

CABINET

Decision Notices and Minutes of a meeting of the Cabinet held on Thursday, 28th June, 2012 at 5.00 p.m. at the Civic Offices, Telford

PUBLISHED ON WEDNESDAY, 4th JULY, 2012

(DEADLINE FOR CALL-IN: MONDAY, 9th JULY, 2012)

PRESENT: Councillor K.S. Sahota (Leader and Chair), E.A. Clare, S. Davies, A.R.H. England, W.A.M. McClements, R.A. Overton, H. Rhodes, C.F. Smith and P.R. Watling

ALSO PRESENT: Councillor A.J. Eade (Conservative Group Leader) and Councillor W.L. Tomlinson (Lib Dem/Independent Group Leader)

CB-11 MINUTES

RESOLVED – that the minutes of the meeting of the Cabinet held on 31st May 2012 be confirmed and signed by the Chairman.

CB-12 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

None

CB-13 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor S. Davies declared a personal and prejudicial interest in relation to Agenda item 6 – Youth Offending Service Review

Councillor A.R.H. England declared a personal interest (as a youth court magistrate) in Agenda item 6 – Youth Offending Service Review

CB-14 SERVICE & FINANCIAL PLANNING – 2011/12 OUTTURN

Key Decision identified as **Service & Financial Planning: 2011/12 Outturn and 2012/13 Update** in the Forward Plan published on 16th May 2012.
Recommendations to Council - not subject to call-in

Councillor W.A.M. McClements, Cabinet Member: Resources & Service Delivery, presented the report of the Assistant Director: Finance, Audit & Information Governance, which informed Members of the final outturn position for Revenue and Capital for 2011/12.

The gross revenue budget for 2011/12 was £409m – the net budget for reporting purposes was just over £129m. The revenue outturn position was within budget, with a final net under-spend of £1.8m (-1.42% of net budget). It had been a very challenging year with government grant cuts of £13.6m, and a major programme of restructuring and service reviews continuing across all

Council services to deliver the level of savings required. The outlook promised to be equally difficult with further pressure on resources and increasing demands on services due to the recession. Given this context, it was a particularly positive year-end position which demonstrated the stringent financial management in place and the efforts of employees across the Council to make efficiency savings wherever possible. Provision had been made for the £2.1m required as part of the 2012/13 budget strategy, and to create an Invest to Save fund totalling £1m which would assist with the delivery of future savings.

There had been a number of service pressures experienced in 2011/12: particularly the cost of children in care (£1.5m overspend relating to both placements and the use of agency workers), adult social care purchasing (£0.993m overspend) and income shortfalls totalling £1.9m. Benefits had arisen from treasury management activities, restructure savings, vacant posts, and concessionary transport. Details of budget variations over £0.100m within each service delivery unit were set out in the report.

Capital spend ended the year at £71m, against an approved estimate of £84m, which was in the main due to re-phasing into 2012/13. The main scheme delays/re-phasing to 2012/13 were detailed in the report, along with a number of new approvals and virements.

Council Tax collection (£59m) and Business Rates (£65m) and sales ledger income collection (£35m) were slightly behind target for the year.

Summaries of the outturn on revenue and capital, along with major variations, were appended to the report.

Councillor A.J. Eade (Conservative Group Leader) expressed concern at the overall overspend on the cost of children in care, and in particular on the amount paid for agency staff. The Cabinet Member for Resources & Service Delivery and Councillor P.R. Watling (Cabinet Member for Children, Young People & Families) stated that there had been an impact as a result of the restructuring of services. However, it was expected that there would now be more stability, and that every effort was being made to reduce the use of agency workers. However, the Cabinet was very clear that it would not put a price on children's safety.

RESOLVED – to RECOMMEND to COUNCIL

- (a) that the revenue outturn position for 2011/12 and related virements, as shown in Appendix III of the report, be approved, subject to audit by the Council's internal auditors. (This includes the following transfers into provisions and reserves: £2.145m to support the 2012/13 budget strategy; £1m to create an Invest to Save fund (including the £0.5m approved in February's financial monitoring); £0.330 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) that authority be delegated to the Managing Director, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Resources & Service Delivery, to approve bids against the Capacity and Environmental works reserves;
- (c) that the Capital outturn position and related supplementary estimates, virements and re-phasing, as shown in Appendix IV of the report, be approved;
- (d) that the performance against income targets be noted.

CB-15 SERVICE & FINANCIAL PLANNING UPDATE

Key Decision identified as **Service & Financial Planning: 2011/12 Outturn and 2012/13 Update** in the Forward Plan published on 16th May 2012 .

Councillor W.A.M. McClements, Cabinet Member: Resources & Service Delivery, presented the report of the Managing Director and the Assistant Director: Finance, Audit & Information Governance, which provided an update on progress on meeting the remaining target for savings in the current year, and on the more significant challenge of identifying proposals for a projected gap of around £3.7m for 2013/14.

At the March Council meeting, specific savings proposals totalling £19m gross were agreed. However, a further £0.88m of savings were needed but had not been specifically identified at that stage. Appended to the report were details of just over £0.9m of savings proposals that would meet this remaining target.

The March projections showed that around £3.7m further savings would be needed for 2013/14 on top of the £9.3m gross savings proposal already budgeted for. This assumed that the Council's £2.1m share of NHS funding passported via the Primary Care Trust (PCT) for adult social care expenditure was still available in 2013/14 – although this had not yet been confirmed. However, positive discussions with the PCT about reducing the cost to the Council from 2013/14 for Continuing Healthcare cases meant that the remaining projected shortfall could be reduced from £3.7m to £2.7m. It was becoming increasingly difficult to identify areas for further savings, but some initial proposals were included in the report.

A number of the savings proposals now going forward were dependent on investment up-front in order to achieve ongoing revenue savings. It was recommended that these invest to save bids were reviewed by the Cabinet Member and authority delegated to the Managing Director to approve the bids. Work was in progress to generate further savings proposals.

In response to a question from Councillor A.J. Eade, the Cabinet Member advised that a further report would be brought to Cabinet in September, when there would be more detail on the proposed savings proposals – particularly in relation to non-staffing costs. The Cabinet Member added that the situation

was not helped by the uncertainty about the new Local Government Finance system which was due to be operational from 2013/14.

RESOLVED –

- (a) **that the additional 2012/13 savings proposals shown at Appendix 1 of the report be approved, and an Impact Statement completed;**
- (b) **that authority be delegated to the Managing Director, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Resources & Service Delivery, to approve Invest to Save bids.**

(Councillor S. Davies withdrew from the meeting room for the following item).

CB-16 YOUTH OFFENDING SERVICE (YOS) REVIEW

Key Decision identified as **Youth Offending Service** in the Forward Plan published on 16th April 2012.

Councillor P.R. Watling, Cabinet Member: Children, Young People & Families, presented the report of the Assistant Director: Family & Cohesion Services, which set out proposals for determining the most appropriate service model for providing an effective Youth Offending Service (YOS).

Currently West Mercia had two Youth Offending Services – one covering Shropshire and Telford & Wrekin, the other covering Worcestershire and Herefordshire. Although both services performed well, the changing landscape for local authorities and criminal justice agencies had prompted a review of how the service was delivered. A project board (including Children's Services Directors from each LA) had been established, and this group had established a vision which focused on preventing youth crime, rather than simply responding to it. A number of principles for change had also been agreed, against which a number of service delivery options had been tested. Details of this appraisal process were shown in the report. The preferred option was for the delivery of a Core Service across West Mercia on a hosted basis. This would be done under a formal partnership agreement, with a new YOS Management Board to ensure that the service was being delivered. Non-core services would be commissioned by each Local Authority, and it was envisaged that in-house provision would remain in the short term.

In terms of hosting the Core YOS, the best option in terms of synergies and costs was for the West Mercia Probation Trust to provide a "clinical lead" for the Core YOS as part of a transition process that could be achieved by April 2013. This arrangement would be reviewed after 18 months to allow exploration of commissioning the service through a competitive process, as well as gathering more information on the optimum range and delivery of non-core services.

During discussion of the report, Cabinet Members emphasised that the YOS was not being privatised, and that the Service must be user-led and targeted

at those vulnerable young people with complex needs. The aim was to get the best possible service within the constraints of the current economic climate.

RESOLVED –

- (a) **that work should progress to establish a distinct core model for a West Mercia Youth Offending Service (YOS), and to consider the optimum delivery mechanisms for non-core services using a commissioning approach;**
- (b) **that, as part of the transition process, the preferred option for the West Mercia Probation Trust to provide a “clinical lead” for a core YOS be approved, and that implementation should proceed to achieve this;**
- (c) **that authority be delegated to the Director of Children’s Services, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Children, Young People & Families, to negotiate and agree the terms of the agreement with West Mercia Probation Trust;**
- (d) **that this arrangement be reviewed after 18 months, to allow exploration by the Local Authorities, jointly and individually through the YOS Management Board, of commissioning a single core YOS through a competitive process to secure a third party provider from year three, if that is the conclusion of the review;**
- (e) **that authority be delegated to the Assistant Director: Law, Democracy & Public Protection to sign or seal any such agreement.**

CB -17 CIVIC OFFICES SITE - APPROPRIATION

Key Decision identified as **Civic Offices Appropriation** in the Forward Plan published on 24th May 2012.

Councillor W.A.M. McClements, Cabinet Member: Resources & Service Delivery, presented the report of the Assistant Director: Development, Business & Housing, which requested Cabinet to appropriate the Civic Offices site for planning purposes to facilitate its development.

On 29 March 2012, Cabinet resolved in principle that the Civic Offices site was no longer required to be held by the Council for office and associated car parking purposes. This was advertised in a local newspaper, with a 21 day period for any representations to be made. One representation was received, from the solicitors representing the Telford Trustees – owners of Telford Shopping Centre. A copy of the letter was appended to the report. The representation put forward a number of objections to the Council’s appropriation of the Civic Offices site. These were detailed in the report, along with the Council’s responses. A further letter had been received from the solicitors representing the Telford Trustees following publication of the Cabinet agenda. This letter was tabled at the meeting, and its contents fully

considered by Members together with officer's comments on the representations made. The Council's Commercial Solicitor advised that: in relation to paragraph 3 – it could be demonstrated that the redevelopment of the Civic Offices site would facilitate additional development that would provide additional benefits to the wider regeneration of the Southwater area in the Town Centre.

in relation to paragraph 4 – the Trustees have not indicated in previous correspondence that they would be prepared to surrender their rights by agreement. In addition, discussions had taken place over a long period of time with the Trustee's representatives in an attempt to agree a solution, but these discussions had proven unsuccessful. In addition, the Trustees were not the only landowners with the benefit of rights arising from the restrictive covenants.

in relation to paragraph 5 - this paragraph confused causes and effect. Planning permission had been secured for the site and to enable it to be redeveloped in accordance with this permission, it was necessary to deal with the restrictive covenants affecting the use.

in relation to paragraphs 6 and 7 – these issues had been dealt with in the main report.

Following careful consideration of the representations that had been made, and the responses that had been provided, Members were satisfied that there was clear evidence that the public benefit of appropriating the site for planning purposes outweighed the potential private loss that might be incurred.

RESOLVED – that in accordance with section 122(1) of the Local Government Act 1972, and having considered representations received, the decision on 29th March 2012 to appropriate for planning purposes the Civic Offices site (as identified in the plan at Appendix 1 of the report) because the land is no longer required to be held for office accommodation and associated car parking purposes be reaffirmed.

CB-18 REPRESENTATION ON OUTSIDE BODIES 2012/13

Non-Key decision

Councillor R.A. Overton, Deputy Leader, presented the report of the Assistant Director: Law, Democracy & Public Protection which requested Cabinet to approve the nominations made to Outside Bodies for 2012/13.

Appended to the report was the list of outside bodies to which representatives were appointed on an annual basis. Nominations had been sought from each of the political Groups for those appointments that were not by position, and these were shown in the Appendix. No further nominations had been received from the Conservative Group.

RESOLVED – that the nominations to represent the Council on outside bodies for 2012/13, as set out in Appendix 1 of the report, be approved.

CB-19 EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

RESOLVED - that the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the following item of business on the grounds that it involved the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972.

CB - 20 TELFORD INTERNATIONAL RAILFREIGHT PARK

Key Decision identified as **Appointment of an Operator for the Telford International Railfreight Park** in the Forward Plan published on 16th April 2012.

Councillor C.F. Smith, Cabinet Member: Housing, Regeneration & Economic Development, presented the report of the Assistant Director: Development, Business & Housing, which sought approval to appoint an operator for Telford International Railfreight Park following a procurement process.

Following the executing of a break clause in the contract by the previous operator, Cabinet in December 2011 agreed to procure a new operator for the terminal through the OJEU procurement process. The report detailed the stages of this process, consultation with industry experts and the engagement of a firm of rail logistics experts to advise on and support the evaluation of tenders received. Two tenders were submitted at Stage 2 of the procurement process, and the evaluation and scoring of the tenders was detailed in the report, including financial analysis and modelling. From a financial perspective, there was a marked difference between the two submissions – with one being cost neutral to the Council and the other requiring an ongoing weekly financial contribution from the Council.

RESOLVED –

- (a) that the appointment of DB Schenker as the operator for Telford International Railfreight Terminal be approved;**
- (b) that authority be delegated to the Assistant Director: Development, Business & Housing, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Housing, Regeneration & Economic Development, to conclude contract negotiations and enter into a Lease and Operating Agreement with DB Schenker;**
- (c) that authority be delegated to the Assistant Director: Law, Democracy & Public Protection to take any required procedural steps and enter into any necessary legal agreements to facilitate the transfer of the Transport & Work Act Order undertaking to DB Schenker for the duration of the proposed lease.**

The meeting ended at 5.55 p.m.

Signed for the purposes of the Decision Notices

Jonathan Eatough
Assistant Director: Law, Democracy & Public Protection
Date: 4th July 2012

Signed:

Date:

TELFORD & WREKIN COUNCIL

CABINET - 26 JULY
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 Plan 2012/13 to 2014/15 for approval

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

2.1. That Cabinet review the latest draft of the Council Plan with particular reference to the Council priorities (see section 5, page 26).

3. SUMMARY

3.1. The Council Plan (see Appendix One) 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 Council 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 Council 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 Council Plan will deliver many community
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		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 st 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	Yes	Borough-wide impact.

specific wards		
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Report prepared by Jon Power, Delivery & Planning Manager.

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

DRAFT

FORWARD

We are pleased to introduce the Council 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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- TAKING THE ORGANISATION FORWARD:
 - FINANCIAL STRATEGY
 - PUTTING OUR CUSTOMERS FIRST
 - BUSINESS SUPPORTING, BUSINESS WINNING COUNCIL

4. A CO-OPERATIVE COUNCIL WORKING WITH THE COMMUNITY:

- STRENGTHENING RELATIONSHIPS WITH THE COMMUNITY
- MORE EFFECTIVE PARTNERSHIP WORKING
- CO-OPERATIVE ARRANGEMENTS TO ADDRESS CHILD AND FAMILY POVERTY
- CO-OPERATIVE COMMISSION & EMPLOYEE COMMISSION
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6. TELFORD & WREKIN AT A GLANCE

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 9.2% 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 Business Plan, sets out our strategy for responding to these continuing pressures, transforming how we are working and being clear about what we 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 each have 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** 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.

Projected Budget Gap	12/13 £m	13/14 £m	14/15 £m	15/16* £m	16/17* £m
Base Budget gap	21.847	31.635	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	-8.019	-13.497	-16.671	-17.151	-17.631
Savings from planned service redesign and restructures	-8.158	-8.483	-8.483	-8.483	-8.483
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)
Savings still to be identified	0.882	4.600	4.771	10.280	14.785

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
Managing the Organisation	7.798	4.398	1.700	1.700	0.000	0.000
	336.092	84.269	95.919	74.775	43.665	37.464

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.

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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 residents 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'.

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.

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 proactive. 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/

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
 - CVS
 - Shropshire Chamber of Commerce
 - Telford & Wrekin Council
 - Job Centre Plus

- Trust
 - Clinical Commissioning Group
 - 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.
- **Tackling Child & Family Poverty** – again, an area which will only be addressed through co-operative working. Our approach is set out below.

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 23). 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.

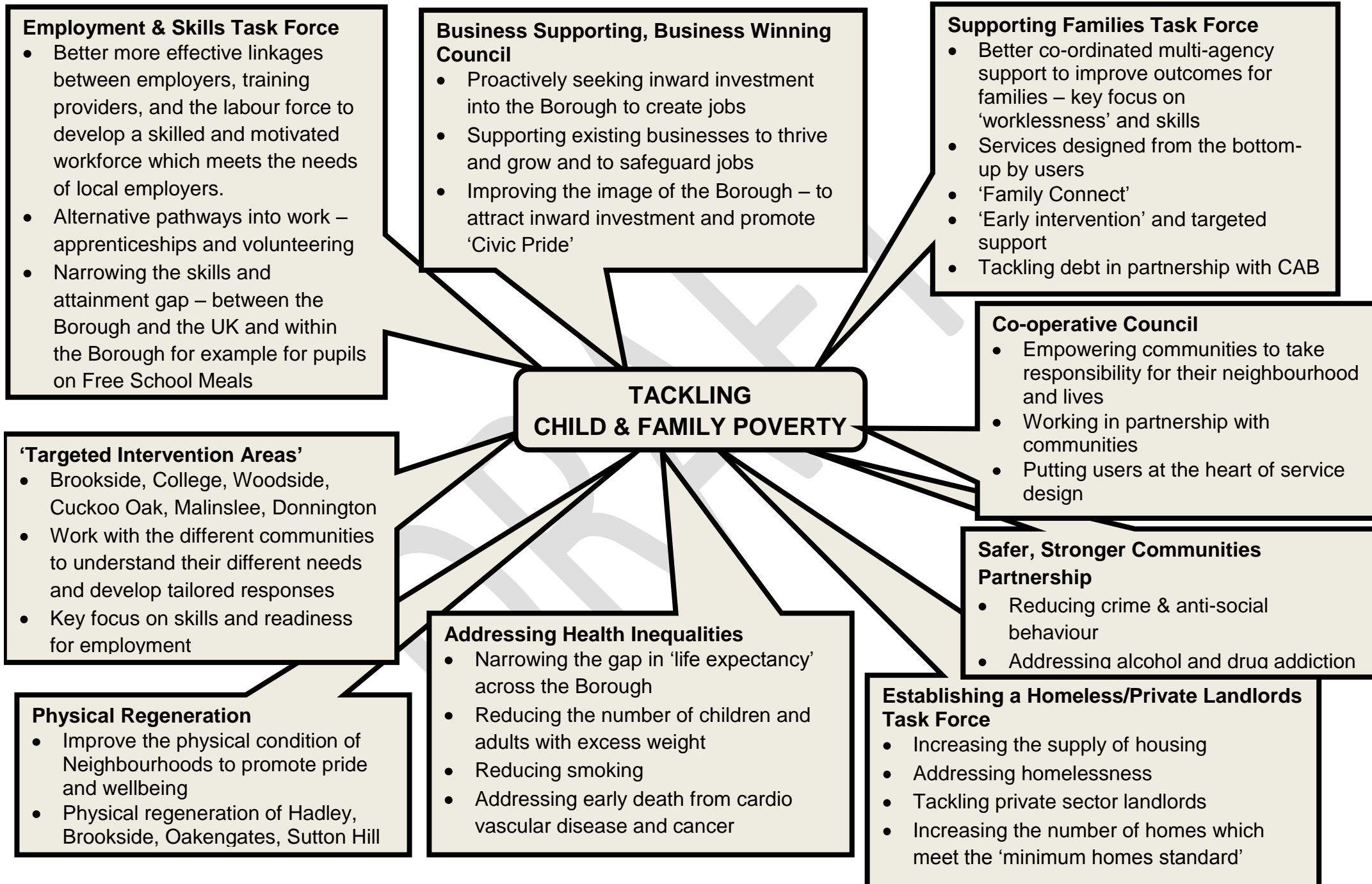
There will be 3 areas of focus to do this:

- 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.**

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

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
- Increase the percentage of our children in care living with local foster carers
- Increase the percentage of care leavers who are in employment, education or training.

- Increase the percentage of care leavers in suitable accommodation
- **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 al 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 resident satisfaction with their neighbourhood as a place to live within 6 priority areas
- 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
- Deliver 200 affordable homes each year
- Increase the number of properties that meet the ‘decent homes standard’
- Increase the number of properties in Sutton Hill which 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

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

THE PLACE

- Located at the heart of the UK, the Borough covers some 112 miles², **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).

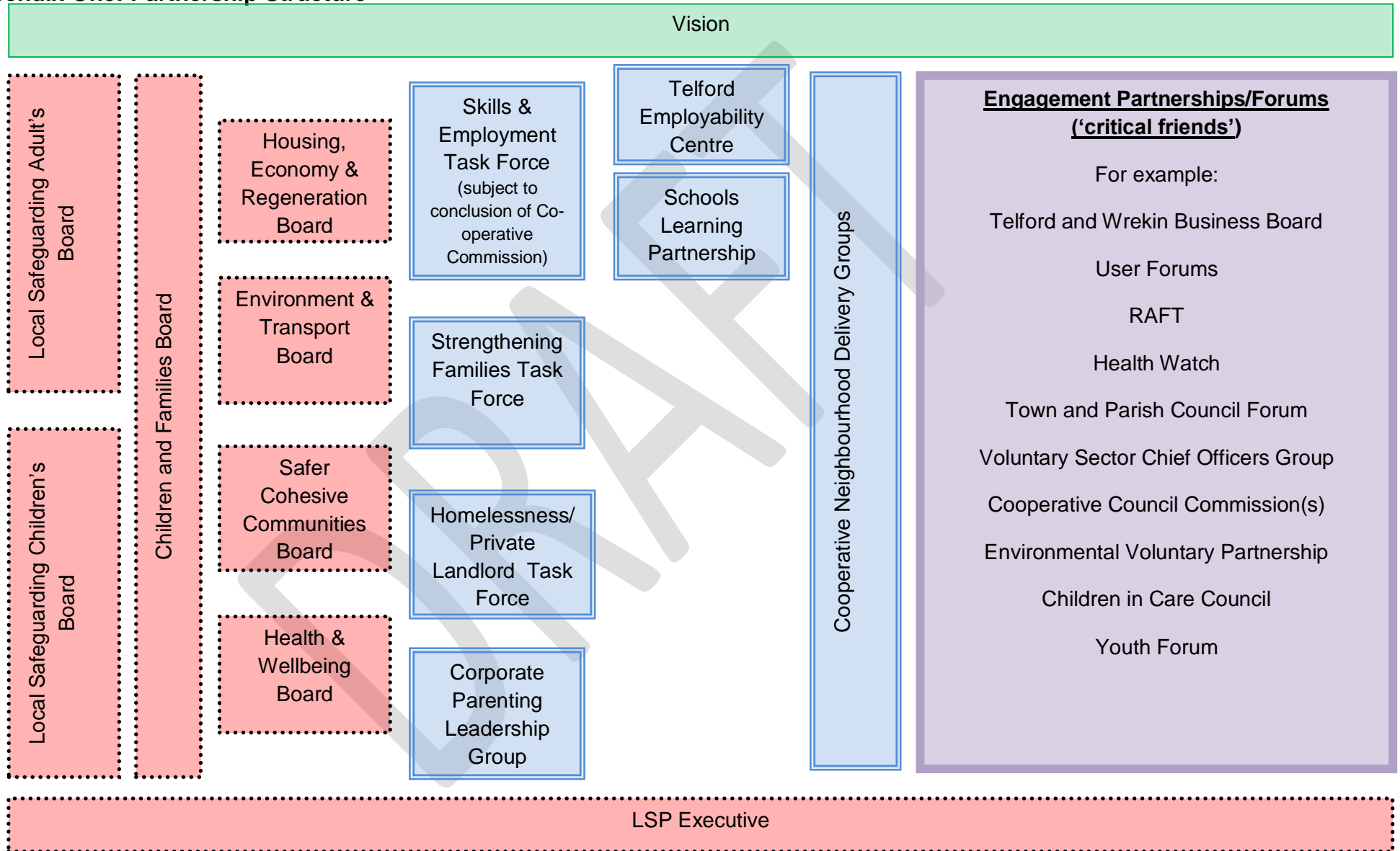
DEPRIVATION

- 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:

Council
 Appendix 1 - Draft For Approval
 Pink – Strategic Function

Blue – Delivery Function

Purple – Engagement/Critical Friend

BOROUGH OF TELFORD & WREKIN

CABINET – 26 JULY 2012

CO-OPERATIVE COUNCIL UPDATE

REPORT OF THE MANAGING DIRECTOR

1. SUMMARY

- 1.1 In July 2011, the Council made a clear commitment to become a Co-operative Council and became a founder member of the Co-operative Council Network (www.councils.coop). Over the past year, there has been a growing interest in Co-operative Councils nationally, which has seen the Network expand from 13 to 21 members.
- 1.2 We stated that as a Co-operative Council we would work together with the community to build a new partnership where power and responsibility were more balanced and where our employees, local people and organisations would be more actively involved in shaping services and decision-making.
- 1.3 In November 2011, we published an organisational review, which described how we would become more co-operative by:
- Bringing more public services together so that people get what they need at the right time and place;
 - Involving local people and our employees more in the planning and running of services;
 - Supporting our community better and encouraging people to do more to help their own communities.
- 1.4 A programme of work was agreed to translate this vision into action, which focused on 4 main areas:
- Adopter projects;
 - Co-operative and Employee Commissions;
 - Partnership working;
 - Community agreements.
- 1.5 This report summarises what has been achieved and illustrates that in a relatively short period time and with reducing council budgets, we have made significant progress in putting co-operative working into practice.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 That Cabinet notes progress in delivering the Co-operative Council Work Programme, as set out in Section 4 of this report; and
- 2.2 That Cabinet approves the inclusion of the Food Bank project (described in Section 4.1.4) in the Co-operative Council Work Programme.

3. SUMMARY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

Community Impact	Yes	This programme of work contributes to the Council's priority to be a Co-operative Council. Many of the projects/initiatives in the work programme are already delivering community benefits (see Section 4). Other initiatives will be assessed for community impacts as the proposals are developed.
Financial & Value for Money Impact	Yes	The proposed Service & Financial Planning Strategy for 2012/13 to 2014/15 was agreed at Council on 1 st 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. A clear priority identified in the strategy is being a Co-operative Council, working with residents, partners and local organisations to collectively deliver services to the area within the resources available. This report highlights areas of work to further develop co-operative working. There is a small co-operative council budget of £15k, intended to be used to pump-prime monies for community projects which was approved by Full Council as part of the 100 day budget in November 2011. Given the financial constraints, the scope for any additional investment is very limited and it is important that any financial implications are identified and considered when individual recommendations are made prior to approval. The Co-operative Council Adopter Programme also includes undertaking a number of reviews which will explore whether services can be delivered more cost effectively which may deliver savings in the future.

Legal Issues	Yes	The General Power of Competence under the Localism Act 2011 provides that councils are specifically empowered to do anything not prohibited by legislation and subject to public law principles and due process. In addition, the provisions regarding Community Right to Challenge are being adopted. Legal Services' advice will be sought throughout the implementation of proposals and all necessary legal arrangements such as property documentation, appropriate partnership agreements or any necessary contract documentation will be put in place.
Other impacts, risks and opportunities	Yes	The ongoing programme of work will be evaluated to ensure risks are identified and managed and any associated opportunities are maximised. Mainstreaming the Co-operative Values and ways of working throughout the authority amongst officers and members remains key to becoming a Co-operative Council.
Impact on specific wards	Yes	Borough-wide impact.

4.0 **INFORMATION**

4.1 **Adopter Projects**

4.1.1 One of the main ways that we are embedding co-operative working across the Council is through the delivery of a range of practical 'Adopter Projects'. In the current phase of work, agreed in January 2012, there is at least one project in each of our service areas.

4.1.2 Over the past 12 months, achievements include:

- **Apprenticeships & Internships** – we have provided new employment opportunities, including 15 additional apprentices employed by the Council over the last 3 months (with a further 14 apprenticeships agreed) and 5 new internships (short-term graduate/student placements) starting in July 2012. Through a campaign aimed at local businesses, we have also secured 60 additional apprenticeships with 47 different local employers.
- **Small Business Loans Fund** – launched in May 2012 with Impetus (a community development financial institution) to help small and medium Telford & Wrekin businesses access funding (£69k of funding has been approved as at end of June 2012).
- **Employability Centre** – launched with TCAT at Meeting Point House. From November 2011-April 2012, the Centre has had approximately 450 contacts with young people and adults who have taken part in training and advice sessions to help them back into employment, education and

training. We have delivered 24 courses resulting in 8 job outcomes and 6 people who are doing, or have registered for, voluntary work.

- **Brookside** - working alongside local residents, partners, members and the Parish Council in Brookside (pilot ward for co-operative working), we have improved street lighting, carried out an environmental clean-up and are now developing long-term regeneration plans.
- **Health Hub** – launched with the Primary Care Trust at Civic Offices. From November 2011-January 2012, more than 1,700 people accessed healthy lifestyle advice through the Health Hub, 113 of these went on to receive full lifestyle screenings.
- **Environmental Action Teams** - in partnership with Parish Councils, secured new Environmental Action Teams in Madeley, Great Dawley and St Georges and Priorslee to improve environmental maintenance in these areas.
- **Community Engagement** - involved more than 3,000 people in shaping our new priorities and more than 2,800 people in our budget consultation (more than double the number taking part in 2011/12), which this year gave local people the power to decide whether or not Council Tax should be increased;
- **Ward Co-operative Fund** - delivered a wide range of local projects put forward by residents across the Borough (£1,000 allocated for each of our 54 wards) e.g. repairs to footpaths, materials and equipment for community gardens and new notice boards and benches.

4.1.3 A number of other Adopter Projects are in progress. These include:

- **Family Connect** – developing a new single point of contact for services for children and families. We have launched a new Family Connect Website and have advisors in place at First Point to deal with enquiries about Council services and we are now working with our partners to include them within Family Connect over the next 12 months, starting with Police and Health services.
- **Dawley Town Hall** – taking steps to bring Dawley Town Hall back into community use. We have secured £140k funding and a commitment from a number of partners to be involved in the future management of the Town Hall and a business plan is being developed. A Friends group was launched in June – the group has developed a Face book page, has started fund-raising activities and will be consulting local residents at Dawley Day in July.
- **Fair-trade** – promoting Fair-trade across the Borough. We ran a number of successful events during Fair-trade Fortnight in February 2012 – this included an event involving 23 local organisations, which has led to the

creation of a working group who are now planning to launch a Telford & Wrekin Fair-trade Partnership to better promote Fair-trade locally.

- **Wi-Fi** – free Wi-Fi is now available at the new Wellington Library and we are aiming to roll this out to publicly accessible Council-owned buildings in other areas, starting with Newport and Brookside.
- **Community Ambassadors** – developing a pilot scheme where volunteers will provide peer support for families who are in the very early stages of having problems (due to start in autumn 2012).

4.1.4 We are also seeking members' approval to incorporate a new **Food Bank** project into the current programme. Food Banks provide emergency food parcels to people in need that are struggling to feed their families as a result of redundancy, illness, debt etc. Whilst a number of voluntary organisations in the Borough, such as Citizen's Advice Bureau, the Salvation Army and the YMCA already provide food parcels, it has been identified that there is a growing need for a co-ordinated Telford & Wrekin Food Bank facility and support to tackle the underlying issues. It is anticipated that the need for this will increase from April 2013 due to changes to the benefit system.

4.1.5 The Cabinet Member (ex officio) for Communications and key officers are now meeting regularly with a range of voluntary organisations to progress this and we are investigating how we can contribute, for example by using the Council's premises as a central depot for food supplies. We are proposing to allocate up to £5k from the Co-operative Council budget towards the costs of this project.

4.2 Co-operative and Employee Commissions

4.2.1 We are now working alongside two Commissions; the Co-operative Commission involving community and business leaders, and an internal Employee Commission. The Commissions were established to provide a new and direct way for people to get involved in shaping the future of the Borough and our organisation.

4.2.2 The Co-operative Commission, made up of about 60 community and business leaders with a vast range of skills and experience, was established in September 2011. The Commission set its own agenda to focus on 5 priority areas:

- Economy & Image;
- Civic Pride & Volunteering;
- Employment & Skills;
- Commissioning & Procurement;
- Co-operative values and communication.

4.2.3 The Employee Commission was established in October 2011 with 87 employees taking part so far. The Employee Commission is open to all and is

employee-led. As with the Co-operative Commission, employees prioritised what they wanted to work on, identifying:

- Employee volunteering;
- Employee communication and engagement;
- Skills planning and development;
- Financial management;
- Social responsibility.

4.2.4 Both Commissions completed their recommendations in March 2012, which were formally agreed by Cabinet in May 2012. There is a strong commitment from the Council to deliver the recommendations with an Assistant Director and Member championing each Commission theme. In conjunction with Commissioners, we are now starting to implement the Commissions' recommendations— early achievements include:

- Adopted **Co-operative Values** - now being promoted to our employees and the community (supports Co-operative Commission recommendation);
- Launched a **Business & Development Charter** and published a new **Visitor Guide** and an Event Planners Guide to promote Telford as a tourism and conference destination (supports Co-operative Commission recommendation);
- Promoted volunteering as part of **National Volunteer Week** (June 2012) – event held in Town Park with Council for Voluntary Service, employees volunteered as part of Olympic Torch relay (supports Co-operative and Employee Commission recommendations);
- Piloted a new **employee mentoring scheme** – mentors now being trained for roll-out across the Council in July 2012 (supports Employee Commission recommendation).

4.2.5 Both Commissions will meet again in October 2012 to review progress and agree next steps. Examples of other initiatives that support Commission recommendations that are already in progress include:

- Launching '**Telford Automotive excellent**' prospectus to encourage inward investment linked to the Jaguar, Land Rover development (supports Co-operative Commission recommendation);
- Setting up a **Destination Telford** Working Group to drive forward the promotion of Telford as a tourism and conference destination (supports Co-operative Commission recommendation). This group will lead on initiatives, such as the Ironbridge Festival in September 2012;
- Developing '**First Point for Business**' – a one-stop shop single point of contact for all investment, business and planning enquiries (supports Co-operative Commission recommendation);
- Running a programme of **Community Games** events over the summer linked to the Olympics and developing an **employee volunteering scheme** to encourage Council employees to get involved in volunteering opportunities and projects (supports Co-operative and Employee Commission recommendations);

- Procuring an **e-learning** system to provide cost-effective learning and development for employees (supports Employee Commission recommendation);
- Widening the use of **social media**, trialling ‘**communication champions**’ in areas of the Council where employees do not have access to Council PCs and launching internal **customer service awards** during Customer Services Week in October 2012 (supports Employee Commission recommendation);
- Running a series of **social responsibility campaigns** to encourage employees to take collective responsibility for issues such as reporting environmental issues and saving energy (supports Employee Commission recommendation).

4.3 Partnership Working

4.3.1 We are also working with other organisations in Telford & Wrekin to strengthen partnership working, as this is an essential part of co-operative working. Many of the projects within the Co-operative Council work programme provide practical illustrations of how we are working more closely with others. Key focuses moving forward include:

- Developing a Health & Well-Being Strategy informed by the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment and a programme of engagement with stakeholders, for example we held an engagement event on 3 July 2012 that involved approximately 100 people from a wide range of organisations;
- Refreshing the Children, Young People & Families Plan;
- Two task forces now established (Strengthening Families and Employment & Skills) – these task forces are helping to implement Co-operative Commission recommendations.

4.4 Community Agreements

4.4.1 To help strengthen our relationship with local people and organisations, we are in the process of reviewing our existing community agreements (Parish Charter, Customer Charter and Voluntary Sector Compact) to better reflect our new Co-operative Values and approach.

4.4.2 The **Parish Charter** has been reviewed with the Town and Parish Councils and an updated version has been agreed through the Parish Charter Monitoring Review Group. Feedback from parishes indicated that only slight amendments to the Charter were required. The Council’s Co-operative Values will be shared and discussed with the Parish Councils at the meeting of the Town and Parish Group in July 2012.

4.4.3 The **Customer Charter** is currently being reviewed and feedback is being sought from the Council’s Community Panel how the Charter could be improved. Panel members are also being asked on how residents can support the Council to deliver its services more effectively. The information from this consultation will be used to update the Customer Charter.

4.4.4 As part of delivering the Co-operative Commission's recommendations on Commissioning and Procurement, a number of sessions have been held with representatives from the **Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS)**. A workshop was held on 26 June 2012 to develop a revised approach to the way in which the Council works with and spends with the VCS. A further 3 sessions are planned to take this forward and to ensure that the Council and the VCS are working together on developing our approach.

4.4.5 A further report will be brought to Cabinet to seek agreement on the Council's revised process. The aim is to have this process in place by November 2012 to ensure that funding arrangements for the following financial year can be confirmed at an earlier stage. The aim is to work towards 3 year agreements where possible, and to demonstrate the added value of the Council and VCS working together.

4.5 Communication

4.5.1 Finally, to give residents a better understanding of what being a Co-operative Council means, we are increasing our communications to keep people informed about what has been delivered and to let them know how they can get involved.

4.5.2 This has included a campaign on volunteering to coincide with National Volunteer Week, and more recently we have focussed on Co-operative Fortnight (23 June to 7 July 2012). Using social media, the Council's Website, press releases and internal campaigns, we have promoted co-operative working and some of our main achievements over the last 12 months.

5. PREVIOUS MINUTES

5.1 Minute number CB23-26 July 2011

5.2 Minute number CB89 - 26 January 2012

6. BACKGROUND PAPERS

6.1 None.

Report prepared by Felicity Mercer, Policy & Strategy Manager, Tel: (01952) 380136.

TELFORD & WREKIN COUNCIL

**CABINET – 26 JULY 2012
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 2012/13 Revenue

Initial financial monitoring shows revenue spending for the year is projecting to be within budget at year end which is after using £2.6m of the budgeted contingency. More detailed monitoring will take place over the coming months which will feed into future reports.

The main pressures identified are:

- The cost of Children in Care Placements together with the use of agency staff in the Children's Safeguarding Service and associated legal costs – showing a combined variation of £1.970m
- The cost of Adult Social Care purchasing is projected to overspend by £0.320m which is after offsetting anticipated one-off funding from the NHS totalling £4.7m. The majority of the overspend relates to the PCT's withdrawal of funding for some clients with healthcare needs and the costs of supporting these people falling on the Council.
- A shortfall in client contributions towards Adult Social Care costs estimated at £0.400m
- The cost of Specialist Education – projected overspend of £0.300m which relates to stated provision; this is being partly offset by DSG funding brought forward from 2011/12.
- School Meals Income shortfall – a projected shortfall of £0.200m which is mainly due to fewer schools buying back into the catering service

Benefits from active treasury management, vacancies and other small service variances are also reported.

1.2 Capital

The capital programme totals £112.7m which includes re-phasing approved as part of outturn. Robust programme management and monitoring is in place.

The capital programme funding includes a significant amount of capital receipts anticipated to be delivered over the medium term. Failure to achieve, or delays to, the receipts would have financial implications for the Council. The position is being closely monitored and while there have been some changes since the budget was set, total receipts are currently on track.

1.3 Corporate Income Collection

NNDR Collection is ahead of target; collection levels for council tax and Sales Ledger outstanding debt are behind target.

2.0 <u>RECOMMENDATIONS</u>
2.1 Members are asked to
(i) Note that 2012/13 revenue spend is currently projecting to be within budget at year end
(ii) Approve the proposed uses of the budgeted contingency detailed in para. 6.1 and extend the existing delegated authority in relation to approving bids against the capacity fund to cover the additional amount approved.
(iii) Note the position in relation to capital spend and make a recommendation to Full Council that the slippage and new allocations identified in Appendix 3 are approved
(iv) Note that collection of nndr income is ahead of target while Council Tax collection and Sales Ledger outstanding debt are behind targets set.

3.0 SUMMARY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

COMMUNITY IMPACT	Do these proposals contribute to specific Priority Plan objective(s)?	
	Yes	Delivery of all priority objectives depend on the effective use of available resources. Regular financial monitoring helps to highlight variations from plan.
	No	
TARGET COMPLETION/DELIVERY DATE	To outturn within budget at 31/3/13	
FINANCIAL/VALUE FOR MONEY IMPACT	Yes	The financial impacts are detailed throughout the report.
LEGAL ISSUES	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.
OTHER IMPACTS, RISKS & OPPORTUNITIES	No	
IMPACT ON SPECIFIC WARDS	No	Borough Wide

4.0 **PREVIOUS MINUTES**

01/03/12 – Full Council, Service & Financial Planning Strategy









PART B) – ADDITIONAL INFORMATION


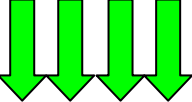





5.0 **2012/13 REVENUE BUDGET**

- 5.1 Financial monitoring is undertaken following a risk based approach: more focus is given to high risk areas (high value/highly volatile); less frequent monitoring is undertaken on low risk areas with budget holders having a role in reviewing their own service position.
- 5.2 Initial monitoring shows that spend is projected to be within budget at year end which includes use of £2.6m of the remaining corporate contingency.
- 5.3 Variations of more than £0.100m are detailed in section 5.4 for each Service Delivery Unit. The overall 2012/13 budget position is summarised in the table below :

Service Delivery Unit	Total Variation
	£
Children's Safeguarding	1,941,821
Education, Culture & Skills	(34,000)
Family & Cohesion Services	(81,468)
Care & Support	833,000
Customer & People Services	293,883
Finance, Audit & Information Governance	(118,820)
Council Wide	(200,000)
Total Projected Variation	2,634,416
Call on Corporate Contingency	(2,634,416)
Projected Year End Position	0

5.4 Projected variances over £0.100m are highlighted below.

Key			
£0 to £100k	↑		Underspend
£101+to £250k	↑↑		Overspend
£251+to £500k	↑↑↑		
over £500k	↑↑↑↑		
Service Delivery Unit		Projected Variation £m	
<u>Safeguarding</u>			
Children in Care – based on a total of 305 Children in Care (mid June). This takes into account the £0.5m budget reduction as part of the 12/13 savings package.		+1.395	
Agency Staff – overspend arising from the use of agency staff employed to cover vacancies.		+0.324	
Support for Children in Need/Legal Costs and Assessments – costs associated with court proceedings, specific support for children in need and specific assessment requests.		+0.254	
<u>Education, Culture & Skills</u>			
Employees – anticipated impact from the restructure and vacancies. There is also a potential risk of reduced income relating to traded services; further work is needed to establish the financial impact.		-0.130	
<u>Family & Cohesion Services</u>			
Specialist Education – projected overspend based on numbers currently in the system and an estimate of future statements. Projections of expenditure in this area are volatile due to the constant updating of information.		+0.300	
DSG – funding brought forward from 2011/12 and provisionally agreed by the Schools Forum to be used against pressures on statements.		-0.250	

<p>There is also a potential risk of reduced income relating to traded services; further work is needed to establish the financial impact.</p>		
<p><u>Care & Support</u></p> <p>Purchasing budgets – continuing the trend reported in 2011/12, resulting mainly from the impact of the PCT’s withdrawal of funding to clients due to their review of eligibility criteria resulting in more Continuing Health Care (CHC) costs falling on the council. The Council is engaged in productive dialogue with the PCT and it is anticipated that the impact in 12/13 will be mitigated – see below.</p> <p>NHS/PCT Funding – anticipated funding from the PCT in relation to clients with a Primary Health Need (CHC clients) as they rebalance their spending.</p> <p>Other NHS Funding - funds passed to the PCT by the Department of Health to support Social Care in Local Authorities.</p> <p>Income – shortfall of client contributions from all client groups.</p> <p>Care Leavers – overspend relating to the cost of supporting 16-18 year olds as they leave care.</p>	<p>+5.050</p> <p>-2.700</p> <p>-2.030</p> <p>+0.400</p> <p>+0.113</p>	<p></p> <p></p> <p></p> <p></p> <p></p>
<p><u>Customer & People Services</u></p> <p>Education catering client account – shortfall against free school meals income budget partly due to schools not buying back into the service.</p>	<p>+0.199</p>	<p></p>
<p><u>Treasury Management</u></p> <p>Benefit of low interest rates and lower borrowing than anticipated in the early part of the year.</p>	<p>-0.200</p>	<p></p>

6.0 **CONTINGENCIES**

- 6.1 The 2012/13 budget includes combined contingencies of £7.391m, which are set aside to meet any unforeseen expenditure.

	£m
General Revenue Contingency	1.596
Inflation Contingency *	2.550
Additional One Off Contingencies (held in reserves)	3.245
Total Contingency	7.391
Proposed Uses:	
Insurance premium – additional costs at renewal	0.010
Payment to the Information Commissioner	0.072
West Midlands Council European Service – contractual obligations	TBC
Council Wide Capacity Fund – additional resources to provide capacity required to support major projects and deliver savings	0.500
Amount required to meet current Revenue Shortfall	2.634
Balance remaining in Contingencies	4.175

*A review of all the Council's reserves and balances will be undertaken over the next few months which will include known commitments/uses of the inflation contingency shown above.

7.0 **CAPITAL**

7.1 **2012/13 Capital Programme**

The capital programme approved as part of the Service & Financial Planning Strategy for 2012/13 was £95.9m. Re-phasing of schemes from 2011/12 (approved as part of the outturn report) was £16.8m giving a total approved programme of £112.7m. Robust programme management and monitoring is in place.

New allocations (including Invest to Save bids approved under the delegated authority granted by Cabinet in June 2012) and rephasing of schemes which require approval and are detailed in Appendix 3.

- 7.2 The capital programme funding includes a significant amount of receipts anticipated to be delivered over the medium term. Failure to achieve, or delays to, the receipts would have financial implications for the Council. The position is being closely monitored and while there have been some changes since the budget was set, total receipts are currently on track.

8.0 CORPORATE INCOME MONITORING

8.1 The Council's budget includes significant income streams which are regularly monitored to ensure they are on track to achieve targets that have been set and so that remedial action can be taken at a very early stage. The three main areas are Council Tax, NNDR (business rates) and Sales Ledger. Current monitoring information relating to these is provided below. The Council pursues outstanding debt vigorously, until all possible recovery avenues have been exhausted, but also prudently provides for bad debts in its accounts.

8.2 In summary, the overall position shows collection levels NNDR ahead of target and sales ledger debt and council tax are outside the targets set.

INCOME COLLECTION – JUNE 2012			
	Actual	Target	Performance
Collection Levels:			
Council Tax Collection	29.36%	29.53%	0.17% behind target
NNDR Collection	33.60%	33.28%	0.32% inside target
Sales Ledger Outstanding Debt	9.39%	5.50%	3.89% behind target

8.3 **Council Tax (£61.1m)**

The percentage of the current year liability for council tax which the authority should have received during the year, as a percentage of annual collectable debit. The measure does not take account of debt that continues to be pursued and collected after the end of the financial year in which it became due. The final collection figure for all financial years exceeds 99%.

Year end performance 2011/12	97.8%
Year End Target for 2012/13	97.8%

Performance is cumulative during the year and expressed against the complete year's debit. Performance to the end of June is 0.17% behind of the target set for this year and the performance at the same time last year:

Month End Target	Month End Actual	Last year Actual
29.53%	29.36%	29.53%

8.4 **NNDR-Business Rates (£68.8m)**

The % of business rates for 2012/13 that should have been collected during the year. This target, as for council tax, ignores our continuing collection of earlier years' liabilities.

The measure does not take into account the debt that continues to be pursued and collected after the end of the financial year in which it

became due. As a general rule the final collection figure for any financial year exceeds 99%.

Year end performance 2011/12	98.3%
Year End Target for 2012/13	98.3%

Performance at the end of June is 0.32% inside the month end target and the collection at the same time last year.

Month End Target	Month End Actual	Last year Actual
33.28%	33.60%	33.28%

8.5 **Sales Ledger (£32.7m)**

This includes general debt and Social Care debt. Debt below 2 months is classified as a normal credit period.

The target percent is set relating cumulative debt outstanding from all years to the current annual debit. The targets and performance of income collection for are as follows:

Age of debt	Annual Target %	June 2012	
		£m	%
Total	5.50	3.226	9.39%

Performance for sales ledger outstanding debt is currently outside target. The majority of the debt relates to invoices under 6 months old, and over 12 months old. The service area has actively pursued higher debts during June and will continue to do so for the forthcoming months until the debt is reduced.

9.0 **BACKGROUND PAPERS**

2012/13 Budget Strategy / Financial Ledger reports

Report Prepared by:


Ken Clarke, Assistant Director: Finance, Audit & Information Governance (Chief Financial Officer) – 01952 383100;
Pauline Harris, Corporate Finance Manager – 01952 383701

Summary of 2012/13 Projected Variations

Service Delivery Unit	Total Variation
	£
Children's Safeguarding	1,941,821
Education, Culture & Skills	(34,000)
Family & Cohesion Services	(81,468)
Development, Business & Housing	0
Environmental & Leisure Services	0
Care & Support	833,000
Customer & People Services	293,883
Law, Democracy & Public Protection	0
Finance, Audit & Information Governance	(118,820)
Cooperative Council Delivery Unit	0
Council Wide	(200,000)
Total Projected Variation	2,634,416
Call on Corporate Contingency	(2,634,416)
Projected Year End Position	0
check = 0	0

2012/13 Revenue Budget Variations					
Description		Budget	Service	Comments	Flag for Service Variation
		£	£		
Childrens Safeguarding					
Children in Care Placements		9,812,530	1,395,395	Based on all known CiC placements and projected for expected leave dates where known - this will reflect a change in both periods of care and numbers within residential care. Latest CiC numbers for mid June were 305 (31 st March 2012 – 302)	↑↑↑↑
Child Protection and Assessment Staffing		2,079,250	323,966	This is based on the net cost of agency staff, taking their forecast costs and taking off budgets for posts being covered. There are various different agency staff used but in total the expenditure is for an average of 13.4 fte Agency staff . The cost of agency staff is offset by any vacancies being covered by such staff.	↑↑↑
Support for Children in Need/Legal Costs and Assessments		224,390	253,668	Reflects the costs associated with court proceedings, specific support for children in need and specific assessment requests. The level of such costs are subject to the individual cases which present during the year.	↑↑↑
Other Variances under £50,000		5,827,350	(31,208)		↓
Total Children's Safeguarding		17,943,520	1,941,821		
Staffing			(130,000)	There are expected to be some impact from vacancies arising in this year and the implementation of the restructure.	↓↓
Premature Retirement costs			96,000	Additional retirement costs are expected to arise after taking into account reductions from expenditure no longer being paid out.	↑
Income				There is a risk of reduced levels of income in particular around Traded Income services. There is currently insufficient information to determine the levels of service bought from the Council. Therefore, further detailed work is required to forecast income in order to determine levels of income to be generated with accuracy.	
Total Education, Culture & Skills			(34,000)		
Family & Cohesion Services					
Statements			300,000	Reflects the current projections based on known numbers in the system and a forecast of future statements. Projections of expenditure in this area are volatile due to the constant updating of information.	↑↑↑

2012/13 Revenue Budget Variations					
Description		Budget	Service	Comments	Flag for Service Variation
		£	£		
DSG			(250,000)	Funding brought forward from 2011/12 provisionally agreed by School's Forum to be used against pressures on statements. This will be ratified in due course.	↓↓
Community Cohesion				There is a risk of reduced levels of income in some areas of the Community Cohesion service. Further work is required in order to determine whether income targets can be met, but it is too early to determine with accuracy potential income shortfalls.	
Variations under £50k			(131,468)		↓↓
Total Family and Cohesion Services			(81,468)		
Care & Support					
Purchasing - all client groups		32,679,000	5,050,000	In the 2011/12 financial year the financial impact of the PCTs review of eligibility for clients with a Primary Health need had a major impact. The budget was overspent by £4.7m because of the increasing financially supported caseload the Council had inherited. The impact of this course of action continues into 2012/13. The increase in expenditure resulting from the full year impact of clients reassessed in 2011/12 is an estimated £1.3m (net of client income etc) falling to the Council. The anticipated expenditure falling to the Council in 2012/13 is £6.0m.	↑↑↑↑
Funding from the PCT			(2,700,000)	The rebalancing of spending on clients with a Primary Health Need referred to as Continuing Health Care will result in further funding being made available to the Council by the PCT. The expectation is that £2.7m will be made available as a grant to the Council.	↓↓↓↓
Funding from the PCT(DH funding)			(2,030,000)	£2.03m of this funding was passed to PCTs by the Department of Health to support Social Care. The funding was first made available in 2011/12. This funding is made available by way of a grant to the Council.	↓↓↓↓
Subtotal			320,000		
Income -client contributions for all client groups		-10,113,000	400,000	Further work is required to determine if client contributions are falling short of target. Contributions fell short of target in 2011/12 but a shortfall of this magnitude is cause for concern.	↑↑↑

2012/13 Revenue Budget Variations					
Description		Budget	Service	Comments	Flag for Service Variation
		£	£		
£101 - £250k	↑	Overspend			
£251 - £500k	↑↑				
£501k and above	↑↑↑				
	↑↑↑↑				

Capital Approvals**Slippage**

Scheme	£	Comment
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

New Allocations

Scheme	2012/13 £	2013/14 £	
Local Sustainable Transport Fund	143,835		PCT grant allocated to be used in 12/13
Invest to Save Initiatives:			
Town Centre Regeneration		300,000	Addition of 8th 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	Proposal is £325k p.a. For 4 years 12/13 to 15/16

PART A) – SUMMARY REPORT

1. SUMMARY OF MAIN PROPOSALS

1.1 This report sets out our Co-operative approach to developing a framework for community engagement relating to planning. The report also seeks Cabinet approval to amend the approach relating to the Development Plan Steering Group with its role being carried out through the regular meetings of Cabinet and Scrutiny.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 That Cabinet approve the Statement of Community Involvement for public consultation (See Appendix 1)
- 2.2 That Cabinet amend the approach relating to Development Plan Steering Group and approve that the approach will be through Cabinet and the Scrutiny Programme

3. SUMMARY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

COMMUNITY IMPACT	Do these proposals contribute to specific Priority Plan objective(s)?	
	Yes	All Council priorities <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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 hard to ensure that local people have access to suitable housing
	Will the proposals impact on specific groups of people?	
	Yes	The document aims to encourage engagement with planning with all parts of our community including development and business sectors. It also specifically highlights how the Council will seek to engage with groups who have previously been less involved with planning.
TARGET COMPLETION/ DELIVERY DATE	If approved at Cabinet in July then Public consultation will take place September – October 2012. The final revised document will be brought to Cabinet later in 2012.	
FINANCIAL/VALUE FOR MONEY IMPACT	Yes	There are financial implications of adopting the Statement of Community Involvement. These are outlined in paragraph 6 of this report. JAC 05.07.2012
LEGAL ISSUES	Yes	It is a statutory requirement under Section 18 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 for the Council to produce a Statement of Community Involvement. Legal advice will be provided as required during the process.
OTHER IMPACTS, RISKS & OPPORTUNITIES	Yes	The Statement of Community Involvement will provide greater overall clarity to encourage engagement and interaction with planning and also to reflecting the new streamlined processes pledged in the Business & Development Charter.
IMPACT ON SPECIFIC WARDS	No	Borough wide impact.

PART B) – ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

4. INFORMATION

- 4.1 The Statement of Community Involvement, which is a regulatory requirement in relation to development of the Local Plan, sets out the minimum standards the Council will deliver when engaging with the public through planning. The approach in practice will be to build upon this, with tailored and more innovative processes that ensure that we will be working with the community in the development of the plan. These activities will be specific to the different stages of plan making and pick up on new opportunities and best practice.
- 4.2 The Statement of Community Involvement will provide greater overall clarity for investors regarding the Council's requirements showing how to engage with the planning process embedding the streamlined processes pledged in the Business & Development Charter. The processes set out include updates to current approaches to planning engagement helping to achieve:
- the Council providing free pre-application planning advice on all schemes;
 - the provision of support from all teams within the Council in relation to Planning Application Workshops and advice.
- 4.3 In drafting the document teams from across the Council including Community Engagement, Corporate Communications, Customer Services, Equalities and Development Management have been involved. Their input has shaped the document and will be drawn upon in undertaking consultation on the document, in finalising the Statement and delivering its proposals.

Engagement with Members

- 4.5 Currently a small cross party Development Plan Steering Group is engaged with Officers working on the new Plan. The Group has no decision making powers, it's function is to provide advice to Cabinet on progress with the Development Plan. The Development Plan will play a critical role supporting and enabling the delivery of the Council's growth and inward investment agenda. It is therefore important that the Cabinet directly shape and drive the Development Plan.
- 4.6 It has also been identified by the existing Steering Group that greater emphasis needs to be placed on engaging with all ward members. This will ensure their local knowledge and experience shapes the plan and supports the involvement of communities across all parts of the Borough.
- 4.7 In the light of this it is proposed to change the process to that of engagement through the Cabinet and Scrutiny structure. It has already been agreed that Scrutiny will participate in the development of the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) which forms part of the overall development plan structure.

5. IMPACT ASSESSMENT – ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

- 5.1 In line with our Co-operative values the approach we will take is to engage communities in the planning process rather than simply seeking their views via traditional consultation methods at set stages which will help shape a much improved outcome representing the views of our communities.

6. Financial Implications

- 6.1 The draft Statement of Community Involvement proposes a number of enhancements to existing planning processes, some of which have a financial implication.
- 6.2 A wide range of techniques will be utilised to improve stakeholder involvement in the planning process. Whilst some of these communication techniques will add costs it is envisaged that this will be offset by the increased use of an on-line consultation portal. Consultation costs overall will be contained within existing budgets.

- 6.3 Support to planning applicants will be enhanced through the provision of pre-application advice and access to a Strategic Application Workshop service for large development applications. The provision of proactive advice earlier in the planning process will improve the service provided and allow a more efficient use of available resources. These services will be provided, free of charge to the applicant, by existing officer resources from the appropriate professional teams within the Council. As this will impact upon the capacity of these teams to undertake chargeable works a review of the budgeted income targets for these services may be required.
- 6.4 The financial implication of the introduction of Neighbourhood Plans depends upon the number and nature of the plans. The costs, which are to be met by the Local Authority, will include the costs of preparing the plans, the independent examination costs and the costs of a referendum to endorse the plan. CLG have estimated that these costs may total upwards of £20,000 per plan. There is no budgetary provision for these costs and they will be taken into account as part of the budget strategy for future years.
JAC 050712

7. PREVIOUS MINUTES

N/A

8. BACKGROUND PAPERS

N/A

Report prepared by Matt Wedderburn, Development Plans Team Leader

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1 Foreword

We hope that by involving people in the decisions that affect them we can create a better place for those who live, work and play in Telford and Wrekin. It is important that people know when and how they can be involved in the planning process. This document explains how Telford & Wrekin Council will engage different people in planning; both the production of new planning policy and the decisions made on planning applications.

Engagement will be carried out when people can most effectively be involved in those planning issues that concern them. Your views matter to the Council and are important in shaping the future of Telford and Wrekin.

This is the consultation draft of the Council's Statement of Community Involvement. We are publishing this for a period of six weeks for people to comment on our suggested methods of engagement. This consultation will take place between 20th August and 1st October 2012.

After the period of consultation, the Council will review the comments made and make alterations to the document where appropriate. When these updates have been made the Statement of Community Involvement will be adopted by the Council.

Councillor Charles Smith

Cabinet Member for Housing, Regeneration and Economic Development

2.1 What is a Statement of Community Involvement?

2.1.1 The Statement of Community Involvement is a document which provides people with information about how and when they can be involved with planning. It explains how different stakeholders (local businesses, developers and the general public) can get involved in the planning process, from preparing new policy documents to determining planning applications.

2.1.2 As a Co-operative Council, and in the spirit of localism, Telford & Wrekin is keen to involve residents, businesses and other representative organisations in the planning process.

2.1.3 The Telford & Wrekin Statement of Community Involvement is in accordance with national regulations which set expectations with regards to adequate stakeholder involvement in the planning process.

2.1.4 A glossary of all terms used in this document is provided in Section 9.1.

3 The Vision for Involvement

3.1 Our Vision

3.1.1 Local communities, businesses, investors and interest groups often have vital local knowledge and a stake in their local area. These groups are known as stakeholders. They have views and opinions on planning matters that are important to the Council. In an attempt to operate in an open and inclusive manner, the Council will endeavour to consider and incorporate the often diverse views that planning can arouse, with a view to creating stronger neighbourhoods and an improved borough for all.

3.1.2 The planning process in Telford & Wrekin; from policy development, to application decisions, is a dialogue between all interested parties. The Council will take account of the public's views and strive to see them incorporated in decision making, wherever possible.

3.1.3 All stakeholders in the planning process should understand how the Council will inform, engage and involve them in planning. This information will be set out clearly in the Council's Statement of Community Involvement.

3.2 Our Commitment

3.2.1 Telford & Wrekin Council is committed to involving communities and other stakeholders in the planning process. The Council will:

- Engage in a timely, and appropriate way with all stakeholders, ensuring people are invited to engage before major decisions have been made;
- Use a variety of methods to inform and engage communities in the planning process. The Council understands that people with different needs and interests require different methods to engage with planning;
- Explore new and innovative ways to engage with a wider range of people, especially focusing on electronic communication;
- Avoid using jargon and strive to communicate in the clearest and simplest way possible;
- Ensure public involvement is appropriate in scale in relation to the scale and nature of the planning issues being dealt with and in line with the resources available;
- Treat participants with respect and ensure the safety and wellbeing of participants by taking account of safeguarding frameworks, confidentiality and data protection guidelines⁽¹⁾;
- Keep under review the suitability and effectiveness of our methods of engagement, and make changes where necessary.

¹ It should be noted that not all comments can remain confidential as they may be subject to Freedom of Information requests or made public during a public inquiry, or examination of a document

4 The Planning System

4.1 How does Planning work?

4.1.1 Planning Policy

4.1.1.1 It is stated in the National Planning Policy Framework that the purpose of the UK planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development. To achieve this the planning process is guided by a forward looking plan.

4.1.1.2 Each local authority must prepare a **Local Plan**. This plan may be supported by other planning documents that together guide development in that area. All decisions on proposed new development will be judged against the policies contained in the Local Plan (plus other relevant policy documents).

4.1.2 Development Management (Planning Applications)

4.1.2.1 Most types of development need planning permission⁽²⁾. An applicant must submit an application⁽³⁾ to the council describing the proposed development. The Council must then consider the proposal against local planning policies, along with national guidance and other material considerations. Engagement in Development Management is described in more detail in Section 6.

4.2 Who is involved?

4.2.1 At different stages of the planning process (from producing policy documents to assessing applications) a range of stakeholders will be involved in different ways.

4.2.2 The Council holds a database of organisations and people who are to be kept informed about the development of planning policy and relevant planning applications in the Telford & Wrekin area. Any resident, business or interested party can add their details to the database by contacting the Development Plans Team via email (developmentplans@telford.gov.uk) or telephone (01952 384255).

Table 1 Stakeholders involved in planning

Stakeholder	How they're involved
General Public	At all the key stages of policy production, people who have registered on the Council database will be notified of the publication of documents and provided with full details of how they can make their views known. The Council will ensure that the key consultation stages are widely publicised. The general public may also be involved in planning application decisions. They may receive a letter or read a site notice about a proposed development and are able to comment on proposed developments.

² There are some types of development which do not require planning permission (such as some minor building works), however in most cases planning permission must be applied for

³ There are several different types of application dealt with by the Development Management team: for example, planning applications, listed building applications and advertisement consent.

4 The Planning System






Local Organisations and Businesses	As a 'Business winning and supporting Council' Telford & Wrekin is committed to enabling businesses to engage effectively with all Council services. Any local organisations and businesses who have an interest in planning can register with the Council to receive updates regarding planning policy production. The Council will also utilise existing business networks and contacts to make businesses aware of emerging planning policy. For further information on how the Council will support local companies please see the Development and Business Charter.
Parish and Town Council Members	Parish and Town Councillors are important representatives of the community. Parishes will be notified of planning applications in their locality and invited to comment. Planning Officers may attend the Parish Forum to engage with the Parishes as part of planning policy production. Officers will also use parish newsletters and attend individual parish meetings where appropriate. The Parishes are also the level at which Neighbourhood Plans are being produced in Telford & Wrekin.
Council Members	Elected Council Members sit on Plans Board to make decisions about some planning applications (see section 6.4). Members have a key role to play in preparing local planning policy and will be involved in this from the earliest stages.
Agents and Developers	This group includes landowners, private developers, and their agents. They have knowledge and expertise which is particularly relevant to the delivery of the Local Plan. The Council will use local networks and contacts to draw on this expertise, particularly regarding market conditions and the deliverability of development.

5 How you can be involved: Planning Policy

5.1 Methods we use

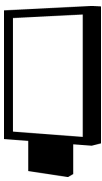


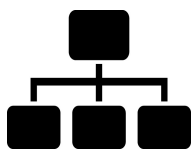




5.1.1 There are a wide range of techniques which can be used to involve stakeholders in planning matters. The following methods will be used at various stages to engage stakeholders in the production of planning policy. Details of which methods will be used when follow in section 5.3 - 5.5.

Table 2 Methods which the Council will use to engage with stakeholders

	Method	How it works	Type of Involvement
	Email and letters	Emails and letters are sent out to inform stakeholders about planning policy production and opportunities for involvement	Information and awareness raising
	Face to face questionnaires	Questionnaires are undertaken with the public at a range of locations around the borough (for example community centres, train/bus stations etc.) asking people's opinion about certain issues or policies	Active engagement
	Leaflet questionnaires	Distribution of leaflet questionnaires at a range of locations around the borough (for example libraries, post offices, leisure centres etc.) asking people's opinion about certain issues or policies	Engagement through seeking opinions of proposals
	Online questionnaire on the Council's consultation portal ⁽⁴⁾	Type of questions will differ at different stages of policy production; they could be broad open questions, multiple choice and specific questions related to a published document	Gathering opinion in general or regarding a published document
	Council notice boards/screens (libraries and community centres)	Posters and digital displays informing people about planning policy production in council owned buildings	Information and awareness raising

⁴ The Council has a web based consultation software package, where stakeholders can log in and provide comments on emerging planning policy online

5 How you can be involved: Planning Policy

	Method	How it works	Type of Involvement
	Non-Council notice boards/ stands/screens (village shop/hall, community centres)	Posters and information stands about planning policy production in non-council owned buildings	Information and awareness raising
	Press releases	Publication of an advert with information about planning policy production and opportunities to be involved in the local paper (the Shropshire Star - as the paper with the largest circulation)	Information and awareness raising
	Website pages	Publication of information about planning policy production	Information and awareness raising
	Social media (including Facebook and Twitter)	Publication of information about planning policy production, often directing stakeholders to the website/a questionnaire	Information and awareness raising
	Open workshops	Interactive engagement sessions where people's opinions and views are gathered through discussion and breakout groups	Active engagement with officers present to support our customers
	Young people's forum	Interactive engagement sessions where young people's opinions and views about planning policy production are gathered	Active engagement with officers present to support our customers
	Public meetings	Interactive engagement sessions where stakeholders' opinions are gathered - they are open to all and are widely advertised	Active engagement with officers present to support our customers
	Focus groups	Interactive consultation sessions where the views of a specific group of people (e.g. Parish councils, Wildlife Trusts) are sought - usually invite only events	Active engagement with officers present to support our customers

5 How you can be involved: Planning Policy

5.1.2 It should be noted that the methods the Council uses will be continually reviewed. The opportunities to use new types of engagement techniques and continually innovate our approach to engagement will be considered at each and every consultation. These activities are not set out in the Statement of Community Involvement as they will be specific to the circumstances of the consultation, reflecting new opportunities and best practice.














5.2 Types of Planning Document

5.2.1 The main planning policy document in Telford & Wrekin is the Local Plan, this is supported by a number of other planning policy documents. These each have a different status, therefore the amount of consultation that is required and carried out for each of the documents varies. The remainder of this section explains the consultation which will be carried out in the production of each of the different planning policy documents. The documents are:

- Development Plan Documents
- Sustainability Appraisal
- Community Infrastructure Levy
- Supplementary Planning Documents
- Neighbourhood Planning Documents

5.2.2 The following table shows which methods will be used at which stage in the production of each document. Sections 5.3 to 5.5 explain the purpose of each stage of production.

5 How you can be involved: Planning Policy

Methods used	Development Plan Documents and associated Sustainability Appraisal				Community Infrastructure Levy			Supplementary Planning Documents		Neighbourhood Planning	
	Early engagement	Strategy and Options	Draft Plan	Independent examination	Preliminary draft charging schedule	Draft charging schedule	Examination in public	Early engagement	Formal consultation	Neighbourhood area	Submission
 Email and letters	Y	Y	Y		Y	Y		Y	Y		
 Face to face questionnaires	Y							Y	Y		
 Leaflet questionnaires	Y	Y	Y					Y	Y		
 Online questionnaire on the Council's consultation portal	Y	Y	Y		Y	Y		Y	Y		
 Council notice boards/screens/information stands	Y	Y	Y								
 Non-Council notice boards/stands/screens	Y	Y	Y		Y	Y				Y	Y
 Press releases		Y	Y	Y			Y				
 Council website pages	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
 Social media (Twitter and Facebook)	Y	Y	Y					Y	Y	Y	Y
 Open workshops	Y							Y	Y		
 Young people's forum		Y									
 Public meetings		Y						Y	Y		
 Focus groups		Y			Y	Y		Y	Y		

5 How you can be involved: Planning Policy

5.3 Development Plan Documents

5.3.1 Development Plan Documents are statutory documents that contain land use planning policies and development proposals against which planning applications will be considered. The main Development Plan Document is the Local Plan. Set out below are the key stages of community engagement and involvement throughout the document preparation. There are several stages in the adoption of a Development Plan Document.



Stage 1: Early Engagement

5.3.2 At this stage the consultation is centred around the gathering of initial views about what issues people would like the Development Plan Document to cover. People will be encouraged to register their details on the development plans database so that they can be informed and involved in later stages of the document production.

5.3.3 All comments gathered at this stage are considered when writing the Strategy and Options stage document.

Stage 2: Strategy & Options Consultation

5.3.4 The consultation at this stage is for stakeholders to comment on the development proposals put forward by the Council. This is a statutory six week consultation period within which anyone can make comments on the options set out in the document. At this stage, as the consultation period is fixed, care will be taken by the Council to ensure all relevant parties are aware of the dates of the consultation period.

5.3.5 After the close of this consultation period, the Council will consider the comments received and make amendments to the document where appropriate. It may be the case that this consultation will identify matters/issues on which it will not be possible to build consensus. It is these matters which may need to be explored when the document is submitted for independent examination.

5.3.6 The Council will consider all comments made at this stage in producing the Draft Plan.

5 How you can be involved: Planning Policy

Stage 3: Draft Plan (Submission to the Secretary of State)

5.3.7 The Council is required to publish a Draft Development Plan Document before it submits the document to the Secretary of State for independent inspection at an Examination in Public. The Council must invite representations on the document for a period of at least 6 weeks. A report detailing the main issues raised in this consultation will be submitted to the inspector.

5.3.8 For comments to be considered by the planning inspector responsible for the Examination in Public they must be submitted at this stage.

Stage 4: Independent Examination by the Secretary of State & Adoption of Final Plan

5.3.9 An independent examination is carried out by a planning inspector appointed by the Secretary of State. The inspector will consider the "soundness" of the plan, this involves a legal compliance check, and assessing if the plan is justified, effective and consistent with national policy.

5.3.10 The Council will publish an advert informing people of the details of the examination.

5.3.11 Anyone who has a concern with the document has the right to have their comments considered by the inspector. The inspector will consider most comments in writing, although everyone has a right to speak at the inquiry. The inspector will try to make the inquiry as informal as possible.

5.3.12 After the examination, the inspector will produce a report which will recommend that the Council either adopt the document or make changes before adopting the document. This report will explain any changes which must be made to the Development Plan Document for it to be found "sound". Following this the Council will adopt the document.

5.4 Sustainability Appraisal

5.4.1 The Sustainability Appraisal process considers any likely significant environmental, social and economic effects of the policies or proposals contained within planning documents. The process should identify if there could be any negative impacts which could be caused by the policy. If this is the case measures are included in the plan to minimise or remove these impacts. The Appraisal process includes a Strategic Environmental Assessment which also has to be carried out in the preparation of all Development Plan Documents and Supplementary Planning Documents.

5.4.2 The Sustainability Appraisal report is published for consultation at the same time as the relevant policy documents.

5 How you can be involved: Planning Policy

5.5 Community Infrastructure Levy

5.5.1 The Community Infrastructure Levy is a payment that local authorities can choose to charge on new developments in their area. The Council must consult on the proposed charging schedule.

Stage 1: Preliminary Draft Charging Schedule

5.5.2 The Council will produce and publish a Preliminary Draft Charging Schedule, this will set out what the proposed charges would be and how they would be implemented. The objective of this phase of informal consultation is to gain feedback on the proposed rates.

Stage 2: Draft Charging Schedule

5.5.3 The Draft Charging Schedule will be formally published and consulted on for a minimum of four weeks. This will be widely advertised. During this period anyone can provide their comments to the Council and suggest changes to document. Stakeholders may also request to speak at the Examination in Public. The Council may make changes to the document following this phase of consultation, prior to the Examination in Public.

Stage 3: Examination in Public

5.5.4 The Council has to submit the Final Charging Schedule to the Secretary of State for independent examination. An independent examination is carried out by a planning inspector appointed by the Secretary of State. The Council will publish an advert informing people of the details of the examination. Anyone who requested to speak at the Examination in Public during stage 2 (above) will be heard at the examination. The inspector appointed to the examination will determine the examination procedures and timescales. At the end of the examination the inspector will either approve, reject or approve with changes the Charging Schedule. Following this, if successful, the Council will adopt the Charging Schedule.

5 How you can be involved: Planning Policy

5.6 Supplementary Planning Documents

5.6.1 Supplementary Planning Documents are produced to support policies and proposals contained in a Local Plan. They provide additional information/guidance to support the implementation of a policy or proposal.

Stage 1: Early Involvement

5.6.2 The nature of community involvement for Supplementary Planning Documents will depend on the nature of the document being produced. If a site specific Supplementary Planning Document is being produced for a major development site, the focus will be on involving local residents and businesses in the vicinity of the site. Where possible, events will be held within the area the document will affect. If the Supplementary Planning Document is more technical in nature for example concerning car parking standards, the Council's approach will focus more on engaging specialist stakeholders e.g. Developers and highway engineers. The main focus of this informal stage of engagement will be information gathering, and the consideration of issues and options.

Stage 2: Formal Consultation

5.6.3 Once a draft document has been produced a formal consultation period will be held for no less than four weeks.

Stage 3: Adoption

5.6.4 Following this the Council will produce a statement explaining how the comments raised at the formal consultation stage have been considered in the re-drafting of the final Supplementary Planning Document. Anyone who provides comments at the formal consultation stage will receive notification of the adoption of the final document.

5 How you can be involved: Planning Policy

5.7 Neighbourhood Planning

5.7.1 A new tier of planning has recently been introduced, enabling local communities to prepare Neighbourhood Development Plans (also known as Neighbourhood Plans). A plan can enable communities to establish general planning policies for development and use of land in a neighbourhood. The level of detail in the plan will be set by the local community.

Neighbourhood Area Designation

5.7.2 The first stage of the process is to establish the area to be covered by a plan. In Telford & Wrekin, these areas are likely to be parishes. The Council therefore receive an application from the Parish/Town Council to designate a Neighbourhood Area.

5.7.3 The Council must then hold a consultation of at least 6 weeks to ensure people in the neighbourhood area i.e. those who live, work or carry on business in the area to which the application relates, have the chance to comment on the neighbourhood area suggested. As a result of the consultation, the neighbourhood area will either be accepted or refused by the Borough Council, the outcome is publicised as required by legislation. If accepted, work will be led by the Parish Council to develop a Neighbourhood Development Plan⁽⁵⁾.

Preparing the Plan

5.7.4 In producing the Neighbourhood Development Plan, engagement and consultation should be done by the Parish Council in a way that enables as many people as possible to be aware of the plans⁽⁶⁾ (including people living, working and doing business in the area to which the plan relates). Critical to this stage is identifying the key issues relevant to planning in the neighbourhood area. This will be followed by the Parish Council developing a local vision for development and detailed policies e.g. covering where development will be supported. Consultation will be carried out by the Parish Council concerned and it's nature may vary depending on the area involved; the stage of the plan - with a minimum position set by legislation; and, the approach of the local Parish Council.

Plan Submission - Examination - Referendum

5.7.5 Neighbourhood Development Plans have to meet a number of conditions (focused on legal compliance and that plans take account of wider policy considerations - for instance that plans have regard to national and local planning policy) before they can be put to a community referendum and legally come into force. The first step is for a Parish Council to submit its final Neighbourhood Development Plan to the Borough Council. The Council will then publicise the proposed plan to local people for a minimum six week period. The Council will publish the Neighbourhood Development Plan on the Council website and promote this as widely as possible in the plan area.

5.7.6 An independent assessor will be then appointed by the Council to undertake an examination to independently check the plan satisfies the key tests of neighbourhood planning. Depending on the outcome of the examination stage, a referendum (a vote) organised by the Council will then be held in the area covered by the plan. The plan must be considered favourably

5 The method by which the plan is written is at the discretion of the neighbourhood area (Parish); Telford & Wrekin Council officers will assist, including by providing statistical information, and up to date guidance on how to produce Neighbourhood Development Plans

6 Activities may be led by a Neighbourhood Planning Steering Group

5 How you can be involved: Planning Policy

by over 50% of those who voted to be successful. Following a successful outcome at the referendum, the Council then accept the Neighbourhood Development Plan as "made" ⁽⁷⁾ and can then be used when determining planning applications.

7 Also known as adopted.

6 How you can be involved: Development Management

6.1 Planning Applications

6.1.1 Certain types of development require planning permission⁽⁸⁾, such as building, engineering, mining and certain changes to the use of a building or piece of land.

6.1.2 An applicant must submit an application to the Council describing the proposed development, applicants may choose to appoint a planning consultant to do this on their behalf. The Council must then consider the proposal against local planning policies, along with national guidance and other material considerations.

6.1.3 The government sets minimum standards for consulting the public regarding planning applications. Anyone is entitled to comment on a planning application, either to object or support the proposals. The following section describes how to find out about current applications, and how to comment on different applications.

Pre-application discussions & workshops

6.1.4 The Council is keen to encourage early engagement of all parties (including the public) to discuss and resolve issues prior to the submission of a planning application. This may be householder applicants discussing extensions with neighbouring properties or large scale developers holding a public consultation event for a new residential scheme.

6.1.5 As set out in the new Development & Business Charter the Council will provide free pre-application planning advice on all schemes, and encourage potential applicants to access this service.

6.2 Publicising an Application

6.2.1 The level of advertising of an application is determined by the type of application and the location. There is a statutory requirement for some applications to be advertised in a local newspaper and for a site notice to be displayed on or near the application site. The council will need to advertise an application if:

- The proposal is a departure from the Local Plan
- It affects a right of way
- It has an environmental statement submitted
- It is a major application
- It involves works to a listed building or the development affects the setting of a listed building
- It is within a conservation area or the development affects the setting of a conservation area.

6.2.2 There is a 21 day period for responses to be submitted to the Council if an application has been advertised. Applications are advertised in the Shropshire Star (as the paper with the largest circulation locally) on a Thursday.

6.2.3 The Council also sends a site notice with all applications to the applicant (or agent if one has been used) requesting that the notice is displayed on or adjacent to the site. The notice includes information on the nature of the application and details of how to comment.

⁸ There are some types of development which do not require planning permission (such as some minor building works), however in most cases planning permission must be applied for.

6 How you can be involved: Development Management

6.2.4 Occupiers of properties adjacent to the proposed development site are notified individually by letter. In cases where there are isolated applications (such as in the rural area) or larger applications which may have wider than adjacent influence it will be the Local Authority's judgement how far the neighbour notification will apply.

6.2.5 Appropriate Statutory Consultees are also notified of the application. Not all Statutory Consultees are consulted on each application; the organisations consulted will depend on the type and nature of the application.

6.2.6 All those who have been notified of a planning application have 21 days to send comments to the Council.

6.3 Amendments to an Application

6.3.1 In order to avoid unnecessary delay, for minor amendments, such as small alterations to the design of extensions or individual houses where the amendment results in smaller buildings, no additional re-notification is undertaken. More significant alterations, such as re-siting of roads in residential developments or altering the siting of extensions or building closer to neighbouring properties may require neighbour re-notification - this is not always 21 days.

6.3.2 In summary, significant amendments are subject to re-notification and possibly re-advertisement, whereas no notification would usually take place for minor amendments.

6.4 Determining an Application

6.4.1 When the Council receives an application it will be assigned to a planning officer. The officer will produce a report about the planning application which will recommend either approval or refusal. Prior to preparation of this report, the officer may liaise with other officers in the Council (for example; engineers, parks and open spaces etc.) and potentially external bodies such as the Environment Agency and Parish Councils depending on the nature of the application. All comments from statutory bodies, other Council Officers and the general public are considered and have to be weighed up against national and local policy advice and guidance in coming to a decision. It is important to note that just because the Council has received an objection to a development this does not automatically result in refusal of the application.

6.4.2 The majority of applications submitted to the Council are determined by planning officers through delegated authority. This helps ensure that most applications are determined within the statutory period. Applications which cannot be determined by delegated powers are considered by Plans Board, these include:

- Where the planning officer considers that the application should be considered by Plans Board
- Where the approval of an application would be a departure from local planning policy
- Where the proposal involves the Council either as applicant or land owner as required by the scheme of delegation to officers and committees
- Where the applicant/land owner is either a borough Councillor or Council employee at senior level

6 How you can be involved: Development Management

- Where a borough Councillor or a Parish/Town Council makes a written request for the application to be considered by Plans Board
- If the application is subject to a new or change to a planning obligation (also known as S106 agreement/undertaking).

6.4.3 Plans Board comprises of a Chair, a Vice Chair and 8 other Borough Councillors. Plans Board usually meets every 3-4 weeks. Members of the public are allowed to speak at Plans Board if they have registered to do so in advance of the meeting through the Council's Democratic Services⁽⁹⁾.

6.4.4 Applications are either:

- Approved
- Approved with conditions/obligations⁽¹⁰⁾
- Refused

6.4.5 After a decision is made, neighbours, Parish Councils and members who commented on the application will be notified of the outcome. If the decision was taken by committee at Plans Board the resolution will also be published in the minutes of the meeting.

6.5 Appeals

6.5.1 If an application has not been determined within the appropriate timescales, the application has been refused, or the applicant disagrees with the conditions attached to the granting of permission the applicant has a right of appeal to the national Planning Inspectorate. This right of appeal only applies to the applicant, not a third party (for example a neighbour).

6.5.2 There are several different types of appeal and these are dealt with in different ways. If an appeal is received everyone who was consulted on the original application, including those who commented, are notified of the appeal and information is provided on how to make any further views known. There is no need to re-submit previous information sent with the planning application as all this information will be sent to the Planning Inspectorate.

6.5.3 Appeals are dealt with either in writing, (if a written representations appeal) or in person at an informal hearing or public inquiry.

6.5.4 A written representations appeal is determined by the Inspectorate on the basis of written statements submitted by the appellant, the Council and any third parties. If a public inquiry is to be held to consider an appeal, a site notice is displayed with details of the date and location of the event. Third parties are able to attend both informal hearings and public inquiries.

9 For further information see http://www.telford.gov.uk/download/downloads/id/1900/information_about_public_speaking.

10 Conditions may either be restrictive conditions to mitigate the potential impact of a development or a pre-commencement condition which is something that may need to be rectified before the development can commence. The application could also be subject to a planning obligation - a Section 106 agreement or charges made under a Community Infrastructure Levy (should the Council choose to adopt one). Section 106 agreements are private agreements negotiated between local planning authorities and persons with an interest in a piece of land, they are intended to make acceptable development which would otherwise be unacceptable in planning terms under the Town and Country Planning Act 1990.

6 How you can be involved: Development Management

6.5.5 To reduce the amount of time taken to process small household appeals the Inspectorate offers a Householder Appeal service. A householder appeal is an appeal against a refusal on a householder planning application⁽¹¹⁾. These appeals are carried out electronically, the inspector will only consider the material which was submitted to the local authority when it made its decision, and the appeal form submitted by the appellant. There is no opportunity for any party to submit further representations. Appeals will usually be dealt with within 8 weeks.

11 Appeals where the Local Authority have failed to make a decision, applications for additional dwellings, applications relating to development to a flat and appeals against the authority's decision to impose a condition on a planning permission for a householder development are not suitable for the Householder Appeals Service.

7 Ensuring Equal Opportunities

7.1 Learning from Past Involvement

7.1.1 Telford & Wrekin Council are keen for a wide representation of our borough's population to be involved in planning. Equalities data has been collected when carrying out previous consultations with the public on planning policy. Using this data we can see which sections of society are less involved in planning.

7.1.2 It is evident from this data :

- More men than women engage with planning
- A greater number of people aged 40-64 engage with planning than any other age range
- The majority of those involved are White and British

7.1.3 Unfortunately limited data has been collected regarding stakeholders with disabilities, it is recognised that this is a protected characteristic that should be considered when reviewing our approach to engagement in the future.

7.2 Addressing Under-representation

7.2.1 Many reasons may exist for the under-representation of certain groups such as selecting potentially excluding locations for engagement events, or the use of inappropriate methods of engagement. We will seek to identify reasons for under-representation and adapt our communication methods to meet the participatory needs of underrepresented groups, even where limited data is available. Progress will be monitored through the annual monitoring report.

Table 3 Methods used to engage hard to reach groups

Hard to reach group targeted	Methods to use
Young people (under 35)	Engaging with the Young Peoples Forum as part of new policy production and using Social Media
People over 65	Holding our face to face consultation events at appropriate locations and using existing networks and groups
BME communities (including gypsies, travellers and travelling show people)	Holding our face to face consultation events at appropriate locations and using existing networks and groups such as "connecting communities"

8 Monitoring & Review

8.1 Monitoring

8.1.1 The Annual Monitoring Report, considers the effectiveness of local planning policies. Future Annual Monitoring Reports will provide a summary of the previous years community involvement activities and assess their effectiveness.

8.1.2 The Annual Monitoring Report is published annually in December, it is available at <http://www.telford.gov.uk/planning>

8.2 Review

8.2.1 In the future the Statement of Community Involvement will be reviewed as required. The engagement methods outlined here will be supplemented, as appropriate, to reflect best practice in community engagement, to better manage stakeholder expectations and to address specific problems or concerns as these emerge. The Council will always seek to maximise effective engagement of all stakeholders in planning.

9.1 Terms used in this document

Annual Monitoring Report: A document which assesses the extent to which local planning policies are being achieved.

Black and Minority Ethnic "BME" Groups: A term used to cover all the characteristics of a 'racial group', BME refers to people who do not define themselves as being White using the Census definitions.

Community Infrastructure Levy: A levy that local authorities can choose to charge on new developments in their area. The money can be used to support development by funding infrastructure that the Council, local community and neighbourhoods want - for example new or safer road schemes, park improvements or a new health centre⁽¹²⁾.

Conditions: Planning applications can be granted permission "with conditions", this means development is allowed but only if the certain conditions are met such as development must start within 3 years of the granting of permission.

Development Management: The Council service that considers planning applications

Development Plan Documents: The term used in the Planning Regulations under the Local Development Framework system to describe the statutory documents that contain land use planning policies and development proposals against which planning applications will be considered.

Examination in Public/Independent Examination: All Development Plan Documents will be subject to independent examination by an inspector appointed by the Secretary of State. The examination is to test the "soundness" of the document (this involves a legal compliance check, and an assessing if the plan is justified, effective and consistent with national policy).

Local Plan: The term used by the government in current national policy to describe the key planning policy document for a Local Authority area. It should set out the key policies and proposals for meeting the economic, environmental and social aims for the future of the area, where this effects the development and use of land. This term is now used rather than Core Strategy.

Material Consideration: Factors that will be taken into account when determining planning applications. Examples include: nature conservation issues, traffic, disabled access.

National Planning Policy Framework: The government's national planning policies (issued in March 2012) It replaces national Planning Policy Statements and Planning Policy Guidance Notes along with some circulars.

Neighbourhood Development Order: Local communities can produce a Neighbourhood Development Order to permit development they want to see without the need for planning applications. These must be supported by more than 50% of people in a referendum.

12 <http://www.communities.gov.uk/planningandbuilding/planningsystem/communityinfrastructurelevy/>

9 Glossary

Neighbourhood Development Plan: Neighbourhood forums (In Telford & Wrekin these are usually Parish and Town Councils) can use new neighbourhood planning powers to establish planning policies for the development and use of land in a neighbourhood. It must conform to national planning policies and the strategic policies that Telford & Wrekin Council have in place but once completed becomes part of the statutory planning policies for the area.

Obligations (Section 106 agreements): Private agreements negotiated, usually in the context of planning applications, between local planning authorities and persons with an interest in a piece of land, they are intended to make acceptable development which would otherwise be unacceptable in planning terms.

Planning Application: Most types of development need planning permission from the Local Authority. To apply for permission a developer must submit a planning application to the Local Authority who will make a decision. The Planning Application is a form which sets out information about the proposed development, it is accompanied by maps and plans of the development.

Planning Permission: Developers must request permission from the Local Authority to carry out development by submitting a planning application which will then be approved or refused.

Plans Board: The Board's main role is to determine applications for planning permission within the Borough. Not all applications come before the Board – decisions on many minor applications are delegated to Officers. The Board consists of 9 Council members and is politically balanced.

Regulations: Refers in this context to the national planning regulations to which all local planning authorities have to adhere in preparing plans.

Secretary of State: A cabinet minister who is in charge of a government department. The Secretary of State for Communities & Local Government oversees planning.

Soundness (of a Planning Document): Once a Development Plan Document has been produced, the local planning authority must submit it for independent examination where the "soundness" of the document is tested, namely that it is positively prepared, justified, effective and consistent with national policy.

Stakeholders: People, groups and organisations which may be affected by planning, includes the general public, developers, Councillors and any other interested party.

Statutory Consultees: Organisations and bodies, defined by statute, who must be consulted on relevant planning applications and as part of relevant planning policy production.

Strategic Environmental Assessment: Required by European Legislation, an assessment of the effects of policies and proposals within the Local Plan on the environment.

Supplementary Planning Document: Policy documents which provide policy guidance to supplement policies and proposals contained within Development Plan Documents.

Sustainability Appraisal: An appraisal of the potential impacts of policies from an environmental, economic, and social perspective. This will inform the Council of the potential implications of different alternatives. Strategic Environmental Assessment and Sustainability Appraisal will be undertaken together.

Consultation Response from Hollinswood Infant Parent

From:

Sent: 07 July 2012 09:27

To: School Organisation

Subject: Hollinswood Schools

Dear Jules Millington,

I attended the meeting at Hollinswood Infant School this week and gained the answers to the questions we had. While I agree that a Primary School is obviously a better system for children avoiding the 'new school' issue at the end of year 2 I still have concerns as a parent about the geographical difference between the 2 schools.

As discussed at the meeting the structure of the new school day would be up to the 'new' school to organise. As the current Infant/Junior school system works there is a 5 minute difference between the schools to allow parents to pick children up. I have 2 children my son is in reception and my daughter is nearly 3. So for example when my son is in year 2 my daughter will be in reception and could be in different buildings starting at the same time. It will be impossible to be in 2 places at once.

Also the benefit of a Primary school is that there is no 'new school experience', from the meeting it was suggested that the year groups would be spilt up and a mix of year groups between the schools. This way it would cause unsettlement each year as year 1 they could be in Infant building, next year in Junior then back to the Infants. The other option would be to keep the lower school in the 'Infants' and the upper school in the 'Juniors' but this is going to cause the same issues of a 'new school' which you are claiming you are trying to avoid.

I agree that a Primary school is the better system but with Hollinswood Infant and Junior I don't believe this to be the case due to the building layout of the 2 schools. As you have said in the meeting all the other school mergers within Telford are joined building without the separation like our school.

I believe if these plans were to go ahead it would cause more unsettlement each year for the children, than the one move from year 2 to year 3.

I hope my views will be taken into account when the decision is made.
Many Thanks

Consultation Response from Hollinswood Infant parent

From:

Sent: 04 July 2012 20:02

To: School Organisation

Subject: consultation views

These are my thoughts I would like considered as part of the consultation process.

My concerns are that you say one of the main reasons to merge is to ease transition, how is this realistically going to be any better under the proposed merger if the schools will still be on two sites. There is a huge risk that the schools will remain very separate, and that there will still be a them and us culture.

You speak about raising standards as a merged school but how is this going to happen when we are classed as outstanding and the junior school satisfactory? Will our current high standards be pulled down and what is the chance of their standards being pulled up by us when it is their head that is going to be running both schools?

Thank you

Hollinswood Infant and Junior School Proposed Merger Consultation Meeting held at Hollinswood Infant School Wednesday 4th July 2012

Staff Meeting	4.00pm
Governors Meeting	5.00pm
Parents Meeting	6.00pm

In attendance representing Telford & Wrekin Council were:

- Jim Collins, Assistant Director - Education, Skills and Culture
- Kathy Swallow, School Organisation Admissions & Planning
- Maria Haywood, HR Consultant (4pm - 6pm)
- Jules Millington, School Organisation Admissions & Planning

Kathy began each meeting by explaining the process we have been through so far and the timetable for the remainder of the process, and what are considered to be the advantages of an all through primary school. Maria followed on from Kathy and explained the human resources aspect of the merger and the process that would follow should the merger be approved by cabinet on 26th July. At all meetings Jim Collins explained and reaffirmed the benefits of merging an infant and junior school.

The following questions and comments were raised during the **Staff** meeting:

Q: When the decision is taken to publish the public notice will this be based on the funding implications or on the responses from the consultation.

A: If the Cabinet decide to publish the public notice this will be the first indication that the merger will go ahead. The cabinet will have all of the responses from the consultation prior to the cabinet meeting on the 26th and will then weigh up the pros and cons and will decide whether they will proceed with the merger.

Q: What will happen to the savings generated by the process; eg the loss of a headteacher?

A: All savings are put back into the LA's School budget and will be distributed between the schools. Any monies remaining the balances of the 'closed' school will be transferred to the newly formed primary school.

Q: Who will have to pay the costs if there are any redundancies?

A: There were no redundancies following the two mergers last year, however if there were to be any redundancies the LA would absorb the costs.

Q: Is there any evidence that merged primaries perform better than separate infant and juniors?

A: It is too early to assess the schools that merged last year. During the process in Birmingham that merged 37 pairs of schools it was Jim's experience that the schools performed better.

Q: If there is no hard facts to support this theory, then this does not seem to be a good enough reason to merge.

A: Various examples of recent mergers eg Lawley, Dawley, Malinslee, Old Park have all performed better since they became a primary school.

Q: Had all previously merged schools moved into one building

A: Some had, but in the Birmingham scenario some schools had considerable distance between the sites, challenges were overcome to establish successful, workable primary schools. Good organisation and management were key to ensuring success.

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Q: Can you explain what effect the merger would have on funding, ie would the resource diminish due to the merger?

A: There will be a new funding structure from April 2013 and it not clear exactly how the funding will operate. However the new funding will be predicated by numbers of children on roll, which will not be affected by the merger, there is also a new pupil premium which could benefit Hollinswood.

Q: Will it automatically be the Infant school that will close?

A: It is normal to retain the remaining Headteacher and therefore we would expand the age range for the Junior school. This is not a take over it is a merger.

Q: How would the merger affect Ofsted and previous ratings.

A: Both schools are due for inspection and substantial amounts of work have been done since the previous inspections which would be recognised in any future inspection. If the infant was closed it would be likely that it would lose its 'outstanding' category.

Q: What other awards would the infant lose, basic skills award for example or can it be transferred?

A: This would have to be checked out. Collectively all the skills transfer into the new school strengthening the skills base of the school.

Q: Can we inspected by Ofsted during the merger process?

A: Whilst no guarantee can be made. Jim would request that a proposed inspection be deferred until the merger was complete.

Q: How will the new primary be organised eg: 2 deputies, 2 separate buildings same as at this point in time

A: Suggest that a governors working party be developed during the summer to consider the future workings of the school. They will decide what will be the best fit for the school. Location will be a factor, but until the working group is functioning we cannot answer the question.

Q: Do the governors decide the new staffing structure?

A: Once a structure is agreed the Governors will distribute the new structure to all staff and trade unions. There will be a four week consultation period. If there is more than one person for a post then it will be necessary to conduct interviews.

Q: Will pay grades be protected? Eg deputy head teachers?

A: Yes there will be a degree of protection, depending on the new staff structure.

Q: Will staff on maternity leave be considered and kept informed?

A: Every effort will be made to ensure that they are still part of the process. Staff on maternity leave have the same rights as all other staff.

Q: For those on holiday, how will the staff be informed of the outcome of the cabinet meeting.

A: The staff would like to be emailed. The Business Manager is to provide email addresses of those who would like to be informed on 26th July. LA will endeavour to email staff on 26th after the cabinet meeting.

Q: What other factors will be taken into consideration by the cabinet?

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A: Council policy, parental views, wider development of the Borough, the movement towards primary schools.

Q: When considering all the benefits and policies could it be decided to work cooperatively but remain as two separate schools?

A: Parental confidence in both schools has been demonstrated by the high percentage of pupils that already transfer between the two schools (98%). Consideration would be given to how best serve the people of Telford and Wrekin.

Q: Staff were concerned that the Infant school was currently rated as outstanding by Ofsted.

A: If infant 'closes' then the outstanding status would close. However the LA is certain that neither school has stood still since their last Ofsted and as the inspection framework had changed completely it was impossible to say what would be the outcome of a new inspection. If the merger proceeded it would provide the opportunity to work together to improve the outcomes across both phases.

Q: Some of the staff felt that a lot of the drivers and benefits of mergers did not apply in this instance and could not see why the merger should proceed.

A: The benefits of the merger were reiterated. All staff were urged to express their views via email, post and telephone and all this information would be fed back to the Cabinet.

Q: It was felt that the situation of the buildings were not conducive to a merger.

A: The issue of the buildings is not ideal, but the challenges are not insurmountable with a bit of creative management and organisation.

Q: Have any considerations been given to increased development in the area.

A: It is thought that there will be a lot of development around the Town Centre and this would undoubtedly impact on Hollinswood as this would be the nearest school. In the long term the school and its capacity would have to be revisited, in the short term it may be that creative landscaping may assist to integrate the two schools.

Q: Would there still be two separate entrances.

A: This would be a matter for the governors to decide.

Q: It was felt that if the two schools merged it may be confusing for visitors to ascertain where the entrance would be.

A: The re-branding grant could assist in improving the signposting.

Q: Parents are buying new uniform now, will they be required to buy new uniform again in January?

A: We would suggest that the re-branding grant could be used to assist with uniform and we would suggest that the new uniform would not be issued until September 2013 – but this would be a decision for the governing body.

Q: Should the staff give their views to the Governors.

A: All comments, views and statements should be sent to the LA, but the staff can always send their views etc to both the governors and the LA.

Q: Should the teaching staff issue a statement?

A: All views are important and any statement would form part of the consultation papers.

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Staff were very upset that the first they knew of the merger was the article in the Shropshire Star.

Press releases were sent out without the knowledge of Jim or Kathy who felt that it was regrettable that this had occurred. Every effort would be made to keep the staff informed about the outcome of the cabinet meeting on 26th July.

All staff were encouraged to have their say.

The following questions and comments were raised during the **Governors** meeting:

An apology was made regarding the erroneous report by the Shropshire Star.

It was explained that any savings from the merger would be fed back into the LA's school budget and would be redistributed amongst the schools only.

Q: Who will be responsible for funding any redundancies.

A: Response as before

Q: Would VR be an option for staff?

A: At the last two mergers all staff were retained, albeit some staff had a reduction in their working hours. If there were more staff than posts then VR would be available as necessary.

Q: Would there be reduction to the budget.

A: Response as before

Q: Who would decide the new structure

A: In previous mergers and working party of school governors, made up of representatives of from both governing bodies, would be formed and, working with HR, would develop the new structure. It had been suggested at the meeting at the Junior school on 3rd July that a working party could be formed during the school holidays to plan and prepare a new structure

Q: The Governors felt that this merger was very different from the last two as the buildings could not be joined.

A: It was felt that development in the Town Centre may increase need in the future and accommodation and capacity at Hollinswood may have to be revisited. Some of the governors felt that this was a way off.

Q: It was felt that the proximity of the buildings would severely impede a successful merger

A: The effectiveness of the buildings was not insurmountable and a primary school benefits greatly from a single assessment policy and curriculum planning across the key stages.

Q: If the merger was to proceed, would there be any money for landscaping?

A: There may be some monies available for landscaping – this would need to be investigated but there are lots of opportunities to improve the aspect of the school eg: forest schools

Q: Would staff at risk be eligible for redeployment

A: Every effort would be given to staff at risk to locate vacant posts within LA schools. We have had considerable success redeploying staff at risk in previous mergers.

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Q: Within the new staffing structure would there be the opportunity for a new class?

A: There would be the opportunity for staff to put an expression of interest during the structure consultation. The head teacher and governors would make the final decision on the new structure.

Q: What is the process to becoming an academy.

A: If we were to shut both schools, then there is an expectation that it will become an academy. We would be required to seek an expression of interest for sponsors. The LA is allowed to express a preference, but the final decision would lie with the Secretary of State. It is a lengthy process

Q: If we decided to pursue the academy route is it likely the school would be rebuilt?

A: The LA provide the building, the sponsor runs the school. There is no money in the budget at present to rebuild Hollinswood.

Q: The governing body are concerned about the Ofsted status of the Infants school

A: As there is a new inspection framework it is difficult to know what the outcome of any inspection would be. Significant improvements have been made to both schools since their last inspections, both schools are demonstrating improvements via the RAISEOnline data. As an ambassador for school improvement Jim would not promote any project that would diminish standards in any of our schools.

All governors were encouraged to submit their views during the consultation period.

The following questions and comments were raised during the **parent's** meeting:

Q: Is there any plans to rebuild?

A: Response as before.

Q: How would the merger affect ABC Nursery.

A: There is no intention to change the relationship between the school and the nursery. It is a relationship that the LA would encourage as an attached nursery provides a conducive preschool environment.

Q: Would there be any change in the start and finish time of the school day?

A: It would be a decision for the governing body. Perhaps the entrances could be reconfigured to assist parents that have children in both buildings.

Q: Are there other examples of mergers that have succeeded in two buildings.

A: In previous mergers we were able to link the buildings, however this is not always the case. The problems are not insurmountable. Sympathetic landscaping may be an option to link the two school buildings. Future development in the town centre may provide additional funds to adjust the buildings.

Q: How would staff be organised.

A: This would be the a decision made by the governing body.

Q: Who determines the head-teacher?

A: If the infant school closes there is already a head teacher in situ in the Junior school. If as in previous mergers both head teachers resigned we would need to advertise for a head teacher.

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Q: Who initiates the process in this instance (ie resignation of one Head teacher in linked infant and junior school.)

A: There is a rubric that states if the school is a community school then it is the LA that instigates a consultation. This differs from a Voluntary Aided or foundation school as the governing body can initiate the consultation process.

Q: How would you ensure that the workload of the new head teacher would remain manageable?

A: This would need to be taken into consideration within the new structure. Even as a merged school it would be an average size for a primary.

Q: Why change it if it is working so well at the moment?

A: The benefits of merging were reiterated.

Q: Some parents expressed concerns regarding bullying because of the extended age range of the children.

A: This is an issue that Telford and Wrekin take very seriously. We have 45 primary schools all of whom have dealt with these issues. As an Authority we are not aware of increased incidents and it is up to the senior leadership team within a school to address this issue. We are not aware of any increase in bullying due to school mergers.

Q: Would the dinner halls be merged?

A: This would be a decision made by the Governing Body.

Q: Is the merger a foregone conclusion.

A: No this is why we have consultation. All opinions will be listened to before the Cabinet make an informed decision.

Q: How will you ensure that KS1 standards are maintained?

A: All of the KS1 expertise will remain within the school. It would be the responsibility of the Head Teacher to appoint the correct staff to lead on KS1 and he would be able to monitor progress and keep up to date with changes in the key stage assessment process.

Q: A parent suggested that the views of the children should be considered.

A: We have recommended that the members of the school council be consulted and their views will be fed into the consultation process.

Q: Will the final decision be up to Board of Governors?

A: The process was reiterated. The governors were considered to be major consultees and their views would be considered. The merger could still go ahead if the governors were not in favour, the cabinet would consider the broad consensus. The consultation process considers all suggestions.

Some parents were not in favour of mixing young and older children.

Q: Would there be any help with set up?

A: There would be £10,000 re-branding grant. Per previous answer.

Q: Would the newly merged school receive support and be monitored?

A: Both the current infant and junior school have an attached advisor – Liz Smith, she is very familiar with the schools and her support would remain instrumental to the school.

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Q: Would a newly merged school be able to accommodate children with varying medical conditions

A: It is the responsibility of the Board of Governors of the new school to accommodate the learning needs of all pupils including mentors. What's in place at the moment will continue and if there are children with specific needs that require access adaptations (eg ramp) both buildings will be adapted to fulfil our duty of care for all pupils.

Q: Will the playing fields be retained

A: Yes.

Q: Large events such as sport days will involve large numbers of people.

A: Primary schools work very hard to organise successful sports events and to accommodate all age ranges.

Q: Again concerns about the Ofsted rating were raised.

A: Response as before

All parties were urged to get involved in the consultation and to express their opinions via phone, email or post.

Hollinswood Junior School

School Reorganisation Consultation

Staff Meeting	4.00pm
Governors Meeting	5.00pm
Parents Meeting	6.00pm

Tuesday 3rd July 2012

Glenn Atkinson introduced the LA representatives.

In attendance representing Telford & Wrekin Council were:

- Jim Collins, Assistant Director Education, Skills and Culture (5.20pm onwards)
- Kathy Swallow, School Organisation Admissions & Planning
- Maria Haywood, HR Consultant
- Jules Millington, School Organisation Admissions & Planning

Kathy began the meeting by explaining the process we have been through so far and the timetable for the remainder of the process, and what are considered to be the advantages of an all through primary school. Maria followed on from Kathy and explained the human resources aspect of the merger and the process that would follow should the merger be approved by cabinet on 26th July. At both the governors and parents meeting Jim Collins reaffirmed the benefits of merging an infant and junior school.

The following questions and comments were raised during the **Staff** meeting:

Q: Would staff be informed of the outcome of the Cabinet meeting on 26th July?

A: Kathy explained that this would be a public meeting that would be attended by the press. It is likely that the outcome would be reported in the press the following day, but every effort would be made to inform the school of the outcome at the earliest point.

Q Is it an automatic decision to 'close' the Infant school?

A: This would be a decision made by the Council. It is recommended that a Governors Working Party would be formed if approval is given by cabinet to proceed with the merger. The working party would be a combination of governors from both schools, would include both Chairs and would guide work on the merged school. It is immaterial which school is 'closed' the end result would be the same. It was stressed that this was an amalgamation – not a take-over.

Q: If the merger went ahead would there be any possibility of closing one school building and extending the other?

A: There are no funds at present to consider this as an option, however if the town centre expanded this may create the need to revisit this question in years to come. Reorganisation in the class structure may assist integration of the year groups.

It was suggested we could consider a covered walk way. The distance between the two buildings was thought to be too great to contemplate this option. We would consult the Property and Design team to see if they could suggest any enhancements to the landscaping which may assist integration and harmonisation.

The general feeling at the meeting was that the merger was a positive move for the schools, but thought would be needed to minimise disruption and movement between buildings. It

was suggested that this was a matter of organisation and that the year groups could be mixed within the buildings to assist integration. The fact that the buildings were physically separate would be the challenge.

Q Is it likely that the staffing would remain at its current level?

A: It was not possible to say until the restructure had been decided. However at the two mergers that took place in 2011 no compulsory redundancies occurred. There was some adjustment to hours to accommodate all staff.

The following questions and comments were raised during the **Governors** meeting:

A personal opinion was expressed by one of the Governors, she felt that it would be good if the schools merged to be one school. She felt that the children would benefit if there was no change over between infant school to junior school.

Q: Was the merger likely to be detrimental to the children?

A: National figures show that generally merged primary schools perform better than separate Junior and Infant schools. There are also management and assessment benefits of merging the schools.

A governor asked for clarification of the policy to merge infant and primary schools. Kathy explained the history behind policy and confirmed that Telford and Wrekin would consider the merger of schools where one of the following situations arise: There are fundamental problems with the school's building, there are considerable concerns over the school's attainment or one of the head-teacher resigns

A governor recalled that the last time a merger between the two schools was considered, the schools were going to be rebuilt as one and was there any opportunity to join the buildings. It was confirmed that there was no budget to consider this at this point in time, but it would not be ruled out in future should the need for additional capacity in the area become apparent.

Q: Notwithstanding the extra cost benefit, which was considered best - a new head teacher for the infant school or merger?

A: Research has demonstrated the benefit of primaries over separate infant and junior schools. It was confirmed that there was a new funding structure and it was not clear how this would impact on all Telford and Wrekin schools, however, funding was based on numbers on roll and pupil numbers would not be affected by the merger.

The Head-teacher commented that merging in January would give the school some settling time, before starting a new academic year, which could work to the benefit of the school.

The governors considered drafting a letter expressing their opinions which would be forwarded to the schools organisation in-box.

The following questions and comments were raised during the **parent's** meeting:

In response to a press release in April it was clarified that neither school would be physically closed. It is proposed that one school will have its age range extended to cover the whole primary range and the other school would no longer have its own DfE number so the two schools would operate under a single DfE number.

Q: What will happen to the infant school during the interim period?

A: The governors have appointed an acting head teacher until a decision is made on the merger.

Q: What are the financial implications of merging a school?

A: It was explained that there is a new funding structure that would be effective from April 2013. This would be driven by the number on roll, pupil numbers would not be affected by the merger. Remaining balances from the 'closed' school would be transferred to the remaining school. Although the lump sum that is currently given to all schools would only be given to the primary school this would be offset by only having to fund one head-teacher.

Q: How much disruption to you anticipate for the children?

A: This would depend on how the governing body decided to organise the school. If merged all the pupils would be familiar with the head teacher and there would be no transfer between infant to junior school. It would all be driven by the needs of the children.

Q: Would all staff have to reapply for their jobs?

A: It would depend on the governing body, they would decide how the new school would be structured. In previous mergers governors have not made all the staff reapply for their jobs. It was confirmed that we had already addressed this matter with the staff earlier that evening.

Q: How can the transition between the key stages be improved giving that there would be no structural change to the building?

A: Various methods could be employed for example: mixing of year groups within the two buildings, events such as sports day, assemblies, a single assessment policy and curriculum planning across the key stages all aid integration.

Everyone was encouraged to express their opinion whether it be positive or negative.

The feeling from the junior school parents was that it was a positive proposal.

The Head-teacher had canvassed some of the children who had responded positively. It was suggested that they could involve the school council to encourage the children to discuss the merger and give the children the opportunity have their say.

TELFORD & WREKIN COUNCIL

CABINET – 26 JULY 2012

**PLANNING OF SCHOOL PLACES:
HOLLINSWOOD INFANT AND JUNIOR SCHOOLS**

**REPORT OF THE ASSISTANT DIRECTOR FOR EDUCATION, CULTURE AND
SKILLS**

LEAD CABINET MEMBER CLLR PAUL WATLING

PART A) – SUMMARY REPORT

1. SUMMARY OF MAIN PROPOSALS

Following the formal consultation process which was completed on 23rd July 2012, to seek a Cabinet decision upon whether to publish Public Notices in respect of the possible school merger to establish a primary school formed from the amalgamation of Hollinswood Infant and Junior Schools from January 2013.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

That the Cabinet, having taken into consideration responses to the formal consultation process completed on 23rd July 2012, publish Public Notices in respect of the merger of Hollinswood Infant and Junior schools.

SUMMARY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

COMMUNITY IMPACT	Do these proposals contribute to specific Priority Plan objective(s)?	
	Yes	<i>Children & Young People – to consult and involve all stakeholders with a vested interest in children’s education and safety</i>
	Will the proposals impact on specific groups of people?	
	Yes	<i>Children and Families living within the Wards served by the schools</i>
TARGET COMPLETION/DELIVERY DATE	<i>To make a decision on whether to publish Public Notices to merge the schools to take effect from January 2013.</i>	
FINANCIAL/VALUE FOR MONEY IMPACT	Yes	<i>With a proposed merger date of January 2013, the proposed change would take place shortly before new school funding arrangements take effect from April 2013. The Department for Education is currently still consulting on some aspects of these proposals, but the new funding formula for</i>

		<p><i>schools will be required to have fewer factors than at present. The only one of these factors that would be affected by a merger would be the lump sum. The maximum allowable lump sum will be between £100,000 and £150,000.</i></p> <p><i>The impact of a merger on Telford & Wrekin's Schools Budget would be positive, as we would receive the same funding (which is based on the number of pupils in the area) but would only fund one lump sum rather than two. The impact of the merger on the new school's budget would depend upon the precise details of the new school's staffing structure. However, in general terms, the savings generated by having only one Headteacher, a likely lesser requirement for office staff and some savings on bought in services (as support for only one school rather than two would be required) would be likely to reach £100,000, possibly more. Thus the new school should be broadly in a similar budget position to its two predecessor schools.</i></p>
<p>LEGAL ISSUES</p>	<p>Yes</p>	<p><i>Changes to school organisation are governed by the requirements of the Education and Inspections Act 2006 and Guidance from DfE. The Local Authority is required to follow a statutory consultation process to merge schools or to change the school status. The consultation period should be for a minimum of six weeks during term time. The Local Authority is required to publish formal proposals. There is a four week representation period for objections or comments to be sent to the Local Authority. The Local Authority is required to consider the representations and decide whether to merge schools or change school status within six months of publishing the proposals. Relevant Bodies can refer the proposals to the school's Adjudicator if they have concerns that the Local Authority has failed to consult adequately or has not taken account of the consultation, or that the merger of schools and/or change of school status will have a negative impact on standards at the school.</i></p>

		<p><i>If a referral is made, the Schools Adjudicator will decide the proposals in place of the Local Authority.</i></p> <p><i>If the decision is to proceed with the merger of schools and change of school status the Governing Body will be reconstituted.</i></p> <p><i>A wide range of legal implications arise upon merger of schools and change of school status. These include negotiating the transfer of land; Assets Transfer; Joint Use Agreements; TUPE of Staff and Service Level Agreements for Support Services. In this instance there is no intention to change the status of any merged school and so the majority of these provisions would not apply.</i></p>
OTHER IMPACTS, RISKS & OPPORTUNITIES		
IMPACT ON SPECIFIC WARDS	Yes	<p><i>The merger would impact on the individual ward within which schools are located. However there is potentially Borough wide impact due to parental preference in choosing which schools children attend.</i></p>

PART B) – ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

The Council’s policy on infant and junior school provision is that reviews take place, where appropriate, whenever particular circumstances emerge such as a pending head teacher retirement or resignation, or significant building issues including excessive numbers of surplus places.

In the case of Hollinswood Infant and Junior schools, the Headteacher of the infant school has submitted her resignation with effect from the end of the summer term 2012, in order to take up another Headship . It is intended therefore to apply the policy in respect of these schools to consider the options available following consultation with all stakeholders.

A decision to merge the two schools would be in line with the national trend to reduce the number of single phase schools. The benefits of aligning policies and curriculum planning which an all- through primary school would offer are more likely to lead to improved attainment for all children. A merged school would also afford opportunities for staff to enhance their skills by gaining experience across more than one key stage.

As both current schools are located on the same site this would be relatively easy to achieve. In the short term we are unlikely to join the two buildings physically but there would be opportunities to improve the access and circulation between the existing teaching blocks.

In the past 7 years records show that only 4 pupils have transferred from the infant school to a school other than the linked junior school at the end of key stage one. This indicates considerable parental satisfaction with progression to the current junior school.

A 6 week formal consultation process on the proposed merger has just closed and officers have been involved in several meetings with parents, pupils, staff and governors to seek and collate the views of all stakeholders. Letters have also been sent to the Parish Council, local MP and other relevant bodies such as neighbouring local authorities where appropriate, in order to alert them to the consultation process and to give them the opportunity to register their views on the proposals. Responses have been received via meetings and also through the School Organisation email inbox.

The outcome of the consultations is included at Annexe A. Any consultation responses received between 18th and 23rd July will be made available to Cabinet members before the meeting on 26th July

3. INFORMATION

Following the Cabinet decision on 31st May 2012 to engage in formal consultation on the merger of the two schools, further discussions have been held with headteachers and governors to explain the timetable and process necessary for consultation to take place in time for any possible changes to take place by January 2013.

4. IMPACT ASSESSMENT – ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

If following consultation a decision is made to merge schools, to avoid lengthy competition rules regarding the opening of new primary schools and changes to school category, the recommendation will be to close the infant school and extend the age range of the junior school to accommodate infant aged pupils. . This would enable final decisions to be made by the Local Authority, subject to any objections being received and considered.

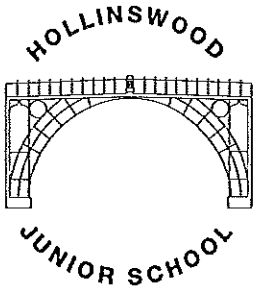
5. PREVIOUS MINUTES

Decision **CB-5** – Cabinet meeting 31st May 2012.

6. BACKGROUND PAPERS

Cabinet Paper 31st May 2012 - Planning of School Places: Hollinswood Infant and Junior

Report prepared by Kathy Swallow, Service Delivery Manager – Integrated Planning, Placements & Commissioning : Telephone: 01952 380905



HOLLINSWOOD JUNIOR SCHOOL

Headteacher: Mr G Atkinson BEd (Hons)

Dale Acre Way, Hollinswood, Telford, Shropshire TF3 2EP

Tel: 01952 386940 Fax: 01952 386944

Email: a2200@telford.gov.uk

Web: <http://hollinswoodj.taw.org.uk>

5 July 2012

Mrs K. Swallow
Education Officer – Admissions
Telford & Wrekin Council
Civic Offices
Coach Central
Telford
TF3 4HD

Dear Mrs Swallow

Re: Proposed Merger of Hollinswood Junior and Infant School

The Governors of Hollinswood Junior School recognise the opportunity and benefits that a merger of both the Junior and Infant schools could bring in creating one teaching and learning community.

We acknowledge that there will be challenges ahead should the merger proceed and if we are about to create something new then the combined efforts of both sets of governors and staff should focus on making our Primary school a success.

In a world of financial ideals a new build would be the preferred option, though we know that this is not viable in the current climate. If circumstances change we would like assurances that a new build would be given serious consideration.

The split nature of the site represents a challenge and we would hope that the Local Authority could look to support the school in exploring and funding capital projects that would link the sites together such as pathways, play spaces, gardens etc.

Therefore, we the undersigned support the proposal to merge the two schools.

Yours sincerely

The block contains several handwritten signatures in black ink. From left to right, the signatures are: a signature that appears to be 'Hartley', 'Roberts', and another signature that is partially obscured. In the middle, there are two signatures: 'J. Johnson' and 'Elaine'. On the right, there are two more signatures: 'S. Newbrook' and 'S. Barber'. To the right of the 'S. Newbrook' signature, there is a handwritten note that reads 'PP: P.H.C. 5/22/12'.

Hollinswood Junior School Governing Body



Tuesday 17th July 2012

To whom it may concern,

Proposed Merger

On Thursday 12th July the Governing Body had an emergency meeting to discuss the proposed merger of Hollinswood Infant & Nursery School and Hollinswood Junior School.

Following this meeting the Governors carefully considered the views of teaching staff, support staff, along with the views of the school council, the pupils and the parents.

The main theme of the discussions is that it will be impractical to operate one school over two sites and as such the majority vote of the Governing Body is not to Merge schools.

Therefore it is of urgent importance that an advert to recruit a Head Teacher for Hollinswood Infant & Nursery School to start in January 2013 is progressed.

Yours Sincerely



Kirsty Griffiths

Vice Chair Person

On behalf of Governors at Hollinswood Infant and Nursery School

Hollinswood Merger – consultation response from Hollinswood and Randlay Parish council

From: Katrina Baker [<mailto:katrina.hrpc@btconnect.com>]

Sent: 18 July 2012 09:29

To: School Organisation

Subject: Hollinswood Infant and Junior School merger consultation

Jules

Further to your letter of 14th June, I can confirm that my Members have been informed of the consultation process and were invited to the meetings on 3rd and 4th July 2012.

The item was included on our Full Council agenda on Monday (16th July).

The Parish Council resolved to have no objections to the merger, as they understood that this was a Telford & Wrekin Policy. Two points that were raised in the discussion were:-

Hollinswood & Randlay Parish Council has a close working relationship with both schools and both Headteachers, the Councillors would wish this to continue for the benefit of the young people and the community.

The Parish Council would not support any changes to the building or site that would mean the loss of the essential green space around the school which is available for school and community use.

Kind regards

Katrina Baker

CLERK

Hollinswood & Randlay Parish Council

01952 201690

email: katrina.hrpc@btconnect.com

www.hollinswoodandrandlaypc.org.uk

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Response from Hollinswood Infant parent (3) (Annex B)

From:

Sent: 20 July 2012 13:52

To: School Organisation

Subject: proposed merger Hollinswood Infant with Hollinswood Junior.

Hi

I am a parent governor at Hollinswood Infant and Nursery, and thought I would express my personal views.

After seeking out as much information as possible, I am against the merger. The main reason for this is the fact that nothing has changed since the last consultation on a School merger. The reason then was that we have two separate buildings and no money to extend either to make one building. If the schools merge it is my opinion that there will be significant problems managing behaviour on both sites with a reduced leadership team, i.e. sending a child to the head will be a problem if the head is on the other site. The issue of moving schools will still be there as they will be moving into a new building.

I believe the cons outweigh the benefits of a harmonized curriculum and assessment scheme, the Junior school will be achieving Level 6's this year so is already showing the required value added to their children's education, so the Head there should be allowed to continue the hard work he is doing without adding the additional workload of merging two schools that don't need merging. Jim Collins during the meetings I have managed to sit in with him admitted that both schools were achieving well, and in his opinion were outstanding schools, so other than to save money why change things?

Also by having an Infant and Junior School it allows choice for parents, as to whether they want to put their child through a primary or Infant/Junior system. As there are many children from outside the catchment area this seems to be a popular choice.

Regards

P.S. can I please express to the council my disappointment that none of the councillors for the Nedge ward turned up at any of the meetings to hear first hand the views of their constituents. Instead they are going to rely on the council officer. This doesn't seem to show a co-operative way of working.

TELFORD & WREKIN COUNCIL

CABINET - 26 JULY 2012

HIGHWAYS MAINTENANCE – WINTER SERVICE REVIEW

REPORT OF THE ASSISTANT DIRECTOR NEIGHBOURHOOD AND LEISURE SERVICES

LEAD CABINET MEMBER – CLLR SHAUN DAVIES

PART A) – SUMMARY REPORT

1.0 SUMMARY OF MAIN PROPOSALS

- 1.1 The report provides a review of the performance of the Winter Service with regard to operational and policy delivery during the 2011/12 winter season and the impact of amended salt spread rates to conserve salt stocks. Service efficiency proposals which reduce costs whilst retaining service standards are also included.
- 1.1 To identify a range of Co-operative Council opportunities and initiatives which will enhance winter service provision within the local community by way of Snow Warden Schemes, Parish Environmental Teams and Community Payback Schemes

2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 That the recommended changes to the Winter Service outlined in **Appendices 1 and 2** of the report be adopted, namely:
- Existing treatment routes to remain the same for 2012/13 with the addition of one location-the slip roads off A4640 leading to Donnington Business Park and reduce the number of gritting routes from nine to eight without affecting network coverage and in turn delivering efficiency savings..
 - Existing Grit Bin Policy to remain for 2012/13 but to continue close working with Parishes and community groups for local co operative opportunities.
 - To provide ongoing resilience and efficiencies – continue with salt storage at the same capacity and the rate of spread of salt of 10g per m2 for frost prevention and 20g per m2 for snow events be adopted as ongoing service policy.
 - Continue to improve communication channels and access to information for residents, parish councils and businesses within the Borough and to promote Co-operative Council opportunities including the introduction of up to 50 volunteer Neighbourhood Snow Wardens

3. SUMMARY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

COMMUNITY IMPACT	Do these proposals contribute to specific Priority Plan objective(s)?	
	Yes	Environment plan – Winter resilience
	Will the proposals impact on specific groups of people?	
	No	Borough Wide
DELIVERY DATE	Winter Maintenance season commences 1st October 2012	
FINANCIAL/VALUE FOR MONEY IMPACT	Yes	<p>This report identifies a number of service efficiencies which will deliver the £50,000 savings required as part of the Budget Strategy for 2012/13.</p> <p>Proposed enhancements to the service include the inclusion of an additional location, the provision of additional grit bins in partnership with Parishes and the recruitment of volunteer Snow Wardens, and these will be delivered within existing budgets within the Neighbourhood and Leisure services unit. The adequacy of the ongoing revenue budget for winter maintenance will need to be considered as part of the annual service and financial planning process.JAC280612</p>
LEGAL ISSUES	Yes	<p>The Council is under a general statutory duty to maintain those highways in the Borough which are not trunk roads. The Council's duty in respect of snow and ice on the highway has been clarified (as mentioned below) in that a highway authority is under a duty to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, that safe passage along a highway is not endangered by snow or ice.</p> <p>In any action against the Council in respect of damage resulting from its failure to maintain a publicly maintainable highway (including addressing snow and ice), it is a defence to prove that the Council took such care as in all the circumstances was reasonably required to secure that the part of the highway to which the action relates was not dangerous for traffic.</p> <p>Review, amendment and proper implementation of policies for winter highways maintenance is an essential element of the Council's response to its statutory duties and would be referred to in any action against the</p>

		Council.
OTHER IMPACTS, RISKS & OPPORTUNITIES	Yes	The scope of the actions of the Winter Maintenance Service will impact on many aspects of life in the Borough including the environment, economy and community cohesion. The actions all impact on the Council's reputation.
IMPACT ON SPECIFIC WARDS	Yes	Borough-wide impact.

PART B) – ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

3.0 REPORT SUMMARY

- 3.1 In October 2003 the Government introduced an amendment to the Highway Act 1980 which placed a duty on Local Authorities to ensure, so as is reasonably practicable, that safe passage along a highway is not endangered by snow or ice.
- 3.2 Council policy extends to precautionary salting routes to include schools, transport interchanges, industrial estates and strategic footways and cycle ways. The Policy has been further amended and strengthened in July 2009, September 2010 and September 2011.
- 3.3 Due to difficult winter season conditions and previous national shortage and distribution problems with road salt in recent years, the council in order to protect its network has increased its storage capacity from 1400 tonnes to 2700 tonnes.

4.0 PREVIOUS MINUTES

- 4.1 18 September 2006, 21 July 2009, September 2010 and September 2011.

5.0 REVIEW OF THE LOWER SPREAD RATE

- 5.1 To increase resilience without increasing costs, the rate of spread for salt applied to the roads for the winter of 2011/12 was reduced to reflect national guidance and the experiences of other local authorities.
- 5.2 The reduced rates of spread have been monitored throughout the winter of 2011/12 to ensure that the treatments remained effective and suitable for our road network.
- 5.3 This change has been effective as we did not receive requests from the emergency services requesting additional gritting due to surface conditions. In addition there has been no apparent increase in the number of road traffic incidents that can be said to have occurred as a result of reducing the rates of spread.

- 5.4 The effectiveness of the reduced rates spread will continue to be monitored throughout the 2012/13 winter season as part of our out of hours service. Should the need arise, the service response by the contractor will allow for an increase in the rates of spread if we experience prolonged and severe weather conditions.

6.0 SERVICE EFFICIENCY PROPOSALS

- 6.1 As part of our drive for service and budget efficiencies, a review of all gritting routes has been undertaken and it has been found that the existing defined network coverage can be maintained, while reducing the number of gritting routes from nine to eight. This has been identified through a joint route optimisation assessment with TWS Ltd and Vaisala UK Ltd.
- 6.2 The existing fleet of nine gritters of 6 and 4 tonne capacities, treat 422kms of roads out of a total network of 1040kms, the routes comprise of urban and rural roads. The average time taken to treat all routes is in the region of 2 hours from the commencement of gritting..
- 6.3 The optimisation process compared the length of the defined network, the number of routes and the time taken to complete a route, amalgamating parts of routes and equalising as far as possible the coverage of the routes, while still remaining within the 2 hour time frame of completion.
- 6.4 A thorough validation of the results took place and confirmed the reduction from nine to eight routes was feasible without reducing the defined network coverage.

7.0 CO-OPERATIVE COUNCIL AND COMMUNITY INITIATIVES

- 7.1 The three harsh winters of 2009, 2010 and 2011 highlighted the pressures that Council experiences when providing the Winter Service for the community. It is not possible to provide resources for 100% coverage throughout the Borough in order to deal with snow events and prolonged freezing conditions.
- 7.2 The hazardous conditions can pose a threat to the well being of all residents and at times the elderly and infirm can potentially suffer real hardship, by not having access to local shops, doctor's surgeries, bus stops etc. In order to help members of the public with the effects of significant snow fall or adverse weather, it is proposed to introduce and support a Snow Warden initiative with the commencement of the 2012/13 winter service.
- 7.3 A number of Local Authorities throughout the country have already trialled **Snow Wardens** and actual methods and working practices vary from council to council. We have taken our Co operative model as the foundation for developing our proposed method and aim to establish a

network of up to 50 volunteer Neighbourhood Snow Wardens. Further information on how the scheme will work is detailed in Appendix 4.

- 7.4 A further Co Operative Council initiative which can be utilised is the newly created **Parish Environmental Teams** which are now serving the Parishes of St Georges & Priorslee PC, Great Dawley PC and Madeley PC. The teams can support existing resources at times of adverse weather, by clearing snow and treating footways and site plans will be agreed with the respective Parishes.
- 7.5 During the winter season 2011/12 **Community Payback** resources were utilised on a number of occasions to grit and clear snow from footways in various areas. Although these resources are only available on Mondays and Tuesdays they provide valuable support. This initiative will continue in 2012/13 with a view to expanding when possible.
- 7.6 In addition to the resources outlined above it is proposed to involve the **Council's Employee Commission Sub Group on Employee Volunteering** in order to explore and promote the possibility of becoming involved in snow clearing as and when required.
- 7.7 **Parish Charter:** Parishes will be informed of any changes to treatment routes and other changes that affect their areas. During the winter season contact will be via the nominated **Parish Council snow liaison representatives** and during heavy snow events local farmers may also assist operations in rural areas.
- 7.8 The grit bin inventory has been shared with Parishes to consider 'added value' grit bin locations. Any Parish can choose to provide additional grit bins if they should require them for local sites other than those provided for by Telford & Wrekin Council. As a partnership the council will fund the Bin installation and the Parishes will be expected to pay for the provision and salt replenishment of any additional bins.
- 7.9 A more detailed performance review of the 2011/12 Winter Maintenance season is summarised in **Appendix 2** and identifies a series of service strands and conclusions, including:
- Salting Operations
 - Grit Bins
 - Salt storage.
 - Communication and advice and guidance

Each service strand element carries a **service improvement recommendation**.

**Report prepared by David Bell, Public Realm Group Manager,
telephone 01952 38799**

Appendix 1 - WINTER SERVICE POLICY STATEMENT

1 INTRODUCTION

The Borough of Telford and Wrekin is the Highways Authority for all the adopted roads in the Borough except for the M54 Motorway and A5 Trunk road from the end of the M54 at Cluddley to Preston Roundabout.

The Highways Authority is responsible for work relating to snow, frost or ice on these roads.

The aim of the Winter Service is to provide so far as is reasonably practicable for the safe movement of road users along the highway network during wintry conditions. The Service operates between the 1st October and the 30th April i.e. the Winter Season.

A review of Winter Service Operations is undertaken each year before the start of the next Winter Season.

2 FORECASTING & TREATMENT OF ROADS

Two weather monitoring stations operate in the Borough, which with information from surrounding areas' stations and forecasting from the Met Office are used to determine the most appropriate action delivered at the best possible time.

The Council employ the Vaisala weather monitoring and bureau service who advise our experienced staff on optimising the salting of the roads at the most effective and economic times. However with the variable conditions we experience in this maritime climate it is not always possible to complete salting before freezing starts but we endeavour to complete salting as soon as is practicable within the constraints of our resources.

Roads to be treated

The main activities of the Winter Service are treating the highway to:

- 1 Try to prevent ice forming known as "precautionary salting"
- 2 Melt ice and snow already formed, "post-salting"
- 3 Remove snow

All the roads are divided into the "defined network" and the "non defined" roads dependent on their priority. The service aims to prevent ice forming (precautionary treatment) on the "defined network" which consists of main through roads and those serving centres of activity such as commercial, retail, employment, administrative and leisure. These are known as the "frost routes".

Frost Routes

The “frost routes” should be salted prior to the formation of frost by the fleet of gritters provided by Telford & Wrekin Services.

Primary Routes:

- A & B roads
- Roads serving fire, ambulance, police establishments
- Main bus routes in the following centres: Telford Town Centre, Dawley, Madeley, Newport, Ironbridge, Oakengates & Wellington.
- Access roads to transport interchanges

Secondary Routes:

- Other regular bus routes (The regular bus routes are defined as Monday to Friday routes with a minimum of one bus per hour during the main part of the day).
- Feeder roads to schools/colleges (roads linking main salting routes to main entrances)
- Main access roads on industrial estates (Halesfield, Stafford Park, Hortonwood)
- One access route to main villages/hamlets and minor sections of road for continuity.

Priority will always be given to ensuring that the Primary routes are treated before the Secondary routes.

The remainder of the roads are “non defined” and are not treated for a forecast of frost. However grit bins are provided at high risk sites such as steep hills, severe bends, etc.

Snow and ice routes

Roads to be treated at times of snowfall or prolonged icy periods following snow (post-treatment) are known as the “snow and ice routes”. The “snow and ice routes” consist of the “frost routes, the remaining main and secondary distributor roads and high risk sections of the local network.

In times of snow and prolonged icy conditions the “snow and ice routes” are ploughed, cleared or salted with the frost routes being treated as priority. This work is undertaken under our instruction by Telford & Wrekin Services, farmer operated snowploughs and if necessary local contractors. These activities are aimed at providing safe movement around the Borough between major centres and at least one access route to each hamlet.

When resources allow they will then be deployed onto the “non defined” routes dealing with problems in priority order.

3 TREATMENT OF FOOTWAYS AND CYCLETRACKS & DISTRICT CENTRES

Frost Routes

Footpaths/cycletracks and district centres that will be treated when frost is forecast are the “defined footway routes” at the following locations:

- 1) Adopted footpaths in Telford Town centre.
- 2) Footpaths serving the main shopping areas of:
 - a) Dawley
 - b) Ironbridge
 - c) Madeley
 - d) Newport
 - e) Oakengates
 - f) Wellington

Snow & ice

In the event of prolonged snow or ice strategic footway/cycletracks will be treated in a priority order. The order starts with town centres, local district centres etc. It is not possible to clear all the footpaths within the Borough during these wintry conditions.

4 GRIT BINS

Grit bins in general are only provided on “non-defined” roads at high risk sites such as steep hills, severe bends, etc and only on the adopted highway. Their provision is determined by on-site risk assessments using a standardised set of criteria and then prioritised based on available resources. Grit bins are provided on the basis of self-help by the public and the service is limited to refilling the bins with salt and replacing damaged bins.

A limited number of grit bins are provided at key locations on the footway/cycleway network defined as routes promoted as Safe Routes to Schools.

Requests for new grit bin locations are considered only from Ward members, Parish & Town Councils or community organisations and contributions will be sought from these groups for provision and maintenance.

5 STAKEHOLDER REQUESTS

Other than requests for residential roads throughout the borough to be gritted which **do not** comply with our policy, the following request has been received which has been assessed and **does** comply:

Location	Comments
A4640 Redhill Way slip roads to Donnington Business Park	The slip roads have severe bends and gradient and are hazardous in poor weather conditions. The request complies with our policy to treat 'main access roads on industrial estates', Lyreco are one of the main users of the access road.

Appendix 2 - WINTER SERVICE STANDARDS AND PERFORMANCE:

1. SALTING OPERATIONS

Winter Maintenance Service Policy – salting

The main activities of the Winter Maintenance Service are treating the highway to:

1. Try to prevent ice forming known as “pre-salting”
2. Melt ice and snow already formed, “post-salting”
3. Remove snow

1.1 Roads:

The service aims to prevent ice forming (precautionary treatment) on the “defined network” which consists of main through roads and those serving centres of activity such as commercial, retail, employment, administrative and leisure (which in the main are serviced as part of school sites or district centres. These are known as the “frost routes” .

Defined network:

Primary Routes:

- A & B roads
- Roads serving fire, ambulance, police establishments
- Main bus routes in the following centres: Telford Town Centre, Dawley, Madeley, Newport, Oakengates, Wellington and Ironbridge
- Access roads to transport interchanges

Secondary Routes:

- Other regular bus routes (The regular bus routes are defined as Monday to Friday routes with a minimum of one bus per hour during the main part of the day).
- Feeder roads to schools/colleges (roads linking main salting routes to main entrances)
- Main access roads on industrial estates (Halesfield, Stafford Park, Hortonwood)
- One access route to main villages/hamlets and minor sections of road for continuity.

1.2 Turnouts in 2011/12

Roads:

The total number of turnouts in 2011/12 was 73 compared with 92 in 2010/11. This compares with the 5 yearly averages for previous years of 95. The forecast for snow events was greatly reduced in 2011/12 however we conducted 12 double spread rates for snow events compared to a season average of 13.

Footways:

The total number of turnouts in 2011/12 was 21 compared with 41 in 2010/11. This compares with the 5 yearly averages for previous years of 29.

1.3 Salt usage

Impact of reduced spread rates introduced in order to increase resilience at times of salt shortages:

Due to national salt demand and delays in deliveries over the previous 3 winters, the council followed the national directive to conserve salt stocks. For the 2011/12 winter season a reduction in the rates of spread for treating frost, ice and snow was introduced. This resulted in the equivalent of 915 tonnes less salt being used, which in turn saved the council £33,000.

General Comment

It is evident that the previous three concurrent cold winters have seen a significant increase in the use of salt and the numbers of turnouts have resulted in a significant increase in the year end costs for the Winter Service. Although 2011/12 winter was milder, temperature still fell sufficiently to require consecutive day and night treatments on 12 occasions between 8 and 19 December 2011 and 17 consecutive treatments between 26 January and 11 February 2012. Although expenditure was less than previously, the winter maintenance budget was overspent by £151,000, which was funded by underspends in other service areas.

1.4 Feedback from Community stakeholders

Feeder roads to schools and colleges

During the prolonged periods of cold weather during the 2011/12 winter season, the salting of feeder roads to schools has been successful in ensuring that schools have remained open.

Comments by the Capital & Facilities Manager were:

The winter maintenance programme proved very effective last year and as a consequence there were no school closures which resulted directly from road closures or dangerous surfaces caused by the ice or snow.

Access roads to transport interchanges: Bus companies

Comments by the Area Manager, Midland Arriva (Telford) were:

I would have to commend the efforts of the council and say that we were very pleased with all your hard work in keeping roads open. Apart from locations with inclines which at times were affected by the worst of the weather, our services continued to run.

Main access roads on industrial estates

Halesfield, Stafford Park, and Hortonwood – all routes were kept open during the frost and snow events.

A request from Lyreco has been received requesting gritting of the slip roads off the A4640 Redhill Way that provide access to Donnington Business Park.

1.5 Gritting Route Optimisation

In order to reduce expenditure and produce efficiencies a review of all nine gritting routes has been undertaken and it has been found that they can be reduced to eight while retaining the existing defined network. The optimisation process compares the length of the defined network, the number of routes and the time taken to complete a route. The outcome will result in savings in the region of £20,000 during a 'normal' winter season such as 2011/12. These savings have been reflected within the agreed budget for 2012/13.

1.6 Conclusion: salting operations

Feedback from key stakeholders suggested that the gritting routes used in 2011/12 provided a satisfactory level of protection to roads even with the reduced rates of spread being introduced. It is however encouraging to confirm that there were minimal reported accidents as a result of wintry conditions on the road network.

Between 1 November 2011 and 31 March 2012 we received five official compliments and two formal complaints relating to the winter maintenance service.

Feedback from customers would suggest that a mixture of increased information on the Councils web site, national & local media coverage including a series of radio & television interviews, public understanding and the excellent service delivery from the council and contractor throughout the periods of colder weather all helped to ensure public frustration were contained to a relative minimum.

Recommendation: Defined network

That while still retaining the defined network, the number of routes be reduced from nine to eight as suggested by the route optimisation process. That the slip roads serving Donnington Business Park be added to the defined network.

2. GRIT BINS

2.1 Current grit bin policy

The Council continues to provide in excess of 470 grit bins on non-treated roads that are considered high risk locations. These sites have been subject to a risk assessment criteria or they remain in situ due to historical placement reasons. The number of grit bins we currently provide far exceeds the average compared to other Councils.

All high risk sites are now accommodated, however future requests for grit bins for community/public use provision can be on the basis of a co operative approach and/or financial contributions from community groups such as Parish Councils which the Council will assist in relation to purchasing and replenishing on their behalf.

Prior to the commencement of the 2011/12 winter season, all Parish and Town Councils were written to regarding local provision of grit bins and to seek their views on providing grit bins at their expense. This is only the case when the Council criteria for sighting a bin are not met. This has led to a successful take up with several Parishes wanting to engage. The process will continue for the forthcoming season and all Parish and Town Councils will be written to again regarding the arrangements.

Grit bins are provided on the basis of self help by motorists for use on the public highway. There is evidence from community feedback that grit bins are sometimes requested and used for the gritting of private footpaths & driveways. We also receive complaints from residents regarding the siting of them near their properties and Parishes are mindful of this.

During 2011/12 as in past years there continued to be a number of 'one off' requests for grit bins which were made generally during snow events where drivers experienced difficulties with traction on untreated estate roads.

Some Parish Councils have enquired about the locations of grit bins in their area so that they can review whether they are meeting the needs of the community. An up to date inventory list and location maps will again be circulated to all Parishes prior to the start of the 2012/13 winter season. All grit bins have been numbered and have the prefix 'P' where Parish owned.

2.2 Conclusion: Grit bins

The number of grit bins installed and serviced is much higher than many other council's. Further consultations are in process with Parishes on the locations of grit bins in their specific areas so they may consider local demand and provision.

Recommendation: Grit bins

Given the current provision it is recommended that the Grit Bin Policy remains unchanged for 2012/13 and a co operative approach is more widely publicised on the website.

3. SALT STORAGE/USAGE

3.1 Effectiveness of changes to salt storage

Members may recall the difficulties experienced during the 2008/9 season and as a result of a national shortage, additional salt storage of 350 tonnes was created at the Granville House depot prior to the start of the 2009/10 season. This extended the

total storage of salt to 1700 tonnes. Prior to 2010/11 permission was given to acquire a further 1000 tonnes, which was stored locally at a facility owned by Jack Moody on Redhill Way, Telford. Therefore at the start of the 2011/12 winter season salt stocks were at the maximum of 2700 tonnes

No difficulties were encountered with salt deliveries during 2011/12 season, orders were placed periodically to ensure adequate stocks and at the end of the season 1800 tonnes were still held. A summer restock will take place shortly in order to take advantage of lower rates at this time of year and take levels back to 2700 tonnes.

The salt barn at the Granville House depot now has the facility to accommodate some 1700 tonnes of salt which is equivalent to approx 40 turnouts for frost and 20 for snow. The additional stock of 1000 tonnes stored at Moody's will provide approx 24 turnouts for frost and 12 turnouts for snow.

In total this allows for 64 turnouts for frost turnouts and 32 for snow,

In normal circumstances this level of stock together with the reduced rates of spread should be more than capable of providing resilience, however the previous two severe winters have proved, despite the increased resilience that this may not be the case. The Government recommendation is to maintain not less than 6 days stock. If we were to have a really bad spell of snowfall, we could provide 16 days of double treatment twice a day which is far in excess of the Government recommendation.

3.3 Conclusion: Salt storage/Usage

The existing storage arrangements have proved to be adequate and reducing the rate of spread from 15 grams per sqm to 10 grams per sqm when pre treating for ice and from 30 grams per sqm to 20 grams per sqm when pre treating for snow, did not cause any known difficulties.

The revised rate of spread is used by many other Local Authorities and the Highways Agency without any adverse effects, including locally both Shropshire Council and Staffordshire County Council. This proposed spread rate also falls within suggested national guidelines.

Recommendation: Salt storage/Usage

It is recommended that the current salt storage capacity remains unaltered for the 2012/13 winter season, together with the reduced rates of spread of salt at 10 and 20grams per sqm for the 2012/13 winter season.

4. COMMUNICATIONS

4.1 Positive Actions undertaken

In order to assist Elected Members, Parishes, the media and the community as a whole, the council provided access to a series of information channels which were available on the council website, in relevant customer services teams and electronically available to all Members & Parishes.

The information included:

- Borough wide maps indicating defined gritting routes
- Winter maintenance: Frequently Asked Questions
- Winter Maintenance – Facts and Figures
- Who to contact
- Daily service disruption information i.e. refuse & kerbside collections, schools, leisure sites etc.
- Notification of 'real time' gritting operations to all Ward Members, Parish and Town Councils.
- Gritter twitter and Facebook
- In the event of significant snow/adverse weather or forecast – a dedicated 'Snowline' Contact Centre is available before and after normal office hours

There was also a series of meetings with Parish representatives which also assisted in developing the information above.

4.2 Conclusion

Due to 'round the clock' monitoring and actions the council maintained effective communication throughout the winter season and received praise for its actions and approach

Recommendation: Communication

It is recommended that in future the same approach is adopted and the proactive style of communication is developed with a particular emphasis on the council website, social media and information to Parishes and co operative opportunities particularly around grit bins. This is to include continuing to provide up to date records and plans highlighting local grit bins.

5. WEATHER FORECASTING AND BUREAU SERVICES

5.1 Changes to service provision (For information)

For the past 3 years the Met Office has provided the council with weather forecasts and Vaisala have provided online data services and maintenance of the council's two weather stations. Both contracts expired on 30 April and review was undertaken in order to procure those services at reduced rates under new contracts if possible.

One option was to obtain the new contract through joint procurement with neighbouring authorities, in order to produce savings, however that was not possible at the present time but maybe so in two years when those authorities existing contracts expire.

5.2 Procurement process

In order to ensure that service continuity the procurement process commenced in May 2012. Weather forecasting and bureau services are carried out by specialist companies with few competitive options, however by obtaining written quotes from the Met Office and Meteo Group for weather forecasting and Vaisala and Findlay Irving for the bureau services it was possible to secure an annual saving against existing costs of £5,500 or 30%. These savings have been reflected within the agreed Budget for 2012/13. The costs are fixed for the next two years until a formal tender process is undertaken as part of any joint procurement process.

Until 31 April 2014 the weather forecasting service will be provided by Meteo Group and the bureau service will be provided by Vaisala.

Appendix 3- Winter Service: Record of turnouts

	2006/7	2007/8	2008/9	2009/10	20010/11	Ave over past 5 years	2011/12	Comments
Normal gritting 15gms	32	53	83	105	68	68	60 @10grms	Although the winter was not as severe as the past 3 years temperatures fell sufficiently to result in 12 consecutive days/nights turnouts between 8 and 19 December Together with a further 17 consecutive days/nights turnouts between 26 January and 11 February
Double gritting 30gms	6	6	19	16	22	14	12 @20grms	
Wet spots e.g. drainage problems	3	11	18	33	2	13	1	
Total turnouts for roads	41	70	120	154	92	95	73	
Footpaths	14	20	32	38	41	29	21	
Total salt used in tonnes	2074	3008	5160	5345	3964	3910	2773	

APPENDIX 4

Neighbourhood Snow Warden – Functions and Funding

1 Background

- 1.1 The idea of the Snow Warden scheme originated in Calgary in Canada, where a group of people known as Snow Angels commit to helping other more vulnerable members of the community in cases of severe weather.
- 1.2 Development and support for volunteering across our Co Operative Council model is being actively encouraged, there is also a continuous flow of new people coming forward to offer their time and look for varied opportunities to volunteer. In turn, this an ideal time to build on the opportunities available to local residents and possibly employees.
- 1.3 Other councils are trialling similar initiatives, including Lambeth and Sandwell and this is the first time we will formally roll out a scheme. The main objective will be to direct snow clearing volunteers, and identifying minor roads, cul-de-sacs and other places where the council does not treat for snow and ice. The Snow Wardens will complement the work done by the council's winter maintenance teams and add to the boroughs resilience in extreme weather.

2 The principles on how it will work

- 2.1 We hope to recruit a network of up to 50 volunteer Neighbourhood Snow Wardens through wards, parish councils, housing associations and voluntary sector organisations who will clear roads and pavements and spread salt, in their local area when there has been excessive snowfall.
- 2.2 In the event of an over or under subscription, preference will be given to those areas which are close to the existing salt spreading routes so establishing a link to the already treated part of the network, to areas with high numbers of vulnerable people or access to local shops and amenities.
- 2.3 Each Neighbourhood Snow Warden will receive training from officers on working on the highway and the Government's Snow Code and the level of responsibility required in the event of a heavy snowfall.
- 2.4 They will be given a brief summary of the council's Winter Maintenance Manual and an insight into how the weather forecasting works. We would ask that they have access to a mobile phone or internet as they would become part of the flow of weather information and decisions on gritting during the periods of extreme weather.
- 2.5 They will be issued with a snow shovel, high visibility vest and gloves. They together with their location will be risk assessed, and where possible, when the bad weather comes, one-tonne bags of salt will be delivered to an agreed

location. Alternative salt supplies will have to be considered on a location by location basis if the positioning of the salt bag is not possible.

- 2.6 Additionally we will work with local residents physically unable to undertake snow clearance but keen to participate, by enabling them to act as a contact to receive and provide information.

3 Consultation

- 3.1 Consultation will be undertaken by the Public Realm section in partnership with voluntary groups, elected wards members, parish and town councils.

4 Corporate Priorities

- 4.1 Working with residents to deliver a service which best fits the area contributes to the council's strategic ambitions of creating a Co-operative Council part of which is 'Enabling people to do more to help their own communities and at the same time to help themselves by gaining new skills and experience'.

5 Financial Implications

- 5.1 It is estimated that the total cost of each individual set of equipment, plus the training and salt suppliers etc will be no more than £75. With a proposed maximum of 50 wardens, this will give a total annual cost of £3750. It is proposed that this funding is met from existing resources, this will have very little impact on the existing winter maintenance service, but will enhance the resilience at a local level.

6 Legal/Insurance Implications

- 6.1 The main insurance covers held by the Borough of Telford & Wrekin comprising public liability, employers liability and officials indemnity extend to indemnify volunteers whilst acting on behalf of the authority. Cover is subject to the same terms and conditions applying to all other employees.
- 6.2 Our insurers have confirmed that volunteers are covered under the policy subject to the following points:
- Volunteers should receive appropriate training
 - PPE should be provided
 - Risk Assessments should be carried out
 - Volunteers need to be under the direct control of the council.
- 6.3 The Council will not be undertaking site supervision, however direct control will be by pre determining a list of site locations which can be treated by the volunteers.

In addition, the following actions will be required:

Register name and address of volunteers (must renew yearly)

Provide description of task/tasks to be undertaken, how to undertake them and how to work safely.

Get signed form from volunteer to confirm they have received the training and are fit to carryout the duties and retain on record (will need to do refreshers periodically)

Get signed form from volunteer for the equipment provided to them and retain on record.

- 6.4 The council has also regularly reminded members of the public that there is no law stopping people from clearing snow and ice on the pavement outside their property, pathways to local public spaces and amenities. People using areas affected by snow and ice also have responsibilities to be careful themselves.

TELFORD & WREKIN COUNCIL**CABINET - 26 JULY 2012****STATION ROAD, NEWPORT – UPDATE AND APPROPRIATION****REPORT OF ASSISTANT DIRECTOR: DEVELOPMENT, BUSINESS & HOUSING****LEAD CABINET MEMBER - CLLR CHARLES SMITH****PART A) – SUMMARY REPORT****1. SUMMARY OF MAIN PROPOSALS**

To provide an update regarding the progress of the sale of the Station Road, Newport site (“the Site”) and seek decisions that the land is no longer required for its present purposes and that in principle it should be appropriated for planning purposes to facilitate its redevelopment.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1. That Members, resolve in principle, in accordance with section 122(1) Local Government Act 1972, that the Station Road, Newport Site is no longer required to be held by the Council for general land holding purposes.**
- 2.2 That Members decide in principle to appropriate the Station Road Site as identified in Appendix 1 for planning purposes subject to the consideration of representations as to the effect taking that step will have on affected landowners’ interests.**
- 2.3 That Members note that an advertising and consultation process will follow if approval to 2.1 and 2.2 above is given and a final decision on the above matters will be taken following that process and having regard to any objections received,**
- 2.4 That Cabinet note that the Leader will consider any representations received and make the final decision whether to appropriate the Site for planning purposes.**

3. SUMMARY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

COMMUNITY IMPACT	Do these proposals contribute to specific Priority Plan objective(s)?	
	Yes	Protect and create jobs as a ‘Business Supporting, Business Winning Council’
	Will the proposals impact on specific groups of people?	
	Yes	This is an in principle decision only and will be subject to public consultation so that anyone affected by the decision will have the opportunity to object if the recommendations are approved.
TARGET COMPLETION/ DELIVERY DATE	The consultation process will commence shortly after Cabinet if the recommendations are approved.	
FINANCIAL/VALUE FOR MONEY IMPACT	Yes	Legal and valuation advice has been taken which has resulted in no provision being deemed necessary currently to deal with any recommendations arising from this report. However, ongoing financial support and advice will be provided
LEGAL ISSUES	Yes	The Council has the power to make the decisions identified in the recommendation and ongoing legal advice will be provided.
OTHER IMPACTS, RISKS & OPPORTUNITIES	No	As this is an in principle decision only and will be subject to public consultation there are no risks that are associated with this report.
IMPACT ON SPECIFIC WARDS	Yes	Newport South Newport West Newport East Church Aston & Lilleshall

PART B) – ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

4. INFORMATION

Planning

- 4.1 On 25 April 2012 Plans Board resolved to approve the planning application for a supermarket together with associated infrastructure and the application was referred to the Department for Communities and Local Government (“CLG”) to consider whether the application should be called in for determination. On 15 June 2012 CLG confirmed that the application had been called in and officers anticipate an inquiry during late autumn 2012.
- 4.2 Members will be aware that an application for a superstore at Audley Avenue, Newport was considered at a recent planning inquiry following an appeal by the applicant, Classic Furniture, against non-determination of the application. After the appeal against non-determination was lodged the Council’s Plans Board resolved that it would have refused the application had the appeal not been lodged.

Village Green application

- 4.3 On 16 December 2011 an application was made by Mr John Rudd to have the Site registered as a town or village green pursuant to Section 15(1) Commons Act 2006. This application was made on the basis that the land has been used by local inhabitants for more than 20 years as of right for lawful sports and pastimes. The Council (as landowner) has objected to this application on several grounds including on the basis that the land has not in fact been used as alleged for lawful sports and pastimes during the relevant qualifying period and that a substantial part of the land has been used for arable cultivation. A non-statutory inquiry is due to take place during the week commencing 24 September 2012. At this inquiry the evidence will be considered by an independent Inspector and a recommendation made as to whether the land should be registered.

Appropriation

- 4.4 As a necessary first step, and before the Station Road Site may be appropriated for planning purposes, the Council is required to consider whether the land is no longer required for the purposes that it is currently held used in accordance with section 122(1) Local Government Act 1972. The purpose for which the land was originally acquired is not clear. Officers have investigated historic material and no clear conclusions can be reached. The land has for a significant number of years been used for agricultural purposes and grazing land. It is therefore reasonable for that most recent use to be taken as being representative as the purpose for which the land is held. As part of the Council’s land management and asset disposal strategy the land has been identified for development and it is considered that more productive use can be made of the land. It is also considered that there is other land within the area that could be used for the purposes that the land is currently used for. The lawful footpath which presently exists within the land will be retained subject to some diversion within the proposed scheme. The land is no longer considered to be required therefore to be retained by the Council for those purposes.
- 4.5 Members will be aware that a conditional contract for sale was entered into with Sainsbury’s Supermarkets Ltd in December 2011.

- 4.6 It is proposed that the land is to be redeveloped for use as a superstore and associated development. The form of development proposed and which is the subject of the application for planning permission referred to above is shown on the plan accompanying this report. It is considered that appropriation for planning purposes would facilitate and indeed is necessary for the carrying out of that development and the development and therefore the appropriation will contribute to the promotion and improvement of the economic, social and environmental well-being of the Council's area as the proposed retail development is expected to deliver some 300 jobs, together with a major contribution to investment in Newport Town Centre, public transport and leisure provision. The development of the employment land which is part of the wider scheme is anticipated to create a further 200 jobs. The residential development will deliver a full range of housing including the provision of affordable homes. These matters provide a proper basis for appropriation of the land for planning purposes as provided for within section 226 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990.
- 4.7 Additionally the proposed new use as a superstore is restrained by a number of restrictive covenants which affect the Site. To avoid the effect of these restrictive covenants the Council is likely to wish to rely on Section 237 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990. This provides that where a local authority has appropriated land it holds from one statutory purpose to planning purposes the appropriation is effective to overcome restrictive covenants and other rights that would otherwise affect the use or redevelopment of the land.
- 4.8 Before the land is transferred pursuant to the above contract and before it is developed, planning permission will need to have been granted. That is now a matter for the Secretary of State. However, that does not mean that the Council is not entitled or should not appropriate the land at this stage and to do so will ensure that the land is properly held to allow the sale and development to take place if planning permission is granted.
- 4.9 Furthermore, appropriation of the land for planning purposes at this stage would mean that in the event that the land or any part of it is registered as a town green (notwithstanding the Council's objection), its status as such would not prevent development taking place in accordance with planning permission through the operation of section 241 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990. This provides an additional reason why appropriation would facilitate the carrying out of development and why appropriation should take place at this stage, albeit that for the reasons set out above appropriation of the land is justified independently of this factor.
- 4.10 Section 122(2A) of the Local Government Act 1972 provides that where land proposed for appropriation is "open space" a public consultation is required before appropriation takes place. The definition of "open space" within the 1972 Act is wide, relying as it does on the definition in the Town and Country Planning Act 1990. It includes "land which is used for public recreation". There is one lawful public footpath within the land which is likely to be used for recreational walking as well apparently as some other informal walking routes which are not included on definitive map. On a broad interpretation of the definition of "open space" the likely use of these routes may be contended to lead to a conclusion that part of the land proposed for appropriation is used for public recreation. Furthermore, in support of the town green application it is claimed that more extensive use has been made of the land for recreation. That this is the case is not accepted by the Council. However, the existence and likely use of the lawful footpath and potential other routes as described is such that on balance it is considered that the consultation requirements of the Local Government Act 1972 should be followed. Moreover, it is felt that to do so would give an opportunity for public participation in the decision concerning appropriation before it is made. Before any final decision is made, the Council intends to place a notice of its intention in a local newspaper in two consecutive weeks and thereafter consider any objections which may be made.

- 4.11 The decision concerning appropriation which the Cabinet is asked to make at this stage will therefore be provisional and concerns the principle of appropriation. Before any final decision is made, the matter will need to be considered again following completion of the consultation exercise and after consideration is given to any objections received.
- 4.12 It is intended that any representations be considered by the Leader. The final decision to whether the land should be appropriated for planning purposes (as opposed to the in principle decision) is not being taken at this stage and will only be taken after consideration of all objections received during the proposed consultation.

5. IMPACT ASSESSMENT – ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

- 5.1 None as this is an in principle decision only and the impact of the final decision will be considered as part of the decision making process at that time.

6. PREVIOUS MINUTES

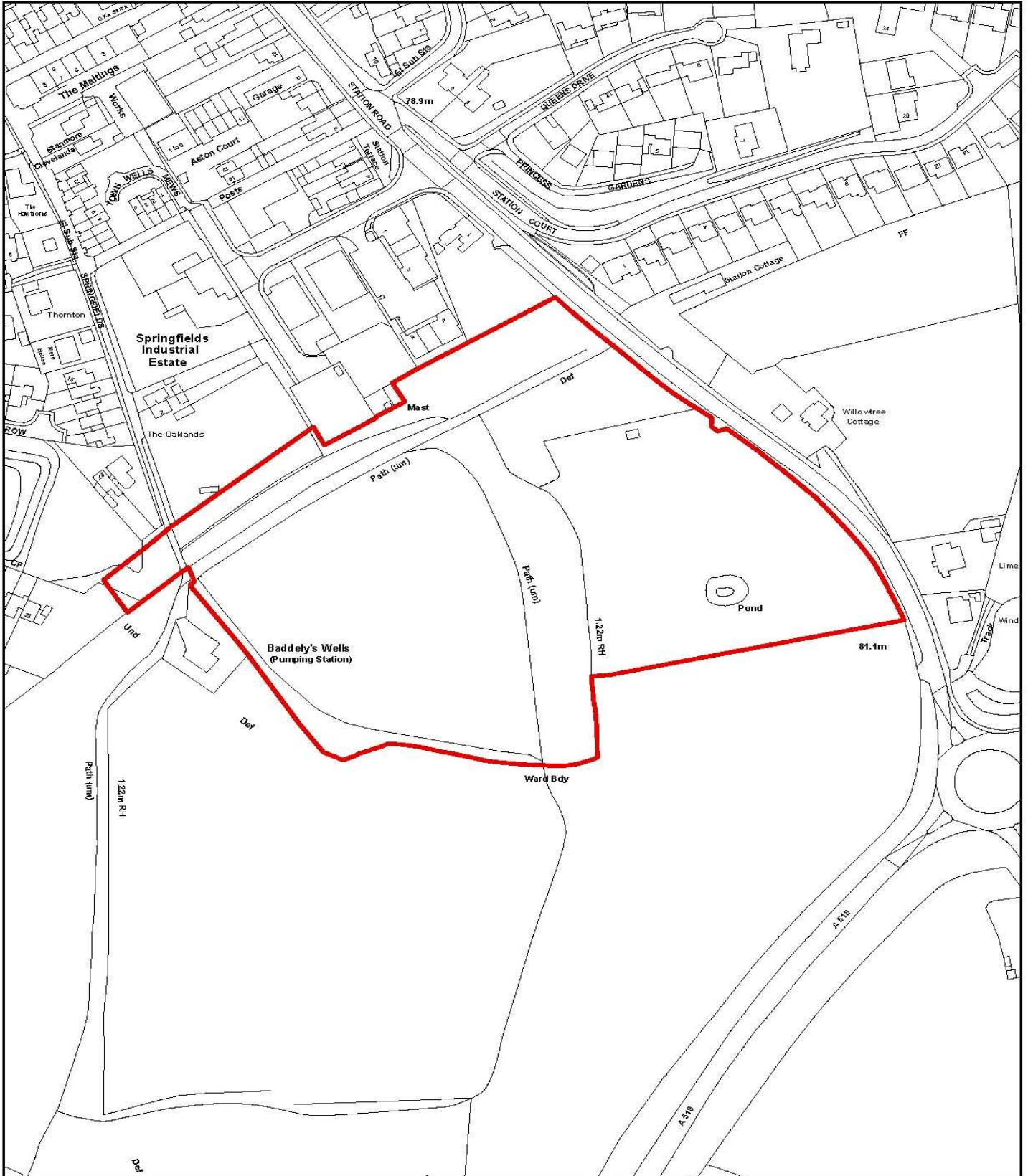
CB-44

7. BACKGROUND PAPERS

None

Report prepared by Emma Harvey, Commercial Solicitor, 01952 383255

Appendix 1 - Site



<p>Title Land off Station Road Newport Telford</p>	<p>Estates & Investments Wellington Civic & Leisure Centre Larkin Way Wellington Telford TF1 1LX</p>		 <p>Telford & Wrekin COUNCIL</p>
<p>Scale: 1:2,500</p>	<p>Drawn by: Arc/CVG</p>	<p>Date: 06/07/2012</p>	<p><small>Based on Ordnance Survey Mapping with the permission of the Controller of Her Majesty's Stationary Office. Crown Copyright. Unauthorised reproduction in any form is prohibited and may lead to prosecution or Civil Proceedings. Borough of Telford & Wrekin Licence No. LA10001 9992 - 2012</small></p>

PART A) – SUMMARY REPORT

1. SUMMARY OF MAIN PROPOSALS

- 1.1 The National Kickstart Programme was established by the Government in 2004 to provide loans to residents on low incomes unable to access finance for home improvements that would enable them to remain living independently
- 1.2 The report outlines the implications for T&WC of the wind up of the West Midlands Kickstart Partnership established to administer the national programme in the Region and includes proposals for the management of home improvement loans to be assigned to T&WC as a result.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 That Cabinet approve that all secured and unsecured loans, as listed in the respective Deeds of Assignment of Loans schedules are formally assigned to Telford & Wrekin Council so that it can legitimately deal with any queries from borrowers relating to those loans and with any enforcement issues (where deemed appropriate).

3. SUMMARY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

COMMUNITY IMPACT	Do these proposals contribute to specific Priority Plan objective(s)?	
	Yes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regenerate those neighbourhoods in need and work hard to ensure that local people have access to suitable housing protect • Support our vulnerable-children and adults
	Will the proposals impact on specific groups of people?	
	Yes	The national Kickstart scheme was established by Central Government to provide finance to those unable to access funding through mainstream lenders as a way of encouraging growth in the Housing market.
TARGET COMPLETION/ DELIVERY DATE	Engrossed Deeds of Assignment of Loans, with regards to Street (UK) Homes Limited and to Art Homes Limited (the two loan management companies acting for the former Partnership.) have been sent to the Kick Start Programme Management Team (established to administer the national programme within the West Midlands) who will liaise with those companies in order to arrange execution of the Deeds, and their subsequent return to T&WC. T&WC will seal the Deeds, which will formally transfer the loans to Council control.	
FINANCIAL/VALUE FOR MONEY IMPACT	Homeowner loans and capital allocation of £361,000 will be assigned under this arrangement. Full details are attached in Section 5 of this report. There are implications for the administration of the loan portfolio including monitoring and chasing payments, providing annual loan statements and responding to queries in relation to secured loans.	
LEGAL ISSUES	Yes	Until the formal assignment of the benefits of the loan portfolio(s) to T&WC, from Street (UK) Homes Limited and from Art Homes Limited, T&WC do not have legal ownership of the loans and will not be able to deal with queries relating to those loans or enforcement of non-payment. T&WC is reliant on the Kick Start Programme Team and particularly on Street (UK) Homes Limited and Art Homes

		Limited executing the Deed of Assignment of Loans in order to affect the transfer. When the loans have been assigned to T&WC there will be potential implications for Legal Services workload in terms of property related issues - further advances or remortgaging (secured loans) and enforcement due to non-payment (unsecured loans).
OTHER IMPACTS, RISKS & OPPORTUNITIES	Yes	Risk of non repayment of loans. Opportunity to invest loan repayments into housing capital programme to support action to meet housing need and enable households to remain living independently
IMPACT ON SPECIFIC WARDS	Yes	Those accessing loans live across the Borough so the Report may impact on all Wards

PART B) – ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

4. INFORMATION

- 4.1 The National Kickstart Programme was established by the Government in 2004 to provide loans to residents on low incomes unable to access finance for home improvements that would enable them to remain living independently.
- 4.2 In the West Midlands region a Partnership of around 12 Local Authorities was established with Birmingham City Council hosting a Programme Management Team. The Programme Team procured a loan management company to manage the provision of secure and unsecured loans provided to home owners. The funding originating from a national allocation was recycled through the Programme with funds released from payment of loans reinvested into new loans.
- 4.3 T&W joined the Partnership in 2008 with the Home Improvement Agency linking residents contacting the Agency with the Programme Team. Initially, once loans were agreed the Council undertook the work or procured contractors and managed the work on site. Following a change in the loan management company work is now procured and managed centrally.
- 4.4 Since the establishment of the Regional Partnership 59 households in T&WC have benefited from the scheme. Typical home improvements have included replacement heating systems, roofing works and electrics. A number equity share and unsecured types of loans were offered. The equity share loans were a maximum of £30k and unsecured were a maximum of £2k. Repayment of unsecured loans is typically over 4 years with full repayment anticipated by 2015.
- 4.5 In 2010 the Government took a decision to cease to provide Kickstart loan finance. This has necessitated the wind up of the Partnership. As part of this process remaining secure and unsecure loans are to be assigned to the relevant Local Authority. This loan portfolio will then become the responsibility of the Local Authority to administer. It has been confirmed that there will be no claw back of capital to Government and the funds released as loans will not be ring-fenced. Although final figures are still being clarified it is anticipated that T&WC will take responsibility for:
- 27 secured loans with a value of £328K at 31 March 2012
 - 21 unsecured loans with a balance of £18k to be repaid

T&WC Responsibilities

- 4.6 Assignment of loans to T&WC will bring with it a series of tasks:
1. Contacting all those with an outstanding loan to confirm new administrative arrangements and providing an annual statement of their loan
 2. Establishing new direct debit payment arrangements for repayment of unsecured loans and administering payments
 3. Pursuing payment if homeowners cease to pay
 4. Responding to HMLR where secure loans are to be repaid on sale of property
 5. Responding to requests from solicitors or homeowners for secure loan charge to be reduced e.g. where a further mortgage or loan is being sought
 6. Ensuring searches accurately reflect the existence of a homeowner loan

Unsecured Loans

- 4.7 The loan management company Street UK ceased to make collections against unsecured loans at the end of February 2012. Customers received a letter explaining the forthcoming transfer of their loan to the LA and indicating there would be no further collections for a period while new administrative arrangements were put in place by the relevant Council. The slow progress of

demobilisation since then and the 4 month payment 'holiday' will make it more difficult to re-establish payment arrangements.

- 4.8 It is also apparent from initial analysis of information received from the Programme Management Team that when Street UK took over from Art (the original loan management company appointed by the Partnership) that new direct debits which should have been put in place with customers were not pursued in all cases. Once all loan information has been received it will be possible to assess the status of each T&WC homeowner loan in full and clarify to what extent loan payments have been collected.
- 4.9 It is important to consider the administrative costs of pursuing loan payments. The existing loan management company, Street, have offered to provide ongoing loan management for Authorities. Birmingham City Council who have a large loan portfolio are tendering for a loan management company and have offered other Authorities opportunity to join this framework. T&WC have a relatively small unsecured loan portfolio and it is not proposed to pursue either option but to use the Authorities Invoicing and Collection Team to manage loan repayments.

Secured Loans

- 4.10 In February 2012 the Programme Office wrote to HMLR with the schedule of loans to be transferred to each Local Authority. To date one request has already been received for the kickstart loan charge to be reduced from 2nd to 3rd charge. A holding response has been given pending the Deed of Assignment being sealed. It is recommended that the Council do not accept a reduction in charge as this reduces the potential to receive full repayment of the loan on sale of the property. This is the approach taken by the Programme Management Team to date. Where a loan is to be repaid the original contract places the cost of providing a final valuation with the homeowner. The Council would potentially value the property to determine the application of the equity % to be repaid.

Application of Funds Repaid

- 4.11 As part of the assignment T&WC has received £15,000 of capital from the Programme Management Team. This represents T&WC proportion of the funds held for recycling at the point loans ceased to be made by Street. This has been directed into the housing capital programme and is being used to provide home improvement grants and to form an allocation to underwrite the provision of loans for similar home improvements through a local partnership with Fairshare Credit Union. Loan repayments are not ring-fenced but also unpredictable in terms of their likely point of repayment. Secured loans may not be repaid for many years until properties are sold. The value of unsecured loans is around £18k.

5. FINANCIAL COMMENT

- 5.1 The value and number of loans outstanding at 31 March 2012 are shown in the table below:

	Number	Loan Value £'000s
Secured	27	328
Unsecured	21	18
Subtotal	48	346
Funds already assigned		15
Total		361

- 5.2 Secured loan repayments will arise only when the properties upon which they are secured are sold. The timing of which cannot be projected with any certainty. Assuming the homeowner meets their unsecured loan repayment arrangements this would equate to a receipt of approximately £18,000. As part of the changes, T&WC has received £15,000 of capital from the Programme Management Team.
- 5.3 The original allocation of funding for the loans was awarded as a part of the single capital pot and there is no requirement to repay funds to DCLG. As such all monies received will represent additional allocation of capital which is not ring-fenced. Approval is requested to accept the capital monies (secured loan repayments, unsecured loan repayments, funds associated with the assignment) as they are received. As it is currently unclear when these funds will be received their utilisation will be considered as part of the service and financial planning process in future years.

5.4 The administrative and legal costs of managing the loan portfolio will be met from within existing resources.

6. IMPACT ASSESSMENT – ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

6.1 The provision of loans has enabled 59 households to make improvements to their homes that they would not otherwise have been able to finance. This has supported individuals to continue to live independently and accommodate changes in their family circumstances.

7. OTHER IMPACTS, RISKS & OPPORTUNITIES

7.1 While full information on individual loans has not yet been received there is a risk that loan repayments will not be made and given the value of the unsecured loan portfolio the administration of pursuing payment may outweigh the financial benefit.

7.2 In relation to secure loans requests to reduce the Council's charge risks the Council not receiving full payment of outstanding loan on sale of the property

Report prepared by Katherine Kynaston, Housing & Development Planning Manager

TELFORD & WREKIN COUNCIL

CABINET – 26 JULY 2012

TRANSPARENCY AND PUBLIC ACCOUNTABILITY

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

LEAD CABINET MEMBER – CLLR RICHARD OVERTON

PART A) – SUMMARY REPORT

1. SUMMARY OF MAIN PROPOSALS

1.1 That Members consider proposals for the Council to operate in an even more transparent, open and accountable way in line with the values and ethos of a Co-operative Council and in accordance with guidance from the Department of Communities & Local Government (DCLG).

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

2.1 That Cabinet consider the implementation of the proposed options, shown at 3.3 to 3.5 of the report, for increasing transparency and improving public accountability.

- a) Publication of information on Councillors who trade with the Council
- b) Publication of Councillor attendance figures for appointed meetings of the Council
- c) Public Question session at Full Council Meetings
- d) Filming/Recording of Cabinet and Council meetings by members of the public on a trial basis
- e) Use of Social Media by members of the public during meetings
- f) Voluntary publication of Council expenditure over £100

2.2 That, for proposals supported by Cabinet, further detailed protocols be agreed for consideration and approval by Council Constitution Committee and Full Council

SUMMARY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

COMMUNITY IMPACT	Do these proposals contribute to specific Council priorities?	
	Yes	<i>If yes, please list relevant priority</i> Co-operative Council Values – Openness and Honesty, Involvement. The section on openness and honesty states that the Council will “ <i>be open and honest in the way we work and make decisions and communicate in a clear, simple</i>

		<p><i>and timely way</i>". The section on involvement stated that "<i>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</i>".</p>
		<p>Will the proposals impact on specific groups of people?</p>
	No	
<p>TARGET COMPLETION/DELIVERY DATE</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Target Implementation Date – should Members accept some or all of the proposals, implementation could begin from mid September 2012 after approval by Constitution Committee and Full Council. With regard to Member attendance data this could be collected retrospectively from the beginning of the Civic year.
<p>FINANCIAL/VALUE FOR MONEY IMPACT</p>	Yes	<p>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 currently available:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information on Councillors who trade with the Council – an exercise would be required to gather and maintain the data for publication; as the proposal is slightly different to the information currently published in the Statement of Accounts this will require additional officer time/resource. Note, the 11/12 declarations of interest have already been requested as part of the final accounts process; • Publication of attendance at meetings figures – resource implications on Democratic Services staff; • Questions at Council – a web-based question facility is likely to have development costs/resources implications; • Web-cast Meetings – estimated cost of £500-£1,000 per meeting; also the suitability of venues may be an issue; • Twitter/social media – could be reputation "costs" and potentially additional costs associated with monitoring social media and

		<p>responding to comments.</p> <p>There is currently no provision in revenue budgets to meet such costs.</p>
LEGAL ISSUES	Yes	<p><i>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.</i></p> <p><i>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.</i></p> <p><i>The changes to provide greater transparency link in with the new Members' Code of Conduct, particularly the aspects relating to integrity and honesty. Disclosing additional financial details could be incorporated into the new Register of Interest forms that will need to be completed when the new ethical framework comes in to force in accordance with the requirements of the Localism Act 2011. We are currently awaiting Regulations to find out how the Register of Interest forms will be set out. However, it is likely that the additional financial disclosures referred to in this report will be provided on a voluntary basis and there may be no formal sanction for members who do not supply the requested details.</i></p>
OTHER IMPACTS, RISKS & OPPORTUNITIES	Yes	<p>Other impacts/risk/opportunities include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased transparency and public accountability • More opportunity for public involvement in decision making processes • Some risk of reputational issues regarding public speaking and filming/recording which will need to be managed by robust protocols

HR Issues	No	
IMPACT ON SPECIFIC WARDS	No	Borough wide impact.

PART B) – ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

3. SUMMARY

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

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 to the report. 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 could 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) 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 the details of any councillors who have an interest in businesses that benefit from trading with the Council could be taken to Full Council via the Audit Committee as a separate report each year.

This information would 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.

Information requested could include:

- 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

This proposal would not have any obvious cost/resource implications providing the information were collected only once.

Publication of more detailed information in a more accessible way would increase transparency and public accountability of councillors. The information would be reported to Audit Committee annually and shown on the Council's website.

b) Publication of Member attendance figures at meetings of the Council

Attendance records showing councillors' attendance at meetings could be published on the Councils website on a quarterly basis and at a minimum annually. 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 provide some transparency and strengthen councillor accountability. Collection of data would have some time and resource implications.

This option provides further accountability and is reported by most Councils. It is suggested that attendance data be collected for the meetings of the Council to which members are appointed at the Annual meeting.

3.4 Meetings

a) Public Question session at Full Council Meetings

Most Councils now have some form of public question session. 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 would allow members of the public to ask questions directly of the Leader and/or Cabinet members. A protocol for the receipt of questions would need to be agreed, this could be similar to the Public Speaking policy used for Plans Board. It is proposed that the opportunity to ask questions is not made available to sitting Borough Councillors and current Council employees as they have other avenues open to them.

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 in place at a large number of Councils and appears to work satisfactorily.

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. A robust protocol would need to be adopted to avoid issues such as vexatious questions, personal attacks, delivering political statements. However, the risks are probably greater by denying the public the right to question elected councillors as this would be at odds with the stated values of the Council, the government's transparency agenda and the growing momentum for accountability.

A protocol could be drawn up setting time allocated and how questions should be submitted. The process might be for a 15 minute slot to allow people to present their questions to the Leader and Cabinet, it would seem sensible that the questions be submitted in advance to allow detailed information to be researched, this might be 7 working days in advance of the meeting (to allow publication on the agenda papers). Questions not dealt with in the 15 minute period would be answered in writing. There would be a limit on the number of questions submitted by an individual or a group in order to ensure that all individuals/groups have the opportunity to raise questions.

Public questions would allow the public direct access to the Leader and Cabinet. It would not be without risks, the session might be used to carry out personal attacks or to air political grievances, the protocol would need to be specific about what questions would not be admissible for legal reasons. It might be feasible to consider a website based electronic question facility that could fulfil the same purpose. However, this would have a potential cost and would not allow the public to meet councillors face to face to raise questions.

Potentially, the administration of a speaking system would have an impact on time and resources within the Democratic services team.

b) Filming/Recording of Cabinet and Council by members of the public

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.

Webcasting obviously carries a cost. Estimates indicate that this would be between £500 and £1000 per meeting. However, web casting of meetings would not stop requests from the public to film/record or take photographs at meetings. DCLG advice on this issue is fairly clear that Councils should do everything possible to allow transparency provided such activity is not interfering with the decision making process. An example protocol has been attached to the report which is used by the Council at Cambridge.

There are some legal 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, these factors could be considered as part of a protocol should the Council decide to allow the principle of filming/recording the decision making process. If adopted then advice that filming/recording was permissible could be included with meeting agenda papers.

There would 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 it is suggested that filming and/or recording by members of the public be trialled at Full Council and Cabinet meetings and that a protocol be drawn up for consideration by Council Constitution Committee.

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 is more 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. Legal guidance would be required as to the basic conditions under which we would allow people to use Social Media.

There would be no obvious time or resource implications.

3.5 Voluntary Publication of expenditure by the Council reduced to £100 from £500

The Council is currently required to publish any expenditure over £500; this is one of the requirements of the Localism Act. In order to provide greater transparency the Council could 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.

3.6 Adoption of Proposals

There are undoubtedly some risks in all of the options but these can be largely mitigated by good protocols and sound management of the processes. More important is how the suggested options might reflect the stated aims of a Co-operative Council and how they might contribute to the goals of openness and accountability to the people of the Borough.

If any or all of the options were to be adopted then a report would need go to Council Constitution Committee and Full Council for consideration and approval.

PREVIOUS MINUTES

None

4. EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY

No implications.

5. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT

No implications.

6. BACKGROUND PAPERS

6.1 The Localism Act 2011

6.2 Co-operative Council Commissions' Report 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**

Eland House
Bressenden Place
London SW1E 5DU

Tel: 0303 444 3430
Fax: 0303 444 3986
E-Mail: bob.neill@communities.gsi.gov.uk

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, VIDEOING, PHOTOGRAPHY AND AUDIO RECORDING AT COUNCIL MEETINGS

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. 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.'

CABINET

Decision Notices and Minutes of a meeting of the Cabinet held on Thursday, 26th July, 2012 at 5.00 p.m. at the Civic Offices, Telford

PUBLISHED ON WEDNESDAY, 1st AUGUST, 2012

(DEADLINE FOR CALL-IN: MONDAY, 6th AUGUST, 2012)

PRESENT: Councillor K.S. Sahota (Leader and Chair), E.A. Clare, S. Davies, A.R.H. England, W.A.M. McClements, H. Rhodes, C.F. Smith and P.R. Watling

ALSO PRESENT: Councillor A.J. Eade (Conservative Group Leader) and Councillor W.L. Tomlinson (Lib Dem/Independent Group Leader)

CB-21 MINUTES

RESOLVED – that the minutes of the meeting of the Cabinet held on 28th June 2012 be confirmed and signed by the Chairman.

CB-22 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Councillor R.A. Overton

CB-23 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None

CB-24 COUNCIL MEDIUM TERM PLAN 2012/13 – 2014/15

Key Decision identified as **Council Plan** in the Forward Plan published on 16th May 2012

Council Decision – not subject to Call-in.

Councillor S. Davies, Cabinet Member: Neighbourhood Services & Co-operative Council, presented the report of the Managing Director, attached to which was the draft Council Medium Term Plan 2012/13 – 2014/15.

The Council Plan identified the high level strategic focus for the organisation over the next 3 years, including the Council's vision, priorities and values; its approach to a co-operative way of working; the medium term financial strategy; and its strategy for "Putting Customers First" and being a "Business supporting, Business Winning Council". Against each proposed Priority, the Plan set out how 'delivery' would be measured, although specific measures would be kept under review as strategies and initiatives were developed. Progress reports on the delivery of the Plan and the Priority would be presented to Cabinet at regular periods.

A key challenge was to communicate and embed the Priorities within the organisation alongside the Co-operative values. This could be achieved through Personal Development Discussions between managers and their staff, and by ensuring all Council reports and plans identified how they contributed to delivering the Priorities. The report also outlined a number of suggestions for communicating the message within the organisation.

Reference was made to the new Development & Business Charter, and the series of pledges it made to ensure that the Borough was 'open for business'.

RESOLVED – that the draft Council Medium Term Plan 2012/13 – 2014/15 be approved, and to **RECOMMEND** to COUNCIL that it be adopted.

CB-25 CO-OPERATIVE COUNCIL UPDATE

Non-Key Decision

Councillor S. Davies, Cabinet Member: Neighbourhood Services & Co-operative Council, presented the report of the Managing Director, which provided an update on the progress that had been made in putting co-operative working into practice.

The programme of work to translate the vision into action was focussed on four main areas:

- (i) Adopter projects – achievements over the last 12 months included the employment of around 100 apprentices within the Council, a Small Business Loans Fund, launch of an employability centre, environmental improvements in Brookside, and a Ward Co-operative Fund. A number of other projects were in progress – including Family Connect, bringing Dawley Town Hall back into community use, and free Wi-Fi in Council owned buildings. It was proposed to incorporate a Food Bank project into the current programme. Whilst some voluntary organisations already provided food parcels, it had been identified that there was a growing need for a co-ordinated Telford & Wrekin Food Bank facility, and support to tackle the underlying issues. It was proposed to allocate up to £5k from the Co-operative Council budget towards the cost of this project.
- (ii) Co-operative and Employee Commissions – recommendations from both Commissions had been agreed by Cabinet in May 2012. In conjunction with Commissioners, work had started on implementing the recommendations, including the launch of a Business & Development Charter and promoting volunteering. Both Commissions would meet again in October to review progress and agree next steps.
- (iii) Partnership Working – including developing a Health & Wellbeing Strategy and refreshing the Children, Young People & Families Plan.
- (iv) Community Agreements – existing community agreements such as the Parish Charter and the Customer Charter were being reviewed to better reflect the Council's Co-operative Values and approach.

RESOLVED –

- (a) that the progress in delivering the Co-operative Council Work Programme, as set out in Section 4 of the report, be noted;
- (b) that the inclusion of the Food Bank project in the Co-operative Council Work Programme be approved.

CB-26 2012/13 FINANCIAL MONITORING REPORT

Key Decision identified as **2012/13 Financial Monitoring** in the Forward Plan published on 15th June 2012.

Councillor W.A.M. McClements, Cabinet Member: Resources & Service Delivery, presented the report of the Assistant Director: Finance, Audit & Information Governance, which provided Members with the latest financial monitoring information for 2012/13.

It was reported that revenue spending for the year was projected to be within budget at year end, after the use of £2.6m of the budgeted contingency. There were still a number of significant pressures on the budget, including the cost of Adult Social Care purchasing (projected overspend of £0.320m, largely due to the Council having to fund the support to people who had had their funding withdrawn by the PCT); the cost of Children in Care placements and use of agency staff in the Safeguarding service (projected variation of £1.970m); the cost of Specialist Education (projected overspend of £0.3m); along with income shortfalls, particularly in School Meals. Projected variances of over £0.100m for individual service delivery units were detailed in the report. There were benefits from active treasury management, vacancies and other small service variances.

The capital programme totalled £112.7m, which reflected re-phasing approved as part of the outturn. Robust programme management and monitoring was in place to ensure schemes were delivered. Appended to the report were a number of new allocations and slippage for approval. The capital programme over the next few years relied on a significant amount of capital receipts as part of its funding, and the position was being closely monitored. There was no variation from receipts delivered compared to expectation to date.

Collection levels for Council Tax and Sales Ledger debt were behind target, while NNDR income was ahead of target at the end of June 2012.

Councillor A.J. Eade (Conservative Group Leader) referred to the continued overspend on the cost of placements for Children in Care, and that promises to get this expenditure under control had not been met. In response, Councillor P.R. Watling (Cabinet Member for Children, Young People & Families) stated that the Administration was clear on the direction of Children's Services, and that it would not put a price on children's safety. Councillor McClements added that measures were being taken to reduce the unit costs of placements, and recent monitoring had shown these were

coming down. Although the numbers of children coming into the care system was largely outside the Council's control, it was hoped that the overspend would not be any greater by the end of the financial year.

RESOLVED –

- (a) that it be noted that the 2012/13 revenue spend is projecting to be within budget at year end;
- (b) that the uses of the budgeted contingency detailed in paragraph 6.1 of the report be approved, and that the existing delegated authority be extended in relation to approving bids against the capacity fund to cover the additional amount approved;
- (c) that the position in relation to capital spend be noted, and **TO RECOMMEND to COUNCIL** that the slippage and new allocations identified in Appendix 3 be approved;
- (d) that it be noted that NNDR income collection is ahead of target while Council Tax collection and Sales Ledger outstanding debt are behind targets set.

CB-27 STATEMENT OF COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT – DRAFT FOR CONSULTATION

Key decision identified as **Draft Statement of Community Involvement** in the Forward Plan published on 16th May 2012.

Councillor C.F. Smith, Cabinet Member: Housing, Regeneration & Economic Development, presented the report of the Assistant Director: Business, Development & Housing which set out a Co-operative approach to developing a framework for community engagement in relation to planning. Attached to the report was the proposed draft Statement of Community Involvement.

The Statement of Community Involvement was a regulatory requirement in relation to the development of the Local Plan, and set out minimum standards that the Council would deliver when engaging the public. It would provide greater overall clarity for investors in terms of how to engage with the planning process, and reflected the pledges contained in the Business & Development Charter in relation to streamlining the process. In terms of engagement with Members, it was proposed to focus engagement through the Cabinet, whose role was to directly shape and drive the Development Plan, and the Scrutiny structure. This would replace the current Development Plan Steering Group – a small cross party group that had worked with Officers on the new Plan.

If approved, the draft Statement of Community Involvement would be subject to a six week period of public consultation between 20 August and 1 October 2012. The Council would then review the comments made and make any alterations where appropriate prior to adoption by Council.

RESOLVED –

- (a) that the Statement of Community Involvement be approved for public consultation;
- (b) that the amended approach for Member engagement through Cabinet and the Scrutiny Programme be approved.

CB-28 PLANNING OF SCHOOL PLACES: HOLLINSWOOD INFANT AND JUNIOR SCHOOLS

Key Decision not in the Forward Plan but taken with the consent of the Chairman of the Children & Young People Scrutiny Committee, in accordance with paragraph 2.7 of the Cabinet Decision Procedure Rules as set out in part 4 section 4 of the Constitution.

Councillor P.R. Watling, Cabinet Member for Children, Young People & Families, presented the report of the Assistant Director for Education, Culture & Skills which detailed the responses to the consultation on a proposed amalgamation of Hollinswood Infant and Junior Schools.

Following the Cabinet decision on 31 May 2012 to engage in formal consultation on the merger of the two schools, officers had been involved in several meetings with parents, pupils, staff and governors to seek and collate the views of all stakeholders. Further discussions had been held with headteachers and governors to explain the timetable and process necessary for any possible changes to be implemented by January 2013. Consultation responses and notes of consultation meetings were appended to the report. A further three responses received after publication of the agenda were tabled at the meeting, although it was reported that the response from a staff member was not to be considered, as they had subsequently asked for it to be withdrawn.

It was clear there were mixed views on the proposal, with the Infant School not being in favour of a merger. However, the merging of the schools would be in line with the national trend to reduce the number of single phase schools, it would ease the transition of pupils from KS1 to KS2 and more likely lead to improved attainment for all children, and would offer opportunities for staff to enhance their skills by gaining experience across more than one key stage. In the last seven years, only 4 pupils had not transferred from the Infant School to the Junior School. Cabinet were therefore minded to proceed with the amalgamation, but would work closely with the Infants School to address the concerns of staff and to make sure the transition was as smooth as possible.

RESOLVED – that, having taken into consideration responses to the formal consultation that ended on 23 July 2012, Public Notices be published in respect of the merger of Hollinswood Infant and Junior Schools.

CB - 29 HIGHWAYS MAINTENANCE – WINTER SERVICE REVIEW

Key Decision identified as **Annual Winter Maintenance Review** in the Forward Plan published on 15th June 2012.

Councillor S. Davies, Cabinet Member: Neighbourhood Services & Co-operative Council, presented the report of the Assistant Director: Neighbourhood & Leisure Services, which provided a review of the performance of the service during the 2011/12 winter season, proposals for service efficiencies amounting to £50k along with Co-operative Council initiatives to enhance the winter service provision.

To increase resilience without increasing costs, the rate of spread for salt applied to the roads for the winter of 2011/12 was reduced to reflect national guidelines and common practice elsewhere. This had been monitored, and there did not appear to have been any adverse impact. It was therefore proposed to continue with this rate of spread for the 2012/13 winter season. Following a review of all gritting routes, it was proposed that the number of gritting routes could be reduced from nine to eight – resulting in efficiency savings without reducing the defined network coverage. In response to stakeholder requests, the A4640 Redhill Way slip roads to Donnington Business Park had been added to the roads to be gritted.

In order to help members of the public with the effects of significant snowfall or adverse weather, it was proposed to introduce and support a Snow Warden initiative commencing in winter 2012/13. Based on the Co-operative model, the aim was to establish a network of up to 50 volunteer wardens – further details on how it would work and the financial/insurance implications were appended to the report. The newly created Parish Environmental Teams in St Georges & Priorslee, Great Dawley and Madeley would also provide assistance at times of adverse weather.

Members welcomed the report and thanked all those people who worked hard in often difficult circumstances to keep the roads clear of snow and ice.

RESOLVED – that the changes to the Highways Maintenance Winter Service outlined in Appendices 1 and 2 of the report be approved, namely:

- Existing treatment routes to remain the same for 2012/13 with the addition of one location- the slip roads off A4640 leading to Donnington Business Park and reduce the number of gritting routes from nine to eight without affecting network coverage and in turn delivering efficiency savings;
- Existing Grit Bin Policy to remain for 2012/13 but to continue close working with Parishes and community groups for local co operative opportunities;
- To provide ongoing resilience and efficiencies – continue with salt storage at the same capacity and the rate of spread of salt of 10g per m² for frost prevention and 20g per m² for snow events be adopted as ongoing service policy;

- **Continue to improve communication channels and access to information for residents, parish councils and businesses within the Borough and to promote Co-operative Council opportunities including the introduction of up to 50 volunteer Neighbourhood Snow Wardens.**

CB-30 OUTCOME OF CALL-IN REQUEST

Non-Key Decision

Councillor D.R.W. White, Chair of the Scrutiny Management Board, reported on the Board's consideration of a Call-in of the decisions taken by Cabinet on 31 May 2012 regarding Waste Management Services Procurement. The Board had not supported the Call-in but the discussion generated had raised a number of issues and ideas. It was therefore recommended 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;
- benchmarking reviews should be undertaken at minimum 5 yearly intervals throughout the terms of the contract;
- scrutiny will be involved throughout the procurement process – this would be led by the Housing, Economy & Infrastructure Scrutiny Committee

Councillor S. Davies, Cabinet Member: Neighbourhood Services & Co-operative Council, presented the Cabinet's response to the Scrutiny recommendations arising from the Call-in – a copy of which had been tabled.

A detailed evaluation of the option for a Council owned and managed Transfer Station would be undertaken, and assessed when the market submitted costed bids at detailed solution stage. In terms of benchmarking reviews, these would be built into the contract when it was drafted. A Scrutiny Engagement Plan would be produced, and discussions had taken place between the Project Team and Scrutiny Officer to agree on how the process was to be developed.

RESOLVED - that the Cabinet's response to the Scrutiny recommendations be approved.

CB-31 STATION ROAD, NEWPORT – UPDATE AND APPROPRIATION

Key Decision identified as **Station Road, Newport** in the Forward Plan published on 15 June 2012.

Councillor C.F. Smith, Cabinet Member: Housing, Regeneration & Economic Development, presented the report of the Assistant Director: Development, Business & Housing which provided an update regarding the progress of the sale of the Station Road, Newport site for redevelopment as a superstore and

associated development and sought an in principle decision to appropriate the land for planning purposes.

Before the site was appropriated for planning purposes, the Council was required to consider whether the land was no longer required for the purposes that it was currently used. It was considered that more productive use could be made of the land and the Council, as landowner, had made its intentions clear in respect of the future use of the land. It was considered that appropriation for planning purposes would facilitate and indeed was necessary for carrying out that development, and therefore the appropriation would contribute to the promotion and improvement of the economic, social and environmental well-being of the Council's area as detailed in the report.

RESOLVED –

- (a) **that in principle, and in accordance with section 122(1) of the Local Government Act 1972, the Station Road, Newport site is no longer required to be held by the Council for general landholding purposes;**
- (b) **that in principle the Station Road site, as identified in Appendix 1 of the report, be appropriated for planning purposes, subject to the consideration of representations as to the effect taking that step will have on affected landowners' interests;**
- (c) **that it be noted that an advertising and consultation process will be undertaken, and a final decision on the above matters will be taken following that process and having regard to any objections received;**
- (d) **that it be noted that the Leader will consider any representations received and make the final decision whether to appropriate the Site for planning purposes.**

CB-32 HOUSING KICKSTART PARTNERSHIP – WEST MIDLANDS

Key Decision identified as **Demobilisation & Assignment of Home Owner Loans to TWC** in the Forward Plan published on 16 May 2012.

Councillor C.F. Smith, Cabinet Member: Housing, Regeneration & Economic Development, presented the report of the Assistant Director: Development, Business & Housing which outlined the implications for the Council of the wind-up of the West Midlands Kickstart Partnership established to administer the national programme in the Region.

The National Kickstart Programme was established in 2004 to provide loans to residents on low incomes unable to access finance for home improvements that would enable them to remain living independently. The Council joined the West Midlands Partnership in 2008 with the Home Improvement Agency linking residents with the Programme team. 59 households in the Borough had benefitted from the Scheme, and a number of equity share and

unsecured types of loans were offered. Following the Government decision to cease to provide Kickstart loan finance, the Partnership had had to wound up, with the remaining secure and unsecure loans being assigned to the relevant local authority. Although final figures were still being clarified, it was anticipated that the Council would take responsibility for 27 secured loans totalling £328k and 21 unsecured loans with a balance of £18k to be repaid.

The report set out the actions and responsibilities that now fell on the Council and how these would be dealt with. For the unsecured loans it was proposed that the in-house Invoicing and Collection teams manage the loan repayments. As part of the changes, the Council had received £15,000 of capital from the Project Management Team.

RESOLVED – that all secured and unsecured loans, as listed in the respective Deeds of Assignment of Loans schedules are formally assigned to Telford & Wrekin Council so that it can legitimately deal with any queries from borrowers relating to those loans and with any enforcement issues (where deemed appropriate).

CB-33 TRANSPARENCY AND PUBLIC ACCOUNTABILITY

Non-Key Decision

The Leader presented the report of the Assistant Director: Law, Democracy & Public Protection which asked Members to consider proposals for the Council to operate in an even more transparent, open and accountable way in line with the values and ethos of a Co-operative Council and in accordance with Government guidance arising from the Localism Act 2011

The options outlined in the report were varied but focussed on the issues involving transparency for elected Members and public accountability to the Council's meetings and decision making processes. For example, further information and details could be published on any payments by the Council to companies or businesses that a Councillor had an interest in. In terms of Council meetings, it was suggested that greater public engagement could be achieved through a public question session at full Council meetings. Similarly, the filming and recording of Cabinet and Council by members of the public and the use of social media during meetings was being promoted by the Government as a way of allowing citizens to observe local decision-making. Implementation of some of these options would require consideration of protocols etc, and would need to be discussed by the Council Constitution Committee and full Council in relation to any consequent changes to the Constitution.

Members welcomed the report, and it was

RESOLVED –

- (a) that the following measures for increasing transparency and improving public accountability be approved:

- Publication of information on Councillors who trade with the Council
 - Publication of Councillor attendance figures for appointed meetings of the Council
 - Public Question session at Full Council Meetings
 - Filming/Recording of Cabinet and Council meetings by members of the public on a trial basis
 - Use of Social Media by members of the public during meetings
 - Voluntary publication of Council expenditure over £100
- (b) that, prior to implementation, further detailed protocols be agreed for consideration and approval by Council Constitution Committee and full Council.

The meeting ended at 5.56 p.m.

Signed for the purposes of the Decision Notices

Jonathan Eatough
Assistant Director: Law, Democracy & Public Protection
Date: 1st August 2012

Signed:

Date: