue with government. Councillor A.R.H. England thought that any delegation might include the Shropshire & Telford Trades Union Council in order to demonstrate broader support against budget cuts.

## **RESOLVED that Council:**

- a) Approve the Revenue outturn position and related virements in Appendix III for 2011/12 which is subject to audit by the Council's external auditors. This includes the following transfers into provisions and reserves: £2.145m to support the 12/13 budget strategy; £1m to create an Invest to Save Fund (including the £0.5m approved in February's financial monitoring); £0.330m to support Council Wide Capacity/Training; £1.5m to fund severance costs associated with the delivery of ongoing revenue savings; £0.400m to address Environmental issues.**
- b) Delegate authority to approve bids against the Capacity and Environmental works reserves to the Managing Director after consultation with the Cabinet Member for Resources and Service Delivery.**
- c) Approve the Capital outturn position and related supplementary estimates, virements and re-phasing shown in Appendix IV as summarised in the report.**
- d) Note performance against income targets**

## **23. THE MEMBERS CODE OF CONDUCT & NEW ETHICAL FRAMEWORK**

Councillor R.A. Overton, Deputy Leader with Special Responsibility for Borough Town Development & Policy presented the report of the Monitoring Officer which considered final arrangements for the new Standards regime at the Borough Council in accordance with the provisions of the Localism Act 2011 and regulations made under the Act which had come in to force since this matter had last been considered by Council on 3 May 2012.

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## **RESOLVED –**

That Council endorse the decisions made on the 3<sup>rd</sup> May 2012 to:

- 1.1 Create a Standards Committee and a Hearings Sub Committee, (approving the terms of reference as set out in Appendix 1) to come into effect immediately;
- 1.2 Approve the Code of Conduct for adoption (as attached at Appendix 2 of this report) as the Council's Code of Conduct to come into effect immediately;

and that Council :

- 1.3 Approve the payment of an allowance of £3,935 to the Chairman of the Standards Committee
- 1.4 Approve the arrangements for the investigation of allegations and for decisions on allegations to be made as detailed in Appendix 3 of the report:
- 1.5 Consider the appointment of the Independent Person at its next meeting on 13<sup>th</sup> September 2012.

## **24. FAIRTRADE PROGRESS REPORT**

Councillor C.B.A. Elliott presented the report of the Assistant Director: Development, Business & Housing which provided an update on the Council's Fairtrade activities during 2011/12. Councillor Elliott told the meeting that the Council had promoted a number of successful Farmer's markets. Councillor V.A. Fletcher spoke in support of the report and of a number of Fairtrade activities which had taken place during the year. She was very proud of the achievement made so far by raising awareness and working with partners.

**RESOLVED – That the report be noted**

## **25. MINUTES OF BOARDS AND COMMITTEES**

Council noted the resolved minutes of Boards and Committees:

Budget & Finance Scrutiny Committee	23 April
Children & Young People Scrutiny Committee	19 April
Health Scrutiny Committee	14 March
Plans Board	25 April, 16 & 30 May and 20 June
Scrutiny Management Board	18 April, 14 May and 16 May

## **26. QUESTIONS**

The following Questions were asked in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 10:

a) Councillor G.C.W. Reynolds:

“Could the Leader please confirm the level of expenses claimed by the Labour administration last year, compared with the Conservative administration the previous year?”

Councillor K.S. Sahota, Leader of the Council, replied that for 2010/11 the Conservative administration had claimed £11297.25 whilst for 2011/12 the Labour administration had claimed £1559.52 in expenses. Councillor Reynolds asked whether these figures showed that the Labour administration had a better understanding of cuts in funding. Councillor Sahota replied that this was the case and that his administration wanted to show people that they understood and that they cared.

b) Councillor S. Bentley:

“Following the excellent call-in debate on the Waste Procurement Process, for which I thank the Chairman and Scrutiny Management Board, Councillor Davies gave assurances to both myself and colleagues that the process would now continue with full impartial involvement of Scrutiny Members, cross-party – will you now, please re-affirm this to the Chamber ?”.

Councillor S. Davies replied that Cabinet and Scrutiny Management Board had affirmed that the Scrutiny would happen but that Scrutiny itself would decide issues with the Scrutiny work programme. Councillor Bentley hoped that Scrutiny would look at any proposed contract, consider alternatives and recommend a better path.

## **27. NOTICES OF MOTION**

(a) Councillor K.S. Sahota, in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 11, moved the following Motion:

“The Co-operative Values and Communication sub-group developed proposals earlier this year for a set of Co-operative values for the Council, the wider community and partners. Those proposals were endorsed by Cabinet on 26 April. The values are:

### **Ownership**

We will – be accountable for our own actions and empower people with the skills to help themselves.

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We would like everyone to – take action and responsibility for themselves and their community to the best of their abilities.

## **Openness & Honesty**

We will – be open and honest in the way we work and make decisions and communicate in a clear, simple and timely way.

We would like everyone to – be open and honest about what they want to improve in their community.

## **Involvement**

We will – work together with the community, involve people in decisions that affect their lives and be prepared to listen and take on new ideas.

We would like everyone to – work with and support others, get involved and share their views to help us develop the way we do things.

## **Fairness & Respect**

We will – respond to people’s needs in a fair and consistent way.

We will and would like everyone to – respect and care for themselves and others, value the different ideas and skills that people bring and treat each other as equals.

This Council supports and endorses these Co-operative values and will apply those values in its work for the benefit of the citizens of this Borough.”

The Motion was seconded by Councillor R. A. Overton.

A number of Members commended the motion, strongly supporting the principles and ethos of the Co-operative values.

A recorded vote was requested and the votes were as follows:

For (31): K.T. Blundell, E.A. Clare, S. Davies, B.H. Duce, C.B.A. Elliott, A.R.H. England, N.A.M. England, G.M. Green, K.R. Guy, M.G. Ion, A.S. Jhavar, J. Loveridge, A.A. Mackenzie, C.N. Mason, A.D. McClements, W.A.M. McClements, J.C. Minor, L.A. Murray, R.A. Overton, F.R. Picken, G.C.W. Reynolds, S. Reynolds, H. Rhodes, K.S. Sahota, R.J. Sloan, C.F. Smith, B.J. Thompson, K.L. Tomlinson, W.L. Tomlinson, C.R. Turley, P.R. Watling

Against (17): S. Bentley, S.P. Burrell, E.J. Carter, N.A. Dugmore, A.J. Eade, I.T.W. Fletcher, V.A. Fletcher, E.J. Greenaway, T.J. Hope, M.B. Hosken, R.T. Kiernan, A. Lawrence, A.A. Meredith, C.R.P. Mollett, R.G. Scammell, J.M. Seymour, A. Stanton.

## **RESOLVED – that the motion be approved**

b) Councillor S.P. Burrell, in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 11, moved the following Motion:

“This Council recognises the vital role played by scrutiny and is fully committed to supporting the pivotal work carried out by scrutiny and ensuring that all reasonable resources and expertise are made available to the commissions and management board to assist in the fulfilment of their function.

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This Council therefore commits to review the composition of the scrutiny commissions and management board with the intention of increasing their membership by one to include a professional co-optee with expertise relevant to the remit of the commission concerned.“

Councillor Burrell told Members that Scrutiny were disadvantaged in holding Cabinet to account due to a lack of independent professional advice. An independent co-optee working with each Scrutiny Committee would benefit the Scrutiny service. Councillor D.R.W. White, Chairman of Scrutiny Management Board, noted that each Committee could call upon volunteers to assist with Scrutiny work at any time. Councillor W.L. Tomlinson did not believe there was a need for permanent co-optees. He encouraged all Members to engage and participate more actively with the Scrutiny process.

The motion was seconded by Councillor S. Bentley.

A vote was taken and it was:

**RESOLVED – That the motion not be approved**

The meeting ended at 8.04 pm

**Mayor:** .....

**Date:** .....

## MAYORAL ENGAGEMENTS 5<sup>th</sup> JULY 2012 – 3<sup>rd</sup> SEPTEMBER 2012

### July

- 7<sup>th</sup> **M** Dawley Day at Dawley Park, Telford
- M** New College Family Fun Day
- 8<sup>th</sup> **M** High Sheriff of Shropshire's Summer Reception at Oswestry School
- 10<sup>th</sup> **M** Community Foundation Charity Film Event at Odeon Cinema, Telford Town Centre
- 12<sup>th</sup> **M** Queen's Diamond Jubilee Pageant at RAF Cosford
- 13<sup>th</sup> **M** The Role of the Civic Head & Team Training at the Reception Suite, Civic Offices
- 14<sup>th</sup> **M** Stirchley & Brookside Family Fun Day & Community Games at Windmill School, Brookside
- DM** Ironbridge Gorge Brass Band Festival at The Green, Museum of Iron, Coalbrookdale
- 15<sup>th</sup> **M** Royal British Legion Annual Church Parade at Dawley Christian Centre, Dawley
- 17<sup>th</sup> **M** Active Lifestyle Awards Ceremony at The Place, Oakengates Theatre
- 19<sup>th</sup> **M** Speech Day and School Prize Giving at Adams Grammar School, Newport
- M** County Scout Annual Meeting at Shrewsbury Abbey, Shrewsbury
- 20<sup>th</sup> **M** Royal Visit to Battlebank Centre, National Sports Centre, Lilleshall
- 21<sup>st</sup> **M** CultureFest – Opening and Fun Run at The Arena, Telford Town Park
- M** Mayor's Charity Launch at The Marquee at The Arena, Telford Town Park
- 22<sup>nd</sup> **M** Charity Staff Football Day at AFC Telford United Football Ground

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## August

- 31<sup>st</sup>** **M** Teddy Bear's Picnic Promotional Photographs at Telford Town Park
- M** Sod Cutting at the site of the new Marston's Public House at Lawley Village
- 7<sup>th</sup>** **DM** Fields in Trust Plaque unveiling and Teddy Bears Picnic at The Arena, Telford Town Park
- 10<sup>th</sup>** **M** Woodside Games at The Park Lane Centre, Woodside
- 11<sup>th</sup>** **M** STABLE Fun Day at Russell Square, Madeley
- 13<sup>th</sup>** **M** Engage4Life Conference thePoint4 at Venns Lane, Hereford
- 15<sup>th</sup>** **DM** Citizenship Ceremony at The Register Office, Wellington Civic & Leisure Centre
- 17<sup>th</sup>** **M** Ashley Court Fete Opening at Chapel Street, Dawley
- DM** World Organisation of Martial Arts Athletes – Opening Ceremony at Telford International Centre
- 18<sup>th</sup>** **DM** St George's Parish Church 150<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Concert at St George's Church
- 19<sup>th</sup>** **M** World Organisation of Martial Arts Athletes – Grand Championship Finals at Telford International Centre
- 21<sup>st</sup>** **M** Official Opening of Stirchley Chimney Learning Zone Visitor Centre at Telford Town Park
- 22<sup>nd</sup>** **M** Lake View Court Official Opening at the Former Bridge School Site, Brookside
- M** International Foundation Walk Challenge at Blists Hill, Ironbridge
- 23<sup>rd</sup>** **M** Dunelm Mill Store Opening at Telford Forge Retail Park, Telford Town Centre

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**25<sup>th</sup>** **M** Telford Disability Games at Oakengates  
Leisure Centre, Oakengates

**M** National 'Have-a-Go' Olympic Sport Day at  
Sinclair Works, Ketley

**DM** Jackfield Brass Band Concert at Maws Craft  
Centre, Jackfield

## September

**1<sup>st</sup>** **DM** Shropshire Cadets Queen's Jubilee Concert  
at Shrewsbury Abbey, Shrewsbury

**TELFORD & WREKIN COUNCIL**  
**COUNCIL – 13 SEPTEMBER 2012**  
**REPORT OF CABINET – FOR INFORMATION ONLY**  
**MATTERS DETERMINED BY THE CABINET**

## **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

This report sets out those matters determined by the Cabinet at its meetings on 26<sup>th</sup> July 2012.

## **2.0 CABINET BUSINESS**

Matters that have been determined by Cabinet are listed below:

### **2.1 26<sup>th</sup> July 2012**

- 2.1.1 Council Medium Term Plan 2012/13 – 2014/15
- 2.1.2 Co-operative Council Update
- 2.1.3 2012/13 Financial Monitoring Report
- 2.1.4 Statement of Community Involvement – Draft for Consultation
- 2.1.5 Planning of School Places: Hollinswood Infant and Junior Schools
- 2.1.6 Highways Maintenance – Winter Service Review
- 2.1.7 Outcome of Call-in Request
- 2.1.8 Station Road, Newport – Update and Appropriation
- 2.1.9 Housing Kickstart Partnership – West Midlands
- 2.1.10 Transparency and Public Accountability

## **3.0 DELEGATION OF POWERS GRANTED BY THE CABINET**

None

**TELFORD & WREKIN COUNCIL****COUNCIL – 13 SEPTEMBER 2012****2012/13 FINANCIAL MONITORING REPORT****REPORT OF THE ASSISTANT DIRECTOR: FINANCE, AUDIT &  
INFORMATION GOVERNANCE (CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER)****PART A) – SUMMARY REPORT****1.0 SUMMARY OF KEY ISSUES**

1.1 The Financial Monitoring report to Cabinet in July showed overall revenue spending projected to be within approved budgets and provided an update on progress on capital programme spending. The report also highlighted some new capital allocations and slippage which require formal approval by Full Council which are shown below. Since the report in July, the Council has also received confirmation of an offer of £6.1m grant to fund developments of the Box Road in Telford Town Centre and capital approval is therefore required for this additional scheme.

<b>Capital Approvals – New allocations</b>				
Description	12/13 £	13/14 £	14/15 £	
Local Sustainable Transport Fund	143,835			
Invest to Save Initiatives:				
Town Centre Regeneration		300,000		– addition of 8 <sup>th</sup> floor to multi storey car park
Oakengates Leisure Centre Refurbishment	240,000			
Fitness Facility at Newport Pool		750,000		
Crazy golf course in Town Park	100,000			
Street Lighting Energy Programme	325,000	325,000	325,000	Proposal is £325k p.a. for 4 years to 2015/16
Box Road – see below	694,000	6,105,000	5,016,000	14/15 includes £564k LTP funding already included in the capital programme

The Council made an application under the Local Sustainable Transport Fund (LSTF) programme for £8.787m towards funding the development of the Box Road in Telford Town Centre in December 2012. Since the last financial monitoring report was considered at Cabinet, we have received notification that an allocation of £6.1m (£5.980m capital and £0.120m revenue) has been awarded and this has been accepted. Work is currently underway to ascertain whether reductions could be made to the overall cost of the scheme and to identify potential alternative sources of funding for any residual shortfall. However, it should be assumed, until any alternative option is confirmed that additional prudential borrowing will be required. Conditions attached to the £6.1m grant include that the funding must be used by 31 March 2015 and therefore capital approval is required as soon as possible in order to facilitate an early start to the project. The project totals £11.815m and is funded as follows:

	£m
LSTF Grant	6.100
Section 106 Contribution	2.464
Local Transport Plan (already included in the approved capital programme)	0.564
Prudential	2.687
Total	11.815

<b>Slippage</b>		
	<b>£</b>	<b>Comment</b>
BTI - Dawley	100,000	Rephasing of spend - accelerated to 12/13
Extra Care Housing	(200,000)	Final payment slipped to 13/14
Disabled Facilities Grants	(150,000)	Rephasing of funding - to 13/14
Home Repairs Grants	(50,000)	Rephasing of funding - to 13/14
Housing Needs Property Maintenance	(100,000)	Rephasing of funding - to 13/14

## **2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS**

**2.1** Members are asked to approve the changes to the capital programme shown in section 1 above.

## **3.0 SUMMARY IMPACT ASSESSMENT**

<b>COMMUNITY IMPACT</b>	Do these proposals contribute to specific Priority Plan objective(s)?	
	Yes	Delivery of all priority objectives depend on the effective use of available resources.
	Will the proposals impact on specific groups of people?	
	No	
<b>TARGET COMPLETION/DELIVERY DATE</b>	The capital programme will be immediately updated to reflect the new approvals.	
<b>FINANCIAL/VALUE FOR MONEY IMPACT</b>	Yes	Financial impacts arising from this report will be reflected in future financial monitoring reports and built in to the final service and financial planning strategy for 2012/13 and beyond
<b>LEGAL ISSUES</b>	No	None directly arising from this report. The S151 Officer has a statutory duty to monitor income and expenditure and take action if overspends /shortfalls emerge.
<b>OTHER IMPACTS, RISKS &amp; OPPORTUNITIES</b>	No	
<b>IMPACT ON SPECIFIC WARDS</b>	No	Borough Wide

#### **4.0 PREVIOUS MINUTES**

- 01/03/12 – Full Council, Service & Financial Planning Strategy
- 26/7/12 – Cabinet, 2011/12 Financial Monitoring

#### **PART B) – ADDITIONAL INFORMATION**

There is no additional information.

#### **5.0 BACKGROUND PAPERS**

2012/13 Budget Strategy / Financial Ledger reports

Report Prepared by: Ken Clarke, Assistant Director: Finance, Audit & I.G. (C.F.O.) – 01952 383100; Pauline Harris, Finance Manager – 01952 383701

**FULL COUNCIL 13 SEPTEMBER  
TELFORD & WREKIN COUNCIL MEDIUM-TERM PLAN 2012/13 TO 2014/15  
REPORT OF MANAGING DIRECTOR**

## **1. PURPOSE**

1.1. To present the Council's Medium-Term Plan 2012/13 to 2014/15 for approval

## **2. RECOMMENDATIONS**

2.1. That Council approves the Medium-Term Plan 2012/13 to 2014/15.

## **3. SUMMARY**

3.1. The Medium-Term Plan identifies the high level strategic focus for the organisation over the next 3 years, including:

- The Council's Vision, Priorities and Values – setting out what the Council will do to deliver its vision and priorities.
- A 'Co-operative Council working with the Community' – our approach to 'being the change' to embed co-operative ways of working into all that we do, a new relationship with the community, our employees and partners too.
- Medium term financial strategy – how we will balance the Council's budget over the next 3 years based on available information and setting out our capital strategy.
- 'Putting Customers First' – treating our customers as we would wish to be treated and developing ways to ensure that 'every contact counts'.
- Being a 'Business supporting, Business winning Council' – working with businesses to secure and create jobs in the Borough; a challenge for all of the organisation and our partners.

## **4.0 INFORMATION**

3.2. Against each proposed Priority, the plan sets out how 'delivery' will be measured. **These measures are not fixed at this point in time** – they will be kept under review as specific strategies and initiatives are developed and evolve – for example around the 'Business Supporting, Business Winning Council' theme. We need to ensure that the measures are meaningful and timely.

3.3. Progress reports against delivery of the Medium Term Plan and the Priorities will be presented to Cabinet throughout the year, at 6, 9 and 12 months. On approval of the proposed Priorities, a 'baseline report', will be presented to Cabinet.

3.4. Approval of the Medium Term Plan and the Priorities is just a first step; the Priorities together with the Co-operative Values should act as a thread through all that the organisation does. A **key challenge is to communicate and embed the Priorities within the organisation alongside the Co-operative values**. It is important that all employees understand the Priorities as the focus for the Council and how they do contribute towards them – an important step to refocus the organisation following a period of significant change. Key ways this can be achieved are:

- As part of Personal Development Discussions managers and officers should discuss how their work contributes to the Priorities, and the other key themes of the organisation (e.g. Putting Customers First), and living the Co-operative values.
- All Council reports, strategies and service plans should identify how they contribute to delivering the Priorities and living the Co-operative values.

3.5. Initial steps identified to communicate the Priorities and Co-operative values include:

- ‘Pledge cards’ – setting out the Co-operative Values and Council Priorities
- Internal communications campaign:
  - Visible campaign across council buildings and electronic channels – e.g. poster campaign in corridors, lifts, notice boards
  - In meeting rooms – posters asking ‘how is this meeting contributing to delivering our Priorities?’
  - ‘What are you doing to live the values?’ challenge
- Through ‘Your Voice’ and social media
- Link to the launch of the Council’s brand and ensuring that the values and priorities are embedded in these and part of the Council’s brand.

3.6. The work to develop and deliver this programme will continue and be taken forward by the Co-operative Delivery Team and the Assistant Director Law, Democracy & Public Protection (SMT lead for implementing the Co-operative Values).

## **5. OTHER IMPLICATIONS**

Community Impact	Yes	Achievement of the Priorities set out in the Medium-Term Plan will deliver many community benefits.
Financial & Value for Money Impact	Yes	The proposed Service & Financial Planning Strategy for 2012/13 to 2014/15 was agreed at Council on 1 <sup>st</sup> March 2012. The strategy is set in the context of severe financial pressures facing the Council, including significant reductions in Central Government funding, service pressures

		due to the difficult economic climate which is having an impact on the community, in particular demands in Adults and Children's social care, and uncertainties around future funding levels with changes to both the local government finance system and the Welfare system being on the horizon.
Legal Issues	Yes	Under Section 2 of the Local Government Act 2000, the Council has the power to do anything which they consider is likely to achieve the promotion or improvement of any one or more of the economic, social or environmental wellbeing of the area. In deciding whether to exercise this power the Council must have regard to its sustainable community strategy and also have regard to the guidance issued by the Secretary of State regarding the use of the power. Legal Services will be involved throughout the implementation of the Council's Priorities and proposals around development of the Co-operative Council - all necessary legal arrangements such as property documentation or partnership agreements will be put in place.
Other impacts, risks and opportunities	Yes	The ongoing and development programme of work to deliver the Council's Priorities will be evaluated to ensure risks are identified and managed and any associated opportunities are maximised. Delivering the Council's Priorities and action to being a Co-operative Council provides real opportunity to develop new arrangements and partnerships to improve the lives of local people.
Environmental	Yes	A number of the Council's Priorities will deliver environmental improvements – <i>“ensure that neighbourhoods are safe, clean and well maintained”</i> and <i>“regenerate those neighbourhoods in need and work to ensure that local people have access to suitable housing”</i> As new initiatives are developed they will be assessed for environmental impacts as the proposals are developed.
Impact on specific wards	Yes	Borough-wide impact.

**Report prepared by Jon Power, Delivery & Planning Manager.**

**TELFORD & WREKIN COUNCIL**  
**MEDIUM-TERM PLAN**  
**2012/13 TO 2014/15**

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## FORWARD

We are pleased to introduce the Council's Medium-Term Plan for 2012/13 to 2014/15

As a Co-operative Council, our work is not solely about what we do but more importantly, how we do it.

At the cornerstone of this are our Co-operative Values of **honesty, openness, fairness and respect, involvement and ownership.**

These values are the core of what a Co-operative Council is all about - being accountable for our actions and empowering people to help themselves. We will look at everything we do and ask ourselves - are we living these values when we talk to our customers, work with our partners and work with each other, not just today, but every day?

This Plan provides an opportunity to reflect on and be proud of our achievements over the past year as well as focusing on our future goals. In the last year we have:

- Continued to invest in the regeneration of Hadley, Malinslee and Oakengates while Brookside, our co-operative pilot ward, is now receiving the attention it needs after years of underinvestment
- Demonstrated the difference a Co-operative Council makes through initiatives including
  - the small business loans fund
  - the new Health Hub at Civic Offices with the PCT
  - opening an employability centre at Meeting Point House with TCAT offering employment advice and training to get people back into work
  - seeking as many people's views as possible on a wide range of consultations through our Your Views Matter initiative and getting record numbers involved in our budget consultation
  - our Flexideal scheme for employees, giving greater choice over work patterns
- Made huge progress on our Southwater plans, including investing in the Ice Rink and securing new developments that will create 300 jobs and a living heart to Telford town centre
- Committed investment in stabilising and protecting the Ironbridge Gorge – our World Heritage site
- Committed £18 million to improve our roads network
- Increased opportunities for young people – our commitment is to treble the number of apprentices by next April
- Reshaped our Building Schools for the Future programme so that we will be building six new secondary schools in the borough

- Making £20 million of savings while continuing to deliver our services and protecting as far as possible front line services

Looking ahead we know we will continue to face difficult times and tough choices. But our goals are clear and we will work tirelessly to:

- Make Telford & Wrekin **a business supporting and business winning council**,
- Be a much more customer focused organisation that treats our customers as we would want to be treated and making every contact we have with our customer count
- Continue our development as a Co-operative Council
- Build the reputation of Telford and Wrekin nationally and internationally as a place to live, to work and invest.

We have an excellent platform from which we can now drive forward our Co-Operative Council vision and transform both the Council and the Borough and making a real difference to the people we serve.

Kuldip Sahota  
Leader

Richard Partington  
Managing Director

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# 1. OUR VISION, PRIORITIES & VALUES

As a Co-operative Council, we will work with our communities to create:

*'Telford & Wrekin – the Place of Partnership, Enterprise and Innovation'*

We will:

- *put our children and young people first*
- *protect and create jobs as a 'Business Supporting, Business Winning Council'*
- *improve local people's prospects through education and skills training*
- *protect and support our vulnerable-children and adults*
- *ensure that neighbourhoods are safe, clean and well maintained*
- *improve the health and wellbeing of our communities and address health inequalities*
- *regenerate those neighbourhoods in need and work to ensure that local people have access to suitable housing*

Being a Co-operative Council is not an end in itself rather it is a way of doing things. Essentially, it is about three important things:

- **Bringing more public services together so that people get what they need at the right place and the right time;**
- **Involving local people and our employees more in planning and running services;**
- **As a Council, supporting our community better and encouraging people to do more to help their own communities.**

To be a Co-operative Council and deliver our priorities, challenges us to work even better in partnership, to be even closer to our community, to provide even higher standards of public service, to improve leadership and management practice, to develop new and better skills, and to think ever more creatively at how we can help to solve problems and deliver services differently to address needs and expectations. We want to be a Council:

- that the community, members and employees are proud of
- that puts customers first and treats our customers the way we ourselves would want to be treated
- that is 'business supporting, business winning'. We need to work even better with the private and voluntary sector – a growing, thriving economy is key to both the future of the borough and the Council
- that works efficiently, manages public money very well and delivers and commissions good services

- which is a good employer, which treats employees with dignity and respect and involves everyone in determining the way we operate
- which supports ward members effectively to undertake their role of community advocates and representatives
- which works effectively in partnership right across the borough

As a Co-operative Council, it is essential that we are driven, not just by a set of aims and goals that we want to achieve, but also by a clear sense of the way we want to be as an organisation.

Through consultation with our employees and partners, we have developed and shared our co-operative values. Our challenge for 2012/13 is to put these visibly at the heart of what we do, how we function and our relationship with the community and our partners.

### ***Co-operative Values***

- **Ownership**

**We will – be accountable for our own actions and empower people with the skills to help themselves**

**We would like everyone to – take action and responsibility for themselves and their community to the best of their abilities**

- **Openness & Honesty**

**We will – be open and honest in the way we work and make decisions and communicate in a clear, simple and timely way**

**We would like everyone to – be open and honest about what they want to improve in their community**

- **Involvement**

**We will – work together with the community, involve people in decisions that affect their lives and be prepared to listen and take on new ideas**

**We would like everyone to – work with and support others, get involved and share their views to help us develop the way we do things**

- **Fairness & Respect**

**We will – respond to people’s needs in a fair and consistent way**

**We will and would like everyone to – respect and care for themselves and others, value the different ideas and skills that people bring and treat each other as equals**

## 2. OUR CHALLENGES

The Borough and the Council faces a very difficult set of challenges as a result of the economic situation. Impacts on the community and our services include:

- Higher unemployment – unemployment is currently 8.6% with youth unemployment (16-24) at 23.5% both of which are disproportionately impacting on our most deprived communities.
- Increase in Council Tax and Housing Benefit applicants – the number of claimants for Housing and Council Tax benefits is at an all time high with a 10% increase over the last 2 years (up to April 2011). In 2011/12 our benefit expenditure was more than £2.8m higher than the previous year. In addition, there has been an increase of over 5,000 more ‘change of circumstances’ assessments since the same point last year.
- Slow down in the housing market. There is also evidence of increased pressures on demand for social housing and increasing pressures around household debt. Typically, associated with our more deprived areas.

The pressures the Council faces include:

- Projected grant cuts of £40m in real terms over the period of the current Parliament.
- The withholding of almost £3m grant in 2012/13 that the Government calculate should come to this area but which is paid to other parts of the country through the grant “damping” mechanism.
- A shortfall in grant of up to £2.8m due to the methodology used by ONS to estimate population between annual censuses.
- Reduced income from having a comparatively low council tax. If the Council had the same level of council tax as the average in the Midlands, an additional £5.6m pa would be generated.

Whilst a number of services are experiencing increasing demand (benefit services), there are particular pressures on social care services for children and adults.

- **Children’s Social Care** – in line with national trends, we continue to have an increase in numbers of Children in Care this continues to lead to significant financial pressures.
- **Adult Social Care** - we have also been experiencing increasing demand for our Adult Social Care Services as a result of increasing numbers and life expectancy of older people and increasing complexity of care.

Another challenge for the Council is that from April 2013, the responsibility of running **Public Health Service** will transfer formally from the NHS to the Council. A wide

range of services will transfer in to the Council and are likely to include health protection plans, sexual health, national child measurement programme, Health Check and public health advice to NHS commissioners.

## **RESPONDING TO THESE CHALLENGES**

The Council has already prepared for these challenges for some time, including:

- Identification of ongoing revenue savings over the 5 years up to and including 2011/12 of over £28m
- Reducing the number of senior managers by 55% and cutting the pay of the most senior managers by up to 17% saving a total of over £2.1m pa
- Savings identified from “back office” functions of almost £6m or 33% over the period 2009/10 to 2012/13 – far more than has been achieved by most organisations that have gone down a shared services route and without incurring significant project costs or delays.
- A ‘100 day budget review’ by the new administration which will save just under £3m pa on debt repayments compared to previous plans.
- Reductions in the cost of the special responsibility allowances paid to Cabinet Members.
- An ongoing organisation wide restructure programme which will see most staffing budgets across the Council cut by an average of 20%. This has largely been achieved through vacancy management, extensive redeployment and over 386 voluntary redundancies with 21 compulsory redundancies to date during the process.
- Strict controls placed on the use of agency staff, consultants and external job advertisements.
- A detailed line by line analysis of budgets by Assistant Directors and their teams cutting out spending where ever possible and identifying efficiencies with an emphasis on protecting front line services as far as possible.
- The most extensive consultation exercise ever undertaken by the Council to inform service priority and budget decisions.
- A detailed programme to rationalise our buildings across the borough to realise both revenue savings and capital receipts.
- A strong focus on procurement which will deliver savings of in excess of £4m and ongoing improved contact management.
- Re-establishment of an “Invest to Save Reserve” of £0.5m to fund money-saving initiatives with a significant payback to the Council.

Given the context of very significant cuts in Government grants and the uncertainties over the impacts of the Local Resource Review, the scope for additional investments is very limited.

In all of this, we recognise that the Council has a key role to play in mitigating the effects of the economic downturn and planning for recovery, through supporting the growth of key economic sectors, promoting the Borough's business and leisure tourism offer, and creating a 'business supportive environment' with available employment land and an effective infrastructure. As part of this, we have completed a further restructure of the Senior Management Team to help the Council respond effectively to this agenda. The continued development of the Town Centre and regeneration of the Borough Towns are essential elements of our strategy. It is important that we continue to show confidence, leadership and investment in the future of the area.

This Plan, sets out our strategy for responding to these continuing pressures, transforming how we are working and being clear about what we are seeking to achieve within the resources we have available.

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### 3. CREATING AN ORGANISATION TO DELIVER OUR VISION AND PRIORITIES

#### OUR ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURE

The Council is made up of 54 members in 33 wards. The current political make-up of the Council is:

- Conservative 17
- Labour 33
- Liberal Democrat/Independent 4

The next full Council election is due in May 2015.

From May 2011, Telford & Wrekin Council has formally operated the ‘**Strong Leader and Executive Cabinet**’ model for its executive arrangements. This is a significant change in emphasis on how the Council is run and managed. In the new model, the Leader is responsible for all executive functions and can decide whether to delegate functions to the Cabinet collectively, individual councillors or officers. The Leader determines the size of the Cabinet (maximum of 10, minimum of two) and is able to appoint and remove councillors to/from the Cabinet.

The Council’s **Cabinet** is made up of 9 Members and one ex-officio member (unremunerated) with each having a portfolio of responsibilities and collective responsibilities for the development and delivery of the Council’s policies and strategies. Cabinet meet regularly with members of the Senior Management Team in a “Policy Review Meeting” to progress key projects and performance issues and to help shape policy and strategy development.

The Council has also appointed 5 Scrutiny Committees that are each linked to the Cabinet Member functions. These Committees undertake its scrutiny role through monitoring of Cabinet decisions, undertaking detailed investigations into specific service areas (and making recommendations to the Cabinet /Council if necessary) and contributing towards policy development.

- **Scrutiny Committee - Finance & Budget**
- **Scrutiny Committee - Children & Young People**
- **Scrutiny Committee - Co-operative & Community**
- **Scrutiny Committee - Health & Social Care**
- **Scrutiny Committee - Housing, Economy & Infrastructure**

The **Senior Management Team** (SMT) comprises a Managing Director, currently 2 Directors and 11 Assistant Directors (formerly known as ‘Heads of Service’). Its focus is on planning and managing the business of the organisation fostering corporate working, innovation, sharing ideas and learning. ‘SMT’ is responsible for driving the delivery of our priorities and the implementation of our financial strategy.

## TAKING THE ORGANISATION FORWARD

### SERVICE & FINANCIAL STRATEGY

The Council faces a prolonged period of significant pressure on resources. In developing our response, the Council's service and financial planning strategy for is based around 4 **guiding principles** informed by community consultation. They are:

- In line with our co-operative values, work together with and involve our residents and employees in developing our strategy;
- Adopt a commercial approach and facilitate growth;
- Minimise the impact of savings on front-line service delivery;
- Minimise the impact of savings on our employees as far as possible.

In line with these principles, the starting point for our strategy is to protect front-line services and employees as far as possible, such as:

- **Improving procurement** e.g. re-tendering contracts, reviewing and robustly re-negotiating existing contracts, making greater use of framework agreements and getting added social value from procurement;
- **Property rationalisation and generation of capital receipts** – we have ambitious plans to invest in schools, regeneration and other capital projects to transform the Borough. In order to minimise the burden of ongoing debt repayments we're committed to a significant programme of asset sales totalling £110m over the medium-term;
- **Driving down non-staffing costs that have minimal impact on service delivery** - reviewing and challenging budgets 'line by line' e.g. stationery, hospitality etc to ensure we have exhausted as many options as possible before considering changes or reductions to services.

However, due to the scale of the budget gap, some impact on service delivery and employees is inevitable. Our approach involves:

- **Carrying out planned, long-term service re-design, based around priorities**, not quick-fix options, such as withdrawing services or changing eligibility criteria e.g.
  - Children's Services – better help for people in the early stages of difficulties and more targeted help for families with complex needs;
  - Adults' Services – re-ablement to help ill or disabled adults learn or re-learn how to live independently;
  - Customer Services – more enquiries dealt with first time through a single point of contact
- **Facilitating growth** – becoming a 'business supporting, business-winning Council', increasing prosperity in the Borough and maximising income from business rates and the New Homes Bonus;

- **Working co-operatively with local people, organisations and partners**  
e.g.
  - Co-production and other new service delivery partnerships with the community;
  - Joining up services better to remove overlap and duplication;
  - Partnership with Town and Parish Councils to secure environmental improvements;
  - Encouraging local people to recycle more and reduce waste disposal costs.
  
- **Increasing income generation and external trading** – a more commercial approach and a particular focus on providing support services at affordable cost to local voluntary and community organisations, Town & Parish Councils, partners, schools;
  
- Our aim is to actively seek applications for voluntary redundancy and to promote flexible working arrangements in order to keep compulsory redundancies to a minimum although some continuing **targeted restructuring activity** is inevitable.

### 2012/13 and Projected Medium-Term Budget

The financial summary below sets out our projected budget gap for future years and how we will close it.

<b>Projected Budget Gap</b>	<b>12/13 £m</b>	<b>13/14 £m</b>	<b>14/15 £m</b>	<b>15/16* £m</b>	<b>16/17* £m</b>
Base Budget Gap	21.847	30.635	34.306	40.366	47.076
2011/12 - 2014/15 Tax reduction grant ceases to be paid from 2015/16 onwards				1.400	1.400
Council Tax Increase of 2.5% each year	- 1.400	- 2.800	- 4.200	- 5.600	- 7.000
Non-Staff savings - proposals identified	- 8.437	- 16.333	-18.907	-19.387	- 19.867
Savings from planned service redesign and restructures	- 8.622	- 9.247	- 9.247	- 9.247	- 9.247
Single Status Provision - cease funding for 12/13 and 13/14, net of costs	- 2.000	- 2.400	- 0.500	- 0.500	- 0.500
Agreed use of balances	- 1.390				
BSF additional temporary borrowing costs	0.002	0.145	0.319	0.248	- 0.077
<b>Savings still to be identified</b>	<b>0.000</b>	<b>0.000</b>	<b>1.771</b>	<b>7.280</b>	<b>11.785</b>

\*Projections for 2013/14 and 2014/15 have a high degree of uncertainty given the local government financial system is subject to fundamental changes from 1/4/2013 the detail of which is yet to be announced. Projections for 2015/16 and beyond have an even higher level of uncertainty given they fall outside the current Comprehensive Spending Review period.

These projections will be rolled forward as part of the Service & Financial Planning Strategy during Autumn 2012. Current Government announcements tend to indicate that the position may be considerably higher than shown above.

**Council Tax** - for 2012/13 we have increased council tax by 2.5 per cent. This increase equates to 41 pence per week for the average property in the Telford & Wrekin area and with this increase council tax is still amongst the lowest in the country and is the third lowest in the Midlands.

**Capital spending** - during 2012/13, we are planning to invest £95.919m as part of a £336.092m capital programme, to build and improve the facilities, assets and infrastructure to support the delivery of these objectives. This investment has been secured primarily through a combination of Government grants and supported borrowing allocations, use of the Council's own resources (capital receipts), and Prudential Borrowing by the Council. Over the planning period, our capital programme is as follows:

Priority	Total	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	Later Years
	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m
Protect and Support Our Vulnerable Children & Adults	6,807	2,968	2,917	922	0	0
Protect and Create Jobs as a 'Business Supporting, Business Winning Council'	41,854	6,100	27,207	6,854	1,693	0
Improve the Health and Well Being of our Communities and Address Health Inequalities	8,708	2,769	4,495	271	223	950
Regenerate Those Neighbourhoods in Need and Work Hard to Ensure That Local People Have Access to Housing	24,158	8,993	8,730	5,494	941	0
Ensure That Neighbourhoods are Safe, Clean and Well Maintained	57,621	18,700	8,762	8,423	13,736	8,000
Improve Local People's Prospects through Education and Skills Training	189,146	40,341	42,108	51,111	27,072	28,514
<b>Managing the Organisation</b>	<b>7.798</b>	<b>4.398</b>	<b>1.700</b>	<b>1.700</b>	<b>0.000</b>	<b>0.000</b>
	<b>336.092</b>	<b>84.269</b>	<b>95.919</b>	<b>74.775</b>	<b>43.665</b>	<b>37.464</b>

**Improving procurement** – (£2.18m gross in procurement savings identified for 2012/13) - through a combination of re-tendering contracts, reviewing and robustly re-negotiating existing contracts and making greater use of framework agreements. We are also committed to protecting our front-line services through better more effective procurement. To continue the momentum **we have established a Corporate Procurement Task Force** which is chaired by the Assistant Director for Development, Business & Housing with the Cabinet Member for Resources attending.

**Driving down non-staffing costs that have minimal impact on service delivery**, such as stationery, postage and hospitality (£3.88m gross in operational efficiencies identified for 2012/13) – by reviewing and challenging budgets ‘line by line’ to ensure that we have exhausted as many options as possible before considering changes or reductions to services;

**Service Redesign** - is at the core of our strategy and is to avoid ‘quick-fix’ solutions in services that are critical to the delivery of these outcomes, such as Children and Families, Environmental Services and Adult Social Care. Wherever possible, we are focusing on planned, long-term, positive service changes, as opposed to withdrawing services and closing facilities.

For **Adult Social Care**, we plan to radically change services to enable and reable people to live as independently as possible and to give them more choice and control over how their needs are met. A key element of this service re-design will be the shift towards re-ablement; helping ill or disabled adults to learn or re-learn the skills for daily living and using equipment to live more independently. Re-ablement will help people realise their full potential and promote independence, whilst also releasing savings from long-term care budgets over time. Although not appropriate in every case, we expect that the vast majority of people will go through a short period of re-ablement, before their need for ongoing services is assessed and that this will result in significant savings.

Our long-term strategy for **Children and Families** is about more support for people in the very early stages of difficulties and more intensive, targeted help for families with more complex needs. These services in combination will help to reduce the pressures on and costs of child and adult protection services and wider Council services. At the same time, we will continue to focus on reducing the number of expensive external foster care placements.

For both Adult and Children’s Services, we will also improve customer access, so that we can resolve more enquiries at the first point of contact, signpost people to sources of community support and develop a comprehensive menu of self-service options accessible via the Council’s Website that will allow people, who are able and willing to, to help themselves.

Looking at **Neighbourhood Services**, our long-term strategy is to continue to offer a universal, defined standard of environmental maintenance across the Borough, with additional resources targeted at areas of greatest need.

We will proactively engage with Town and Parish Councils to look at opportunities to work co-operatively to raise environmental standards at a local level. Building on the positive recycling performance across the borough we will continue to work with residents and contractors to reduce costs on waste collection and disposal, whilst retaining high quality residential services.

We are transforming our **Library Service** into providers of the Council’s First Point Services to increase customer access to our services. The First Point Services that will be available in the libraries include:

- Applying for concessionary travel passes and blue badge parking permits;
- Requesting replacement and additional bins and recycling containers
- Reporting faulty street lights, potholes, graffiti and fly tipping
- Services for Housing & Council Tax Benefits
- Making payments for council services
- Citizen Advice Bureau surgery at First Point Wellington

**Balances** - At the start of 2012/13, around £3.698m was expected to be available in **balances**. This is after setting £0.25m of General Fund balances aside in order to allow greater freedom and flexibility in managing the leisure services budget.

In addition, to the available balances, the Council has a one-off contingency fund of £2.145m to supplement the base budget contingency of £1.6m on a one-off basis in 2012/13.

### **PUTTING OUR 'CUSTOMERS FIRST'**

Most public sector organisations are both large and complex and can be confusing to the people who require and receive their services. It is often the case that people require services that span traditional operational boundaries and normal ways of working. In simple terms, customers should be able to get the services and information they need in the way they require them, quickly, accurately and cost effectively.

Since 2008 we have seen some real improvements in the way we serve our customers including the development of First Points, our ASB and Parish Council hotlines, the telephone contact centre, extended opening hours, the partial deployment of our single citizen record, a robust compliments and complaints procedure and the redesign of a number of services from the customers perspective particularly in Revenues and Benefits and Environmental Services, all of which have contributed to an ongoing improvement in customer satisfaction. However this is a journey and there remains a distance to travel.

One of our main objectives of the new Co-operative Council is to ensure that we serve the public and businesses to the best of our ability and to be known for a 'Customer First' ethos, where going that extra mile is part of our day to day activities. While the level of savings that we must find will undoubtedly impact on the range and standards of some of the services that we will provide in the future, this does not mean that there should be any erosion in the quality of our customer contact. We must place real emphasis on the way we talk, listen and correspond with our customers and service users. As a public service, we must remember that it is the public we serve and, because of the difficulties we will face due to funding cuts, it is essential that we do not allow this to distract us or use it as an excuse for accepting poorer customer service. Our mission must be, every single time, ***to treat people the way that we ourselves would want to be treated.***

To be successful we need to approach this on a number of fronts:

- 'Make Every Contact Count' – we want to break down the barriers between our services and provide our key front-line officers with the knowledge and skills to

identify where a resident might benefit from support from another Council or partner service. For example, when a Benefit Officer undertakes a house visit, they might identify whether the house does not have a smoke alarm or that they have concerns around 'slipping and tripping' hazards. These issues would, with the resident's permission be referred to the relevant services. Making Every Contact Count is part of the NHS ambition to systematically improve healthy lifestyle advice given at the front line, the health lifestyles hub at First Point Telford will be a key vehicle to make this work.

- Customer engagement will be essential. We should never assume we know best and, from experience, the most powerful outcomes are realised when a group of customers meet in the same room as the service providers with an objective of improving customer service;
- We need to focus our services even more to get them to think about what it's like to be a customer and work with them to become more efficient in the way they serve the community, removing waste, time delay, addressing unnecessary bureaucracy and form filling, helping to speed up decision making and keeping customers informed of progress. Our Workforce Development Plan needs to identify how we intend to work with those services where we know from customer feedback that customer service can be improved;
- Colleagues working on our front line have a wealth of information about what's working and what's not from our customer's perspective. We need to harness their concerns and knowledge and put remedies in place. We need the shortest routes between customer experience and those responsible for shaping employment policy in order that effective policies to achieve customer needs are implemented. Our front line staff can act as the 'voice of our customers' and therefore we need to share with them the important role that we want them to play in helping us to put customers at the heart of our business. It will be important to celebrate those individuals or teams who have gone the 'extra mile' to serve our community through appropriate reward and recognition;
- To establish a 'First Point for Business' single point of contact for businesses to readily access Council services;
- The branding of our Co-operative Council also needs to reflect our 'customer first' culture and we will need to ensure that our services reflect the way in which the community prefer to do business with us e.g. face to face, telephone, on line, self service or alongside our partners.

## **A 'BUSINESS SUPPORTING, BUSINESS WINNING COUNCIL'**

In the Borough, we have the right mix of skills, the workforce, the land, the infrastructure, the drive and desire to be a modern centre of excellence to attract inward investment. However, to achieve this and create jobs for local people, particularly in the current economic climate, the Council has to be dynamic and proactive. It is not enough to be a passive 'business friendly' organisation rather, the Council has set out to become a 'business supporting, business winning Council'.

As part of this we need to be clear about our narrative as a place, our theme for this is “**Destination Telford – Live. Work. Visit. Locate.**” Destination management is not a marketing exercise but requires a fundamental change in the culture of the business facing areas of the Council. It is a holistic approach to how the Council is viewed by and interacts with current businesses, potential investors, visitors and potential visitors in order to make the council ‘Business Supporting, Business Winning’. While the theme ‘Destination Telford – Live. Work. Visit. Locate.’ may be regarded as brand, the strategic philosophy behind it requires all business facing service areas to buy into it and be fit for purpose. This means, for example, traditional service areas such as Planning and Building Regulations being required to become primarily enabling service areas rather than primarily regulating ones as currently.

The Council alone cannot achieve the goal of increasing jobs and investment in the Borough, and as a Co-operative Council, we are dedicated to working in partnership with public and private sector organisations to deliver jobs and economic activity in our Borough.

As part of its senior management review the Council has created a Development, Business & Housing service area with a mandate to streamline the existing processes and deliver a commercial approach to our business to truly become a ‘Business Supporting, Business Winning Council’ and to bring the customer to the heart of everything delivered within the service. The new structure will embed an approach and culture to the way we do business with investors and existing businesses and most importantly the way we support customers. Taking the best of each process, learning from the business sector and ensuring our behaviour mirrors Council values, we will improve our service, deliver new jobs, provide sustainable economic growth, regeneration and progress towards meeting housing needs.

Core to this is our new Development & Business charter. This sets out a series of pledges which will ensure a streamlined, consistent, personalised and supportive service is provided to our customers. The implementation of the Charter will require commitment by all parts of the Council, not just the teams within Development, Business & Housing and a range of partners including HCA, external consultees and Registered Providers. The result will be delivery of some ‘quick wins’ to establish Telford as a recognised Enterprise Area and that we are ‘open for business’.

An Early Action Plan has been developed as part of the Business & Development Charter. This will focus on:

- Performance, behaviour and values
- Business Support & Aftercare
- Tailored Customer Management of all business and development enquiries
- Join up and coordinate responses from all in house services so advice is timely and aligned with corporate priorities
- Add value, speed up and provide specialist support
- Land and Property enquiries – One Stop Shop for development
- Housing offer

The Council and HCA are establishing a protocol to enable the Council's property team to proactively promote and manage the development of HCA employment land as part of the localism agenda which will allow the council to facilitate growth and take decisions locally. With the management of HCA land together with existing Council owned land it provides in excess of 90% of all available employment land within the borough being managed and controlled through a single point of contact. This will provide investor confidence and certainty in taking investment decisions together with a single point of contact which will be another critical factor in securing growth.

The new service area will embed a 'critical friend' approach to delivering continual improvement in the service by working with a representatives drawn from key sectors including new and long standing investors, The Co-operative Commission Sub Group, Telford Business Board and other business networks. to work with officers to review service delivery, address barriers and further develop the offer.

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## 4. 'A CO-OPERATIVE COUNCIL WORKING WITH THE COMMUNITY'

Being a Co-operative Council underpins everything we do as an organisation. To embed this in the organisation and in relationships with our partners and the wider community we have identified 4 work streams:

### 1. Adopter Programme

On becoming a Co-operative Council, an adopter programme was developed to identify practical steps to put co-operative working into practice. Key successes to date include:

- Working co-operatively with the Primary Care Trust, we have launched a Health Hub at Civic Offices First Point so that First Point customers can now also access a range of health services
- Working co-operatively with Telford College Arts & Technology, we have opened a new Employability Centre at Meeting Point House offering a full programme of training and advice sessions to help young people and adults back into employment, education and training;
- In Brookside, a pilot ward for co-operative working, we are working alongside local residents, partners, members and the Parish Council to deal with some immediate issues in this area, such as improving street lighting and an environmental clean-up involving Community Payback;
- Over 3,000 people have taken part in an extensive programme of community engagement and the results of this have been used to develop a new vision and priorities for the Borough and to inform the Council's budget strategy;

This programme will continue based on these principles:

- There will be at least one review or project in each service area (based on proposed new service areas);
- Reviews/projects will be clearly linked to the Council's emerging priorities;
- Reviews/projects will take account of the Council's service and financial planning process and budget position.

A full list of the programme can be found on the Council's website [www.telford.gov.uk/](http://www.telford.gov.uk/)

### 2. Co-operative Commission & Employee Commission;

One of the first steps, the Council has taken to become a Co-operative Council, is to establish a Co-operative Council Commission made up of our key partners and community leaders and an Employee Commission. **These Commissions were set up in recognition that the Council does not have all the answers or resources**

**to address all of the challenges that the Borough faces.** The Commissions provided an opportunity to capture the knowledge, experience and ideas of both partners and all employees.

Meeting for the first time in September 2011, both of these groups identified issues which they felt would either benefit from or add value to a 'co-operative approach'. These themes were:

**Co-operative Commission**

- Co-operative values and Communication
- The Image of Telford & Wrekin
- Employment, Skills & the Economy
- Volunteering
- Procurement & Commissioning

**Employee Commission**

- Employee Engagement & Communication
- Financial Management
- Employee Volunteering
- Social Responsibilities
- Skills Planning Development

Over this year, delivering these recommendations will be a key goal of the Council. Both Commissions will meet later in the year to review the progress the Council has made against those recommendations it has adopted. Importantly, we will be looking to both our partners and employees to share in the responsibility of delivering these recommendations.

**3. Strengthening Relationships with the Community**

To help strengthen our relationship with local people and organisations, we will develop a new overarching 'Settlement' in conjunction with the community. The Settlement will be based on the co-operative values (see page 5). The Settlement will set out what the Council will do and what we would like the community to do to put the agreed co-operative values into practice.

Our three existing agreements with the community, the Parish Charter, the Customer Charter and the Voluntary Sector Compact, will be updated to reflect the overarching Settlement once agreed. These agreements will set out in greater detail how we will work with Town and Parish Councils, service users and the Voluntary and Community Sector.

A particular priority will be to incorporate a number of new service pledges into an updated 'Customer Charter'. Rather than the Council deciding which pledges to make, we will develop the pledges alongside local people, based on the services that are most important to them. This approach will also mean that pledges will be two-way – clearly setting out what both the Council and the community can and will do to deliver the pledge.

**4. More Effective Partnership Working**

The Co-operative Council approach involves a new partnership between local people, the private and voluntary sector and public services. We recognise that the Council does not have all the answers or the resources to address all the challenges facing the Borough.

To support the development of the Co-operative Council, we will work with other organisations in the Borough to refocus partnership working. A proposed new partnership framework is shown in Appendix 1. The framework includes four main elements:

1. **Boards** – will develop the strategic direction and a high-level delivery plan for a defined agenda. These include:
  - **Children, Young People and Families Board** – with a cross-cutting brief to ensure that the needs of children, young people and families are central to the work of all of our partnership activities. This Board's Plan sets out to identify and address the key challenges which need to be addressed to improve the lives and outcomes for children young people and families.
  - **Health & Wellbeing Board** – created through the Health & Social Care Act, this Board will be formally constituted in April 2013 – until then a 'shadow' Board with responsibility for developing the provision of health and social care services in the Borough commissioned by the Council and the new Clinical Commissioning Group led by GPs. By April 2013 a Health & Wellbeing Strategy will be in place which will identify the core health and wellbeing challenges facing the Borough and set out how this new partnership will work to mitigate them.
  - **Adult and Children Safeguarding Boards** – central to protecting the most vulnerable in our community. Their role is to 'challenge' to the Council and its partners to ensure that the needs of these most vulnerable groups are met and that they are supported. Both of these Boards are 'cross-cutting' and its their role to see that safeguarding is at the heart of all that the Council and these partners sets out to achieve.
2. **Delivery Functions** – will take forward the priority actions identified by the Boards' plans. These will include 'Co-operative Neighbourhood Delivery Groups' that will work at a community level and 'Task Forces' that will be set up to address specific problems, such as families with complex needs;
3. **Engagement Partnerships & Forums** (including the Co-operative Commission) – will seek the views of key partners to inform priorities and plans;
4. **Local Strategic Partnership** – will ensure that partnership working is fit for purpose, review the work of the Boards and has a key role to play in addressing the challenges of the Borough. This partnership is made up of leaders from:
  - TCAT
  - West Mercia Police
  - Shropshire Fire & Rescue
  - Ironbridge Gorge Museum Trust
  - Clinical Commissioning Group
  - CVS
  - Shropshire Chamber of Commerce
  - Telford & Wrekin Council
  - Job Centre Plus
  - Primary Care Trust

One of its core role is to understand and address the shared challenges facing the Borough and how collectively these organisations can address them. The LSP's immediate focus is on:

- **'Strengthening Families' Task Force** - to improve the outcomes for those families which need multi-agency support through better co-ordinated support (see page 24).
- **'Employment & Skills' Task Force** – lack of preparedness for work and the necessary skills has been identified as a core barrier to employment in the Borough. This task force is focused on ensuring better communication between employers, training providers (including schools) and those seeking work. It will also focus on developing and enhancing pathways to work such as apprenticeships and volunteering
- **'Corporate Parenting'** – 'Outcomes' for Children in Care are typically worse than those of their peers. The LSP has recognised that all partners not just the Council have a role to play in supporting our most vulnerable children and young people.

### **Co-operative Arrangements to Tackle Child & Family Poverty**

Addressing poverty in the Borough is a central objective of the Council and its partners (see diagram page 24). Our Joint Strategic Needs Assessment shows that many of the Borough's core challenges are disproportionately found in the poorest communities: low levels of education attainment and high levels of children in care, high rates of teenage pregnancy, smoking in pregnancy and, poor health, including lower life expectancy.

The Council's **co-operative approach** to tackling poverty is to work together with residents, Elected Members, Town and Parish Councils, partners, local organisations and key Council services to collectively 'narrow the gap' between our communities. We want to drive this forward through:

- Effective working between the Council and its partners particularly around poverty and inequalities across communities in relation to Education, Training, Skills and Employment by developing or building upon a partnership approach in key areas across the Borough. A review of these arrangements has been completed by the Council's Co-operative Commission (see page 24) and a partnership task force is being established to implement their recommendations.
- a multi-agency **'Strengthening Families' Task Force established by the LSP** to improve the outcomes for families in the Borough. This is both a local priority and one which Government has identified – making available additional funding through a payment by results model. This task force will focus on:
  - **Engage with families** to better understand their needs and the way in which they want to receive support – rather than a simple 'we know best' model from the Council and its partners
  - **Providing co-ordinated support to families** to meet their needs and to establish their independence from support services.

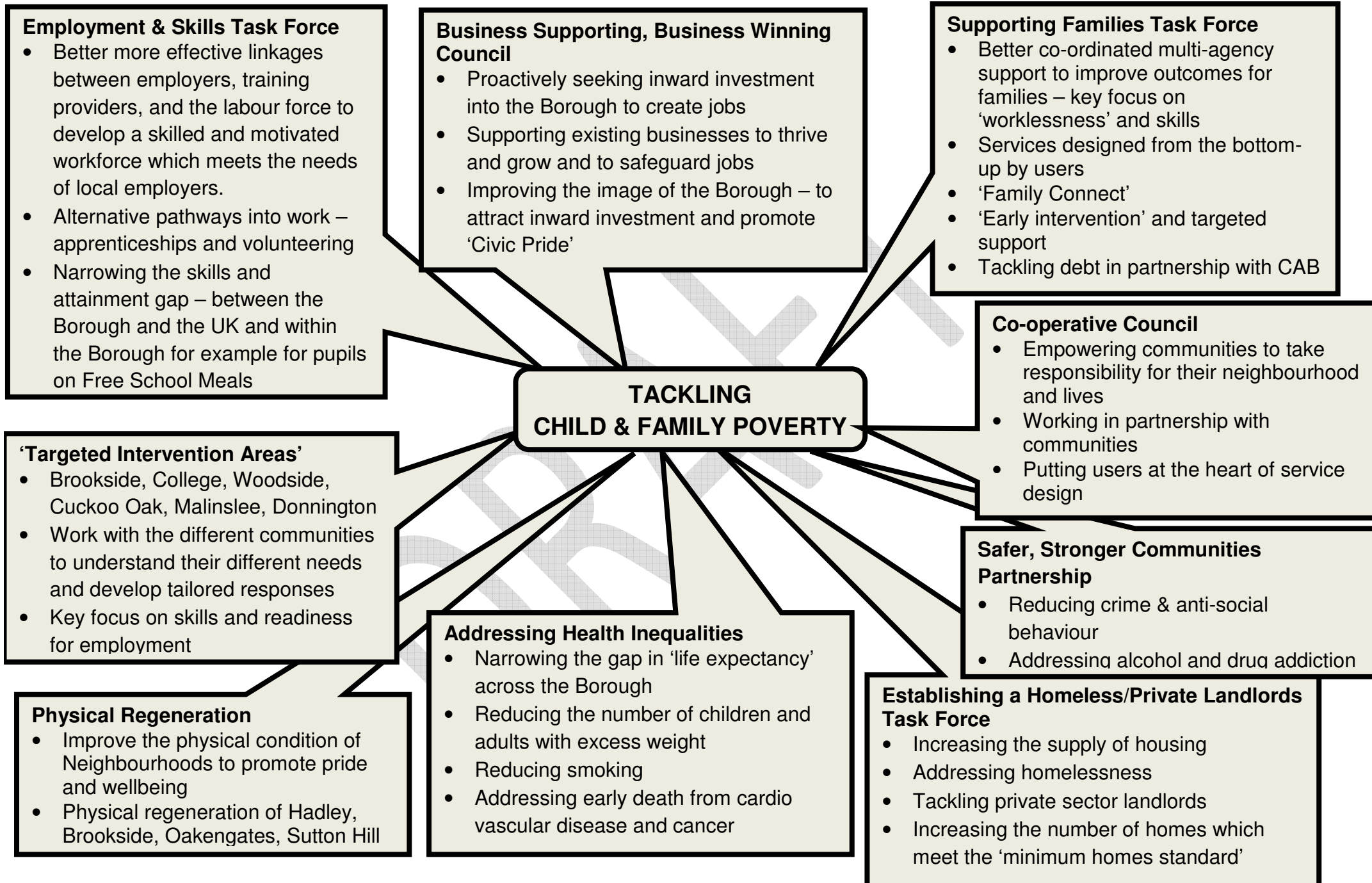
- **Taking a holistic view of the ‘family’** with an initial emphasis on supporting adults back into work, addressing criminal and anti-social behaviour and improving school attendance for children.
- Building the capacity of communities and local voluntary organisations to fully engage in a co-operative approach and enabling people to do more for themselves, this will involve the following:
  - Continuing to support new and emerging grass roots resident and community groups via mentoring and skills development, helping them to access funding, and enabling them to take an active role in identifying and addressing local need;
  - Ensuring wherever possible interventions involve an element of ‘up skilling’ local people, by working closely with colleagues from Job Centre Plus, education providers such as TCAT, and other Council services;
  - Developing and implementing local projects and interventions through volunteers from within the community, via the private sector as part of their Corporate Social Responsibility and through the use of ‘Community Payback’;
  - Providing support to small community organisations to build their capacity to develop and deliver co-operative approaches to service delivery;
  - Supporting Ward Members to engage with their communities in their role as local champions and to assist them to understand local need;
  - Working closely with Town and Parish Councils to identify alternative service delivery models.

There will be 3 areas of focus to do this:

- a) **Geographic areas** that have been identified as a priority through the Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) or other Strategic Needs Assessments that are carried out locally. It is proposed to initially target the 6 wards with the greatest concentration of residents within the 10% most deprived nationally on the overall IMD as follows, **Woodside, Malinslee, Cuckoo Oak, Brookside, College and Donnington**. The Priority Action Team will operate from various ‘community bases’ within these areas in order to facilitate close working relationships at a local level.
- b) In relation to **Brookside**, this has been identified as the pilot ‘**Co-operative Ward**’ in our Co-operative Council programme and we will be developing a comprehensive action plan, in conjunction with the community, to develop and take forward this initiative.
- c) **Specific Groups** that are identified through analysis as experiencing significant inequalities in comparison to other groups in the Borough. For example, narrowing the attainment gap between children in receipt of free school meals and their peers and children of a Pakistani heritage and their peers. Addressing these two challenges have been adopted as the Council’s ‘equality objectives’

For all of these issues, the Council’s Priority Action Team will facilitate partnership arrangements to ensure that interventions – are developed that address local need. **We will not adopt a one-size-fits-all approach.**

# CO-OPERATIVE ARRANGEMENTS TO TACKLE CHILD & FAMILY POVERTY



It is proposed to review the existing local partnership arrangements such as the Neighbourhood Delivery Groups to ensure they are 'fit for purpose' and able to address local issues. It is not proposed to create burdensome partnership structures but to use a range of mechanisms that are appropriate to local circumstances and issues. It is likely that these local working arrangements will include:

- **Multi-agency Task Force and Task and Finish Groups** developed where appropriate to consider the data and intelligence, agree key issues and develop and monitor appropriate action plans.
- **Involvement of Ward Members, Town and Parish Councils** local agencies and services, voluntary groups, and residents as appropriate
- Groups to be actively looking for '**co-operative solutions**' to issues through consideration of alternative delivery of services or interventions, or improving existing service delivery to better meet community needs
- Delivery through or links to other existing partnerships such as **Donnington Partnership** or **Regeneration Partnerships** where applicable, this may involve those groups developing interventions that contribute to the action plans
- Reporting will be to the **LSP Executive, Cabinet** and relevant **LSP Delivery Partnerships** on progress, sharing good practice and highlighting issues and blockages as appropriate – these groups will also 'task' the local partnership to provide support in tackling specific issues identified at a strategic level.

## 5. Making the Change

**Communication** - Co-operative Council is a challenging concept to communicate. We therefore plan to continue to step-up the communication campaign as more schemes begin to give residents, employees and other groups a better understanding of what being a Co-operative Council means, the difference it makes and how they can get involved.

**Skills** - workforce planning sessions have been taking place with Service Delivery Areas following restructuring to establish their workforce needs for the future and how restructuring has changed these. A Workforce Strategy will be developed based on these findings together with the needs of being a Co-operative Council. The strategy will be kept under review to ensure that emerging themes and priorities are addressed

**The 'day job'** - whilst the Adopter Programme will include at least one major review or initiative in each service area, it is also important that those working in services that are not directly involved in this are also starting to think about how they can work more co-operatively on a day to day, smaller-scale basis, for example how could employees and service users be more involved in planning the service? To support this, we will ask all services to identify how they could work more co-operatively as part of the service planning process.

**Leadership** - central Co-operative Council Delivery Team has been created to play a key role in the transition to becoming a Co-operative Council and in the longer-term, a Co-operative Borough. This will focus on:

- on developing a new vision and priorities, overseeing service planning and performance management, gathering intelligence and developing partnership working, including through the Co-operative Commission ;
- on community engagement and involvement, developing relationships and co-operative working with Town and Parish Councils and the Voluntary and Community Sector, promoting volunteering and civic participation and carrying out targeted work with local communities to help 'narrow the gap'.
- proactive, priority-led communication and marketing of the Council and its services;
- developing our approach to becoming a Co-operative Council/Borough, overall project management and co-ordination of Co-operative Council work-streams and supporting policy/strategy development Council-wide, particularly the Service & Financial Planning Strategy.

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## 5. DELIVERING OUR PRIORITIES

Our focus as a Co-operative Council has to be on addressing the needs in the community and the delivery of key outcomes within the resources available. Following a 6 month period of consultation with the community and its partners, the Council has adopted seven priorities:

### ***We will:***

- ***put our children and young people first***
- ***protect and create jobs as a 'Business Supporting, Business Winning Council'***
- ***improve local people's prospects through education and skills training***
- ***protect and support our vulnerable children and adults***
- ***ensure that neighbourhoods are safe, clean and well maintained***
- ***improve the health and wellbeing of our communities and address health inequalities***
- ***regenerate those neighbourhoods in need and work to ensure that local people have access to suitable housing***

### ***We will put our children and young people first***

We want to ensure that children and young people have the best possible start in life to improve their life chances as adults. We want children and young people to have healthy and active lives to ensure good physical and mental health throughout their lives. We want to tackle excess weight in children and young people to avoid health issues such as diabetes later in life and reduce the number of children and young people who start to smoke to reduce heart disease and cancer. We want to support children and young people to maximise their potential through education and training. We will give children and young people a voice to shape and inform their lives. We want to encourage our children and young people to play a positive active role in our communities through for example volunteering to nurture community cohesion.

*It is through the delivery of our other priorities that we will put children & young people first.*

### ***We will protect and create jobs as a 'Business Supporting, Business Winning Council'***

We will work better, more effectively with our partners to support existing businesses and to attract new businesses and investment into the Borough to create jobs. We will work to support entrepreneurs, whatever the size of the business.

Our measures to assess progress against this priority are:

- A net increase in number of jobs

- Reduce unemployment in the Borough
- Reduce youth unemployment (aged 16 to 24)
- Increase the number of young people in education, employment or training

***We will improve local people's prospects through education and skills training***

Through investment in education and training, we will work to ensure that all local people have opportunities to fulfil their potential. We will work to address inequalities in educational attainment to reduce deprivation in the Borough. We want to keep our own local talent and develop a well educated and trained workforce. We will improve the prospects of 18 to 24 year olds through apprenticeships and work experience opportunities.

- Improve achievement of at least 78 points across the Early Years Foundation Stage with at least 6 in each of Personal, Social and Emotional Development and Communication, Language and Literacy
- Narrow the gap between children on free school meals and their peers at KS2 and KS4\*
- Narrow the gap between Pakistani children and their peers at KS2 and KS4\*
- Increase achievement of level 4 or above in both English and maths at KS2
- Increase achievement of 5 or more A star - C grades at GCSE or equivalent including English and maths
- Increase achievement of a level 2 qualification by the age of 19
- Increase achievement of a level 3 qualification by the age of 19
- Increase the percentage of apprenticeships in the Council which lead to employment, education or training.
- Increase the percentage of the local workforce with level 4 and level 3 qualifications

(\* these two measures have been adopted as the Council's Equality Objectives)

***We will protect and support our vulnerable-children and adults***

The best place for most vulnerable children, young people and adults is with their families and in their own communities. Children will be in care for the right reasons. Services for families will be stronger, and will offer support early on. Outcomes for children in care will improve and adults will keep their independence in their communities for longer. We will work to support children and adults who care for a family or friend.

**Improve Outcomes for Children in Care:**

- Increase percentage of Children in Care who get 5 good GCSE's
- Increase the percentage of Children in Care who are in education, employment or training.
- Reduce the number of children in care
- Reduce the number of children who are the subject of a child protection plan for more than 2 years
- Reduce the number of children who are the subject of a child protection plan for the second time
- Increase the percentage of our children in care living with local foster carers

- **Support people to live independently:**

- Increase social care self-directed support
- Increase the percentage of older people who were still at home 91 days after discharge from hospital into re-ablement services
- Reduce people receiving re-ablement services who need ongoing support
- Reduce Delayed transfers of care from hospital

**Improve carers' health and wellbeing:**

- Improve carer-reported quality of life
- Carers who feel they have been included in discussions about the person they care for

***We will ensure that neighbourhoods are safe, clean and well maintained***

Through partnership working, we will work to improve the physical condition of our neighbourhoods reduce the level of crime and anti-social behaviour in the Borough to improve neighbourhood pride. We will work with families that display anti-social behaviour and people will not be as worried about this issue and crime. We want to celebrate the things that are special about Telford and Wrekin and work to develop a stronger local identity. Volunteering will be at the heart of community action and we will work with local people to build respect for the Borough.

We want to have high and consistent levels of cleanliness across all of our neighbourhoods. The condition of roads and footways will have improved. We will have one of the highest recycling rates in the West Midlands and household waste services will be efficient and easy to use.

**Reduce Crime and Antisocial Behaviour**

- Reduce overall level of crime
- Reduce the overall level of anti-social behaviour

**Reduce fear of crime**

- Reduce residents' fear of crime

**Create a Cohesive Community**

- Increase the percentage of residents who feel that their neighbourhood is one where people of different backgrounds get on well together
- Increase resident satisfaction with:
  - Recycled and household waste collection
  - Cleanliness of local neighbourhood
  - The condition of roads and footways
  - District parks
  - Town Park
- Increase recycling rates

***We will regenerate those neighbourhoods in need and work hard to ensure that local people have access to suitable housing***

We will complete our plans to regenerate Brookside, Hadley, Sutton Hill and Oakengates. We will work with our partners to ensure that there is enough good quality housing for residents and newcomers into the Borough. New housing developments will be well designed and help to build sustainable communities and there will be a balance of private and affordable housing that meets the needs of the local community. We want the condition of privately rented accommodation to be consistently better.”

- Deliver 700 new homes each year
- Increase the number of properties that meet the ‘decent homes standard’

**Reduce Homelessness**

- Reduce the number of homeless households
- Reduce the number of homeless 16-17 year olds
- Reduce the use of B&B as temporary accommodation

***We will improve the health and wellbeing of our communities and address health inequalities***

There is a significant ‘gap’ in life expectancy and differences in the experience of ill-health between different communities across the Borough. We want to address this by improving the health and wellbeing in our most deprived communities. Key to this will be the adoption of ‘healthy lifestyles’, including using the opportunities provided by our leisure and culture facilities for people to become more active.

**Improve the health of the Borough**

- Reduce the percentage of children who are obese
- Improve the percentage of infants who are breastfed
- Reduce early death before 75 years from cardiovascular diseases (heart disease and stroke) and cancers
- Increase male and female life expectancy
- Increase the numbers of people immunised against preventable diseases

**Ensure people have a positive experience of health and care services:**

- Increase the proportion of people accessing services who feel they were treated with dignity and respect
- Increase the number of Dignity Champions across the Borough

**Reduce risk taking behaviour**

- Reduce the under 18 conception rate
- Reduce smoking related deaths
- Reduce hospital admissions attributable to smoking
- Reduce smoking in pregnancy

## 6. TELFORD & WREKIN THE BOROUGH: KEY FACTS & FIGURES

### THE PLACE

- Located at the heart of the UK, the Borough covers some 112 miles<sup>2</sup>, **68% of which is classified as 'rural'**
- The key settlements are:
  - **Telford** - made-up from 1960s new town estates and 'Borough towns' which existed before Telford was developed. These Borough Towns include Oakengates, Wellington, Madeley and Dawley
  - **Newport** - to the north-west of the Borough and the location of Harper Adams University College.
  - **Ironbridge** - a UNESCO World Heritage Site located on the northern banks of the River Severn the birthplace of the industrial revolution.
- The Borough is well connected to the UK via the M54 and Telford International Railfreight park. Developed as a new town, Telford has a modern road network with little congestion and ample capacity.

### POPULATION

- The population of the Borough is some 170,300 (2010)
- Its is 'younger' than the national age structure:
  - 0 to 15 population 34,300 20.1% compared 18.7% nationally
  - 65+ population 24,800 14.5% compared to 16.5% nationally
- The population is growing and is expected to rise to 196,300 by 2026.
- As it grows the population is changing:
  - By 2026 the number of residents aged 65+ will have increased by 37%
  - The proportion of the population from Black or Minority Ethnic Group is increasing – from 5.4% in 2001 to 9% currently

### ECONOMY

- There are some 4,500 registered businesses in the Borough employing around 81,000 people.
- Some 20% of these jobs are in foreign owned companies: 48 are US, 28 German, 16 French and 14 Japanese.
- Manufacturing remains important in the Borough. The proportion of jobs in key sectors are:
  - Public 26%
  - Retail, hotels and restaurants 23%
  - Banking and finance 21.7%
  - Manufacturing 18%
- There is a strong bias in local economy towards automotive and advanced manufacturing, logistical and engineering related activities. The Borough is a favoured location for Tier 1 and Tier 2 automotive suppliers including Borgers, Denso, Cobra, Johnson Controls and Stadco.

- The Borough has some 400 acres of available land for commercial development – more than any other local authority in the West Midlands.
- Weekly wage rates in the Borough (£459) remain below the national average (£507)

## **EDUCATION & SKILLS**

- The Borough has excellent education and training providers: including local schools, New College, Telford College Arts & technology, Harper Adams University and the University of Wolverhampton.
- Educational outcomes in the Borough are improving:
  - GCSE (5 A\* - C including English & Maths) attainment (57.9%) has risen each year for the past 5 years, closing the gap to national rates (58.4%)
  - Foundation stages (78 points) – is now 52%, a 15% improvement from 2007.
- However, there are still significant differences in outcomes for children in receipt of free school meals, Pakistani heritage children and Children in Care.
- Higher level workforce skills NVQ3 (15.6%) and NVQ4 (28.4%) level qualifications are improving, although they both remain below national average (16.2% and 35.6% respectively).

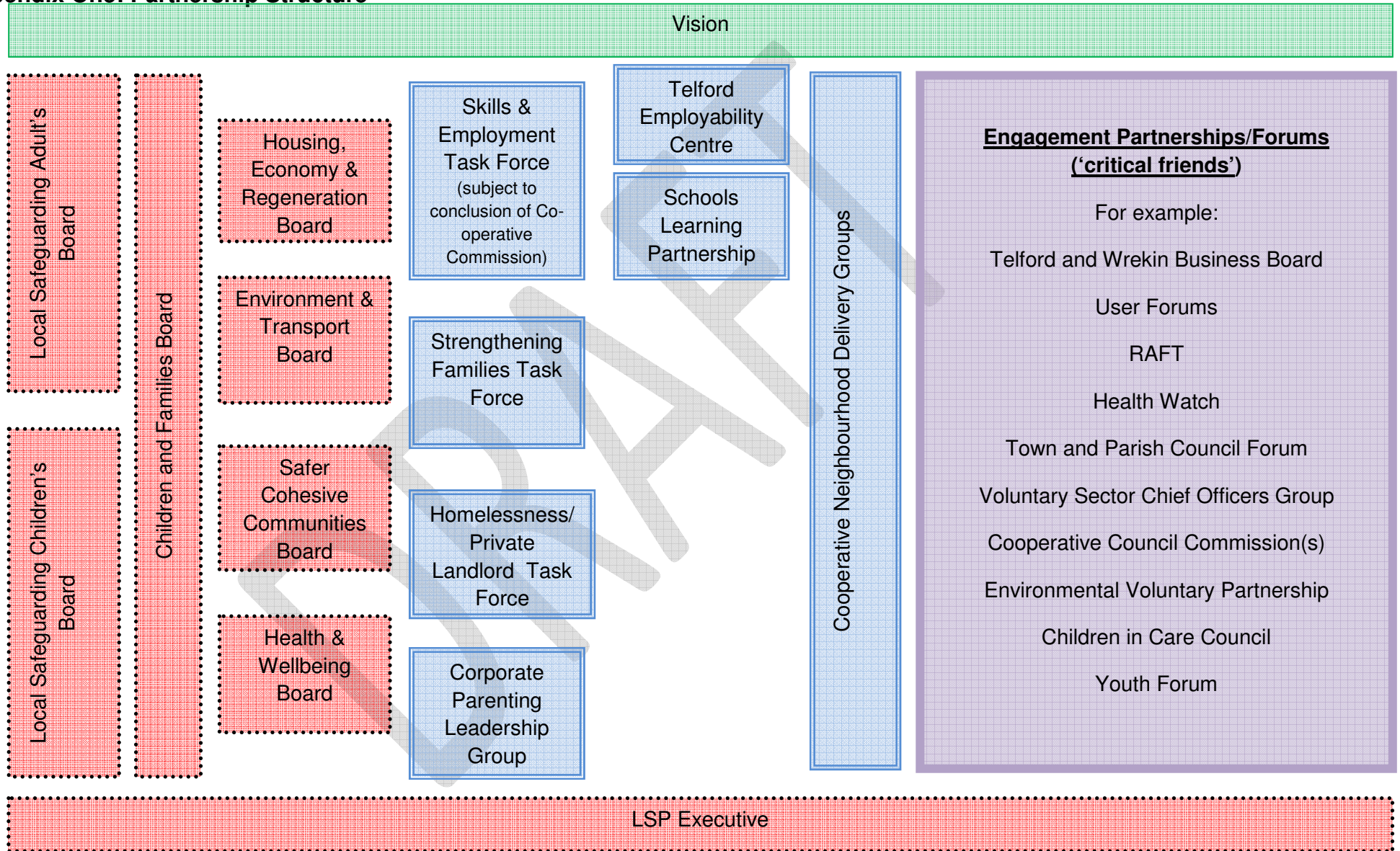
## **DEPRIVATION**

- The Borough is ranked as the 96th most deprived local authority area in England
- 14 neighbourhood areas are ranked among the 10% most deprived in England. These are focused in 6 wards: Woodside, Malinslee, Cuckoo Oak, Brookside, Hadley & Leegomery, Dawley Magna, College and Donnington.
- Around a quarter (24%) of the Borough's total population live in the amongst the 20% most deprived parts of England.

## **HEALTH**

- Although increasing, male life expectancy is worse than the national average (77.5 compared to 78.6 years). The female rate is broadly the same as the national rate.
- The two key causes of early death in the Borough are cancer (217 per year) and cardiovascular disease (140 per year) and rates are worse than the national average.
- Levels of breastfeeding and smoking in pregnancy are worse than the national average, particularly among young mothers
- Although improving, childhood obesity in 4-5 year olds remains above the national rate (24.9% and 22.6% respectively). However the rate for 10-11 year olds is below the national rate and falling.
- Teenage pregnancy rates are falling (47.5/1000 pop 15-17 year olds) but remain above the national rate (35.4).

# Appendix One: Partnership Structure



**Key:**

Pink – Strategic Function

Blue – Delivery Function

Purple – Engagement/Critical Friend

**TELFORD & WREKIN COUNCIL  
FULL COUNCIL 13 SEPTEMBER 2012**

**FURTHER ELECTORAL REVIEW OF THE BOROUGH**

**REPORT OF THE ASSISTANT DIRECTOR: LAW, DEMOCRACY AND PUBLIC  
PROTECTION**

**PART A) – SUMMARY REPORT**

**1.0 SUMMARY**

- 1.1 The Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE) will commence a further electoral review of the Borough in October 2012. The last review was completed in 2002, and the Order that came out at that time gave the Borough a pattern of 33 wards and 54 councillors. 16 wards are single member; 13 wards elect two members and 4 wards elect three members. One of the crucial requirements for such a review is the appropriate number of councillors because this then leads to the quota of electors to councillors. This, in turn leads to the allocation of councillors to wards, ensuring that, as far as possible, every councillor represents approximately the same number of electors. The Commission's technical guidance document can be viewed at the following link

[http://www.lgbce.org.uk/\\_documents/lgbce/guidance-policy-and-publications/guidance/electoral-review-guidance-august-2012.pdf](http://www.lgbce.org.uk/_documents/lgbce/guidance-policy-and-publications/guidance/electoral-review-guidance-august-2012.pdf)

The Boundary Review Committee met on 21<sup>st</sup> June, 19<sup>th</sup> July and 23<sup>rd</sup> August to consider information and form a recommendation on the preferred Council size. The initial meeting provided an overview of the review and its statutory requirements, the Committee selected two notional models of 50 and 40 members to assess the effects of such Council sizes. The second meeting considered both models based on statutory criteria and forecast electorate numbers. The third meeting looked at information on Committee workloads, results of a councillor workload survey and future developments in the role of a councillor. After consideration of the information, the meeting by a majority of votes, made a recommendation to

Council for a preferred Council size of 54 councillors.

Members supporting the recommendation made a number of points in support of a 54 member Council:

- Work was being passed down from central to local government and that workloads would continue to increase
- The issue was not solely around savings but in ensuring that elected councillors were able to properly serve the people who had elected them.
- The councillor workload survey showed that a large number of members had reported that their workloads had been noticeably increased.
- The ethos of a Co-operative Council placed an onus on councillors to actively engage with their community, this added significantly to the workload of elected members.
- Co-operative working placing greater requirements on councillors to engage and work with communities
- Key challenges that would increase workloads included Transfer of Public Health responsibilities, Welfare Reform agenda, delivery of Localism agenda, Neighbourhood Planning requirements, providing services and support to communities in very difficult financial circumstances, and engagement/support of local businesses.
- Reducing the number of councillors and increasing workloads significantly had the potential to exclude a wide range of people that might otherwise come forward to serve as councillors.
- The Council needed an appropriate number of councillors in order to deliver the Council's responsibilities efficiently, providing effective and convenient local government.

Members opposing the recommendation and supporting a recommendation for a 40 member Council made the following points:

- It would not be appropriate to continue with a model of 54 councillors that would effectively be applicable for 20 years from inception in 2002 to next likely review in 2022.
- Different ways to deliver a reduction in councillor numbers and that this could be done by reducing the Committee structure and governance arrangements..

A submission to LGBCE on the Council's preferred number of councillors now needs to be submitted by the end of September. This work lies within the remit of Boundary Review Committee and a further meeting can be scheduled for the end of September to complete the submission.

<b>2.0</b>	<b><u>RECOMMENDATIONS</u></b>
<b>2.1</b>	<b>That Council approve the recommendation of the Boundary Review Committee for a preferred Council Size of 54 councillors</b>
<b>2.2</b>	<b>That the Boundary Review Committee now make the Council's submission to the Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE) for a Council size of 54 councillors before the end of September</b>

### **3. SUMMARY IMPACT ASSESSMENT**

<b>COMMUNITY IMPACT</b>	Do these proposals contribute to specific Priority Plan objective(s)?	
	No	
	Will the proposals impact on specific groups of people?	
	No	<i>Borough Wide</i>
<b>DELIVERY DATE</b>	<i>Timetable not currently formulated by Local Government Boundary Commission for England</i>	
<b>FINANCIAL/VALUE FOR MONEY IMPACT</b>	No	Costs associated with the electoral review are in the form of officer time and will be met from within existing budgets.  MLB 17.01.12
<b>LEGAL ISSUES</b>	No	The Local Government Boundary Commission for England has a statutory duty to keep under review electoral arrangements at local authority level
<b>OTHER IMPACTS, RISKS &amp; OPPORTUNITIES</b>	Yes	The Local Government Boundary Commission for England has served notice on the council that it will commence a Further Electoral Review in October 2012. The outcome of any review may change the size of the council, number and boundaries of wards,

		names of wards and allocation of councillors to wards.
<b>IMPACT ON SPECIFIC WARDS</b>	Yes	Borough-wide impact.

**PART B) – ADDITIONAL INFORMATION**

**4.0 COUNCIL SIZE**

4.1 Some of the key statutory criteria that the review will have to follow include:

- electoral fairness: ensuring every councillor represents about the same number of electors within a 10%+/- variance from the electoral quota;
- the need to work within existing parish boundaries, but with a capacity to alter parish ward boundaries so that they are coterminous with borough ward boundaries;
- using clear and identifiable physical barriers for boundaries: boundaries in the no-man’s land between communities of identity;
- respecting and avoiding partitioning our communities of identity;
- Taking into account the electorate in six years time.

4.2 The guidance that the Commission provides on the issue of council size is reproduced at the Annex to this report. The committee looked at the effects of moving to a 40-member and a 50-member council on the current wards, and which of the wards would be well away from the 10%+/- variance from the resultant electoral quotas.

4.3 At its meeting of 19<sup>th</sup> July, the Boundary Review Committee considered what Borough warding arrangements might look like for a 40-member and a 50-member council. For that meeting, the committee worked to the current electoral quota and to an interim, projected electoral quota for 2018. It was noted that the interim projections were only initial estimates, and final elector projections that are being formulated by the Delivery and Planning Team will be used in the review.

4.4 Members asked for three further studies at the final meeting to enable them to complete their consideration of an appropriate size for Telford and Wrekin Council:

- further detailed work on committee memberships and workloads;
- the outcomes of the workload survey of all Members that had been undertaken;

- an assessment of the additional workloads that were likely to be generated by statutory changes, such as health and wellbeing and welfare work, and by corporate cultural changes, such as the moves towards increased community involvement and the co-operative council.

#### 4.5 Committee memberships and workloads

Committee, Group or Panel	No of seats	Number of Meetings		Average Length of Meetings	Comments
		2010/2011	2011/2012		
<b>Governance</b>					
Council	54	6	9	2 hr 30mins	
Standards	7	3	4	1 hour	
Standards Sub-Committee	3	8	11	1 hour	It is expected that the number of Sub-Committee meetings will decrease under the new Standards regime. These are ad hoc meetings – the three members for any one meeting can be drawn from the “pool” of the seven Standards Committee members
Audit	7	6	5	2 hours	Number of meetings reduced to four for 2012-13, but meetings have been getting longer
Council Constitution Committee	7	6	6	1 hour	Quarterly meetings programmed, but further ad hoc meetings are sometimes required
Boundary Review Committee	7	N/A	1		Regular meetings during a Boundary Review, but otherwise likely to meet intermittently
<b>Executive</b>					
Cabinet	9	18	13	1 hour	The maximum number of Cabinet members permissible (including the Leader) is ten. Meetings in 2011-12 were about every four weeks, compared with every two weeks previously. Cabinet also meets informally as a Policy Review Group – approximately

					monthly
<b>Regulatory</b>					
Plans Board	9 (+ sub s)	18	18	2 hours	Plans Board meets on a three-weekly cycle – this has generally been seen as necessary in order to ensure that applications are determined within the eight-week target. Members (and Parish Councils) can request that particular applications are determined by the Board – some of these would be determined probably under the scheme of officer delegation otherwise. The length of meetings has increased since the introduction of public speaking
Licensing Committee	10	12	4	1 hr 30 mins	There are usually four business meetings a year. There were a larger number of meetings in 2010-11 because the full Committee was dealing with hearings relating to taxi licensing. Some of these meetings lasted a full day. In 2011-12, these matters were delegated to a sub-committee. However, there were no taxi sub-committee hearings in 2011-12 owing to the increased use of officer delegation together with the large number of drivers now being licensed by the neighbouring Shropshire Council.
Licensing Sub-Committee	3-5	7	8	3 hours	These are ad hoc meetings, largely relating to premises licensing. The three or five members for any one meeting can be drawn from the “pool” of the ten Licensing Committee members. The meetings take the form of hearings, and can be quite lengthy
<b>Scrutiny</b>					
Scrutiny Management Board	7	N/A	9	1 hour 30 mins	The Board comprises the Chairs of the

					Scrutiny Committees together with two opposition members
Scrutiny Committee – Finance & Budget	8	N/A	8	2 hours	The information recorded for Scrutiny Committees only relates to formal public meetings convened in accordance with the Local Government Act 1972. In 2010-11, the Committees only met formally two or three times, but in addition members of the Committees met informally as working groups on a number of occasions.
Scrutiny Committee – Children & Young People	8	2	9	2 hours	See above
Scrutiny Committee – Co-operative & Communities	8	N/A	6	2 hours	
Scrutiny Committee – Adult Care & Support	6	2	N/A		
Scrutiny Committee – Active Lifestyles Leisure & Culture	6	3	N/A		
Scrutiny Committee – Joint Health	3	5	5	3 hours	
Scrutiny Committee – Housing Regeneration & Prosperity	6	3	N/A		
Scrutiny Committee – Efficient Community Focused Council	6	3	N/A		
Scrutiny Committee – Protection & Cohesion	6	2	N/A		
Scrutiny Committee – Environment & Rural Area	6	2	N/A		
Scrutiny Committee – Adult Social Care	8	N/A	5	2 hours	
Scrutiny Committee – Health	8	N/A	5	2 hours	
<b>Personnel</b>					
Appeals Committee (Transport/Employee)	7 (+ subs)	14/4	3/13	1hr 30min/4 hrs	These are ad hoc meetings. The three or five members for any one meeting can be drawn from the “pool” of the seven Appeals Committee members, plus substitutes. The meetings take the form of hearings, and can be quite lengthy – up to a full day for employee appeals
Personnel Board	7	0	8	2 hours	These are ad hoc meetings. Some meetings where the Board is

					interviewing candidates for chief officer posts can take a half or full day
Employee JICF	7	1	2	1 hour	Employee JICF has recently been "reactivated" and is meeting on a quarterly basis
<b>Other Committees</b>					
Parish Forum	7	4	3	2 hours	

**MEMBER WORKLOAD SURVEY RESULTS AUGUST 2012****INFORMATION ABOUT YOU****What is your employment status?**

Full time 28.6%  
Part time 28.6%  
Retired/not working 42.9%

**Are you a Parish/Town Councillor?**

Yes 82.9%  
no 17.1%

**Are you a School governor?**

Yes 48.6%  
No 51.4%

**Are you on any Outside bodies?**

Yes 94.3%  
No 5.7%

**Are you a member of any community groups?**

Yes 82.9%  
No 17.1%

**What positions do you hold on the Council?**

Committee Member 57.1%  
Committee Chair 31.4%  
Committee Vice Chair 8.6%  
Cabinet Member 17.1%  
Working Group Chair/Vice 2.9%  
Other 28.6%

### **ABOUT YOUR WARD**

**Do you hold fixed/street surgeries?**

Yes 88.6%

No 11.4%

**If yes, how often do you hold your surgery?**

weekly 22.6%

2 / 3 weeks 19.4%

monthly 45.2%

every 2 months 3.2%

quarterly 0.0%

less frequently 3.2%

### **MEETINGS YOU ATTEND (AVERAGE PER MONTH)**

**How long do you spend preparing/reading papers?**

up to 5hrs 11.4%

6 - 10 hours 31.4%

11 - 15 hours 14.3%

more than 16hrs 42.9%

**How long do you spend travelling?**

up to 5hrs 42.9%

6 - 10 hours 34.3%

11 - 15 hours 11.4%

more than 16hrs 11.4%

**How long do you spend in formal meetings of the Council?**

up to 5hrs 11.4%

6 - 10 hours 20.0%

11 - 15 hours 37.1%

more than 16hrs 31.4%

**How long do you spend in informal meetings with other Members?**

up to 5hrs 42.9%  
6 - 10 hours 20.0%  
11 - 15 hours 20.0%  
more than 16hrs 17.1%

**How much time do you spend on meetings of outside bodies?**

up to 5hrs 36.4%  
6 - 10 hours 33.3%  
11 - 15 hours 18.2%  
more than 16hrs 12.1%

**How long do you spend in meetings with Council officers?**

up to 5hrs 37.1%  
6 - 10 hours 25.7%  
11 - 15 hours 11.4%  
more than 16hrs 25.7%

**How long do you spend in Group meetings?**

up to 5hrs 62.9%  
6 - 10 hours 31.4%  
11 - 15 hours 5.7%  
more than 16hrs 0.0%

**How much time do you spend dealing with residents queries?**

up to 5hrs 5.7%  
6 - 10 hours 28.6%  
11 - 15 hours 22.9%  
more than 16hrs 42.9%

**How much time do you spend attending meetings of the local community/forum?**

up to 5hrs 60.0%  
6 - 10 hours 25.7%  
11 - 15 hours 11.4%  
more than 16hrs 2.9%

**How much time do you spend on meetings of school governors?**

up to 5hrs 77.8%  
6 - 10 hours 11.1%  
11 - 15 hours 11.1%  
more than 16hrs 0.0%

**How long do you spend at Member Information Seminars or training?**

up to 5hrs 85.7%  
6 - 10 hours 14.3%  
11 - 15 hours 0.0%  
more than 16hrs 0.0%

**How long do you spend attending conferences?**

up to 5hrs 91.7%  
6 - 10 hours 8.3%  
11 - 15 hours 0.0%  
more than 16hrs 0.0%

**How long do you spend on Parish/Town Council business?**

up to 5hrs 28.1%  
6 - 10 hours 43.8%  
11 - 15 hours 15.6%  
more than 16hrs 12.5%

**Do you feel that your workload as a Borough Councillor has increased in the last 2 yrs?**

Yes 75.9%  
No 24.1%

**Do you feel that your workload as a Parish/Town Councillor has increased in the last 2yrs?**

Yes 60.0%  
No 40.0%

**Reasons for increased workload** ~Increased knowledge and understanding leads to taking on more work and responsibilities  
~Appointment to a position of special responsibility eg) Cabinet, Chairman, Mayor etc  
~Economic conditions generating more enquiries, complaints and issues  
  
~Spending cuts resulting in increasing local challenges  
~Issues of health, care and regeneration leading to longer and more frequent meetings  
~More work has been devolved to Parish/Town Council level

**Other time commitments**

~Positions of responsibility outside the Council eg) Chairman of Parish Council, Magistrate, NAC Secretary, Office Holder in Voluntary Organisation  
~Voluntary work  
~Additional Political group work

TOTAL RESPONSES: 35

#### 4.7 Assessment of the additional workloads being generated by statutory and corporate cultural change

The following note sets out a number of issues which Councillors could take in to consideration regarding an appropriate council size:

### **CHALLENGES**

#### **Health & Wellbeing**

- Transfer of Public Health responsibilities to the Council
- Statutory duty to develop Health & Wellbeing Strategy by Health & Wellbeing Board
- Strategy must identify and respond to local issues to address health inequalities in the local population informed by local engagement

#### **Economic/social pressures**

- Understanding the impact of the recession in local communities – particularly rising unemployment rates and the need for up and re-skilling the local workforce
- Potential community impact of forthcoming benefit reductions

#### **Inward investment**

- 'Business Supporting, Business Winning Council' – member advocacy role to promote the Borough as a place to invest
- Engagement with existing local businesses to understand how the Council can better, more effectively support them

#### **Council Financial Pressures**

- Whilst delivering service changes and reductions, ensuring that the priority needs of the Borough's different communities continue to be met

#### **Delivering the 'Localism' Agenda:**

- Greater involvement/engagement with Town & Parish Councils

- Neighbourhood Planning – development of local plans at Town & Parish Council level
- ‘Community right to challenge’ – understanding the effective delivery of local services.

### **Co-operative working:**

- Empowerment of local people/communities to shape local services and the Council’s relationship with communities
- With the community and community groups, developing new models of service delivery and management of community assets

### **REDUCING THE BURDEN**

Over the last 2 years, there has been a reduction in the number and scope of statutory inspections/responsibilities. For example, Comprehensive Area Assessment.

Documents and information used in the preparation of this report can be found on the website of the Local Government Boundary Commission for England at [www.lgbce.org.uk](http://www.lgbce.org.uk). Of particular relevance is the Commission’s guidance: *Electoral reviews: technical guidance* (May 2011). Ward maps and electorates (at 1 December 2011) can be found at our elections website at [www.telford.gov.uk/elections](http://www.telford.gov.uk/elections)

Agendas and papers of Boundary Review Committees can be found here.  
<http://apps.telford.gov.uk/demservice/CommitteesDetails.asp?theCommittee=Boundary>

**Report prepared by Phil Griffiths, Democratic Services Manager, telephone 01952 383210**

## Annex

### **Extract from Local Government Boundary Commission for England, *Electoral Reviews: Technical Guidance* (July 2012)**

#### **Council size**

##### 5.2

Council size is the starting point in any electoral review since it determines the average number of electors per councillor to be achieved across all wards or divisions of the authority. We cannot consider the patterns of wards or divisions without knowing the optimum number of electors per councillor, which is derived from dividing the electorate by the number of councillors to be elected to the authority.

##### 5.3

We face a number of challenges in deciding on the most appropriate council size for any authority. There is wide variation in council size across England, not only between the different types of local authority – metropolitan and shire district councils, county councils and London boroughs – but also between authorities of the same type.

##### 5.4

In our opinion, local government is as diverse as the communities it serves, providing services, leadership and representation tailored to the characteristics and needs of individual areas. We believe, therefore, that each local authority should be considered individually and not compared with other authorities of similar geographic or population size, or those facing similar issues and concerns. In addition, the demographic make-up and dispersal of communities in England are such that to aim for equality in the number of electors each councillor represents as an average across the whole country would be impractical, if not unachievable.

##### 5.5

Consistent, therefore, with our desire to support the preparation of electoral arrangements based on the local views and circumstances of councils and their communities, we are unwilling to apply strict mathematical criteria for council size or impose nationally a formula for its calculation. This also means that we will not base our decisions on council size on comparisons between local authorities. It is important therefore that, if we are to reach clear and transparent decisions on council size, we receive well-reasoned proposals that are based on the individual characteristics and needs of each local authority area and its communities.

##### 5.6

Despite this respect for diversity it is important to remember that a local authority may not have fully considered the number of councillors for a number of years, and that during that time the role and responsibilities of local government and councillors have changed considerably. Following the Local Government Act 2000 (the 2000 Act), most local authorities changed the way they make decisions and operate internally, some more so than others.

## 5.7

The political management structures that have come into place in most local authorities since the 2000 Act have changed the roles of all councillors, both those who sit on executives and those who undertake the scrutiny and representational roles. In addition, various central government and local authority initiatives have affected the roles of local councillors, and the impact of these may affect the number of councillors needed to politically manage the authority. Finally, the development and the sharing of knowledge has provided opportunities for councils to learn from their own experience and that of others, encouraging innovation. Some councils have, however, used their experience of working in new ways in order to reach a view of the council size they think appropriate for their area, and tested that view through local consultation and electoral review.

## 5.8

Local authority proposals for council size that are based solely on an examination of national statistics, or simply an attempt to make it more consistent with that of a neighbouring area may mean that opportunities are missed either to reflect new models of political management or to adapt to changes in the responsibilities of local authorities.

## 5.9

Whilst we have no absolute numbers in mind, there are obviously levels at which an authority risks being too small to discharge its statutory functions or too large to be able to function in an effective manner. For this reason, we will normally wish to give detailed consideration to proposals for council sizes of below thirty councillors to be assured that the reduction will not jeopardise the ability of a council to manage its business effectively. Equally, we will wish to examine closely proposals for council sizes of above a hundred councillors.

## 5.10

In short, whatever council size local authorities have in mind, we will wish to test the assumptions underlying the proposals regardless of whom they are from.

## 5.11

Our preliminary discussions with principal local authorities which will take place around six months in advance of the formal start of the review, will give us the opportunity to hear their views about council size and begin to test the assumptions made to us. This will not be due to any presumption on our part but rather to ensure that we have a thorough understanding of why a particular council size has been proposed and that the authority has thought through all relevant considerations. The preliminary discussions will therefore progress most effectively if the local authority has considered its view at the earliest possible stage and is able to provide supporting evidence for it.

## **Factors to consider when making a proposal on council size**

### 5.12

Proposals for council size are most easily, and regularly, argued in terms of effective and convenient local government (in terms of choosing the appropriate number of members to allow the council and individual councillors to conduct the council's business most effectively). Arguments can also be made on the basis of reflecting communities and allowing for fairness of representation.

### 5.13

Broadly speaking, we will take a view on the right council size for an authority by considering three areas:

We will look at the governance arrangements of the council and how it takes decisions across the broad range of its responsibilities.

The Commission will look at the council's scrutiny functions relating to its own decision making and the council's responsibilities to outside bodies.

We will also consider the representational role of councillors in the local community and how they engage with people, conduct casework and represent the council on local partner organisations.

### 5.14

The Commission also asks local authorities and local people to consider the number of councillors for the authority not simply in the context of the council's current arrangements, but also likely future trends or plans. In every review it carries out, the Commission aims to ensure its recommendations remain relevant for the long term and will aim to recommend a number that delivers effective and convenient local government well after the completion of the electoral review..

### 5.15

Those submitting proposals to us should examine the political management and working practices of the council under review, and make well-argued and reasoned proposals. We have no pre-conceived views on the number of councillors necessary to run any particular local authority effectively, and we are content to accept proposals for an increase, a decrease or the retention of the existing number of councillors, but only on the basis that they can be justified. We do not accept, for example, that increases in an authority's electorate should automatically result in an increase in council size.

### 5.16

We are often asked for a more detailed breakdown of the sort of rationale we are seeking in support of a council size proposal. We have therefore developed further guidance (see Appendix C) that local authorities and political groups are asked to consider in submitting their council size proposals to us. They are not exhaustive and we encourage local authorities and others to present us with any such further material as they consider appropriate. We are, of course, content to discuss the guidance at preliminary meetings in advance of the review commencing.

#### 5.17

In the absence of sufficient justification we will consider responses to our challenge to the rationale for the council size being proposed and reach our own conclusions.

#### 5.18

When we consulted on policies and procedures, some people asked us to consider value for money when we are presented with proposals on council size. We believe that value for money is, in part, addressed by our consideration of effective and convenient local government – that an ineffective council is unlikely to offer good value for money. We do not feel that it would be appropriate to make further judgements on other value for money aspects of council size.

#### 5.16

Even if we are content with the rationale provided in support of a proposal for council size, we may choose to consider whether it is necessary to change this number slightly in order to ensure better levels of electoral representation across the district (or county). Having regard to the nature and extent of communities or to appropriate ward/division boundaries, it is often possible to improve the levels of electoral representation across an authority by making minor modifications of one or two to the council size.

## **TELFORD & WREKIN COUNCIL**

**FULL COUNCIL – 13 September 2012**

### **TRANSPARENCY AND PUBLIC ACCOUNTABILITY**

#### **REPORT OF THE ASSISTANT DIRECTOR: LAW, DEMOCRACY AND PUBLIC PROTECTION (MONITORING OFFICER)**

## **1. PURPOSE**

- 1.1 To request that Full Council agree the proposed recommendations from Council Constitution Committee for increasing transparency and public accountability, as set out in the report.

## **2. RECOMMENDATIONS:**

**2.1 That Council approve the recommendations of Council Constitution Committee shown at 3.3 – 3.5 of the report, for increasing transparency and improving public accountability and recommend their approval to Full Council.**

- a) Publication on the Council's website of information on Councillors who trade with the Council, information to be collected as part of the annual related party transactions data collection exercise**
- b) Publication on the Council's Website of Councillor attendance figures for appointed meetings of the Council and a list of councillors' appointed to serve on Outside Bodies**
- c) Introduction of a 15 minute Public Question session at Full Council Meetings**
- d) Permitting Filming and/or Recording of Cabinet and Full Council meetings by members of the public**
- e) Permitting use of Social Media by members of the public during all meetings**
- f) Voluntary publication of Council expenditure over £100 reduced from the current level of £500**

## **3. SUMMARY**

The proposals shown at 3.3-3.5 of the report were approved by Cabinet on 26 July with a recommendation that, prior to implementation, options and protocols be considered and approved by Council Constitution Committee and Full Council. Council Constitution approved the recommendations at the meeting held on 4 September and in addition recommended that a list of councillor membership on Outside Bodies be published on

the Council's website. The Committee also amended the recommendation on filming/recording to permit this at future Cabinet and Full Council meetings and not on a trial basis for the rest of the Civic year.

The proposals aim to improve public accountability, openness and transparency in line with the Council's Co-operative values.

### **3.1 Co-operative Council Values**

The recommendations of the Co-operative Councils Commissions' report, approved by Cabinet on 29 March, set out the Council's values. The section on openness and honesty stated that the Council would "*be open and honest in the way we work and make decisions and communicate in a clear, simple and timely way*". The section on involvement stated that "*we will work together with the community, involve people in decisions that affect their lives and be prepared to listen and take on new ideas*".

The full set of Co-operative values set out in the report are as follows:

#### **Ownership**

We will be accountable for our own actions and empower people with the skills to help themselves.

We would like everyone to – take action and responsibility for themselves and their community to the best of their abilities.

#### **Openness & Honesty**

We will be open and honest in the way we work and make decisions and communicate in a clear, simple and timely way.

We would like everyone to be open and honest about what they want to improve in their community.

#### **Involvement**

We will work together with the community, involve people in decisions that affect their lives and be prepared to listen and take on new ideas.

We would like everyone to – work with and support others, get involved and share their views to help us develop the way we do things.

#### **Fairness & Respect**

We will respond to people's needs in a fair and consistent way.

We will and would like everyone to – respect and care for themselves and others, value the different ideas and skills that people bring and treat each other as equals.

### **3.2 DCLG Guidance (Appendix 1)**

The Department for Communities & Local Government (DCLG) have played a leading role in the current government's transparency drive. A letter from Bob Neill, Parliamentary under Secretary of State, urging Councils to provide access for the public to record and/or film meetings is attached at Appendix 1. The Localism Act 2011 places importance on making it easier for local communities to have a greater influence in some of the decision making processes as well as requiring transparency on officer pay and financial information. These principles of openness, transparency and public accountability fit well with the values and ethos of a Co-operative Council.

In the light of Co-operative Council values and DCLG policy, there are a number of options that can be adopted by the Council that would serve to improve public

accountability and provide greater transparency. These measures would provide a demonstration that the Council is putting in to action the principles outlined in the Co-operative Councils Commissions' report.

The options outlined are varied but focus on the issues involving transparency for elected Members and public accessibility to the Council's meetings and decision making processes.

### **3.3 Councillors**

#### **a) Publication of information on Councillors who Trade with the Council**

Currently, details of councillors who have an interest in companies that receive payment from the Council are shown annually in the Final Accounts which go to Audit Committee. This information is theoretically available to anyone who may wish to access the information but this information is not easy to find.

In order to provide better transparency additional details of any councillors who have an interest in businesses that benefit from trading with the Council will be taken to Full Council via the Audit Committee as a separate report each year and published on the Council's website.

This information will be more readily accessible by the public and demonstrate a willingness by both Members and the Council to provide openness and transparency. In addition, this information could be shown on the Council's website.

The additional information requested would be:

- The previous year's value and description of any payments received from the Council to any businesses/companies where that Member has an interest.
- The preceding years' values
- Cumulative values of payments

Publication of more detailed information in a more accessible way would increase transparency and public accountability of councillors.

If Council agree to the disclosure of additional financial details as set out in the report at paragraph 3.3(a) above, this information would be gathered as part of the related party transactions data which is currently collated annually for publication in the Statement of Accounts. This would be undertaken as part of the 2012/13 accounts process and data collected would be available in early 2013/14.

#### **b) Publication of Member attendance figures at meetings of the Council and of a list of councillor membership on Outside Bodies (commencing from start of 2012 Civic Year).**

Attendance records showing councillors' attendance at meetings should be published on the Councils website on a quarterly basis. This would serve to provide a clear public record of some of the duties carried out by individual councillors. Research of a selection of Council websites indicates that Member attendance data

is currently published by most Councils. Collection and publication of this information was suggested by a member of the public at a recent 'Meet the Community Panel' event.

Publication of attendance data would be for attendance at meetings of the Council to which members are appointed at Annual Council and would provide further transparency and strengthen councillor accountability. Collection of data would have some time and resource implications.

It is suggested that it would be sensible to produce the information quarterly and then for a full Civic year at the end of that year. Therefore, it would be sensible to collect and publish information from the beginning of the current 2012/13 Civic year.

- Information will be collected only for those meetings appointed by Annual Council and published quarterly
- Information will be displayed in the form of a table, indicating where a councillor is a member of a particular Committee and indicating numbers and percentage of attendance with a total of all attendance shown at the bottom of the table for each councillor.
- Where a councillor has been granted a leave of absence due to ill health this will be indicated on the attendance table.

If approved, attendance data could be published for the first quarter of 2012/13 Civic year as soon as practicable and then quarterly.

Council Constitution Committee, at its meeting of 4 September also recommended that a list of councillor membership on Outside Bodies be published on the Council's website.

### **3.4 Meetings**

#### **a) 15 Minute Public Question session at Full Council Meetings (Appendix 2)**

Most Councils now have some form of public question session where members of the public can raise questions with the Leader and Cabinet members. This often takes the form of a short session at the beginning of Full Council meeting but may be extended to other boards and committees. A public question session at the start of Full Council meetings would allow members of the public to ask questions directly of the Leader and/or Cabinet members. A protocol for the receipt of questions is attached at Appendix 2. In order to ensure that a response can be provided, it is proposed that the deadline for receipt of questions be 7 clear working days before the meeting. This is the same receipt deadline as for motions to Council.

The democratic process is based on the rights of individuals to have their say and where appropriate to ask questions of those people elected on their behalf. Therefore there are no clear reasons why the public should not be allowed to ask questions before some or all of the meetings of the Council. The protocol is relatively robust in order to avoid issues such as vexatious questions, personal attacks or the delivery of political statements.

This process would lengthen Council meetings and there is a risk that this session could be dominated by the same people's questions for all meetings. However, the process is working satisfactorily at a number of other Councils, the protocol also contains strict time limits and prevents people submitting more than one question

per meeting. The adoption of a public question session is in line with the stated values of the Council, the government's transparency agenda and the growing momentum for accountability. Potentially, the administration of a speaking system would have an impact on time and resources within the Democratic services team. If approved this could be in place for next Council meeting on 22 November.

**b) Filming/Recording of Cabinet and Full Council meetings by members of the public (Appendix 3)**

Requests to film or record meetings have increased in recent years. The DCLG letter from Bob Neill urges Councils to do everything they can to allow filming and contains advice that appears to support this from the Information Commissioner. The advice is that 'in the context of photographing or filming meetings, whilst genuine concerns about being filmed should not be dismissed, the nature of the activity being filmed – elected representatives acting in the public sphere – should weigh heavily against personal objections'.

A number of Councils web cast some of their meetings in order to increase accessibility to the decisions of the Council. This is an option that could be considered either by using a specialist company to web cast specific meetings or perhaps by installing a CCTV system in the meeting rooms. However, estimates indicate that web casting could cost between £500 and £1000 per meeting. Additionally, web casting of meetings would not stop requests from the public to film/record or take photographs at meetings. Therefore, web-casting is not considered a viable option at the present time. The preferred option would be to allow public filming/recording at some Council meetings. DCLG advice is fairly clear that Councils should do everything possible to allow transparency provided such activity is not interfering with the decision making process. Initial proposals were for filming/recording to be trialled at Cabinet and Full Council meetings. However, Council Constitution Committee at its meeting of 4 September recommended that filming be permitted at future Cabinet and Full Council meetings, noting that the process could be monitored and if significant issues arose then the process could be reviewed as required.

There are some issues to consider here regarding members of the public possibly objecting to filming. Another issue would be the suitability and size of meeting rooms, public galleries etc. However, the protocol (at Appendix 3 of the report) contains some allowance for these factors and the Chairman will have absolute discretion to terminate or suspend filming if, in their opinion, continuing filming would prejudice proceedings. Advice that filming/recording was permissible would be included with meeting agenda papers. There may be a potential impact on time and resources as it would be expected that higher numbers of requests would be received for contentious meetings. In view of these considerations, filming and/or recording by members of the public is proposed for use at Full Council and Cabinet meetings only. If approved, filming could be permitted for the next scheduled meetings of Cabinet and Council.

**c) Use of Social Media (Twitter, Blogs) by members of the public during meetings of the Council**

DCLG advice on this issue is similar to that of filming/recording meetings. Bob Neill MP's letter states that 'In short transparency and openness should be the underlying principle behind everything councils do and in this digital age it is right that we modernise our approach to public access, recognising the contribution to transparency and democratic debate that social media and similar tools can make'.

A number of Councils allow the use of Social Media by the public; some take a different view and specifically forbid it. However, there would be some major difficulties in identifying that it was happening and in subsequently enforcing a ban on the use of Social Media. Many people use Social Media as part of their everyday lives as part of the way they communicate and regulations preventing the use of Social Media are likely to exclude younger people who may be interested in Council matters.

The use of Social Media by the public carries some risks but these can be balanced against the benefits of encouraging inclusiveness for citizens and the creation of an open culture.

The use of social media is in many ways linked to the filming and recording of meetings. Should the principle of filming/recording be permitted then it would be difficult to justify not allowing the use of Twitter by members of the public. In many cases this is almost certainly happening already at some of our public meetings. No protocol is required for this option but the Chairman will have absolute discretion to terminate or suspend any of these activities if, in their opinion, continuing to do so would prejudice proceedings.

This could be introduced at all of the Council's meetings with immediate effect if approved by Council. There would be no obvious time or resource implications.

### **3.5 Reducing the level for Publication of expenditure by the Council to £100**

The Council currently publishes any expenditure over £500. In order to provide greater transparency the Council will voluntarily publish expenditure for everything over £100. This would bring in a significant number of additional transactions but would provide greater public access to the Council's expenditure and would be in line with the ethos of openness and accountability. DCLG have indicated that they intend to publish the department's expenditure over £250, to promote openness and transparency. Publication of expenditure of over £100 would be in line with the Council's Co-operative ethos and if approved by Council would commence from October 2013.

### **3.6 Adoption of Recommendations**

Recommendations contained within this report, if approved by Full Council, will be adopted as indicated in the report or as soon as practicable.

## **4. PREVIOUS MINUTES**

**5. EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY**

No implications.

**6. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT**

No implications.

**7. LEGAL COMMENT**

- 7.1 Adoption of the transparency agenda will require changes to the constitution (example, process for public questions at full Council) and procedures to be put in place to ensure consistency and fairness.

Regarding recording/filming of meetings, there will need to be clear guidelines to address issues such as data protection to ensure that all members of the public attending the meeting are aware that they could be filmed and also to ensure that no personal and/or confidential information is recorded.

The changes to provide greater transparency link in with the new Members' Code of Conduct, particularly the aspects relating to integrity and honesty. The new provisions brought in by Chapter 7 of the Localism Act 2011 require elected members to complete a register of disclosable pecuniary interests (DPI) including details of 'employment, office, trade or profession', and 'contracts'. These specific categories are set out in The Relevant Authorities (Disclosable Pecuniary Interests) Regulations 2012. The DPI forms are made available to the public to view both on the Council's website and at the Council offices. If the Council agree to the disclosure of additional financial details as set out in the report at paragraph 3.3(a) above, this will be supplemental to those details required in the DPI form. Accordingly the financial disclosures referred to in this report and recommended at paragraph 2.1(a) will be provided on a voluntary basis and there may be no formal sanction for members who do not supply the requested details.

The current practice of publishing details of council expenditure over the £500 level is in accordance with the Code of Recommended Practice for Local Authorities on Data Transparency which was issued by the Department for Communities and Local Government in September 2011. The Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government used his powers under section 2 of the Local Government, Planning and Land Act 1980 to issue this Code to assist local authorities to achieve the routine publication of more data to enhance accountability to the public. Paragraph 12 of this Code clearly sets out that publication of expenditure over £500 is a minimum provision. It is within the powers of the Council to reduce this figure to the £100 level proposed at recommendation 2.1(f) of this report.

**8. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

The options to strengthen transparency considered in the report will have resource implications, both in terms of officer time and direct costs. Based on the information available:

- Information on Councillors who trade with the Council – information relating to related party transactions is currently collated annually for publication in the Statement of Accounts and it is proposed that the additional information identified is gathered as part of the same exercise. This will be undertaken

as part of the 2012/13 accounts process and so will not be available until early 2013/14.

- Publication of attendance at meetings figures – resource implications on Democratic Services staff;
- Allowing Filming at Full Council/Cabinet Meetings – the Council itself will not undertake the filming therefore there are no direct costs associated with this proposal;
- Twitter/social media – potential reputation “costs” and additional costs associated with monitoring social media and responding to comments.

Officer time will have to be funded from within existing revenue budgets.

## **9. WARD IMPLICATIONS**

Borough wide

## **10. BACKGROUND PAPERS**

10.4 The Localism Act 2011

10.5 Co-operative Council Commissions' Report 2012

10.6 The Relevant Authorities (Disclosable Pecuniary Interests) Regulations 2012

**End of Report**

***Report prepared by Phil Griffiths Democratic Services Manager Tel: 01952 383210***



To All Council Leaders  
cc Monitoring Officers

**Bob Neill MP**  
*Parliamentary Under Secretary of State*

**Department for Communities and Local  
Government**

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London SW1E 5DU

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[www.communities.gov.uk](http://www.communities.gov.uk)

23 February 2011

Dear Colleague,

### **Access to Meetings**

As part of the Government's transparency drive I want to highlight the importance of your council giving citizens the opportunity to access and experience their local democracy using modern communication methods. It is essential to a healthy democracy that citizens everywhere are able to feel that their council welcomes them to observe local decision-making and through modern media tools keep others informed as to what their council is doing. The mainstream media also needs to be free to provide stronger local accountability by being able to film and record in meetings without obstruction.

Councils are now faced with important budget decisions affecting the day to day lives of people living and working in their communities. Council meetings have long been open to interested members of the public and recognised journalists, and with the growth of online film, social media and hyper-local online news they should equally be open to 'Citizen Journalists' and filming by mainstream media. Bloggers, tweeters, residents with their own websites and users of Facebook and YouTube are increasingly a part of the modern world, blurring the lines between professional journalists and the public.

There are recent stories about people being ejected from council meetings for blogging, tweeting or filming. This potentially is at odds with the fundamentals of democracy and I want to encourage all councils to take a welcoming approach to those who want to bring local news stories to a wider audience. The public should rightly expect that elected representatives who have put themselves up for public office be prepared for their decisions to be as transparent as possible and welcome a direct line of communication to their electorate. I do hope that you and your colleagues will do your utmost to maximise the transparency and openness of your council.

I do recognise that there are obligations on whoever is filming or publishing information – be it the council itself or a citizen or mainstream journalist – under the Data Protection Act 1998. But I do not see these obligations as preventing access for journalism. Nor are there grounds for any council

seeking to obstruct a citizen or other journalist from processing information. The Information Commissioner's Office has told us that:

' In the absence of any other legal barrier to comment, publication, expression and so on, the Act in and of itself would not prevent such processing of information.

In the majority of cases the citizen blogging about how they see the democratic process working is unlikely to breach the data protection principles.

In the context of photographing or filming meetings, whilst genuine concerns about being filmed should not be dismissed, the nature of the activity being filmed – elected representatives acting in the public sphere – should weigh heavily against personal objections'.

Moreover there are within the Act itself exemptions from the data protection principles which might apply in the circumstances of the citizen journalist. The first exemption relates to processing of information for journalistic purposes (section 32), the second for the processing of information for domestic purposes (section 36).

In short transparency and openness should be the underlying principle behind everything councils do and in this digital age it is right that we modernise our approach to public access, recognising the contribution to transparency and democratic debate that social media and similar tools can make.

I copy this letter to your monitoring officer given their responsibility for advising on your council's procedures and decision-making arrangements.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Bob Neill', with a large, stylized initial 'B' and a long, sweeping tail.

**BOB NEILL MP**

## **FILMING/RECORDING/PHOTOGRAPHY PROTOCOL**

The Council supports the principle of transparency and encourages filming, recording and taking photographs at its meetings that are open to the public. It also welcomes the use of social networking websites (such as Twitter and Facebook) and micro-blogging to communicate with people about what is happening, as it happens. There is no requirement to notify the Council in advance, but it should be noted that the Chairman of the meeting will have absolute discretion to terminate or suspend any of these activities if, in their opinion, continuing to do so would prejudice proceedings at the meeting. The circumstances in which termination or suspension might occur could include:

- public disturbance or suspension of the meeting
- the meeting agreeing to formally exclude the press and public from the meeting due to the confidential nature of the business being discussed
- where it is considered that continued recording/photography/filming/webcasting might infringe the rights of any individual, and
- when the Chairman, considers that a defamatory statement has been made.

In allowing this, the Council asks those recording proceedings not to edit the film/record/photographs in a way that could lead to misinterpretation of the proceedings, or infringe the core values of the Council. This includes refraining from editing an image or views expressed in a way that may ridicule, or show a lack of respect towards those being photographed/filmed/ recorded.

Those intending to bring large equipment, or wishing to discuss any special requirements are advised to contact the Council's Communications Team in advance of the meeting to seek advice and guidance. Please note that such requests will be subject to practical considerations and the constraints of specific meeting rooms. The use of flash photography or additional lighting will not be allowed unless this has been discussed in advance of the meeting and agreement reached on how it can be done without disrupting proceedings.

At the beginning of each meeting, the Chairman will make an announcement that the meeting may be filmed, recorded or photographed. Meeting agendas will also carry this message.'

**TELFORD & WREKIN COUNCIL**

**COUNCIL – 13 SEPTEMBER 2012**

**TREASURY MANAGEMENT – AMENDMENT TO TREASURY POLICY**

**REPORT OF THE ASSISTANT DIRECTOR: FINANCE, AUDIT AND IG  
(CHIEF FINANCE OFFICER)**

1. **PURPOSE**

To amend the current Investment Counterparty Criteria.

2. **RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 2.1 That Council approve the amendment to the Treasury Strategy to use the Council's appointed Treasury Advisor's Recommended Counterparty List as one of its criteria when selecting investment counterparties.

3. **SUMMARY IMPACT ASSESSMENT**

**COMMUNITY IMPACT**

*Will the proposals impact on specific groups of people?*

No

**TARGET  
COMPLETION /  
DELIVERY DATE**

*Part of ongoing Treasury Management Activities within the Treasury Management Strategy and Policy approved by Council.*

**FINANCIAL/VALUE  
FOR MONEY IMPACT**

Yes *Where appropriate these are detailed in the body of the report.*

**LEGAL ISSUES**

Yes The Assistant Director: Finance, Audit and Information Governance is the Chief Finance Officer for the Council and is responsible for the proper administration of the Council's financial affairs in accordance with section 151 of the Local Government Act 1972 (confirmed in the Council's Constitution at Part 2, Article 12, paragraph 12.04). Accordingly, if the Council approve the change to the Treasury Policy as proposed, it will be for the Chief Finance Officer to ensure continuing legal compliance when selecting investment counterparties. Further, in undertaking its financial management, the Council must comply with the requirements of CIPFA's Prudential Code for Capital Finance in Local Authorities (Council Constitution – Part 4, Section 6, paragraph 6.2.).

Whilst the Treasury Policy is a matter for full Council to consider, the Audit Committee have a role in reviewing and monitoring the Council's Treasury Management arrangements which will include the changes to the policy as proposed in this report (Part 4, section 10, functions, powers and duties of Audit Committee paragraph 13).

**OTHER IMPACTS,  
RISKS AND  
OPPORTUNITIES**

Yes

The Treasury Management Strategy and Policy approved by Council sets out the key treasury management risks and will be regularly monitored throughout the year with reports to Audit Committee at least twice a year. Currently a key risk is the inability to find appropriate counter-parties for cash investments due to our current very restrictive lending list and the fast changing views of credit worthiness of different financial institutions.

**IMPACT ON  
SPECIFIC WARDS**

No

**PART B – ADDITIONAL INFORMATION**

4. **SUMMARY**

The report proposes an amended investment counterparty policy contained within the Treasury Strategy.

5. **PREVIOUS MINUTES**

Council 1 March 2012  
Audit Committee 26 June 2012

6. **INFORMATION**

The Council's Treasury Strategy, which was approved by Full Council on 1 March 2012, includes using published credit ratings as one of the considerations taken into account when selecting investment counterparties :

*Extract from the 2012/13 Treasury Strategy:*

*The Authority and its advisors, Arlingclose Ltd, select countries and financial institutions after analysis and ongoing monitoring of:*

- Published credit ratings for financial institutions (minimum long term rating of A- or equivalent for counterparties; AA+ or equivalent for non-UK sovereigns) – this is lower than the A+ minimum adopted in 2011/12 and is in response to downgrades in credit ratings below A+ of many institutions considered to be systemically important to the financial system.*

<i>Minimum Long Term Rating</i>	<i>Minimum Short Term Rating</i>	<i>Minimum Individual Rating</i>	<i>Minimum Sovereign Rating</i>
<i>A-</i>	<i>F1</i>	<i>C</i>	<i>AA+</i>

- *Credit Default Swaps (where quoted)*
- *Economic fundamentals (for example Net Debt as a percentage of GDP)*
- *Sovereign support mechanisms*
- *Share Prices*
- *Corporate developments, news, articles, markets sentiment and momentum*
- *Subjective overlay – or, put more simply, common sense.*

Due to continual changes to credit ratings of banks by the rating agencies the policy we adopted in March 2012 has become too restrictive, with a reduction in counterparties that meet our current policy. This is causing issues in finding suitable counterparties and acceptable rates of interest. Whilst security of capital is the paramount concern and will remain so, it is necessary to identify further appropriate counterparties and to be able to have a counterparty list that is capable of being updated very promptly as changes to views of the financial standing of counterparties can change extremely quickly.

We work closely with our Treasury Advisors (Arlingclose) when selecting investment counterparties. Arlingclose produce a list of recommended counterparties and durations. It is proposed that we use this list as a basis for our counterparty criteria in future. This list is updated in real time to reflect any changes in the market and notices issued by Credit Rating Agencies. The list still follows the Audit Commission's and the Council's key criteria of Security, Liquidity and Yield. It is also able to respond very quickly to changes in market conditions as it is updated as soon as circumstances change and is e-mailed directly to relevant Council officers.

Generally, any changes to the treasury strategy are taken to Audit Committee in advance of full council. However, the Audit Committee does not meet again until 25<sup>th</sup> September and as there is a need to amend the strategy, the report was circulated to Members of the Committee for their consideration and there were no objections to the proposal.

## 8. **BACKGROUND PAPERS**

CIPFA Code of Practice for Treasury Management in Local Authorities  
Arlingclose Recommended Counterparty List  
2012/13 Treasury Strategy

Report prepared by:  
Bernard Morris, Finance Team Leader (Capital & Treasury)  
Tel. (01952) 383702

**TELFORD & WREKIN COUNCIL**

**FULL COUNCIL – 13<sup>TH</sup> SEPTEMBER 2012**

**APPOINTMENT OF THE INDEPENDENT PERSON**

**REPORT OF THE MONITORING OFFICER**

**1. PURPOSE**

To seek the appointment of an Independent Person and reserve to assist the Standards Committee and the Monitoring Officer in administering the new ethical framework for Councillors.

**2. RECOMMENDATIONS**

**2.1 That Council appoints Mr. Michael Tebbutt to the role of Independent Person as set out in the section 28 of the Localism Act 2011 for an initial period of 2½ years effective immediately**

**2.2 That Council appoints Mr. Christopher Humphries to the role of Independent Person as set out in the section 28 of the Localism Act 2011 in the capacity as a reserve for Mr. Tebbutt for an initial period of 2½ years effective immediately**

**3. SUMMARY**

The Monitoring Officer has undertaken a recruitment process to find a suitable candidate to act as the authority's Independent Person in relation to councillor code of conduct complaints. This is a new role created by the Localism Act 2011. Two individuals are being put forward to undertake the Independent Person responsibilities and Council are being asked to make the appointment as requested for an initial period of 2½ years.

**4. PREVIOUS MINUTES**

Council 12<sup>th</sup> July 2012

Council 3<sup>rd</sup> May 2012

Standards Committee 21<sup>st</sup> September 2011

Standards Committee 21<sup>st</sup> April 2009 (ST-39)

Standards Committee 18<sup>th</sup> June 2009

Standards Committee 17<sup>th</sup> June 2010

Standards Committee 16<sup>th</sup> June 2011

Standards Committee 8<sup>th</sup> December 2011

Standards Committee 8<sup>th</sup> February 2012

## **5. INFORMATION**

### **5.1 Background**

5.1.1 The Council will be aware from previous reports that a new ethical framework governing councillor conduct came into force on 1<sup>st</sup> July 2012. As part of the new system set out in the Localism act 2011, a new post of Independent Person has been created.

5.1.2 The Independent Person is there to act as an impartial consultee on councillor code of conduct complaints. This will be at the point where a complaint is made and the Monitoring Officer is deciding whether the complaint should proceed, when the Standards Committee are deciding on whether a councillor has acted in breach of the Code of Conduct and the Independent Person can also be contacted by councillors if they have concerns about a conduct complaint against them. It has previously been agreed that the Council will undertake a joint appointment and share the Independent Person with Telford & Wrekin Fire Authority.

5.1.3 The Monitoring Officer has conducted a recruitment process in accordance with the statutory requirements and interviews for the post took place on 23<sup>rd</sup> August. The interview panel comprised Councillor Rae Evans, the Chairman of the Standards Committee, Councillor Chris Mellings, an experienced member of the Telford & Wrekin Fire Authority's Standards Committee and the Monitoring Officer.

5.1.4 Following the interviews, the interview panel are now able to put forward the following candidates for appointment as the Independent Person and a substitute Independent Person (in the event that the Independent Person is unable to act in a particular matter)

5.1.5 For the role of Independent Person – Mr. Michael Tebbutt

Mr. Tebbutt has recently ended his role as Chair of Shropshire & Wrekin Fire Authority's Standards Committee having been an Independent Member of that Committee for a number of years. Previously Mr. Tebbutt has served with the Royal Navy and worked at a number of stately homes one of which is Weston Park. In terms of local involvement, Mr. Tebbutt has overall management of the Newport charity, Preston Trust Homes and is the founder and President of the Wrekin Decorative and Fine Arts Society.

5.1.6 For the Role of Independent Person (reserve) – Mr. Christopher Humphries

Mr. Humphries works for the Ministry of Defence and having started his career 23 years ago as an apprentice electrician his current role is that of a senior repair manager. In terms of career experience, the knowledge of public sector working and individual knowledge of areas such as Investors in People and managing and implementing change are all features which will be relevant to the role.

- 5.1.7 The appointment of the Independent Person has to be made by the full Council. The Monitoring Officer suggests that the appointments are for an initial period of 2½ years. Training and support will be provided.

## **5.2 Equality and Diversity**

The Monitoring Officer has overseen the recruitment process to ensure that there are no equality and diversity issues.

## **5.3 Environmental Impact**

No implications.

## **5.4 Legal Comment**

The role of the Independent Person is established by the Localism Act 2011, most details of the statutory appointment process are contained within the main body of this report. However, the following should be noted.

A person cannot be appointed as an Independent Person if they are a serving councillor, officer, relative or close friend of a serving councillor and/or officer or have held these posts within the last five years (former Independent Members of Standards Committee are not included if appointed before April 2013).

The post has been advertised in accordance with statutory requirements.

The role of Independent Member of the Standards Committee no longer exists. The role of Independent Person is not part of the Standards Committee membership and has no voting rights.

## **5.5 Links with Corporate Priorities**

Maintaining an effective ethical framework and appointing members of the public to be involved in administering the process assists the Council in ensuring it meets the corporate priorities of openness and honesty, fairness and respect and involvement.

## **5.6 Opportunities and Risks**

The risks associated with this decision have been assessed. Every effort will be made to ensure that the risks are managed effectively and the opportunities arising from making these appointments are maximised.

## **5.7 Financial Implications**

There are costs associated with the role of Independent Person. It is proposed that this role receives expenses only but may need some professional support from time to time for which there is no specific budget identified. Costs will be monitored and any variances reported through the financial monitoring reports as appropriate.

6. **WARD IMPLICATIONS**

District wide

7. **BACKGROUND PAPERS**

Localism Act 2011

**End of Report**

***Report prepared by Matthew Cumberbatch, Legal Services Manager, Tel: 01952  
383255***

## **AUDIT COMMITTEE**

### **Minutes of a meeting of the Audit Committee held on Tuesday, 26<sup>th</sup> June 2012 at 6.00 pm in the Scrutiny Meeting Room, Civic Offices, Telford**

**PRESENT:** Councillors R J Sloan (Chair), A A Meredith, S A W Reynolds, W L Tomlinson and C R Turley.

**Officers:** K Clarke (Assistant Director: Finance, Audit and Information Governance and s151 Officer), J Eatough (Assistant Director: Law, Democracy and Public Protection and Monitoring Officer) K King (ICT Service Delivery Manager), (J Marriott (Audit & Assurance Manager), B Morris (Finance Manager) and J Clarke (Democratic Services Officer).

**KPMG:** A Cardoza and M McDonagh

The Chair welcomed the new Members of the Committee and thanked the Vice-Chair for his hard work during the 2011/2012 municipal year and wished him a speedy recovery.

#### **AUC-1      MINUTES**

**RESOLVED** – that the minutes of the meeting of the Audit Committee held on 27<sup>th</sup> March 2012 be confirmed and signed by the Chairman.

#### **AUC-2      APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

K Austin (Vice-Chair), I T W Fletcher

#### **AUC-3      DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Cllr R Sloan declared a personal interest in Appendix G and the reference to the DWP as he is employed by the DWP.

#### **AUC-4      REVIEW OF THE TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR THE COMMITTEE**

The Audit and Assurance Manager gave a report on the Terms of Reference for the Audit Committee which are reviewed at the first meeting of each municipal year with any changes being taken to the Council Constitution Committee.

The current Terms of Reference would need to be changed in order to reflect the changes to governance and risk management and to include information governance.

A discussion took place regarding the changes shown at Appendix A to the report.

**RESOLVED** – that the changes to the terms of reference as attached at Appendix A be recommended to the Council's Constitution Committee for adoption by the Council in September 2012.

#### **AUC-5      KPMG INTERIM AUDIT REPORT 2011/12**

A Cardoza presented the Interim Audit Report for the year 2011/12 during which the following key areas had been considered:

- Planning

- Control Evaluation
- Substantive Procedures
- Completion
- 

During February to April the planning and control environment evaluation work was completed covering the Authority's IT systems, a review of the Internal Audit functions and the production of the Accounts. The findings were favourable and included:

- Effective overall and IT generally sound
- Key financial systems generally sound
- Accounts production – work ongoing but there have been improvements with regard to layout on from last year

Accounts for the 1<sup>st</sup> quarter are on course. Value for money was appropriate. There had been a review with senior officers in February and KPMG had met with Lead Members in May. It was found that the financial plan was robust. The audit would begin w/b 2<sup>nd</sup> July 2012. A further report would be received in September 2012.

M McDonagh had visited various sites with the Managing Director, Richard Partington, which involved talking to staff within the organisation. Within periods 1-12 no concerns had been raised. Period 13 was due to take place and manual adjustments and presentations were due to be disclosed and this presented more risk.

KPMG had a robust relationship with the Authority and both of the team worked well together.

A discussion took place including:

- Cuts to services including front line services and the need for continued savings
- The visit to the sites and independent surveys and their results
- The current, very different, economic situation
- Increasing pressures for the Local Authority

#### **AUC-6      UPDATE ON ICT BACK UP AND RECOVERY**

The ICT Service Delivery Manager gave a brief update on the Business Continuity. All of the areas had now been replicated with the exception of Carefirst which was behind schedule due to the restructure. The system was currently being tested and it was expected that this would go live in September.

During the upcoming moves to new premises the data would be replicated in several different locations and it was confirmed that both Priority 1 systems together with all of the Council's data had some form of back up.

A discussion took place including:

- Monitoring of Data during the moves
- Power Outages
- Business Continuity

#### **AUC-7      UPDATE OF CHILDREN'S PLACEMENT COSTS**

Due to the current ongoing Ofsted Inspection this item was deferred until the September Meeting.

## **AUC-8      DRAFT ACCOUNTS 11/12**

The Assistant Director: Finance, Audit & Information Governance gave a verbal report on the Draft Accounts for 2011/12.

A report would be going to Cabinet on Thursday 28<sup>th</sup> June regarding the out-turn position for the year 2011/12. There had been a net underspend of £1.8m due to tight financial control and this had been transferred into balances with a number of other transfers in to reserves. The accounts were 100 pages long and were currently being finalised and would be sent to KPMG by the end of the week. A copy of the Statement of Accounts would also be e-mailed to members of the Audit Committee for information, although the audited statement of accounts would be considered at the September meeting of the Committee and a training session would be held before the meeting to go through the accounts in details and to explain the key aspects of them.

## **AUC-9      TREASURY MANAGEMENT OUTTURN 2011/12**

The Finance Manager presented an update report on the Treasury Management Outturn for 2011/12 and the year to date. The year ended with a net indebtedness of £94.6m which was an increase of £39.4m due to a combination of funding capital expenditure and use of revenue reserves. During the year two PWLB Loans had matured and one had been entered into to take advantage of the favourable interest rates. The investment which the Council had with Dexia Bank had been repaid and the principal amount together with all interest due was received in November 2011. The Royal Bank of Scotland had been downgraded and no further short-term investments would be taken out with them due to their rating now being below the standard acceptable to the Council. Several investments were due to mature this year totalling approximately £25m. There had been no breaches or amendments to the Prudential Indicators.

A discussion took place including:

- Individual Ratings and advice from Treasury Advisors
- Balancing capital expenditure and borrowings
- Investments

Officers were congratulated on the report, specifically the achievement of investment returns averaging 3.46% for 2011/12 compared to benchmark returns of only 0.52%.

### **RESOLVED – that**

- (a) the contents of the report be noted;**
- (b) the change to counterparty selection criteria in 16.5 be noted; and**
- (c) the performance against Prudential Indicators be noted.**

## **AUC10      INTERNAL AUDIT 2011/12 QUARTER 4 UPDATE REPORT**

The Audit and Assurance Manager presented a report on the work undertaken by the Internal Audit team during quarter four for 2011/12.

Internal Audit activity mainly focussed on completion of the audits and the final areas of work on the key financial systems for the External Auditor. Eight final reports had been issued during quarter 4. Purchase Ledger had implemented a new financial system which had taken longer than estimated due to the additional training and testing needed. A review on Newport Pool and Planning Applications had also been completed together with a review of the ICT infrastructure project and contract. This had been unplanned work which had taken over 10 days to complete. There was currently only one original amber report outstanding - the Abacus review. Further work was required obtaining evidence and confirming the implementation of the recommendations. The results would be reported to the Committee in the next update. One amber report was issued during the quarter - Sales ledger and summary information. Management had implemented the recommendations and actions and a follow up would be undertaken at the end of June.

Following a complaint a review was taken into the ICT Infrastructure contract and project in December 2010. This review had taken some time to complete due to restructure, the complex nature of the case and the collection of some evidence to support the investigation. The outcome of the review was that although the project manager had acted in the Council's best interest resulting in a £200,000 saving, they had not followed the appropriate governance procedures. The review had identified 8 recommendations that the Senior Management Team (SMT) had agreed to implement. Agreed actions included a revised project governance process for significant projects with monitoring by SMT and the Managing Director and Directors. In addition to this revised payment authorisation levels had been introduced which included counter authorisations for all payments over £50,000.

A discussion took place regarding the report which the Committee considered was a balanced report showing the lessons to be learnt.

**RESOLVED – that the report be noted.**

## **AUC11      AUDIT & ASSURANCE ANNUAL REPORT 2011/12**

The Audit & Assurance Manager presented the annual report for 2011/12 which supported the Annual Governance Statement (AGS). This showed the recommendations and reports issued for the three years 2009/10 through to 2011/12. A total of 44 reports were issued during 2011/12 which was less than in previous years due to a reduction in resources and the additional work required on testing the new financial system. There had been no indication from KPMG of any adverse findings on the performance against the external review but any actions required would be incorporated into the Internal Audit 12/13 key tasks list. Positive results had been received from CIPFA in November 2011 and also from customer feedback. Although the results were averaging 4.5 out of 5 and above, the team would not get complacent. Where necessary changes had been made from additional feedback given.

Risk Management had supported some of the Council's major projects during the year including the Co-operative Council project and continues to participate and contribute to external benchmarking exercises. Proposals were currently out for consultation on the re-structure of the risk management and this would be reported back to the Committee at a future meeting.

The Information Governance Team took over the responsibility for the administration of all information requests on behalf of the Council, including subject access requests. The ICO had sent a benchmark of 80% for responding to the FOI requests within a 20 day statutory deadline. The Council answered 909 FOI requests during the year with 85% of these requests being answered within the 20 day working day deadline. There had been 41

Environmental Information requests of which 51% had been responded to within 20 working days and 95 subject access requests of which 68% had been answered within 40 days.

During the year there had been 77 possible data breaches. After investigations it was confirmed that 40 data breaches had occurred. The Council encouraged the reporting of any data breaches as soon as possible as this clearly assists with reducing the impact. The reporting process was very important and two of the confirmed breaches had met the Information Commissioners Office's (ICO) notification rationale and these were referred to the ICO. The ICO had imposed a fine of £90,000 (reduced to £72,000 for early repayment). Although the Council were not in agreement with the decision and had argued strenuously for a number of months that the fine was out of proportion, the fine would be paid to take advantage of the reduced rate.

Despite reduced resources and the change in responsibilities the Audit and Assurance Team had achieved good results and contributed to ensuring good governance arrangements throughout the Council.

A discussion took place including:

- Data Breaches reported to the ICO and the fines
- Restructure and cuts to the Audit and Assurance Service and statutory responsibilities

**RESOLVED – that the report be noted.**

## **AUC12      2011/12 ANNUAL REPORT – CORPORATE ANTI-FRAUD & CORRUPTION ACTIVITY**

The Audit & Assurance Manager presented a report on the 2011/12 Annual Report and Corporate Anti-Fraud & Corruption Policy.

Despite there being reduced resources within the Investigation Team and although fraud was increasing the team were continuing to provide pro-active fraud work. The total number of referrals were significantly less than last due to the reduction in the service following the restructure and any cases looked at were on a risk based approach with the appropriate action taken. The Investigation Team had investigated matches through the National Fraud Initiative (NFI) which had resulted in 46 incorrect awards of benefit and 7 frauds totalling £77,519 in overpayments. Both Revenues and Benefits and Trading Standards had used publicity as a deterrent in order to lessen fraudulent activity. Scambusters continued to be a very import tool with scams being reported daily. A Loan Shark Team had been set up in order to identify, investigate and if necessary prosecute loan sharks and to work with victims. Due to the reduced resources the Authority faces significant challenges for the year 2012/13.

A discussion took place including:

- The importance of Scambusters
- HB Overpayments
- Benefits Joint Working
- Real Time Reporting
- Administrative Costs
- Rogue Trading
- Data Cleansing
- Pension Scheme

**RESOLVED** – that the report be noted.

**AUC13      ANNUAL GOVERNANCE STATEMENT 2011/12**

The Audit and Assurance Manager presented a report on the Annual Governance Statement 2011/12 which would accompany the 2011/12 annual accounts and would be reviewed and signed by the Leader and Director. The key elements of the Governance Framework were listed on Appendix A to the Report. The review of effectiveness was conducted annually by senior managers, internal and external audit and Ofsted. The Audit Committee and the Scrutiny process also tested and challenged the effectiveness of the framework. The action plan for 12/13 was set out at Annex 1 and Appendix B to the report. The Council would be facing challenges during the coming year with service reviews and the merging of Organisational Improvement and Human Resources and the governance arrangements for the Health and Wellbeing Board.

**RESOLVED** – that the report be noted.

**AUC14      OUTLINE OF BUSINESS FOR 12/13**

The outline of business for future meetings 12/13 was discussed. The verbal update on Children's Placement Costs would be deferred to the September meeting.

**RESOLVED** – that the outline of the business for future meetings 12/13 be noted.

The meeting ended at 7.42 p.m.

**Chairman:**

**Date:**

## **BOUNDARY REVIEW COMMITTEE**

### **Minutes of a meeting of the Boundary Review Committee held on Thursday, 21<sup>st</sup> June, 2012 at 6.0 p.m. in the Civic Offices, Telford, Shropshire**

**PRESENT:** Councillors R.J. Sloan (Chairman), K.T. Blundell, S. Davies, N.J. Dugmore , A.J. Eade, A.D. McClements and R.A. Overton.

#### **BRC-1      APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

None.

#### **BRC-2      DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

None.

#### **BRC-3      BOROUGH ELECTORAL REVIEW**

Members received the report of the Assistant Director: Law, Democracy & Public Protection which provided briefing information of the Further Electoral Review of the Borough. This was one of a series of three briefings that had been scheduled for Members to consider:

- Overview of the Review and introduction to the question of Council size
- The question of Community Identity – linked to electorate forecasting across the Borough
- Consideration of ‘effective and convenient local government’ - the question of ‘how many councillors does it take?’

The final briefing in August would lead to the Committee’s recommendation to Full Council on 13th September on the appropriate Council size.

The Electoral Services Team Leader provided Members with copies of slides which dealt with the various elements of the review and invited questions from members at the end of his presentation.

#### **Review**

A review was due to be conducted by the Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE).The review operated to statutory criteria and would consider the electoral arrangements of the Borough.

- Council size
- Electoral equality (number of electors to councillors)
- Number and boundaries of wards
- Number of councillors to be elected for each ward
- Ward names

The review had been triggered by a number of factors. The last review had been completed in 2002 and had resulted in the current arrangements whereby the Borough had 33 wards which were represented by a total of 54 councillors. The current electoral quota was 2,292 electors per councillor.

Development within the Borough meant that 36% of the Borough wards were now either 10% above or below the electoral quota, no ward was currently more than 30% above or below the electoral quota.

The review process would begin with initial information gathering, produce a recommendation on Council size and then prepare and publish draft recommendations. These recommendations would be publicised and subject to consultation. Following this a final report would be produced and an order made for new arrangements to be in place for May 2015 local elections. Councillor A.D. McClements noted that any proposals on Council size should be properly supported with evidence showing how that size of Council would properly support the business of the Council

LGBCE guidance on Council size indicated that they would expect views to be argued along the lines of 'effective and convenient local government: how many councillors would it take for the councillors and the Council to conduct statutory roles and the Council's business most effectively.

Councillor A.D. McClements noted that any

## **Statutory Criteria**

LGBCE were required to work to a number of statutory criteria:

- Electoral Fairness
- Community Identity
- Effective and Convenient Local Government
- Future Development

## **Parishes**

LGBCE had no powers to alter Parish boundaries. In drawing up Borough wards, Parishes and Parish wards should not be split. However, there were powers to make consequential changes to Parish electoral arrangements.

- Parish council size
- Division of Parishes into Parish wards
- The number and boundaries of Parish wards
- The number of councillors per ward
- Names of Parish wards

Members raised a number of questions. In order to provide evidence on the question of Council size a councillor workload survey was currently being prepared for circulation to Members. This would look at the split of time spent performing different aspects of the councillor's role. A number of Members noted that there were a number of significant issues and additional responsibilities that would have an impact on councillor workloads in the future. These included:

- Public Health workload
- Community engagement role, particularly in relation to social deprivation
- Welfare Reform agenda

The Chairman, with the agreement of the meeting, proposed that officers provide information on 2 models of Council size to the next meeting of the Committee in July. This would enable Members to look at the feasibility of each model, taking in to account councillor/elector ratios and communities of identity and to discuss evidence supporting these options that would lead towards recommending a suitable Council size for the Borough.

The models for consideration would be for

- a) Council size of 50
- b) Council size of 40

Next meeting 6pm 19 July Committee Room 2

The meeting ended at 6.54 p.m.

**Chairman:** .....

**Date:** .....

## **BOUNDARY REVIEW COMMITTEE**

### **Minutes of a meeting of the Boundary Review Committee held on Thursday 19th July 2012 at 6.00 p.m. in the Civic Offices, Telford**

**PRESENT:** Councillors R J Sloan (Chairman), K T Blundell, S Davies, N J Dugmore, A J Eade, A D McClements.

#### **BRC-1      MINUTES**

The minutes of the meeting held on 21<sup>st</sup> June 2012 were confirmed and signed by the Chairman.

#### **BRC-2      APOLOGY FOR ABSENCE**

An apology for absence was received from Councillor R A Overton.

#### **BRC-3      DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest.

#### **BRC-4      FURTHER ELECTORAL REVIEW**

Members considered a further report of the Assistant Director - Law, Democracy & Public Protection which provided the information that Members had requested at their meeting of 21<sup>st</sup> June. In particular, the report provided Members with information on two possible models for mapping council size: a council size of 40 members and a council size of 50 members.

The Electoral Services Team Leader provided Members with information to support the report. Members were reminded of the statutory criteria in this review: electoral fairness, the respect for parish boundaries, the drawing up of clear and identifiable boundaries between wards, respect for communities of identity and consideration of electorate forward projections. Members were informed that the first stage in the mapping exercise had been the mapping of clear physical barriers that existed in the Borough: arterial routes such as the Queensway, the M54 and the A442 Whitchurch Road along with greenbelts and parklands in the Borough. These were physical barriers that in many respects were reinforced by their coterminosity with parish boundaries, and they often provided dividing lines between communities.

There had then been an attempt to map communities of identity in the Borough. In such an exercise there would inevitably be some difficult areas that had overlaps or no clear identity, for example, at Sutton Hill – Madeley, Randlay – Stirchley, Malinslee – Dawley, Dawley Bank and Lawley Bank, Apley Castle – Leegomery – Hadley, in Wellington (where the communities of identity might include Shawbirch, Dothill or Arleston) and in Newport (where within the compact

parish boundary there were arguably no distinct communities of identity). The meeting was informed that these communities of identity often did not provide the building blocks for a ward on their own, either being too large or too small in terms of their electorates. Furthermore, the communities of identity could be difficult to split or partition to provide single member wards in such a way as to provide wards that were meaningful to the electors that they were intended to serve. Members were also reminded once more of the limitations that the parish boundaries themselves created in this review.

The Electoral Services Team Leader informed Members that an attempt had been made to identify future development based on August 2011 forward planning projections. These and the newly-received June 2012 projections were circulated to Members. While there were limitations to these projections and the electorate projections that could be deduced from them, Members noted that they provided guideline quotas of 2,476 electors per member in 2012 rising to 2,682 in 2018 for a 50-member council and 3,095 in 2012 rising to 3,352 in 2108 for a 40-member Council. The resultant maps of how warding arrangements might operate were considered, and the limitations of the mapping exercise were emphasised. However, the Electoral Services Team Leader suggested that the exercise had shown certain 'pinch points' across the Borough which were likely to be the areas that would be difficult to resolve in the review. These included the shortfall of electors in The Gorge parish to provide a single member ward, the considerable new development that was scheduled in the western part of central Telford, the shortfall of electors in Wellington that might need to be remedied by taking in electors from Shawbirch or Admaston in Wrockwardine parish, the shortfall of electors in Newport for four or three wards under the different models, the risk that it might prove necessary to use 'rural' areas to top up shortfalls in the electorates of adjoining 'urban' areas and the creation of 'mixed' urban-rural wards, and how best to amalgamate the rural areas into wards with the necessary electoral quotas. Officers also commented that the provision of draft mapped communities was only indicative at this stage and served to highlight the different levels of electorate (which would be a key indicator of Council size) that higher or lower numbers of members would lead to.

Members initially considered whether there were other ways in which such an exercise could have been undertaken, and whether an area-based approach or whether a quota-based approach might have been appropriate. However, Members were advised that any mapping exercise was likely to result in the same problems because a warding exercise would always be constrained by the numbers of electors within the communities of identity and within the confines of the parish areas.

Members noted the growth projections that had been provided in the planning projection reports that had been circulated to the Committee. These projections showed the extent and likely planning permissions across the Borough and the

number of housing units that would result. Members discussed the accuracy and limitations of these figures and they were reminded that these projections were continually shifting and changing. Members were also reminded that the final electorate projections that would be provided to the Commission as the basis of the review would also be required to consider and account for national and sub-regional demographic trends and to compensate for over-estimation.

Members questioned the 40- and 50-member models that were being put forward by the group representatives. A discussion ensued about Member workloads and about appropriate governance arrangements. Some Members considered that it was not appropriate to consider council size without also considering the future governance arrangements of the Authority: only those arrangements could answer the question of how many members would be required to effectively manage the authority, scrutinize its work and represent its electors. Other Members cited the increasing population of Telford, the level of deprivation in certain wards and the current difficult economic climate which together would inevitably increase the expectations that the public would have of their elected members. Members also gave consideration to the new responsibilities that would come forward, particularly in the areas of public health and welfare reform. It was also considered that the ethos of the Council and its co-operative approach were further considerations in the council-size debate. Members considered the levels of ward work that were required of elected members and the expectations of the public with regard to the ward member role. It was commented that the promotion of equality and diversity among the different members of the Council could be jeopardised if the Council fell below a certain size.

The Members noted that the next meeting of their Committee was intended to move forward to considering some of these issues in greater detail. The Committee therefore requested that the following documents be prepared for their next meeting:

- the outcomes of the workload survey of all Members that had been undertaken;
- further detailed work on committee memberships and workloads;
- an assessment of the additional workloads that were likely to be generated by statutory changes, such as health and wellbeing and welfare work, and by corporate cultural changes, such as the moves towards increased community involvement and the co-operative council.

Members noted that their next meeting was scheduled for 23<sup>rd</sup> August, and they requested that these documents should be provided to them in draft format one

week before the agenda issue date so that Members' comments could also be incorporated where appropriate.

**Next meeting** 6.00 p.m. 23<sup>rd</sup> August Committee Room 2.

**The meeting ended** at 7.30 p.m.

**Chairman:** .....

**Date:** .....

## PLANS BOARD

### Minutes of a meeting of the Plans Board held on Wednesday, 11 July at 6.00pm in the Reception Suite, Civic Offices, Telford

**PRESENT:** Councillors J C Minor (Chairman), N A Dugmore, I T W Fletcher, R T Kiernan, J Loveridge, G C W Reynolds, S A W Reynolds, M J Smith and C R Turley

**ALSO PRESENT:** Councillors A. Lawrence (for planning application TWC/2012/0408) and J.M. Seymour (for planning applications TWC/2012/0261 and TWC/2012/0362).

#### **PB-013      MINUTES**

**RESOLVED** – that the minutes of the meeting of the Plans Board held on 20 June 2012 be confirmed and signed by the Chairman

#### **PB-014      APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

None

#### **PB-015      DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

TWC/2012/0031 and TWC/2012/0143 - Councillor I.T.W. Fletcher stated that in “green carding” these applications, his concerns had been recorded as formal objections in the report. He therefore indicated that he would leave the room during determination of these applications, but would first speak as Ward Member on behalf of local residents.

TWC/2012/0261 – Councillor C.R. Turley declared a personal interest as the Council’s appointed representative to the Shropshire Hills AONB Steering Group.

TWC/2012/0408 – Councillor N.A. Dugmore declared a personal interest as a ward member and parish councillor, but had not taken part in any prior discussion on this application.

TWC/2012/0420 – Councillor S.A.W. Reynolds declared a personal interest as a ward member and parish councillor, but had not taken part in any prior discussion on this application.

TWC/2012/0145 – Councillor G.C.W. Reynolds declared a personal interest as a ward member and parish councillor, but had not taken part in any prior discussion on this application.

#### **PB-016      DEFERRED/WITHDRAWN APPLICATIONS**

None

**PB-017      SITE VISITS**

**RESOLVED –**

- (a) that site visits take place on 1<sup>st</sup> August 2012, relating to applications at Maynards Croft, Newport and for Residential Development at Wellington Road, Newport that are due to be considered by the Board at the next meeting.
- (b) that the following applications be deferred for Site Visits to take place on 1 August 2012 (times to be advised by Planning Officers):
  - (i) TWC/2012/0031 – Land adjacent to The Shires, Shifnal Road, Priorslee, Telford
  - (ii) TWC/2012/0143 – Land at junction of Moss Road/Rookery Road, Wrockwardine Wood, Telford
  - (iii) TWC/2012/0362 – 4 Little Meadow Close, Admaston, Telford

**PB-018      PLANNING APPLICATIONS FOR DETERMINATION**

Members had received a schedule of planning applications to be determined by the Board and fully considered each report and the supplementary information tabled at the meeting regarding planning applications TWC/2012/0145, TWC/2012/0261, TWC/2012/0473, TWC/2012/0362 and TWC/2012/0391.

- (a) TWC/2012/0031 - Land adjacent to, The Shires, Shifnal Road, Telford, Shropshire, 2 9NN

This was an application for the erection of six detached houses fronting Shifnal Road and a four storey care home to the rear of the site with new access and associated works.

Councillor I T W Fletcher, Ward Member, had requested that the application be determined by the Plans Board.

Councillor Fletcher (speaking as Ward Member) stated that local residents were satisfied with the housing element of the scheme, but considered the proposed four storey care home to be significant over-development of the site. There was concern that the application would exacerbate existing problems with poor drainage and sewerage in the area, and that there was no mains sewerage connection to the application site. He requested that Members undertake a site visit before determining the application.

It was moved, seconded and

**RESOLVED – that determination of planning application TWC/2012/0031 be deferred to allow the Board Members to make a site visit.**

- (b) TWC/2012/0034 - Stockton House Barns, Stockton, Newport, Shropshire, TF10 9BA

This was an application for conversion of barns and former workshop to form one holiday let and five units for use within Class B1 (Business).

Councillor G Reynolds considered that the scheme was sympathetic and will assist keeping the building in a good state of repair.

**RESOLVED** – that with respect to planning application TWC/2012/0034 planning permission be granted, subject to the applicant entering into a s106 agreement for £7,000 towards highway improvements and subject to the conditions as set out in the report.

(c) TWC/2012/0075 - Land off, Concorde, Dawley Bank, Telford, Shropshire, TF4 2QB

This application sought consent for change of use from scrubland to garden allotments. The proposals included creation of 200 raised bed allotments, erection of a secure boundary fence and gate, improved access with dropped kerb, disabled parking and a dry eco toilet container unit.

This application had been deferred at the meeting of the Board on 20 June 2012 to enable Members to undertake a site visit.

Mr D Harber, on behalf of the local Residents Association, spoke against the application on the grounds that there had been no detailed plans submitted for the layout of the allotments; that the “greenness” of the proposal was undermined by the replacement of top soil on a regular basis and the likely increased car usage as the vast majority of users did not live in Dawley Bank. Furthermore the Residents Association had alternative plans for the site that would benefit the wider local community as opposed to the small group of people who would be able to use the allotments.

The Planning Officer advised that while there was a separate general consultation on the wider use of land in the area, this application was specifically for a change of use to allotments. Only a small segment adjacent to the highway verge was designated as Green Network, and local policy gave a presumption in favour of community facilities which could be located on Green Network, therefore the principle of development was therefore considered acceptable. Consideration was also made by the officer in that the majority of the site was white land and as such not protected from other forms of development such as residential. Great Dawley Parish Council had not raised any objections, although there were some neighbour objections and 2 petitions against the application, as detailed in the report.

Councillor N.A. Dugmore expressed concern at some of the technical issues regarding the application, including the height of the compost bins, the proposed parking provision, removal of trees, and the security of the site; concerns were also raised with regard to the contamination of the site. In response, the Planning Officer advised that these details would be controlled by the proposed conditions to granting planning permission. The Board also reflect on a recent allotment application in Lilleshall which also had limited parking. Other Members welcomed the application

as an opportunity to tidy-up a scrubland site, and as providing a community facility that would encourage social interaction and sustainability, promoting Civic Pride.

**RESOLVED** – that with respect to planning application TWC/2012/0075 planning permission be granted, subject to the conditions as set out in the report.

(d) TWC/2012/0143 - Land at junction of Moss Road/Rookery Road, Wrockwardine Wood, Telford, Shropshire, TF2 7BL

This was an application for the demolition of two dwellings (The Nyth and Erindale) and the erection of an 'L' shaped 2-3 storey block of 13 apartments with associated car parking and amenity area. An extant planning permission (W2010/0060) adjacent to the proposed apartment block which would share the proposed access.

Councillor I T W Fletcher, Ward Member, had requested that the application be determined by the Plans Board.

Councillor Fletcher (speaking as Ward member) stated that residents had raised a number of concerns about this application, including over-development of the site, the increase in the amount of traffic onto Moss Road (close to a bend) when combined with another adjacent development for more houses, and potential damage to a monkey puzzle tree on the site.

(Councillor Fletcher then withdrew from the meeting)

The Planning Officer advised that the scheme had been amended to take account of the monkey puzzle tree, and that any permission would be conditioned to ensure the tree was not adversely affected. In terms of highway safety, the Highways Engineer had not raised any objections in relation to increased traffic movements. The principle of residential development on this site was acceptable, and would provide a beneficial effect upon the appearance of a currently unmanaged site. The current building on the site was not listed, and therefore had no statutory or non-statutory protection.

Councillor S.A.W. Reynolds referred to the objections submitted by Wrockwardine Wood and Trench Parish Council, and also to the potential loss of the existing building on the site, which was one of the few historical properties in that area. Although the site was now run-down, it would be preferable to see a sympathetic reuse of the existing building for residential use rather than demolition.

It was then moved, seconded and

**RESOLVED** – that determination of planning application TWC/2012/0143 be deferred to allow the Board Members to make a site visit

- (e) TWC/2012/0145 - Maddocks Sports & Social Club, Church Street, Oakengates, Telford, Shropshire, TF2 6BP

This was an application for the demolition of existing clubhouse and outbuildings and erection of a new clubhouse facility and bowling green with parking areas and 30 dwellings comprising 18 two- and three- bed houses and 12 two-bed apartments with new retaining walls, screen fencing and alterations to vehicular entrance to provide a new access road.

This application had been deferred at the meeting of the Board on 30 May 2012 to enable Members to undertake a site visit. An update report was tabled which referred to receipt of a 142 signature petition from members of the club and local residents in support of the re-development of the site. A further letter of objection (signed by 22 local residents) had been received, and was appended to the update report. There was also further Officer comment in response to the issues raised.

Mr D Tooth (representing local residents) spoke against the application, which he felt would have a detrimental impact on the neighbourhood. The sloping nature of the site and the proposed levels/gradients outlined for the development would cause significant overlooking and loss of privacy/light to existing properties in Station Fields and Church Street in addition to concerns over ground stability. These properties would also potentially be at risk of flooding from increased surface water run-off. The proposed scheme would result in increased traffic and congestion in the adjacent area, and there was concern that the number of car parking spaces associated with the new clubhouse would be insufficient.

Mr J Bradbury and Mr A Williams (on behalf of the applicants) spoke in favour of the application. The current club premises were outdated and not very secure; furthermore limited modernisation could occur within the existing premises, and this proposal offered an opportunity for a new-build replacement with many facilities that would benefit the local community, along with improved landscaping and parking. A wide range of potential community uses of a new clubhouse building were listed. It was emphasised that the Club was not seeking to profit from this scheme, and had undertaken extensive consultation with the local community etc.

The Planning Officer reminded Members that this was an outline application to decide the principle of the redevelopment of the site, and that all matters in respect of siting, layout, design, appearance, boundary treatment and landscaping would be addressed at the reserved matters stage. However, a condition could be added to cover the use of audio equipment in the new clubhouse, as well as a condition to state that the layout plan was indicative only.

Councillor G Reynolds considered that the proposals brought forward improvements, however raised concerns over the indicative layout. Councillor Dugmore recognised that the principle of development had previously been established on the site, but considered the reserved matters application needed to take account of those properties along Station Fields, taking account of planting and possibility of bungalows in this location,

Members generally welcomed the proposals, but that the concerns and issues raised by local residents regarding the proposed layout and levels, drainage, access arrangements, slope stability etc. should be explored with the applicants during negotiations on the reserved matters. It was also suggested that the reserved matters application should be determined by the Board, and that delegated power be given to Officers to review the existing conditions in the light of the concerns raised.

**RESOLVED –**

- (a) **that with respect to planning application TWC/2012/0145 outline planning permission be granted, subject to the developer entering into a Section 106 Agreement to provide 38% affordable housing of a mix and tenure to be confirmed by the Council's Strategic Housing Officer, financial contributions of £18,000 for recreational facilities in the local area, £69,828 towards education facilities in the vicinity and £10,000 towards highway improvements, and subject to the conditions as set out in the report and additional conditions to cover the use of audio equipment and to state that the layout plan is indicative only;**
- (b) **that authority be delegated to the Development Manager to review the conditions attached to the report in the light of the issues raised.**
- (c) **that the reserved matters planning applications for the site be determined by the Board.**
- (f) TWC/2012/0261 - Land off, Wrekin Course, Wellington Road, Wellington, Telford, Shropshire

This application had been deferred at the meeting of the Board on 20 June 2012 to enable Members to undertake a site visit. The application sought planning permission to construct a 40 space car parking area and hardstanding to site a mobile catering van, with provision of a footpath link leading to the track up to The Wrekin. The application further proposed to provide additional off-road parking and a pedestrian link to The Wrekin in order to avoid the dangers of pedestrians walking along the highway.

An update report was tabled which referred to two further letters of support from a local resident and from Wellington 21 Group. Wellington Civic Society had also reiterated their objections to the application. There was also further Officer comment in response to the issues raised.

Councillor J.M. Seymour (speaking as Ward Member) stated that the Wrekin was a significant visitor destination, and that many people wanted to park as close as possible to the hill and local trails. This application would address the current situation of haphazard parking along local lanes, and would also be a first step in potentially unlocking future funding for developing the Wrekin Forest project.

Councillor S Hutchison, representing Little Wenlock Parish Council, spoke against the application on the grounds that it would involve the loss of a green-field site, which would set a precedent for the local area. There were a number of concerns

relating to the operation of the proposed catering van, the management and security of the site, the enforcement of parking restrictions on the highway, and that the funding for this scheme had not yet been secured. It was felt that there was little local community support for the proposal, and that there had not been any meaningful consultation.

Mrs M Pietroni, Vice-Chair of the Local Access Forum spoke to support the application which she considered to be crucial to the strategic development of parking and rights of way between the Wrekin and the Telford Town Park. Priority needed to be given to developing opportunities for those with disabilities and limited mobility to access the countryside. This scheme would do that, and the car park would be properly landscaped. She did not agree that the local community was not behind this application, and stated a number of communities, schools, golf club and church which supported the scheme.

The Applicant, Mr P Holt, and his agent, Mr A Francis-Jones spoke to support the application. Mr Holt stated that the car park would give direct access to the Wrekin without the need for having to cross the road. It was felt that the Wrekin was one of Shropshire's most iconic landmarks, but that it was currently the poor relation in terms of facilities and parking. Mr Francis-Jones added that only a small area of the site would be tarmaced. This was a local voluntary-led project, and that the funding application to the Huntingdon Lane Mining community fund would be sought once planning permission was granted.

The Planning Officer referred to the photographs attached to the report, which showed examples of parking in the area on a recent Saturday and Sunday. At the site visit, Members had looked at the access points to the site, and discussed the issues of on-road parking. It was suggested that delegated powers be given to Officers to negotiate with the applicant and Highways regarding measures to prevent parking along the highway.

Members expressed the view that the application should be supported in terms of providing a safer environment for families and children visiting The Wrekin. The issue of controlling the hours of operation etc of the proposed catering van was raised, to which the Planning Officer stated that this was covered in the management plan for the site. Councillor S.A.W. Reynolds suggested that alternatives to yellow lines should be considered to deter parking on the adjacent highway, and the Chair suggested that the provision of wildlife noticeboards at the site could be negotiated with the applicant.

#### **RESOLVED –**

- (a) that with respect to planning application TWC/2012/0261 planning permission be granted, subject to the applicant entering into a Section 106 Agreement to provide contributions towards a Traffic Regulation Order, and subject to the conditions as set out in the report.**
- (b) that authority be delegated to the Development Management Manager to negotiate with the applicant and highways officers regarding alternative**

**measures for the parking restrictions on the existing highway and the provision of noticeboards.**

- (g) TWC/2012/0362 - 4 Little Meadow Close, Admaston, Telford, Shropshire, TF5 0DN

This was an application for the erection of a two-storey, detached hipped roof dwelling with a two storey side extension, conversion and alterations of garage to as study and extension to porch. The extension would provide the dwelling with a bedroom and ensuite on both the ground and first floors. The Planning Officer referred to an update report that had been tabled. This set out some additional neighbour comments, along with clarification on permitted development rights and the distances between the proposed extension and neighbouring boundaries. The Council's Enforcement Officer had confirmed that the property was not being used for business purposes, and the Planning Officer confirmed that the application was specifically a household extension with no business aspects.

Councillor J.M. Seymour (Ward Councillor) spoke on behalf of local residents against the application. The proposed two storey side extension would have a significant impact in terms of overlooking and loss of light to the neighbouring property. Many local residents believed that a business was operating from the property contrary to the covenant on the property, and that there were three different households currently living there. She requested that Members undertake a site visit before determining the application.

It was then moved, seconded and

**RESOLVED – that determination of planning application TWC/2012/0362 be deferred to allow the Board Members to make a site visit**

- (h) TWC/2012/0391 - Unit 6, Telford Bridge Retail Park, Old Park, Telford, Shropshire, TF3 4PB

This proposal sought planning permission for the erection of a mezzanine floor to replace an existing mezzanine, thereby increasing floor space by 312sqm. The final proposed floor area would be 1,104 sqm.

The Planning Officer referred to an update report which had been tabled. This expanded further on the policy considerations in relation to the National Planning Policy Framework and the Central Telford Area Action Plan. It was considered that the extension of this unit would complement rather than compete with the retail offer in the town centre shopping area. The application was a small increase in the floor space above the permitted development allowance and would not impact on the viability and vitality of the town centre. The policies within CTAAP requested contributions towards transport improvements within Central Telford, and as such the applicant had agreed to provide the requested contribution.

**RESOLVED – that with respect to planning application TWC/2012/0391 authority be delegated to the Manager of Development Management to grant planning permission, subject to the applicants entering into a Section 106**

**Agreement relating to financial contributions towards strategic highway infrastructure, and subject to the conditions as set out in the report.**

- (i) TWC/2012/0408 - Land off Meadow Road, Marshbrook Way, Muxton, Telford, Shropshire

This was a reserved matters application for the erection of twelve dwellings on site, with matters of access, appearance, landscaping, layout and scale for consideration.

Councillor A Lawrence, Ward Member, had requested that the application be determined by the Plans Board.

Councillor Lawrence (speaking as Ward Member on behalf of the residents of Meadow Road) raised concerns regarding the proposed access point off Meadow Road. This was a small cul-de-sac with difficult access, and it was felt that the only access point should be from Marshbrook Way, which was a more substantial road. However, the access point off Marshbrook Way should be moved to a better location. It was also considered that 12 dwellings were too many for this site.

Mr I Cox, from Bromford Housing Group (the applicant), and Mr J Chipeta, the Applicant's Agent, spoke to support the application. It was contended that the scheme would be a positive development for the area, and provide much needed affordable housing. The proposed access arrangements to the site were considered to be adequate, with the new turning head for Meadow Road providing benefit to existing residents and improving the current road network. The concerns of local residents had been taken on board, and any disruption from the development would be minimised.

During consideration of the application, Councillor N.A. Dugmore expressed concern at the access point to the proposed development from Marshbrook Way, which was located at a point where queues built up at busy times from the nearby junction with Donnington Wood Way. A proposal to defer the application for a site visit was moved and seconded, and upon being put to the vote was lost.

The Planning Officer reported that the Highways Officer had not raised any concerns in principle to the proposed access arrangements. The scheme would improve pedestrian linkages within the area; it was not a high density development; and there would be screening between the development and Meadow Road.

**RESOLVED – that with respect to planning application TWC/2012/0408 planning permission be granted, subject to the conditions as set out in the report.**

- (j) TWC/2012/0420 - 80 Wombridge Road, Wrockwardine Wood, Telford, Shropshire, TF2 6QG

This retrospective application sought change of use from garage to dog grooming business.

Wrockwardine Wood & Trench Parish Council had requested that the application be determined by the Plans Board.

A local resident, Mrs A Griffiths, spoke in support of the application. She stated that it was a well run business, and not overly visible or noticeable from neighbouring properties. Customers parked directly outside the property, and there were no problems with driveways being blocked etc. It was noted that all the objections to the application had been submitted anonymously.

The Planning Officer reported that neither Enforcement Officers nor Environmental Health Officers had received any complaints about the operation of the dog grooming business from the premises. The proposed use of the garage was a relatively low-key development, and the hours of operation etc would be conditioned.

**RESOLVED – that with respect to planning application TWC/2012/0420 planning permission be granted, subject to the conditions as set out in the report.**

(k) TWC/2012/0471 - Telford Town Park, Telford, Shropshire, TF3 4AQ

This proposal was for a landscaping scheme incorporating lighting and play equipment in association with the new visitor centre in Telford Town Park.

**RESOLVED – that with respect to planning application TWC/2012/0471 planning permission be granted, subject to the conditions as set out in the report.**

(l) W2008/0473 - Former Dale End Garage, Dale Road, Coalbrookdale, Telford, Shropshire

This was an application for the erection of ten dwellings comprising 6 two-bedroom apartments and 4 dwellings with associated works and access.

This application had been deferred at the meetings of the Board on 11 June 2008 and 2 July 2008 to resolve the issues with regard to flooding and the Environment Agency. The application was subsequently presented to the Board on 20 June 2012 and deferred to enable Members to undertake a site visit.

Mr J Parnell, a neighbouring resident, spoke to oppose the application. His main concern was the proposed three storey block of apartments that was to be built on a raised plinth. This would make the building equivalent to four storeys, which would have a detrimental impact on neighbouring properties and be out of keeping with the character of the local area. Photographs illustrating the potential impact had been circulated in an update report. It was also considered that there was insufficient parking provision for the development, which would lead to more on-street parking and add to the existing highways/traffic problems on Dale Road. It was further suggested that any development should be conditional on the workshop on the site also being developed.

The Planning Officer advised that this was an important “gateway” site at the entrance to the Gorge. It was currently derelict, and in need of some form of development. The applicant had reduced the number of proposed dwellings from twelve to ten, and at the site visit Members had been able to see the site levels and heights of adjacent existing buildings viewed at different vantage points. A number of flood mitigation measures had been carried out, one of which had been the necessity to raise the level of the proposed buildings. In respect of highways issues, it was felt on balance that one parking space per unit was sufficient, given the proximity of nearby car-parks and bus routes.

Councillor Dugmore recognised that due to the historic nature of Ironbridge the area was less car friendly, which is accepted by any potential resident; considering that the proposal was therefore in keeping with this environment He also considered the need for protection against the culvert, and projecting the residential amenities of existing residents in particular to the rear of the site.

Councillor G Reynolds stated the site as existing detracted from the area, and the proposed development reflected the adjacent development.

Members felt from viewing the site that the scheme had taken care to reflect the architecture of the adjacent site and did not harm other amenities. The re-development of this site was badly needed, and it was recognised that a lot of work had taken place with the applicant and the Environment Agency to address the concerns about flooding. It was suggested, however, that the culvert at the rear of the site should be properly fenced off.

**RESOLVED** – that with respect to planning application W/2008/0473 authority be granted to the Development Management Manager to grant planning permission, subject to further information relating to retaining structures on site, any further drainage conditions and a Section 106 contribution of £600 per 2 bed unit or above towards the provision of off-site leisure and recreation facilities, and subject to the conditions as set out in the report.

The meeting ended at 8.45 pm

**Chairman:** .....

**Date:** .....

## **PLANS BOARD**

### **Minutes of a meeting of the Plans Board held on Wednesday, 1 August 2012 at 6.00pm in the Reception Suite, Civic Offices, Telford, Shropshire**

**PRESENT:** Councillors J C Minor (Chairman), N A Dugmore, I T W Fletcher, R T Kiernan, J Loveridge, G C W Reynolds, S A W Reynolds, M J Smith, C R Turley

**ALSO PRESENT:** Councillor E J Carter (for planning application TWC/2012/0211), A J Eade (for planning applications TWC/2011/0821 and TWC/2012/0053), V A Fletcher (for planning application TWC/2012/0423), A D McClements (for planning application TWC/2012/0240), J M Seymour (for planning applications TWC/2012/0362 and TWC/2011/0959), B J Thompson (for planning application TWC/2012/0395)

#### **PB-019      MINUTES**

**RESOLVED** – that the minutes of the meeting of the Plans Board held on Wednesday, 11 July 2012 be confirmed and signed by the Chairman

#### **PB-020      APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

None

#### **PB-021      DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Councillor I T W Fletcher declared a personal and prejudicial interest in planning applications TWC/2012/0031 and TWC/2012/0143 and indicated that he would leave the room during determination thereof.

#### **PB-022      DEFERRED/WITHDRAWN APPLICATIONS**

None

#### **PB-023      SITE VISITS**

**RESOLVED** – that determination of planning application TWC/2012/0423 be deferred to allow the Board Members to make a Site Visit on Wednesday, 22 August 2012 at 4.30pm.

#### **PB-024      PLANNING APPLICATIONS FOR DETERMINATION**

Members had received a schedule of planning applications to be determined by the Board and fully considered each report and the supplementary information tabled at the meeting regarding planning applications TWC/2011/0959, TWC/2012/0053, TWC/2012/0240, TWC/2012/0355, TWC/2012/0395 and TWC/2012/0423.

(a) TWC/2011/0821 Land At, Wellington Road, Newport, Shropshire

This proposal sought outline planning permission for approximately 285 houses and open space provision (including an informal kick about area and associated works) on land between Wellington Road and Moorfield Lane on the southern edge of Newport. The applicant had stated an aim to meet the Council's Core Strategy policy requirement for 35% of the total homes being affordable units. All matters (access, appearance, landscaping, layout and scale) were reserved for consideration at a later stage by means of separate application(s). Full details of the proposals were set out in the report. Members were advised that this application was one of four applications submitted to the Council seeking consent for residential development in and around Newport and the Board were supplied with a location plan for all four sites. A site visit for this application had been undertaken earlier in the day.

Councillor R Pitt, representing Newport Town Council spoke to oppose the proposals on the grounds of housing need and supply in Newport, lack of consultation and a feeling that the application was being rushed through the process, the principle of development on an area of historic significance and associated loss of open space, highways and traffic issues, risk of flooding, the quality of housing and lack of public transportation in the near vicinity.

Councillor S Stacey, representing Church Aston Parish Council also spoke in opposition to the proposals on the grounds of using Greenfield land before Brownfield land, housing need in a depressed market, affordable housing provision, and the cumulative impact of a number of developments. He also questioned whether the proposals were sustainable and therefore in compliance with the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), and noted that drainage, sewerage and flooding issues remained unresolved with Severn Trent Water still investigating the impact of the proposals.

Councillor A J Eade, the Borough Ward Councillor for Church Aston and Lilleshall, also spoke against the proposals on the grounds that due to the cumulative impact of applications for housing development in Newport and his belief that it was vital that all applications should be brought to Plans Board together. He argued that the local physical and social infrastructure was not sufficient to meet the demands of the applications and expressed concern that Section 106 contributions for education would not be payable with regard to this site if the other applications did not come to fruition. He believed that investigations by Severn Trent Water were crucial to the proposals and his latest understanding was that these would not be concluded until late in 2012. He expressed further concerns that the officer's recommendation was to delegate authority to the Development Plans Manager, that housing need in Newport had not been demonstrated and that this particular application utilised Greenfield land when Brownfield sites were available.

Mrs M Whitefoot, representing local residents, then spoke against the proposals on the grounds of the principle of development on agricultural land when Brownfield sites were available, the scale of development proposed was disproportionate to need, drainage issues, traffic and highways issues and the cumulative impact of phased construction work across four sites.

The Applicant's Agent, Mr N Hardy, addressed the Board in relation to boosting housing provision in accordance with the NPPF and Core Strategy, sustainability, scoping of and mitigation towards infrastructure issues, consultation, and housing need and supply.

The Planning Officer referred Members of the Board to the detailed report before them, highlighting consultation responses. He emphasised that Highways engineers had carefully costed the impact from trip distribution and that Severn Trent Water had indicated that capacity existed in the drainage system to accommodate this development. Severn Trent Water were undertaking a feasibility study which would reportedly be available by the end of the summer and any permission granted would be conditioned to prevent occupation before confirmation that capacity in the sewerage system was available. The Planning Officer considered that the proposals were compliant with the NPPF and Core Strategy and drew attention to the lack of affordable housing being a main driver for policies CS1 and CS6. To support this position, he drew Member's attention to the data set out in the report regarding delivery of housing and affordable housing in Newport to date and the housing trajectory beyond the end of the Core Strategy period and noted that granting permission for this proposal alone would not meet identified needs. In addition, he drew attention to the sections of the report which addressed affordable housing need, sustainability, infrastructure provision, surface water drainage, foul drainage and noise issues. He also explained the education contributions required as part of a proposed Section 106 Agreement and recommended that a further figure of £8,500 should be sought in relation to Planning and Financial Monitoring. He clarified that delegated authority was sought as the Secretary of State had requested sight of the Board's decision and report.

Councillor N A Dugmore, noting the planning history of the site asked why an outline planning application for residential development was refused in 1989 and the Assistant Director: Planning Specialist advised that it was important to focus on contemporary issues which would be different to those of 20 years ago. The Planning Officer was able to confirm that the refusal was given as the application (W89/0400) was contrary to the then Local Plan and also on drainage issues due to insufficient capacity at Newport Reclamation Works. The Assistant Director: Planning Specialist, further pointed out that the Newport Local Plan was no longer in force and that drainage had since been upgraded with Severn Trent Water confirming that capacity existed to meet the needs of the development.

Councillor N A Dugmore also expressed concerns about the projections for school places set out in the report, sustainability as the development did not comply with the Code for Sustainable Homes, flood risk, the use of a Greenfield site and the scale of development at this location. He also questioned whether the infrastructure was sufficient as the report of Severn Trent Water was still outstanding and questioned the use of aging housing data.

The Planning Officer stressed that it was important to consider the proposals holistically, reminded the Board that the application was for outline permission only and that there was a significant shortfall of much needed affordable housing in the area which would be partly addressed by the proposals. In addition, the

development would bring investment to the area which would increase overall sustainability.

Councillor S A W Reynolds noted the annual shortfall of affordable housing in the locality and stated her understanding that locally a person on a need band had an average wait time of 5 years and 2 months, with those in urgent need waiting an average of 14 months. Furthermore, over the previous twelve months only 5 houses had become available for rent and it was clear to her that this situation needed to be addressed.

Councillor I T W Fletcher stated that he felt it was inappropriate to make a decision on the application when Severn Trent Water's sewerage investigations were ongoing as the outcome would have a material effect on the proposals. He suggested that consideration of the application should be deferred until the report was available.

The Assistant Director: Planning Specialist advised with regard to infrastructure that consultation with both Severn Trent Water and the Council's Drainage Engineer had taken place and it was acknowledged that further infrastructure was needed in the future, but not immediately. Housing would be built over a period of time and this gave time for infrastructure to be delivered over a reasonable timescale as set out in the report. He noted concerns that the application was being rushed through the system but pointed out that the Government had made it clear that planning applications should be considered at the earliest opportunity and the cumulative impact of a number of proposals should therefore not unreasonably hold back applications. He explained that Brownfield sites were often more expensive to develop due to reclamation and reuse and this often resulted in Greenfield sites coming forward and being more likely to produce affordable housing and community benefits via the Section 106 process. The report comprehensively set out appropriate planning conditions and Section 106 requirements to deal with issues raised and whilst it was necessary to acknowledge the impact of development, it was equally important to balance this against need.

The Planning Officer advised that the need for 35% affordable housing in Newport was supported by information from the Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA), Telford & Wrekin's Choice Based Lettings scheme, 2005 housing needs summary together with profiles of the existing affordable housing stock, current housing market and the population of Newport. Whilst this had not resulted in updated figures since the publication of 2009 housing data it did support a general trend towards the requirement for greater provision.

At the end of the debate, the recommendations set out in the report, together with an additional condition for planning and financial monitoring, were proposed and seconded. In accordance with Committee Procedure Rule 12 and at the request of Councillors N A Dugmore and I T W Fletcher, a recorded vote was taken, the voting being as follows:

For:                   6  
Councillors J Loveridge, J C Minor, G C W Reynolds, S A W Reynolds, M J Smith and  
C R Turley

Against: 3  
Councillors N A Dugmore, I T W Fletcher and R T Kiernan

Abstentions: 0

**RESOLVED** – that with respect to planning application TWC/2011/0821 the Development Management Manager be authorised to grant planning permission subject to:-

- (a) Confirmation from the Secretary of State that he does not wish to call in the application for determination;
- (b) The applicants entering into a Section 106 agreement with the Council (terms to be agreed by the Development Management Manager) relating to:
  - (i) Affordable housing, to include:
    1. Provisions ensuring that 35% of the dwellings to be built shall be affordable housing either in number or value (to allow for the inclusion of more expensive specialised affordable housing where required)
    2. Of these 80% to be Rented Social Housing dwellings and the remaining 20% in Shared Ownership unless otherwise agreed with the Council
    3. Provisions ensuring that the affordable housing is provided throughout the development and not left to the latter stages and also that the affordable houses are delivered in small clusters
    4. Inclusion of details to ensure lettings are prioritised to Newport area based residents
    5. Receipts from the disposal of any Shared Ownership dwellings to be recycled and used for the provision of further affordable housing.
  - (ii) Highways works, to include:
    1. Off site highway infrastructure improvements - up to a maximum of £228,953;
    2. Public transport service enhancements – up to a maximum of £120,000;
    3. Public transport infrastructure (bus shelters) – up to a maximum of £20,000.

**Adjustment provisions will need to be agreed to take into account whether other permissions have been or are likely to be granted or implemented in Newport and if not to reassess whether the maximum figures stated can still be justified for this development.**

**4. Public Rights Of Way - £27,000;**

**5. Travel Plan monitoring - £5,000.**

**(iii) Education infrastructure funds up to maximum of £702,396 provided the average number of bedrooms per dwelling across the development is under 3.35. Timescale and triggers for the payment of the contributions to be agreed. Details of reviews will need to be agreed to take into account whether other permissions have been or are likely to be granted or implemented in Newport and if not to reassess whether the maximum figures stated can still be justified for this development.**

**(iv) The provision of Open Spaces, to include (if that option is exercised by the applicant) a transfer of the open space and recreation areas to the Council at a suitable time and with payment of a commuted sum for maintenance to be agreed. Or alternatively, provide for a residents management company to maintain those areas.**

**(C) £8,500 Planning and Financial Monitoring Contribution;**

**(D) the conditions set out in the report with authority to finalise conditions and reasons for approval to be delegated to Development Management Manager.**

**(b) TWC/2011/0959 Isombridge Farm, Isombridge, Shropshire, TF6 6NF**

This application sought planning permission to convert two agricultural buildings located at either end of a small field on the edge of Isombridge Farm to a live/work unit. The Application had been deferred at Plans Board on 11 April 2012 to enable the applicant to submit further information to demonstrate the economic viability of the development. An update report, tabled at the meeting, set out information submitted by the applicant which clarified how potential occupants would operate their businesses from the site.

Councillor J M Seymour, Borough Ward Member for Wrockwardine, spoke in support of the application on behalf of the Applicant. She emphasised that the application would benefit a local farming business that currently supported four families by sustainably using redundant farm buildings to generate a small rental income. Councillor Seymour referred to the expressions of interest before the Members which demonstrated viability for the proposals and also indicated that she

understood that the Applicant was willing to enter into a Section 106 Agreement to tie the residential element to the business.

Mr B Davies, the applicant's agent, addressed the meeting in support of the application. He referred Members to the genuine expressions of interest received and indicated that the income from rent was required to support the four farming families' income.

Members welcomed the additional information and the Applicant's consent to enter into the Section 106 Agreement.

**RESOLVED** – that with respect to planning application TWC/2011/0959 the Development Management Manager be authorised to grant planning permission subject to the applicants entering into a Section 106 Agreement that the residential element shall be tied to the business and shall not be sold as a separate unit or let as a separate unit and further subject to the conditions set out in the update report.

(c) TWC/2012/0031 Land adjacent to, The Shires, Shifnal Road, Telford, Shropshire, TF2 9NN

This was a proposal for the erection of 6 two storey dwellings along frontage and a four storey nursing home to rear, along with associated works including highways. This proposal had been deferred at the meeting of the Board on 11 July 2012 to enable Members to undertake a site visit.

Councillor I T W Fletcher, one of the Borough Ward Members for Priorslee, addressed the Board to speak against the application on the grounds that the proposals would have a detrimental impact on residential amenity, particularly overlooking from the 4 storey nursing home. In addition, Councillor Fletcher raised issues of traffic generation, parking and road safety and considered that the design was not in keeping with the character of the street scene and represented over development of the site. In accordance with his previous declaration of interest Councillor I T W Fletcher then left the meeting prior to the discussion and determination of this item.

Mr A Khoury, representing the Applicant, then addressed the Board to support the proposals which he maintained were an innovative and contemporary design resulting from working closely with Planning Officers. He noted requests for additional information regarding stability and drainage had been made but that these were not required by current national policy and that the proposals were consistent with the NPPF. He considered that the proposals would meet demand for family housing in the area and create employment opportunities.

In response to Mr Khoury's comments, the Planning Officer confirmed that information previously requested regarding drainage and stability was to satisfy local policy requirements but that during the application process the NPPF had come into force and it was subsequently acknowledged that whilst local policies were still relevant, the over-riding approach within the NPPF was that these issues were the responsibility of the developer.

The Planning Officer noted the innovative approach to the design and appearance of the proposed buildings which would create an interesting mixed use development and made excellent use of a sloping site. However, he considered that, should members be minded to give approval, an additional condition should be added which would allow Officers to negotiate further regarding the design of the window reveals and exact detailing of the elevations.

Councillor N A Dugmore considered that the proposed designs were inappropriate since they did not fit with the existing street scene, would dramatically overlook existing residents and that car parking provision was inadequate for the size of the site. Whilst he recognised the need for this type of development, he considered that this was not an appropriate site.

Councillor G C W Reynolds supported the development of the care home and whilst she noted the modern design she considered that it lacked features to fit with the existing character of the street scene.

Councillor S A W Reynolds expressed concern regarding car parking and was advised by the Planning Officer that no standards for car parking existed but that the Highways Authority had considered the proposal and had recommended various measures which had been covered in the report.

**RESOLVED** – that with respect to planning application TWC/2012/0031 the Development Management Manager be authorised to grant planning permission subject to further negotiation with the applicant relating to design elements particularly pertaining to window reveals and details of elevations and further subject to the applicant entering in to a Section 106 Agreement to provide financial contributions of £5000 for recreational facilities, £5000 for highways and £2500 for financial planning and monitoring and further subject to the conditions as set out in the report.

(d) TWC/2012/0053 North Lynn Manor, Lynn, Newport, Shropshire, TF10 9BB

This was a proposal for the erection of a 20kw wind turbine on a 20m high tower. The application had been deferred at Plans Board on 28 March 2012 to enable residents to have more time to consider a further noise assessment in respect of potential noise nuisance and the cumulative noise of the existing 18m high wind turbine and the proposed 27m high wind turbine.

Councillor A J Eade, the Borough Ward Councillor for Church Aston and Lilleshall, spoke to oppose the proposals. Councillor Eade referred to the history of this application and indicated that a compromise between residents and applicant could be reached if agreement could be achieved to resituate the turbine further away from residential properties. However, in order to do this it was necessary to remove part of a hedgerow and he understood that the Ecology Officer had objected to such removal, despite the fact that all of the hedgerow could be removed without planning permission. He urged Members to consider this as part of their deliberations.

Mr M Norton spoke against the proposals on behalf of local residents. Mr Norton referred to the compromise situation detailed by Councillor Eade, suggested that an Environmental Impact Assessment should be required and suggested that power generation by the farm was affecting local electrical supply.

The Applicant, Mr M Davies, then spoke in favour of his application which had already reduced from seeking permission for the erection of two turbines to one. He indicated that the erection of the turbine would provide energy saving mechanisms to the farm. He was disappointed by the level and methods of local objection but drew attention to letters of support detailed in the report and argued that it was a myth that difficulties in the local energy supply were being created by energy generation at the farm. Mr Davies also indicated that the proposals were NPPF compliant.

As had previously been the case, Members welcomed the generation of power from a renewable energy source and, recalling the site visit previously undertaken in July 2011, Councillors N A Dugmore and S A W Reynolds did not consider noise from one additional turbine would cause significant nuisance.

Councillors N A Dugmore and I T W Fletcher expressed concern regarding the late submission detailed in the tabled update report and preferred to view legal advice on the contents when received rather than delegate authority in accordance with the Officer's recommendation set out in the tabled update report. However, this was not a view supported by the majority of members.

**RESOLVED – that with respect to planning application TWC/2012/0240 the Development Management Manager be authorised to grant planning permission subject to the receipt of legal advice on the contents of the late submission and further subject to the conditions as set out in the main report.**

(e) TWC/2012/0143 Land at junction of Moss Road/Rookery Road, Wrockwardine Wood, Telford, Shropshire, TF2 7BL

This was an application for demolition of 2no. dwellings (The Nyth and Erindale) and erection of a block of 13 apartments with associated car parking and amenity area. There was an extant planning permission for 4 dwellings (W2010/0060) adjacent to the proposed apartment block which would share the proposed access. This current application had been deferred at the meeting of the Plans Board on 11 July 2012 to enable Members to undertake a site visit.

Councillor I T W Fletcher, one of the Borough Ward Members for Priorslee, addressed the Board to speak against the application on the grounds of traffic generation and inappropriate design. He stated that the site was located on a busy main road serviced by several bus routes and, when combined with the adjacent development, a dangerous increase in traffic would occur. He was disappointed at the proposed loss of a beautiful and historic building which would be replaced by an apartment block of utilitarian design that would not blend into the street scene and, in his opinion, was a breach of urban design criteria. In accordance with his previous declaration of interest, Councillor I T W Fletcher then left the meeting prior to the discussion and determination of this item.

Councillor G C W Reynolds noted that, despite its traditional style and history, Erindale and the Nyth was not a listed building and she lamented the proposed demolition of such an attractive property. She questioned whether it would be possible for the developer to consider preserving the current building for conversion into luxury apartments. Councillors S A W Reynolds and N A Dugmore were similarly disappointed that the developer was not seeking to restore the property. In addition, Councillor S A W Reynolds did not consider that the plans complimented the existing street scene.

There being no proposer that planning permission be granted, it was proposed and seconded to refuse the application.

**RESOLVED** – that planning application TWC/2012/0143 be refused on the grounds that the Local Planning Authority considers that the proposed development by virtue of the proposed scale mass and design is unacceptable and will result in an incongruous feature within the street scene, to the detriment on the character and appearance of the area. Accordingly the proposal is contrary to ‘saved’ polices UD2 and H6 of the Wrekin Local Plan, CS15 of the Core Strategy and national guidance contained within the NPPF.

(f) TWC/2012/0211 Land To The Rear Of, Maynards Croft, Newport, Shropshire, TF10 7SZ

This was a full application for residential development comprising the demolition of a detached house (No.25 Maynard’s Croft) to facilitate the creation of an access road and the erection of 34no. dwellings comprising a mix of 16 three and four-bedroom detached houses; 8 three-bedroom semi-detached houses; 4 two-bedroom terraced houses and a two and a half storey block of 6 two-bedroom apartments, with garages and/or parking facilities, served off a new estate road with associated parking, drainage, sewage pumping facility, landscaping and associated engineering works. This would result in an average density of 38 dwellings per hectare and the provision of 35% affordable housing. The site lay outside the built up boundary of Newport, as shown on the Wrekin Local Plan Proposals Map, and hence lay in the countryside, however it was currently being used as garden land. A site visit for this application had been undertaken earlier in the day.

Councillor Peter Scott, representing Newport Town Council, spoke to oppose the application on the grounds of the suitability of the site for development, particularly due to subsidence as a result of the peat-based soil and the need for piling which could damage the canal. Piling would result in noise disturbance and this had not been adequately addressed by the developer. The Town Council objected to the use of Greenfield land whilst Brownfield land remained available for development and considered that housing need could be met by proposals for development at other sites. Councillor Scott also cited issues with road safety and suggested that the development would be detrimental to the quality of existing residents’ lives.

Councillor E J Carter, the Borough Ward Councillor for Newport East, also spoke in opposition to the application on the grounds that this unique site was unsuitable for development. He argued that the proposals were contrary to the NPPF since, as well as a presumption in favour of sustainable development, the NPPF sought to

recognise the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside, recognise the many functions performed by open land, not include residential garden land or land of special community interest in development, protect development from unacceptable risk or from being adversely affected by unacceptable levels of soil, air, water or noise pollution or land instability and also similarly protect Sites of Special Scientific Interest, avoid development that would give rise to noise causing significant adverse impacts on quality of life and stated that Local Authorities should not grant planning permission for peat extraction. In the spirit of the Council's Shaping Places scheme, he urged the Plans Board Members to listen to the views of the local community.

Mr E Howells, a local resident, also spoke against the proposed development on the grounds that it was not financially viable and, therefore, contrary to paragraph 173 of the NPPF. Local residents had sought the opinion of experts, including a Planning Inspector, Civil Engineers and out of the Borough Planning officers, who all concurred with the view that the project would be difficult to deliver due to falling market prices. He argued that the land was unsuitable for development which would result in significant noise nuisance from piling and construction traffic and would only deliver 3% of affordable housing need targets. He considered that, if the Board was minded to grant planning permission, the developer would eventually seek to vary Section 106 obligations relating to the affordable housing element in order to make the development viable in the current economic climate. He suggested that the scheme should be deferred until a full foundation plan and new viability assessment could be provided.

The Applicant's agent, Mr A Williams, spoke to support the application. He argued that there was a clear need to remedy affordable housing needs in the area and explained that this was difficult to deliver from Brownfield sites and, as this application was made in full and the developer was ready to begin work immediately some progress towards meeting targets could be made significantly sooner than with other proposals in the area which were only at outline stage. He referred to the consultation responses set out in the report, noting a lack of objection from the Council's Ecologist, Natural England, the Council's Arborist, Environment Agency, Severn Trent Water and the Council's Drainage Engineer. Piling would take place over a short period of time and noise would be managed by a detailed construction management plan. Overall, he considered that this was a good site for a modestly sized housing development.

The Planning Officer noted the recurring argument for development on Brownfield sites prior to Greenfield land existed in this case but he felt that there were mitigating circumstances for development in this case. He drew the Board Members' attention to the consultation responses set out in the report, particularly those of the Highways Engineer which addressed residents' concerns regarding the narrowed carriageway at the bend on Maynard's Croft as likely to relate to poor driver discipline rather than visibility falling below required standards, and those of the Housing Delivery Officer regarding the need to maintain provision for socially rented accommodation. A report on noise had been received and hours of construction and piling could be limited by condition. Whilst the proposals made a modest contribution towards housing supply, in accordance with policies CS1 and CS6, and contrary to the interpretation given by Councillor Carter, the proposals were consistent with the requirements of the NPPF. He did not consider that the vista from the canal would

be damaged by the proposed housing as it was a particularly discrete parcel of land which did not form part of the wider area and negotiations had already taken place to resite the tallest apartment block. Residential amenity would not be compromised as limited overlooking or loss of privacy would occur. He recommended that a further financial contribution of £2500 should be sought from the Section 106 Agreement in relation to Planning and Financial Monitoring. He also clarified that delegated authority was the normal process in this type of application.

The Chairman expressed concern about noise levels from piling and considered that if Members were minded to grant this application it was important that the impact on residents' quality of life should be mitigated and, if Members were minded to grant permission, a condition should be included to limit the hours that work would be allowed to take place. Councillor M J Smith shared his personal experience of piling works in another area and noted that whilst the work could be completed quickly, it did create a significant noise nuisance. The Planning Officer acknowledged these concerns and advised that it was normal to specify hours of operation in the site construction plan as agreed with the applicant. Piling was covered by building regulations but Officers had been assured that the works would not undermine the embankment.

Councillor N A Dugmore noted that the area was adjacent to a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) and that piling works would be likely to cause vibrations which would disturb local wildlife. He noted concerns regarding stability issues and, referring to the site visit which had taken place that afternoon, his opinion was that the ground was unsuitable for this type of development. He also noted that conditions C17 and C18 requested by the Highways Engineer were not included in the list of recommendations and was advised that these were encompassed in condition B150. Councillor Dugmore also expressed concern regarding the capacity for school places at schools in the locality. Councillor I T W Fletcher echoed these comments and noting the nature of the ground on site, felt that development may prove costly resulting in renegotiation of the affordable housing element at a later date.

Councillor S A W Reynolds noted that the area was fenced and overgrown and presently unsuitable for public access. She considered that the Plans Board needed to be mindful of social housing needs in the area and concurred with concerns that hours of operation should be controlled by condition. Councillor J Loveridge agreed with the view that social housing was required in the area.

Councillor G C W Reynolds noted concerns regarding land instability on site and questioned who would be responsible for remedial works if an incident occurred. The Chairman, on legal advice, pointed out that once planning permission had been granted, responsibility lay with the developer.

The Assistant Director: Planning Specialist noted claims that the application was inconsistent with the NPPF but advised Members that the Framework had to be considered holistically rather than by individual sections. The NPPF gave a presumption towards sustainable development in order to significantly boost housing supply. The Local Authority had an up-to-date Development Plan and Core Strategy and it was his advice that the application was, therefore, consistent with

local and national policy. He advised that the impact of development had to balance with the benefits. He noted growing concerns regarding the stability of the land and referred the Board Members to the Geotechnical Engineer's expert advice that the application was acceptable subject to condition.

Councillor J Loveridge moved the recommendation in the report, with an additional condition specifying hours of construction activity and this was seconded by Councillor S A W Reynolds. Members agreed that negotiations between Officers and the applicant regarding the hours for construction activity should be guided by the general principle of 9.00am to 5.00pm.

Councillor C R Turley expressed his decision to abstain from voting due to his involvement in a number of environment-based organisations and the site's closeness to an SSSI.

On being put to the vote it was, by a majority of five votes in favour and three against:

**RESOLVED** – that with respect to planning application TWC/2012/0211 the Development Management Manager be authorised to grant planning permission subject to the applicants entering into a Section 106 Agreement for financial contributions of £72,000 towards primary and secondary education provision, £10,000 towards highways improvements and 35% affordable housing, Monitoring Contribution of £2,500 and further subject to the conditions set out in the report to include agreement of hours of construction activities on site with authority to finalise conditions and reasons for approval to be delegated to the Development Management Manager.

(g) TWC/2012/0240 Land at, Arleston, Telford, Shropshire

This application sought outline planning permission for residential development on 7.26 hectares of land for up to 103 dwellings (Use Class C3) and 50 extra care units (Use Class C2), provision of two new access roads and associated drainage, open space and landscaping. A site visit had taken place on the afternoon of 20 June 2012 and during the debate at Plans Board that evening Members raised concerns about the siting of the Extra Care facility and the impact of the three storey building on existing residents. The applicants had submitted amended plans, including the parameters plan, which set the zone for the extra care facility to be situated. The primary change was the repositioning of the extra care facility further south into a more central location of the parcel of land which was bounded by Dawley Road to the west and Kingsland to the north. This had led to the previously proposed zone of housing adjacent to the extra care facility moving from the south of the building to the north of the building. In addition a further strip of open space was proposed along part of the northern boundary with Kingsland, which was approx 10m wide including the existing hedge which was to be retained. In addition, the zone of building had also been reduced by re-evaluating the internal space requirements. An update report was tabled which set out a revised approach to the provision of recreational facilities.

Councillor J Gorse, representing Wellington Town Council spoke to oppose the amended proposals raising concerns in relation to the access through and to the proposed site, the potential use of the proposed mixed-use thoroughway by motor-vehicles, current sewerage and drainage problems which would be increased if the development proceeded, the high density of the proposals, impact on the character of Arlestone Village and over-development of Green network land.

Councillor A D McClements, the Borough Ward Councillor for Arlestone, acknowledged that she had previously supported development of Green Network land (at the Ercall Wood Technology College site; application reference TWC/2012/0069) because that development had demonstrated exceptional circumstances and community benefit to residents in her Ward. However, she felt unable to support this application as there were no such community benefits and, therefore, she spoke to oppose the proposals. She raised concerns on behalf of local residents regarding the loss of their “green lung” and associated abundant wildlife. She echoed the concerns of Councillor Gorse regarding traffic congestion and set out continued concerns regarding the location of the Extra Care Facility and lack of affordable housing. She informed the meeting that whilst the location of the Extra Care Facility was in proximity to local services there was a steep hill which, in her experience, elderly residents found it difficult to ascend. With regard to public transport access, Arriva were undertaking a review of their transport network and if the results were unfavourable residents could find themselves isolated. She did not, therefore, consider that the provision of the Extra Care Facility was sufficient to outweigh the loss of green network, particularly as similar facilities were located or proposed nearby.

Mr G Devey spoke on behalf of local residents to oppose the proposals. He expressed the residents’ deep dissatisfaction at the loss of green network which played an important role in urban social development. Green network land had been dramatically reduced in recent years due to development and he expressed concerns for local wildlife. Although residents understood that there were sometimes community benefits to utilising green network land, in this case no such benefits were apparent. In addition, residents did not consider that the plans were demonstrably improved and security concerns remained together with concerns that the plans were detrimental to the character of the village.

The Applicant’s Agent, Ms Y Bowater, then addressed the Board in relation to the revisions to the proposals following collaborative working with the Planning Authority, resiting of the Extra Care Facility together with a reduced footprint, open space provision, housing need and delivery and the economic and community benefits to the Borough as a whole.

The Planning Officer noted that the use of Green Network land was a critical issue within the consultation, responses to which were set out in the report. Although he realised that the site had intrinsic value, it was a private site with limited public access, and the development would provide community value in the form of an Extra Care Facility, the retention of significant woodland and provision of allotments, activity trails and NEAPS. He noted reluctance to utilise the green network for development but also advised that the Local Plan policy which protected the green

network would be out of date by March 2013 and likely to be defunct by the end of any appeal process, should an appeal be lodged.

The Chairman reminded Members that this application was received in outline only and all matters were reserved for consideration at a later date.

Some confusion was expressed regarding the status of the land as green belt or green network and the Development Management Manager confirmed that the land was green network, as defined by the Local Authority, whereas green belt was formally designated under specific national legislation.

Councillor S A W Reynolds stated that this development would assist in the increase in provision of care homes in the north of the borough where there was a high population of elderly residents and would also assist in meeting strategic housing targets as set out on page 169 of the report.

Councillor G C W Reynolds recognised concerns from the residents that 50% of the green network at this location would be lost but she felt that this counter-balanced a currently unsafe and wild landscape becoming accessible together with the provision of play facilities. Councillor S A W Reynolds concurred with this view and also welcomed the retention of hedgerows to limit the impact of the development upon residents at the edge of the urban area.

On being put to the vote it was, by a majority:

**RESOLVED** – that with respect to planning application TWC/2012/0240 the Development Management Manager be authorised to grant planning permission subject to the applicant entering in to a Section 106 Agreement to provide 30 affordable extra care units within the extra care facility, provision of open space and play facilities on site and at John Broad Avenue with the Development Management Manager being authorised to agree an appropriate financial contribution, Highways contributions of £10,000 for maintenance of new junction, £600 for commissioning of new traffic signals controlled pedestrian crossing and £5000 for support/monitoring of Travel Plan for the Extra Care facility, an education financial contribution of £208,794, for primary education provision in the local vicinity. Public Art either £10,000 financial contribution for commission and erection on site or in local vicinity or creation of piece of public art outside or within the extra care facility to this same sum. Section 106 financial and conditions monitoring contribution of £3,500 and further subject to the conditions set out in the report.

(h) TWC/2012/0355 W Davies & Sons, Mill Lane, Kynnersley, Newport, Shropshire, TF6 6DY

This was an outline planning application for residential development to include access, layout and scale. Permission was sought to cease the existing B2 general industrial use, demolish the existing industrial buildings and clear the site of all structures and open storage to enable redevelopment of three new dwellings with detached double garages at land to the south of Kynnersley in the rural area. Matters of appearance and landscaping were reserved matters for later consideration.

Kynnersley Parish Council had requested that the application be determined by the Plans Board.

Councillor J Edge, representing Kynnersley Parish Council, addressed the Board in opposition to the application on the grounds of setting a precedent for future development, access, that Kynnersley was deemed unsustainable in terms of residential development, housing stock in the village would have increased by 30% since 2000 once all barns with consent for conversion had been developed and the proposals were contrary to policy CS7. He felt that some of the potential B2 industrial uses sited in the report were scaremongering and the majority of the local community supported continued industrial use.

The Applicant's agent, Mr A Williams, then spoke to support the application explaining that the business use had been on site for more than 100 years, and applicant's impending retirement had resulted in bringing forward the application. He also indicated pre application advice had acknowledged the merits of the business ceasing on this site.

The Planning Officer drew Member's attention to the tabled update report which summarised a letter of support; she also noted that there two letters of objection on file and that the Highways Officer had no objections to the proposals. She noted that the property could change hands and operate with B2 or B8 use without consent and this could cause a proliferation of traffic and other nuisance; alternatively the property could become vacant and left to decay. Members were reminded of similar decisions within the rural area approved by board, taking account of The Piggeries at Rodington and the Glasshouses at Charlton where such building had been left to decay and residential approved to remove such eyesores; these merits outweighed the concerns of the additional housing outside of the suitable settlements, which is similar to this development. She believed that the proposals could be adequately sited and provide sufficient parking whilst preserving local amenity.

After careful consideration of the reports together with the comments received verbally above, it was proposed, seconded and unanimously:

**RESOLVED – that with respect to planning application TWC/2012/0355 planning permission be granted subject to the conditions as set out in the report.**

- (i) TWC/2012/0358 Land between 44 & 45 Sandbrook, Ketley, Telford, Shropshire

This was a proposal which comprised the erection of a pair of semi-detached bungalows on a former garage site on land between 44 & 45 Sandbrook, Ketley. Councillor H Rhodes, Borough Ward Councillor for Ketley and Oakengates, had requested that the application be determined by the Plans Board.

**RESOLVED – that with respect to planning application TWC/2012/0358 planning permission be granted subject to the conditions as set out in the report.**

- (j) TWC/2012/0395 The Acorns, Donnerville Gardens, Admaston, Telford, Shropshire, TF5 0DE

This application sought outline planning permission with some matters reserved for the erection of 7 detached dwellings with garages and construction of a new access off Sweet Chariot Way following the demolition of The Acorns. Access and layout of the development were to be agreed at the outline stage, with scale, landscaping and appearance reserved for a further application. The principle of residential development on the site had been established by extant full planning permission for six dwellings (W2007/1723 and TWC/2010/0554) as detailed in the report. Additional consultation responses were set out in the tabled update report.

Wellington Town Council had requested that the application be determined by the Plans Board.

Councillor B J Thompson, the Borough Ward Councillor for Park, spoke to oppose the proposals. He referred Members to the letters of objection detailed in the report and urged the Board to consider undertaking a site visit to put the objections into perspective.

Councillor I T W Fletcher proposed, seconded by Councillor R T Kiernan that determination of this application be deferred to allow Members of the Board to undertake a site visit but, on being put to the vote, this was not agreed.

Councillor Thompson then continued his address to the Board, on the grounds of highway safety due to the narrow nature of Sweet Chariot Way, the angle of the proposed access to the site, the principle of demolishing the existing building and the potential that the proposals would set a local precedent. He also considered the plans were inadequate and that noise and disturbance would result during construction.

Dr P Davies, speaking on behalf of local residents spoke against the application on the grounds of road access and safety, the potential for future additional development at and around the site and suggested that the application was contrary to the National Planning Policy Framework (paragraph 53). Councillor R Aveley, local Parish Councillor, also spoke on behalf of local residents who had approached Wellington Town Council after the Planning Committee had considered the application and submitted no objections. He echoed Dr Davies' comments and, in addition to noting the long planning history of the site, he considered that the application was over-development of the site and expressed concern that a precedent for development could be set in the cul-de-sac. Both Dr Davies and Councillor Aveley urged Members to undertake a site visit.

The Applicant's Agent, Mr A Williams, addressed the Board reminding them of the extant planning permission, and drew attention to the revised scheme for vehicular movements within the site to cater for a refuse vehicles, altering the internal layout of the road, however the access remained in the approved location and the lack of objection from Highways. He noted concerns for future development, but considered

that this was not suggested by the current Plans and asked Members to consider the application on its individual merits rather than speculation.

Following confirmation from the Planning Officer that it was believed the application met local and national policy requirements in the form of the NPPF, the majority of Members did not consider that this application deviated greatly from the extant permission already in place and, therefore, concluded that a site visit was not necessary. The recommendation of approval and associated conditions were proposed and seconded and was carried by a majority vote.

**RESOLVED** – that with respect to planning application TWC/2012/0395 planning permission be granted subject to the conditions as set out in the report.

(k) TWC/2012/0420 80 Wombridge Road, Wrockwardine Wood, Telford, Shropshire, TF2 6QG

This retrospective application, for a change of use from garage to dog grooming business, was resolved to be granted by Plans Board on 11 July 2012. The applicant had subsequently asked for a minor amendment to the hours condition from 9.30am to 4.30pm Monday to Saturday to 10.00am to 5.30pm Monday to Saturday with no working on Sundays or Bank Holidays.

**RESOLVED** – that with respect to planning application TWC/2012/0420 planning permission be granted subject to the revised condition as set out in the report.

(l) TWC/2012/0423 9 Bayswater Close, Priorslee, Telford, Shropshire, TF2 9GY

This was a full planning application for the erection of a two storey front extension and the conversion of the attic to habitable space by creating a dormer in the west facing roof pitch.

Councillor R Williams, representing St Georges & Priorslee Parish Council, spoke against the proposals on the grounds that he believed the application was an over-development of the site which would result in excessive traffic generation and subsequent dangers to road safety.

Councillor V A Fletcher, one of the Borough Ward Members for Priorslee, addressed the Board to speak against the application on the grounds that there would be a significant impact on shared driveway access which would impact upon parking and access by construction vehicles, additional traffic generation would exacerbate traffic congestion, there would be a loss of privacy to 8 Bayswater Close and that over-development at the site would breach the building line and have a detrimental effect on the street scene.

Mr K Francis, representing local residents, also spoke to oppose the application on the grounds of loss of privacy, the increase in footprint would be out of character to

the street scene, parking and confusion over the proposed number of bedrooms. He asked members to consider undertaking a site visit.

The Planning Officer referred members to the tabled update report which addressed issues documented by residents of Bayswater Close and specifically set out the position with regard to potential loss of privacy and guideline separation distances. She also advised that the applicant had indicated ownership of the drive. The Planning Officer demonstrated on the displayed plans that some units on Bayswater Close projected forward of the main building, and that there was no distinct building line which characterised the area; as the proposal was located at the end of the cul-de-sac and only approached from the side, she also considered that the proposal would not adversely affect the character of the street scene, and she therefore believed the site could accommodate the extension without a detrimental impact.

Councillor I T W Fletcher noted that those units which projected forward of the building line were one storey garages whereas the application before the Board was for a two storey extension. Referring to the photographs supplied, he considered that this large extension would result in loss of amenity for neighbouring residents.

Councillor N A Dugmore expressed concern that the expectations raised by privacy guidelines were not being met in this case and he feared that a precedent for developing forward of the building line in this case could set a precedent.

Councillor S A W Reynolds noted that all of the plots were large and in her opinion the 2 storey extension would not be incongruous and would have sufficient parking space.

**RESOLVED – that determination of planning application TWC/2012/0423 be deferred to allow the Board Members to make a Site Visit on Wednesday, 22 August 2012 at 4.30pm.**

(m) TWC/2012/0472 Southwater Square, Southwater Way, Telford Town Centre, Telford, Shropshire

This was a Reserved Matters application for the erection of the Council's new Community Hub building and associated public realm enhancements at Southwater Square, Telford Town Centre. This mixed use building would incorporate First Point (A2), Library (D1), restaurants and cafes (A3) and flexible office space (A2 & B1) for a range of community, voluntary or public sector uses and associated public realm.

Councillor S A W Reynolds welcomed this application which would provide excellent facilities for the public. She commended the preservation of library facilities and accessibility of First Point facilities.

Councillor N A Dugmore queried the provision for a "Contact Centre" and was advised that the Community Hub was proposed to be the permanent base for the Council's Telephone Contact Centre which was currently based in Civic Offices and would temporarily relocate to Addenbrooke House.

**RESOLVED** – that with respect to planning application TWC/2012/0472 reserved matters planning permission be granted subject to the conditions as set out in the report, together with a requirement to provide on site sample panels of proposed materials for prior approval.

(n) TWC/2012/0362 4 Little Meadow Close, Admaston, Telford, Shropshire, TF5 0DN

This was an application which sought consent to extend a two-storey detached, hipped roof dwelling with a two storey side extension, conversion and alterations of garage to a study and extension to porch. The extension would provide the dwelling with a bedroom and ensuite at ground floor and bedroom and ensuite at first floor. This application had been deferred at the meeting of the Plans Board on 11 July 2012 to enable Members to undertake a site visit.

Councillor J M Seymour, Borough Ward Councillor for Wrockwardine, spoke in opposition to the application, on the grounds that it constituted an unacceptable loss of amenity to neighbouring residents due to loss of light. She also drew attention to a legal covenant which existed to prevent use of properties on Little Meadow Close as commercial properties and which limited the number of families occupying each home. In addition, Councillor Seymour pointed to increased traffic and parking problems and feared that over-development of this site would create a precedent for development in the vicinity.

Mrs S Farthing, a local resident, also spoke to oppose the application on the grounds of over-development which would impact on the character of the area, over-bearing, over-occupation, increased vehicular traffic, parking problems and business activity at the property which should constitute change of use.

The Planning Officer demonstrated the extent of the development on displayed plans and advised Members of the type of development which could take place under permitted development rights. She advised that she understood the property was run as a family household, albeit an extended family which was becoming the norm in the current economic climate. This was not, therefore, considered to be change of use. However, the Planning Officer recommended an additional condition which would restrict windows and doors on the front elevation to deter the internal segregation of the living accommodation. With regard to business use at the property, liaison with the applicant had taken place and it appeared that he was a semi-retired gentleman with a total of 20 clients, 15 of whom were seen once per year and the remainder no more than quarterly.

Councillor R T Kiernan expressed reservations about the proposed increase in size of the property and the high number of potential occupants, expressing fears that the property would be available for multiple occupancy and this could give rise to an application in future for change of use to Boarding House or similar.

Councillor G C W Reynolds took the view that the plans made good use of a large garden and privacy would be adequately protected by existing boundary fencing. She did not consider that it was within the remit of the Board to limit the size of family which could occupy a home.

Councillor N A Dugmore noted the Planning Officer's advice regarding permitted development, however, he did have reservations regarding loss of light and the fact that the applicant was running a business from the property, regardless of how small.

Councillor S A W Reynolds similarly noted the extent of works which could take place under permitted development rights and she saw the benefit of accepting the application for controlled development. She considered that neighbouring properties would not be greatly adversely affected due to the presence of an existing fence and she also pointed out that many homes were coming under pressure to accommodate extended families due to the prevailing economic climate.

It was then moved, seconded and by a majority:

**RESOLVED – that with respect to planning application TWC/2012/0362 planning permission be granted subject to the conditions as set out in the report and an additional condition notwithstanding permitted development rights to preclude any additional windows and doors on the front and side elevation of the proposed extension.**

The meeting ended at 11.48pm

**Chairman:** .....

**Date:** .....

## SCRUTINY MANAGEMENT BOARD

### Minutes of the meeting of the Scrutiny Management Board held on Thursday, 21<sup>st</sup> June 2012 at 9.00am at the Civic Offices, Telford

**PRESENT:** Councillors D.R.W. White (Chairman), A.D. McClements, C.N. Mason (substitute for M.G. Ion), C.P.R. Mollett, G.C.W. Reynolds (substitute for S.A.W. Reynolds), J.M. Seymour (substitute for V.A. Fletcher) and C.R. Turley.

Councillors S.Bentley, A.J. Eade and N.A. Dugmore (Call-in signatories)

Councillor S. Davies – Cabinet Member for Neighbourhood Services & Co-operative Council

**Also Present:** D. Hanley (Environment & Open Space Manager), J. Eatough (Assistant Director: Law, Democracy & Public Protection), J. Rowe (Assistant Director: Environment & Leisure Services), S. Jones (Scrutiny Group Specialist), P. Smith (Democratic Services Team Leader)

#### **SMB-1      APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Councillors V.A. Fletcher, M.G. Ion and S.A.W. Reynolds

#### **SMB-2      DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

None.

#### **SMB-3      CALL-IN REQUEST – WASTE MANAGEMENT SERVICES PROCUREMENT**

The Chair reported that a valid call-in request had been received following the publication of the following decisions by Cabinet on 31st May 2012:

(a) that the commencement of a formal procurement process for Waste Management Services, as detailed in the report and its appendices, be approved;

(b) that authority be delegated to the Assistant Director: Environment & Leisure, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Neighbourhood Services & Co-operative Council and Cabinet Member for Resources & Service Delivery, to progress the procurement process until the Council is in a position to award the contract;

(c) that it be noted that a further report will be brought back to Cabinet detailing the outcome of the procurement process and to seek approval to award the contract at the appropriate time;

(d) that the current residual/municipal waste disposal to landfill contract be extended by one year to April 2014, for the reasons outlined in the report;

(e) that authority be delegated to the Assistant Director: Law, Democracy and Public Protection to execute any documents necessary to give effect to the above recommendations;

(f) that £0.27m available from Environment Services underspends in 2011/12 be allocated to fund project costs.

Attached to the agenda was a copy of the signed Call-in request form. Following a preliminary informal meeting between the Chair and lead Call-In member (Councillor Bentley) and consideration of background information, an amended proposal had been submitted by the lead Call-in member, and the Chair advised that this would be the document which the Board would vote on at the end of the meeting. In accordance with the Member Call-in Protocol, the lead Call-In member and the Cabinet Member: Neighbourhood Services & Co-operative Council each tabled a document summarising the arguments and points they would be making during the meeting. In addition, the Cabinet Member had previously circulated supporting papers and documents relating to the issues raised by the Call-in. Attached to the agenda was the report of the Assistant Director: Environment & Leisure Services that was considered by Cabinet on 31<sup>st</sup> May 2012.

The Assistant Director: Law, Democracy & Public Protection then outlined the procedure to be followed at the meeting, a copy of which was attached to the agenda.

Councillor Bentley (lead Call-in Member) presented the tabled document setting out the reasons for the Call-in and for calling on Cabinet to reconsider their decision. The revised proposal was as follows:

“After having heard the main points of argument from the Lead Member for Neighbourhood Services and Co-operative Council and having considered the background information provided by the Waste Management team I would ask the Scrutiny Management Board to accept the validity of the concerns set out in the amended call-in request and refer this matter back to Cabinet for their reconsideration, due to the failure to properly consider the following: -

1. The consequences and impact of a 20 year length contract with regard to service delivery, flexibility, costs in an unstable market and the potential of future disposal technology.
2. The financial case for:
  - the provision of a Council run facility for the bulking and transfer of waste
  - the volume and value of trade waste recycling and disposal

- the value of potential income streams from domestic and trade waste recycling and disposal.
3. Disposal of food and green waste.
  4. A revised and updated strategy for increasing recycling rates and / or reducing waste within the borough before the procurement process commences.
  5. A coherent borough-wide strategy for local disposal facilities”.

The Lead Call-in Member put forward the view that the Cabinet’s plans meant that the Council would not benefit from potential income generation streams associated with recycling of waste. For example, a waste transfer station controlled by the Council would generate income as well as allowing recycling facilities to be better managed. Examples of current prices being paid for recycled materials were provided. It was contended that the current procurement process should be suspended to allow Scrutiny to look at these issues, examine how waste management regimes were run elsewhere and see what other options were available. .

The Assistant Director: Environment & Leisure Services then presented the information contained in the supporting papers that had been submitted by the Cabinet Member. There were financial and service benefits in bringing together the current separately let contracts for different elements of the waste collection and management process. A considerable amount of evaluation, analysis and stakeholder engagement had taken place to look at the different procurement options, and Scrutiny and other stakeholders would be involved during the different stages of the procurement process. The length of contract had been considered very carefully, but a 15 – 20 year period was seen as optimum in terms of the costs associated with a contractor investing in a transfer station and with the replacement cycle of vehicles (every 7 years). In terms of a Council run facility for the bulking and transfer of waste, the review and analysis over the last 12 months had clearly indicated that the management of the transfer station could not be considered separately from the waste contracts. A Council operated transfer station would require significant capital investment of over £5m, as well as the loss of efficiencies and savings from bringing waste services together. As part of the procurement process, it would be made clear to potential contractors that a key requirement would be to allow the facility to be available for commercial waste. Similarly, dialogue and negotiations would take place with the contractor on the income from recyclables arising from domestic waste, and a share of third party income. Collection of food waste was included as an option to be considered by potential contractors. The Council had a Waste Management Strategy 2005-2021. This had been updated and amended over time, but the key principles of the Strategy remained valid. The provision of Community Recycling Centres would be reviewed with the contractor to ensure that they were fit for purpose.

Following a short adjournment, Board members asked a number of questions to both the lead Call-In member and the Cabinet member. These related to:

- How other local authorities manage their waste services;
- Why there wasn't an option for a Council run waste transfer facility;
- the length of the proposed contract and why different options had not been explored;
- the costs of bringing the whole waste contract in-house;
- the potential income that could be generated from recycling and whether this had been fully examined;
- the need to encourage private companies to recycle more, and to ensure that the new bulking station would maximise recycling opportunities;
- benchmarking of the proposed contract, and ensuring that the contractor was meeting performance targets;
- consultation and communication with local residents and businesses
- bulk collections

Having heard detailed responses from both sides to the questions, the lead Call-in member and the Cabinet member were invited to sum up. Councillor Bentley urged the Board to ask the Cabinet to suspend the procurement process in order to allow Scrutiny to have a proper look at all the issues and options. Councillor Davies stressed that no bids had been received, and many of the issues raised by the Call-in (eg having a Council run waste transfer station) had not been ruled in or out at this stage. The Council was not being too prescriptive at this early point of the procurement process, in order to allow potential contractors to come up with innovative and cost effective solutions to various waste/recycling options. Therefore, it was felt that the Call-in was premature at this stage, and that there would be ample opportunity for Scrutiny to be involved in the procurement process.

Having considered all the written and verbal evidence that had been submitted, and the responses to questions, the Board:

**RESOLVED –**

- (a) **that the Call-in request and proposal, as tabled at the meeting, be rejected, and that the original Cabinet decision be noted;**
- (b) **that Cabinet be asked to consider the following recommendations in relation to the waste management services procurement:**
  - **That a detailed evaluation of the option of a Council owned and managed Transfer Station should be undertaken as part of the evaluation of solutions before going out to contract.**
  - **That benchmarking reviews should be undertaken at minimum 5 yearly intervals throughout the term of the contract.**

- That scrutiny will be involved throughout the procurement process and the details of the timetable for scrutiny work would be discussed and agreed following the meeting.

The meeting ended at 12.02 pm.

**Chair:** .....

**Date:** .....