

CABINET

Decision Notices and Minutes of a meeting of the Cabinet held on Thursday, 25th July, 2013 at 5.00 p.m. at the AFC Telford Learning Centre, Haybridge Road, Wellington, Telford

PUBLISHED ON WEDNESDAY, 31st JULY, 2013

(DEADLINE FOR CALL-IN: MONDAY, 5th AUGUST, 2013)

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)

CB-18 **MINUTES**

RESOLVED – that the minutes of the meeting of the Cabinet held on 27th June 2013 be confirmed and signed by the Chairman.

CB-19 **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Councillor W.L. Tomlinson (Liberal Democrat/Independent Group Leader)

CB-20 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

None

CB-21 **FINANCIAL MONITORING 2013/14**

Key Decision identified as **Financial Monitoring 2013/14** in the Notice of Key Decisions published on 30 April 2013.

Councillor W.A.M. McClements, Cabinet Member: Finance & Enterprise, presented the report of the Assistant Director: Finance, Audit & Information Governance, which provided Members with the latest financial monitoring information for 2013/14.

Revenue spending was projected to be within budget at year end, after using £4.1m of the budgeted contingencies (including allocation of the contractual inflation contingency) leaving £1.36m available in remaining contingencies. In previous years the use of contingencies had reduced as the financial year progressed. There were still a number of significant pressures on the budget, including the cost of Children in Care placements (overspend of £1.3m); the cost of Adult Care and Support services (overspend of £1.6m); and the cost of ICT maintenance contracts (overspend of £0.303m). Projected variances of

over £0.100m for individual service delivery units were detailed in the report. There were benefits from active treasury management of £0.500m, a refund of £0.731m in relation to previously top-sliced revenue support grant, and dividend of £0.148m from West Mercia Energy.

The capital programme totalled £127.7m, which included slippage from 2012/13. Spend was currently standing at 4%, which was broadly in line with previous years. Robust programme management and monitoring was in place to ensure schemes were delivered. 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. Early monitoring indicated that £30m of these receipts would not now be received until future years, and options to manage this issue were being developed.

Collection levels for Council Tax and NNDR income and Sales Ledger debt were behind the targets set for the year.

The Government's spending plans for 2015/16 had recently been announced, and included a 10% cut to local government funding and plans to increase overall capital spending. The actual impact on Telford & Wrekin would not be known until the detailed Local Government Finance Settlement announcements for 2015/16 were made.

Cllr A Eade queried the capital receipts shortfall and the capital and revenue implications.

Cllr W McClements commented that any plans regarding the capital receipts would be made public at the appropriate time.

RESOLVED –

- (a) that it be noted that the 2013/14 revenue spend is currently projecting to be within budget at year end, and that the uses of the budgeted contingency detailed in paragraph 6 of the report be approved;**
- (b) that the position in relation to capital spend be noted, and that it be RECOMMENDED to COUNCIL that the new allocations and slippage detailed in Appendix 3 of the report be approved;**
- (c) that performance against income targets be noted;**
- (d) that the key points in the Government's latest Spending Round, which re-affirmed the continued pressure on local government funding, be noted.**

CB-22 WINTER MAINTENANCE SERVICE REVIEW

Key Decision identified as **Winter Maintenance Review** in the Notice of Key Decisions published on 29 May 2013.

Councillor S. Davies, Cabinet Member: Neighbourhood Services, Employment & Skills, presented the report of the Assistant Director: Neighbourhood & Leisure Services, which provided a review of the performance of the service during the 2012/13 winter season, and options for an enhanced winter maintenance service from 2013/14.

During the last winter season, there were a total of 49 turnouts for the pre and post treatment of snow and ice. It had been concluded that by increasing the carriageway spread rate of salt from 20g to 30g, the number of turnouts could have been reduced by 9 – and this was being proposed for 2013/14 when dealing with the risk of significant snow events. Other issues that had arisen were the gritting and snow clearance of Council owned car parks, access to public buildings, footway gritting, routes to schools and the misuse of grit bins. A detailed review of service performance was appended to the report.

The report also provided information on long-term trends on winter maintenance budgets, and to continue to provide an effective winter maintenance service, it was recommended that the budget be increased by a further £66k in 2014/15 to remove the budget gap for an average winter. The current service standard was appended to the report, and the report set out two options that would build on the existing arrangements in order to address the issues raised over the last winter season. The service options included additional treatment and snow clearance of certain footways and highways across the Borough. Full details of each option were appended to the report.

Following the success of the introduction of Neighbourhood Snow Wardens, it was intended to recruit a further 156 wardens in addition to the existing 44 volunteers. This would further complement the Council's service by covering locations not included in the Winter Maintenance Policy.

RESOLVED –

- (a) **that the following changes to the Winter Maintenance Service be adopted:**
- **the carriageway spread rate for salt when dealing with the risk of significant snow events be increased from 20g to 30g when required;**
 - **the 'winter season' be changed to cover the period from 16 October to 16 April;**
 - **existing treatment routes to remain the same for 2013/14 with the addition of one location – access to the Severn Hospice at Apley Castle;**
 - **service option 2, as detailed in the report, be approved for commencement in October 2013 to provide an enhanced service during extreme snow events; the projected costs of £62k to be met from Corporate contingency funding.**
- (b) **that the winter maintenance budget for 2014/15 be increased by £66,000.**

**CB-23 IRONBRIDGE GORGE WORLD HERITAGE SITE –
JACKFIELD STABILISATION**

Non-Key Decision

Councillor R.A. Overton, Cabinet Member for Public Health & Public Protection, presented the report of the Assistant Director: Neighbourhood & Leisure Services, which provided an update on land stabilisation works in the Ironbridge Gorge and which sought approval for a range of property actions to enable the project to progress further.

The scale of risk from land slippage varied throughout the World Heritage Site. A small number of “hotspots”, where the potential for movement was significant, were being monitored closely, and were the subject of ongoing discussions with Government regarding funding to address them. Two phases of stabilisation work had been completed at The Lloyds and Lloyds Head. A further “hot spot” was on the lower part of the Jackfield slope, which had resulted in damage to a number of properties, services and roads – in particular, Salthouse Road which had had to be reconstructed with a temporary “wooden road” pavement.

The Jackfield Stabilisation Scheme needed to be completed by 1 April 2016, and to deliver the project it would be necessary to acquire land and/or rights in/on at least three parcels of unregistered land together with other land owned by third parties. Where ownership was not known, a Compulsory Purchase Order would be required. Where ownership was known, it was hoped that acquisition could be reached by agreement with landowners, because of the benefits it could bring to owners in the area. Negotiations had already commenced, as well as the process to procure a contractor. This would be subject to a future report to Members.

RESOLVED –

- (a) that the progress on the Jackfield Stabilisation Project be noted;**
- (b) that authority be delegated to the Assistant Director: Law, Democracy & Public Protection, following consultation with the Cabinet Member for Public Health & Public Protection and the Assistant Director: Neighbourhood & Leisure Services, to take any required procedural steps to enter into any necessary legal agreements (whether or not under seal), land transfers, vesting and other legal documentation – and to take any required procedural steps to acquire land or rights in, on or over land by agreement or compulsorily, to facilitate land assembly and deliver the Project, including the exercise of relevant powers of compulsory acquisition as required.**

CB-24 EXCLUSION OF PUBLIC AND PRESS

RESOLVED – that the public and press be excluded from the meeting for the following items of business on the grounds that they may involve

the disclosure of information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information) as defined in paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972.

CB-25 RE-PROVISION OF RESIDENTIAL MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES

Key Decision identified as **Re-provision of Mental Health Services at Ellen Court** in the Notice of Key Decisions published on 26 June 2013.

Councillor A.R.H. England, Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care, presented the report of the Assistant Director: Care & Support, which sought approval for a tendering process that would lead to an award of contract for the provision of seven residential rehabilitation placements for adults with mental health issues based at Ellen Court in Wellington.

The current contract for the service was due to expire in March 2014, and in order to ensure the continuity of services, work would be undertaken to complete tendering processes during 2013/early 2014. The re-commissioned service would also provide individually tailored programmes of practical support and rehabilitation to promote independent living after residing at Ellen Court. It would also provide an opportunity to bring people back from costly out of county placements. The report provided detailed financial and contractual information in relation to the provision of the service. The NHS funding commitment to the service would be formally agreed with the Telford & Wrekin Clinical Commissioning Group in accordance with the National Health Service Act 2006.

RESOLVED –

- (a) that the re-tendering for the provision of residential mental health, care and support services at Ellen Court be approved;**
- (b) that authority be delegated to the Assistant Director: Care & Support, following consultation with the Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care, to award a contract for a term of three years, with an option to extend for up to a maximum of a further two years, for the provision of mental health services following competitive tendering in accordance with the Council's Constitution.**
- (c) that a new Section 256 National Health Service Act 2006 Funding Agreement between Telford & Wrekin Council and Telford & Wrekin Clinical Commissioning Group be established with regard to Ellen Court;**
- (d) that authority be delegated to the Assistant Director: Law, Democracy & Public Protection to execute all documentation required to give effect to any agreement reached pursuant to the resolutions above.**

CB-26 ACQUISITION OF LAND AT DONNINGTON WOOD AND SNEDSHILL

Key Decision identified as **Acquisition of Land at Donnington Wood and Snedshill** in the Notice of Key Decisions published on 26 June 2013.

Councillor W.A.M. McClements, Cabinet Member: Finance & Enterprise, and C.F. Smith, Cabinet Member: Housing, Development & Borough Towns, presented the report of the Assistant Directors: Development, Business & Employment, Family & Cohesion Services, and Law, Democracy & Public Protection, which sought authority to acquire land to accommodate gypsies and travellers.

The Council owned and managed two Gypsy and Traveller sites in the Borough, for which there was high demand for plots. Unlawful Gypsy and Traveller encampments were a continued problem for residents and businesses, and to alleviate the problem, it was proposed to accommodate these encampments on a "Tolerated site". A site off Holyhead Road, Snedshill had been identified for this purpose as part of a larger landholding designated for employment purposes. The report set out the costs and associated matters relating to the purchase of this land. In the medium/long term, it was proposed to develop this site for commercial/employment purposes.

The "Tolerated site" at Snedshill would be a temporary site for use whilst works were ongoing at the existing Lodge Road Caravan Site in Donnington Wood to provide further permanent accommodation. This would involve the purchase of additional land adjacent to the current site. Considerable ground and infrastructure improvements would be required, and a bid for funding these costs had been submitted to the HCA's Traveller Pitch Fund.

In addition, approval was sought for an additional capital allocation of £50k to cover recent emergency works on Stafford Park 12 to prevent illegal traveller encampment, and to cover any future one-off expenditure of this nature.

RESOLVED –

- (a) that authority be delegated to the Assistant Director: Development, Business & Employment, in consultation with the Cabinet Member: Finance & Enterprise, to acquire the two parcels of land at Lodge Road, Donnington Wood and off Holyhead Road, Snedshill, as shown on the plans appended to the report;**
- (b) that authority be delegated to the Assistant Director: Family & Cohesion Services, in consultation with the Cabinet Member: Housing, Development & Borough Towns, to develop the Lodge Road land and part of the Snedshill land as a Gypsy and Traveller site;**
- (c) that authority be delegated to the Assistant Director: Law, Democracy & Public Protection to seal or sign any documents to give effect to the resolutions above;**

- (d) that the capital allocation and expenditure, detailed in section 3 of the report, in respect of the acquisition of land off Holyhead Road, Snedshill and in relation to meeting costs incurred as a result of illegal traveller encampment, be approved;
- (e) that the submission of a bid for external traveller funding for the scheme of works at Lodge Road, Donnington Wood be noted, and that such funding be accepted should the bid be successful.

The meeting ended at 5.31pm.

Signed for the purposes of the Decision Notices

Jonathan Eatough
Assistant Director: Law, Democracy & Public Protection
Date: 31 July 2013

Signed:

Date:

BOROUGH OF TELFORD & WREKIN

CABINET – 19 SEPTEMBER 2013

SOLAR FARM

REPORT OF THE MANAGING DIRECTOR

LEAD CABINET MEMBERS – CLLRS BILL McCLEMENTS & SHAUN DAVIES

1. SUMMARY

- 1.1 The Council has made a clear commitment to move towards a more sustainable financial position to help offset reductions in central government funding. A key part of this strategy is to identify new income streams.
- 1.2 As part of this, the Council has considered a range of energy generation opportunities and solar power has been identified as a key opportunity in the Borough.
- 1.3 This report sets out an initial business case for the development of a solar farm in the Borough and the next steps to progress this project.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 That Cabinet approves the submission of a planning application to develop a solar farm on land at Wheat Leasows; and**
- 2.2 Subject to planning permission being granted, that Cabinet delegates authority to the Managing Director in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Finance and Enterprise and the Cabinet Member for Neighbourhood Services & Employment and Skills, to procure the design, build and operation contract(s) for the solar farm; and**
- 2.3 Cabinet delegate authority to the Assistant Director: Law, Democracy & Public Protection to execute all legal documentation necessary to give effect to the recommendations contained within the report.**

3. SUMMARY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

Community Impact	Yes	This initiative contributes to a number of the Council's priorities, including protecting and creating jobs as a Business Supporting, Business Winning Council. It also contributes to a key objective of reducing reliance on central government funding.
Financial & Value for Money Impact	Yes	An initial financial viability business case has been developed and is summarised in Appendix 2b, which also shows the key assumptions used. The business case indicates that one 5WM Solar farm could generate a cumulative net profit of between £2.8m and £8.3m during the 25 year life

		of the project, dependent upon the assumed annual percentage increase in energy prices. Further feasibility work is now required and £50k has been allocated from the Invest to Save fund to allow the initial work to be undertaken. Planning fees and associated consultant costs estimated at £50k will also be incurred, which may be abortive if satisfactory planning approval is not obtained. Financial advice and support will be provided to the project as required.
Legal Issues	Yes	The Council has the power to generate and sell electricity as described in this report by virtue of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976 (as amended in 2010). A number of legal issues will require advice throughout the duration of this project including procurement advice regarding the appointment of a contractor, contractual advice related to all contracts required to deliver the project and property and planning advice related to the site proposed. Some of this advice can be provided by the in-house team but as this is a project of a specialist nature external advice will also be required at times.
Other impacts, risks and opportunities	Yes	A project team will ensure risks are identified and managed and associated opportunities and linkages are exploited. Further details of risks and benefits are set out in section 4.2.
Impact on specific wards	Yes	The potential site identified is located in Hadley & Leegomery ward.

4. INFORMATION

4.1 Introduction

4.1.1 This report sets out an initial business case for the development of a solar farm in the Borough.

4.1.2 This proposed development is part of the Council's wider energy strategy, which also includes:

- Improving energy efficiency and energy generation in Council buildings – this has included replacing gas boilers with biomass boilers at schools and leisure centres and installing web-based building management systems in new and refurbished buildings to give far greater control of heating and ventilation. The Wellington Civic and Leisure Centre is believed to be the first building in the country to make use of ground source heat (pipes buried in the ground that extract heat), photo voltaic (roof-mounted solar panels) and solex power (solar heating system). We are also looking to include similar features in the

Hub at Southwater and retrofit some of our existing buildings where appropriate;

- Promoting the Green Deal, a Government initiative to help local residents and businesses make energy saving improvements – we have recently launched an 8-year Telford Energy Savers programme in partnership with Carillion;
- Investigating other ways in which the Council can help businesses with their energy costs.

4.2 Solar Farms – Business Case

a) Outline Proposal

4.2.1 The proposal is to develop a commercial-scale solar farm of approximately 5MW capacity on Council-owned land in the Borough.

4.2.2 A solar farm is made up of a large number of solar panels mounted on the ground. The panels are fitted in rows on racking (see Figure 1). Each panel typically measures 1.6m x 1m.

4.2.3 The panels absorb light and convert it into electricity. The inverters and other equipment used are housed in a building which is usually located in the centre of the site. The electricity generated is transmitted to the grid via an electricity sub-station. Fencing and/or natural barriers (hedges etc) are installed around the site.

Figure 1 – UK Solar Farm



4.2.4 Solar farms are normally operated for 20-25 years, after which they are either decommissioned or panels are replaced.

4.2.5 An initial investigation into suitable land owned by the Council has identified a 12.2 hectare potential site at Wheat Leasows (see Appendix 1). This site is

owned by the Council and is currently used as agricultural land. It is subject to a joint development with HCA (Homes & Communities Agency).

b) Rationale

4.2.6 The main reasons for developing a solar farm are:

- **Financial benefit** – generation of renewable energy would provide an income stream for the Council (see Appendix 2) that could potentially be off-set against the Council's energy costs. Income would be generated from day 1 and would be guaranteed by the Government for a 20 year period through the Feed in Tariff (FIT) or Renewable Obligation Certificate (ROC) schemes (unlike other commercial projects where we would have to build and maintain a market share).
- **Environmental benefit** – we would show community leadership by helping to deliver legally-binding national targets to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and to generate more electricity from renewable energy. A 5MW capacity solar farm is likely to save more than 2,300 tonnes of CO₂ and to generate enough electricity to power more than 1,000 homes. Solar farms are generally considered to have less environmental impact than other forms of renewable energy, such as wind power.
- **Economic & community benefit** –there could be wider economic benefits, for example use of local suppliers during the construction phase. There are currently no other publicly operated solar farms in the West Midlands, therefore there is an opportunity to include educational activities as part of the scheme.

c) Risks

4.2.7 The main risks associated with this project are:

- **Grid Connection** – we would be dependent on the local Distribution Network Operator (Western Power Distribution - WPD) re: cost and speed of the grid connection. Initial connection cost estimates from WPD for the Wheat Leasows site are relatively low, although further work is needed to finalise these.
- **Planning** – getting planning consent is another major area of risk. We have appointed a planning consultant to co-ordinate the planning process (subject to Cabinet approval). We have also developed a

communication and engagement plan to ensure that we involve the community in the project (see Section d) below).

- **Financial** – the business case cannot be finalised until quite late into the process and there are a number of aspects re: both costs and income that are subject to change. These include the cost of panels and Feed In Tariff (FIT) rates which will vary depending on how many solar farms are built across the country in future. Even small changes, for example in the price of panels or the FIT rates, would have a big impact on the business case due to the scale of the project. To ensure that our business case is as robust as possible, we have taken external financial advice.
- **Construction and Operating Issues** – there are a wide range of risks associated with the construction and operation of a solar farm, as this would be a large and complex project to deliver. These include flooding/weather damage, panel failure, contractor insolvency etc. The project team has developed and will continue to update a risk register to ensure that risks are identified and managed.
- **Legal/Regulatory** – the local authority is permitted to produce and sell electricity by the provision of solar technology, however, specific external legal and tax advice will be required. Separate accounting records must be kept in relation to income and expenditure for this project. Advice will be given by Legal Services, in conjunction with external solicitors, regarding the project; in particular the procurement of a contractor, any agreements that will be required to become operational and any land and planning issues that may arise.

d) Impact on Stakeholders

4.2.8 The Wheat Leasows site is currently farmed under an agricultural tenancy and we would need to give 12 months notice to the farmer if we proceed with this site (agreement in principle with the farmer has been reached). There are also a number of residential properties near to this site and the HLC Queensway School. The land at Wheat Leasows is subject to a joint development with HCA who have given verbal approval to the project.

4.2.9 In addition to neighbouring properties and statutory agencies, there is likely to be an interest in this project from the wider community, for example from local environmental groups.

4.2.10 It is important that we communicate and engage effectively with all these groups. We have developed a communication and engagement plan for the project, which has two main phases:

- Phase 1 – direct contact with those living or working in the vicinity of potential sites, relevant Town and Parish Councils and ward members. We have contacted relevant Town and Parish Councils, ward members and the occupiers of nearby properties in advance of the Cabinet report being published;
- Phase 2 – communication and engagement with the wider community on specific proposals and formal consultation as part of the planning process.

4.2.11 We will use a range of methods to communicate and engage with the community including dedicated Web-pages and a public exhibition.

4.3 NEXT STEPS

4.3.1 The key next steps to progress the solar farm project are:

- Seek Cabinet approval to proceed with the project;
- Subject to Cabinet approval:
 - Carry out pre-planning assessments, prepare and submit a planning application;
 - Develop outline technical design.
- Deliver the communication and engagement plan, including formal consultation as part of the planning process;
- Develop a procurement plan and specification for a solar farm;
- Carry out initial legal work;
- Continue to update the financial model with a particular focus on:
 - Finalising connection cost estimates from WPD;
 - Reviewing other financial assumptions and investigating other income options.

5. PREVIOUS MINUTES

5.1 None.

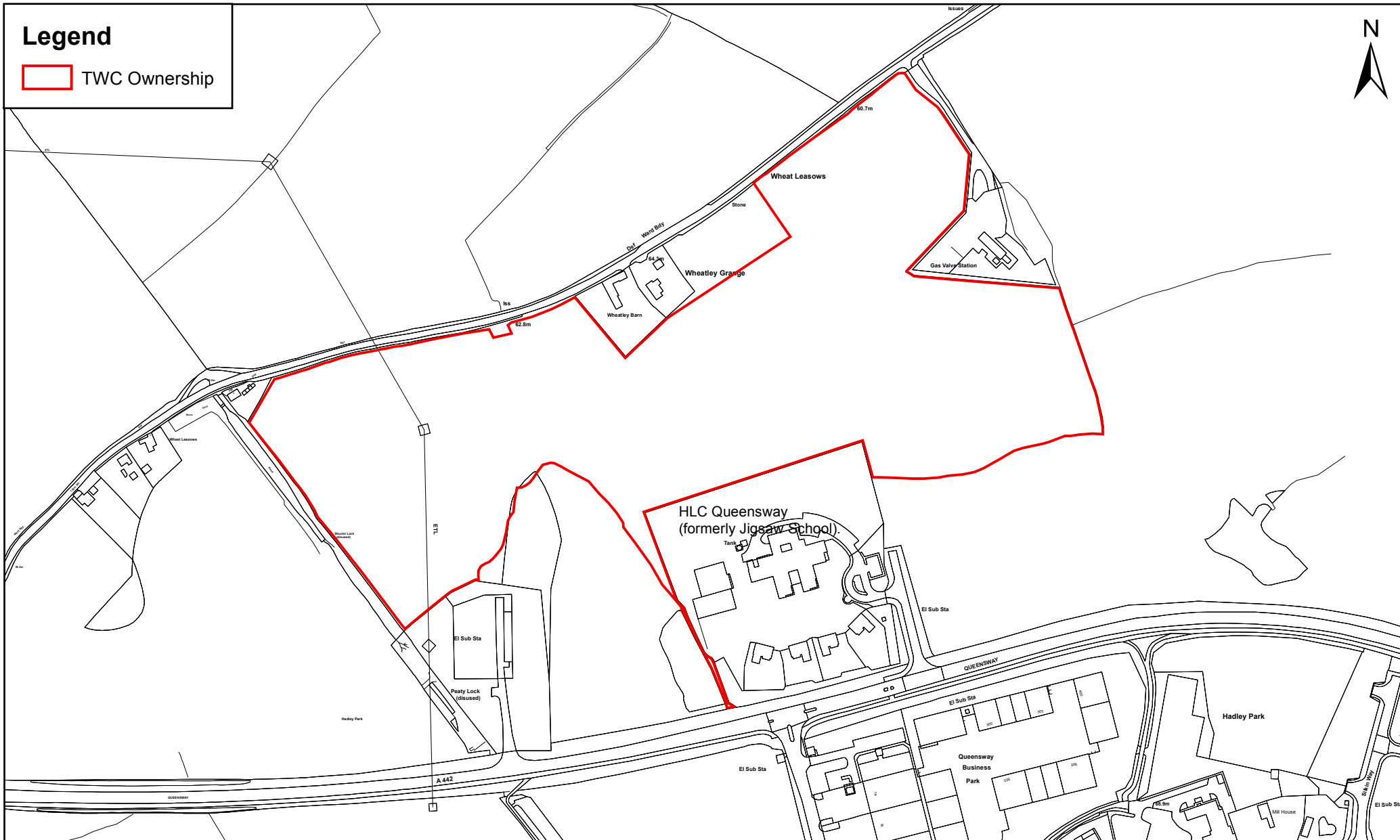
6. BACKGROUND PAPERS

6.1 None.

**Report prepared by Fliss Mercer, Policy Manager, Tel: (01952) 380136.
Financial model prepared by Julia Copus, Finance Manager, Tel: (01952) 383775.**

Legend

 TWC Ownership



Title
Plan 1
Wheat Leasows Site

Estates & Investments
Wellington Civic & Leisure Centre
Larkin Way
Wellington
Telford TF1 1LX



Scale:
1:4,000

Drawn by:
Arc/DRS

Date:
29/08/2013

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TELFORD & WREKIN COUNCIL

CABINET - 19 SEPTEMBER 2013

BRINGING EMPTY PROPERTIES BACK INTO USE AND TACKLING ROGUE LANDLORDS

REPORT OF ASSISTANT DIRECTOR: DEVELOPMENT, BUSINESS & EMPLOYMENT

LEAD CABINET MEMBER: CLLR CHARLES SMITH

PART A – SUMMARY REPORT

1 SUMMARY OF MAIN PROPOSALS

In 2011/12 there were 710,000 empty homes in England. In Telford & Wrekin the number known to have been empty for longer than 6 months is estimated to be around 400 of which circa 162 have been inspected to date with concentrations in Cuckoo Oak (Sutton Hill) and Ketley and Oakengates. 97% of these properties are privately owned. Nationally and locally the expectation is that this figure will continue to increase with the ongoing recession, meaning people are unable to afford to maintain their properties.

Locally there are significant numbers of people on the waiting list for “Choose Your Home” with only around 1,300 affordable properties becoming vacant per annum. The impact of the Welfare Reforms will only increase the number of people on the waiting list. Whilst levels of housing completions have been rising year on year with 275 affordable homes built in 2011/12, it is still vital that every source of accommodation is maximised in order to meet demand.

Therefore empty properties represent a waste of a valuable housing opportunity and in addition are often detrimental to local communities. If a property is left to deteriorate it can blight a whole street, or indeed a whole community, reducing the values of surrounding properties and contributing to a sense of general decline. Empty homes can also attract vandalism, fly-tipping and other criminal activity impacting on the local neighbourhood and on service budgets. Furthermore properties which have been empty for more than 6 months have a detrimental impact on the Council’s ability to generate income through New Homes Bonus with each increase in the number of empty properties resulting in a reduction in New Homes Bonus over the six year period in which it is received.

This report sets out proposals to bring empty properties back into use and tackle rogue landlords by setting up a social lettings agency and implementing a landlord accreditation scheme.

2 RECOMMENDATIONS

- **That Cabinet approve a capital allocation and expenditure of £150,000 funded from existing capital receipts to reduce the significant number of empty homes within Sutton Hill**
- **That Cabinet approve the implementation of a Landlord Accreditation Scheme as described at Section 4.5.2.2 of this report**
- **That Cabinet delegate authority to the Home Improvement Agency Team Leader, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Housing, Regeneration & Economic Development, to serve an Empty Dwelling Management Order,**

Compulsory Purchase Order and/or instigate an Enforced Sales Procedure.

- That Cabinet approve an Enforced Sales Procedure on an empty property where a minimum debt of £1,000 is outstanding on the property

3 SUMMARY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

COMMUNITY IMPACT	Do these proposals contribute to specific Priority Plan objective(s)?	
	Yes	Bringing empty properties back into use and using good landlords directly contributes towards the following priorities: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Protecting and creating jobs as a 'Business Supporting, Business Winning Council' through the use of local contractors to carry out work on empty properties • Regenerating those neighbourhoods in need and working to ensure that local people have access to suitable housing • Ensuring neighbourhoods are safe, clean and well maintained through improving problem empty properties and promoting good landlords
	Will the proposals impact on specific groups of people?	
	Yes	Residents in the borough in need of housing options and communities affected by empty properties and rogue or problem landlords
TARGET COMPLETION/ DELIVERY DATE	Initiatives will commence immediately following and subject to Cabinet Approval.	
FINANCIAL/ VALUE FOR MONEY IMPACT	Yes	This report recommends the development of a loan scheme to help to bring empty homes within Sutton Hill back into occupation. This scheme will be funded from £150,000 improved capital receipts generated from disposals within Sutton Hill and this funding is ring fenced to be used with Sutton Hill. All other proposals highlighted within this report will be accommodated and funded from within existing resources. JAC 20/08/13
LEGAL ISSUES	Yes	The Regulatory Reform (Housing Assistance) (England and Wales) Order 2002 provides that a local housing authority can provide assistance (in any form) for the purpose of improving living conditions in their area. Assistance can be subject to conditions. A policy in respect of such assistance must be adopted and made available. Enforced sales and Empty Dwelling Management Orders are subject to statutory legal processes
OTHER IMPACTS, RISKS & OPPORTUNITIES	Yes	Risks include; further deterioration of empty properties resulting in possible anti-social behaviour; blight and lost revenue to the authority and an increase in rogue landlords or poor landlord practices, resulting in worsening housing conditions.
IMPACT ON SPECIFIC WARDS	Yes	Impacts will be greatest in those wards where there is a high level of empty properties (Cuckoo Oak & Ketley and Oakengates) and rogue landlord properties and where the owners are on board with bringing the property back into use.

PART B – ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

4. INFORMATION

4.1 Why are properties empty?

There are many reasons why properties are empty including:

- Neglect by owners/abandonment due to lack of value
- Disputes over ownership
- Inability to sell
- Repossession/bankruptcy
- Deceased estate and subject to probate
- Speculative purchase
- Owner receiving or giving care to a relative
- Second home

Barriers to bringing properties back into use include; lack of capital to invest, lack of confidence in becoming a landlord or simply not wanting the responsibility or potential consequences of becoming a landlord.

4.2 Current Identified and Inspected Empty Properties by Ward

Using council tax data and reported empty property information, the HIA has identified and inspected 162 empty properties. The location of these is set out by ward in Appendix A and shows occurrences across the borough with concentrations in Cuckoo Oak (Sutton Hill), Ketley and Oakengates wards. In some cases (e.g. Oakengates) empty properties are being dealt with through a specific scheme where properties have been identified for demolition and a new build programme is underway. However, empty property issues in Sutton Hill continue to be a challenge with the area having a number of severe problem properties including empty properties that have had fire damage. Due to the nature of the properties (timber frames and some three storey properties) and historic anti social issues in specific streets there is a need for significant financial intervention and support in order to engage owners and get these properties back into habitable use.

4.3 Council Tax Changes from 1st April 2013

From the 1st April 2013 a number of changes to Council Tax were implemented in an attempt to tackle empty property issues including:

- Empty properties, which are in need of structural repair or alteration work or are unoccupied or unfinished, will no longer receive any Council Tax discounts or exemption and will be subject to 100% of the Council Tax charge. This includes any short periods where the property is empty.
- Properties that have been empty for two years or more will be charged a 50% premium (i.e. the Council Tax payer will be liable for 150% of the Council Tax charge).
- Second homes or furnished empty properties will no longer receive any discount or exemption and will be liable for 100% of the Council Tax charge.

These changes are likely to assist in reducing long term empty properties by incentivising owners to make some use of the property but this may also lead to more accidental landlords or properties that are not adequately maintained. It will also make indentifying properties empty for under two years more difficult, as owners will no longer see any benefit in notifying the Authority when a property becomes vacant. Due to the changes in Council Tax we predict a potential growth of exempt empty properties as some owners will intentionally leave their property to deteriorate further to a state considered unfit for habitation as at this point Council Tax exemptions become effective. There have been instances where landlords have been known to take out a toilet or kitchen to ensure eligibility for this (Class G) exemption. We need to try and identify a mechanism to address this and protect New Homes Bonus.

4.4. Role of the Home Improvement Agency - Targeted Action

In response to these issues the Council's Home Improvement Agency (HIA) will lead on action to bring empty properties back into use. The HIA's role will include; identifying empty properties, promoting the reporting of such properties, working with each owner to identify what could be done to get the property back into use and working with a cross council Housing Action Team (HAT) to co-ordinate support/action to bring properties back into use. The HAT, led by the Assistant Director of Law, Democracy and Public Protection and involving officers from Public Protection, Legal Services and Planning Enforcement, currently meet on a bi-monthly basis and have already delivered considerable positive action in relation to empty properties as summarised in Appendix C. However, the proposals in this report will increase the ability of this group to take further positive action.

The Housing Action Group will be supported by a dedicated Empty Property Officer who has been appointed to identify, inspect and monitor empty properties and will support the HIA to provide a joined up and comprehensive service to owners of all empty properties with the aim being to engage with owners and work in partnership to find the right solutions through the provision of advice and support including;

- Renovation, conversion and/or refurbishment
- Managing repairs and sourcing local contractors
- Renting/leasing the property or finding a letting agent
- Making property available to provide temporary or affordable accommodation
- Facilitating Green Deal opportunities to fund improvements to the property
- Providing advice on how to sell the property
- Implementing a Landlord's Accreditation Scheme (see Section 4.5.2)
- Signposting to national schemes with loans available (see Section 4.5.3)

The flowchart at Appendix B sets out the various routes from reporting through to resolution, depending on circumstances and response from the owner, which will be coordinated by the Empty Property Officer. A range of support initiatives are described in more detail below.

4.5.1 Renovation, Conversion and/or Refurbishment

Part of the HIA's role will be to support and coordinate delivery of renovation, conversion and refurbishment of empty properties to bring them back into use.

A direct intervention will involve the use of £150,000 generated from capital receipts from disposals in Sutton Hill to address empty properties on the Sutton Hill estate. This funding is ringfenced for improvements made to the regeneration of Sutton Hill. It is proposed that the money is used to develop a loans scheme with loans of up to £20,000 to be made available to landlords. An average of £15,000 per empty property will allow us to bring 10 empty properties back into use generating circa £66,000 in New Homes Bonus and £11,000 per year council tax income. The loan will be available for repair/renovation work required to restore properties to appropriate standards, for the owner to either sell or rent. If the loan is used to bring the property into the rental market, the loan can be paid back through a monthly repayment. All loans will be registered as a charge on the property which means that that on sale or transfer of the property all funds would come back into a pot which can be used as a revolving fund for further empty properties. If successful, we will look to develop a business case to extend the loans scheme to other parts of the Borough where there are concentrations of empty properties.

4.5.2 Implementing a Landlord Accreditation Scheme

Since 2001, the proportion of privately rented households in Telford & Wrekin has doubled from 7.1% to 14.9%, with the proportion in social rented properties falling slightly to 11.6%. Recent Welfare Benefit reforms mean that 2,613 residents will lose a proportion of their

benefits where they are considered to be occupying a social housing property with more bedrooms than they are considered, under the reform, to need. There is insufficient existing social housing stock to provide one or two bedroom properties through the existing “Choose Your Home” scheme with local Registered Providers, so many residents may turn to renting through private landlords. Although there are many reputable landlords in the Borough, with both single properties and portfolios of properties, the Council is also aware through tenants, Members and agency contacts that there are a number of landlords whose practices are illegal or are having a significant, detrimental impact on the welfare of their tenants and/or communities. Given the anticipated increase in demand for private rented accommodation, the Council proposes to introduce a Landlord Accreditation Scheme and take coordinated action to address poor landlord practices.

4.5.2.1 Identifying Problem Landlords

The Housing Action Team (HAT) will pool intelligence about poorly performing landlords from services across the Council including Trading Standards, Environmental Health, Environmental Services, Housing Needs, Social Services, Revenues & Benefits and Legal Services. This intelligence will be used to identify the most appropriate course of action through the Landlord Accreditation Scheme (LAS).

4.5.2.2 The Landlord Accreditation Scheme

The Landlord Accreditation Scheme will involve the development of a register of landlords that adhere to correct practices and are therefore deemed to be “accredited” from a review of a range of documents which may include:

- Insurances
- Complaints procedure
- Code of conduct
- References
- Length of time as a landlord
- Number of properties in portfolio

The review will need to take into account the nature of the landlord (e.g. accidental landlord versus large landlord with multiple properties) and tailored accordingly to ensure smaller landlords aren't unfairly excluded from becoming accredited.

The HIA will also provide a one stop shop for landlords on advice such as:

- Property improvement grants/energy efficient properties
- Problem tenants/tenancy agreements
- Converting premises into a HMO
- Accreditation Scheme
- Property Standards
- Informal planning advice
- Their responsibilities

This approach is very much in accordance with that being taken by the Homelessness Task Force and endorsed within the Homelessness Strategy 2013-2016.

The scheme will also provide support to accredited landlords through:

- Advice and Support on their role as a landlord
- Business advice and support, including faster access to planning, building regulations
- Access to tenants through the Social Lettings Agency
- Links to empty properties to purchase or manage
- Data on where housing needs are identified
- Advertisement of their details on the website

By promoting and only using landlords from an accreditation scheme we are sending a message to local landlords and tenants that the Authority will only support good quality landlords. A central database of accredited landlords will ensure that no internal services rent properties from rogue or unaccredited landlords. Accreditation will be reviewed in response to concerns raised by tenants or other parties.

The Homelessness Task Force and Homelessness Strategy 2013-2016, also identifies the role of the HIA in creating a Social Lettings Agency to source affordable, good quality accommodation that is suitable for the requirements of the client in conjunction with the voluntary and private sector. This service will be available for all service areas within the Council that require residential accommodation to meet the housing needs of all those within the borough. The Social Lettings Agency would also provide advice and support to landlords, as well as access to potential tenants through the Council. A management fee could be charged to landlords accessing the services of the Social Lettings Agency with the level of fee being between 8-10% of the monthly rent. In addition the Landlord Accreditation Scheme will generate a small fee, with this being set through engagement with local landlords.

4.5.3. Financial Assistance

Lack of finance to bring properties up to a decent standard is one of the key reasons why some owners are not bringing their empty property back into use. Where an owner identifies this as an issue the Empty Homes Officer will coordinate an assessment to determine what work is needed and also to review the financial circumstances of the owner.

4.5.3.1 Empty Homes Community Grants Programme

A loan of between £5,000 and £15,000 is being made available to owners of empty properties through the national Empty Homes Community Grants Programme. This scheme is currently live in the North West and the North East of England and will be rolled out nationwide later this year. Telford & Wrekin Council signed up as a primary authority so will be classed as an early adopter. The scheme is run by the charity Empty Homes and the loans will be for a maximum period of 5 years with an interest rate of 5%. The loan, which will be secured through a legal charge on the property, must be used for repair/renovation work to an empty property to restore it to a "Decent Homes" standard. A condition of the loan is that the property is rented at an Affordable Rent on completion of the repair project and the rent must remain affordable for the duration of the loan term.

We will be working with landlords of empty properties to support their application for a loan. In particular we will be promoting the use of loans to facilitate conversion of accommodation above shops in local centres such as Wellington, Oakengates, Dawley, Madeley and Newport into residential use. Recent planning legislation is favouring the change of use without the need for planning consent. Indications are that many owners would convert their premises with the assistance of a loan and this hidden accommodation could make a big difference to the vitality of our Borough Towns as well as providing one bed homes which are needed to accommodate households affected by Welfare Reform.

4.6 Role of the Housing Action Team - Enforcement Action

As the flowchart in Appendix B illustrates, where properties are dilapidated or in a very poor condition, the case may be taken to the Housing Action Team to identify solutions which may include:

- **Encouragement** – Initially all officers will work with the owner/landlord and encourage the properties to be brought back into a decent standard before enforcement action is taken. This may mean many conversations and hand holding through processes with the owners.
- **Enforcement Action** - Where an owner refuses to engage and/or a property is dilapidated or seriously impacting on surrounding properties or communities, statutory

action may be taken. There are a number of potential enforcement routes depending on circumstances however these should only be used as a last resort and financial implications considered before taking on these actions.

- **Enforced Sale** - The Law & Property Act 1925 allows local authorities to recover charges through the sale of the property. This option can only be utilised where there is a debt to the local authority registered as a charge on the property. A minimum debt of £1,000 can be registered on the property to start enforced sales proceedings.
- **Empty Dwelling Management Order (EDMO)** - An EDMO can be made where an owner leaves a property empty and has no intention of securing its voluntary reoccupation. This involves applying to the Residential Property Tribunal for authorisation to gain an Interim EDMO and supplying supporting evidence, including that the property has been long term empty and that proactive engagement with landlord has been sought. Telford & Wrekin Council has never pursued an EDMO due to the cost, length and complexity of the process. However, delegated authority is now sought for the Home Improvement Agency Team Leader to undertake this process where appropriate.
- **Compulsory Purchase Order (CPO)** - CPO's can be made under S17 of the Housing Act 1985 or under S226 (as amended by Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990, for the provision of housing accommodation or to make an improvement to existing housing. However, undertaking a CPO can be a lengthy and complex process and should be used as a last resort.

5. PREVIOUS MINUTES

None

6. BACKGROUND PAPERS

Housing Act 1996

Town and Country Planning Act 1990

The Law & Property Act 1925

Solihull MBC website page for Empty Homes

Sandwell Metropolitan Borough Council

National Empty Homes

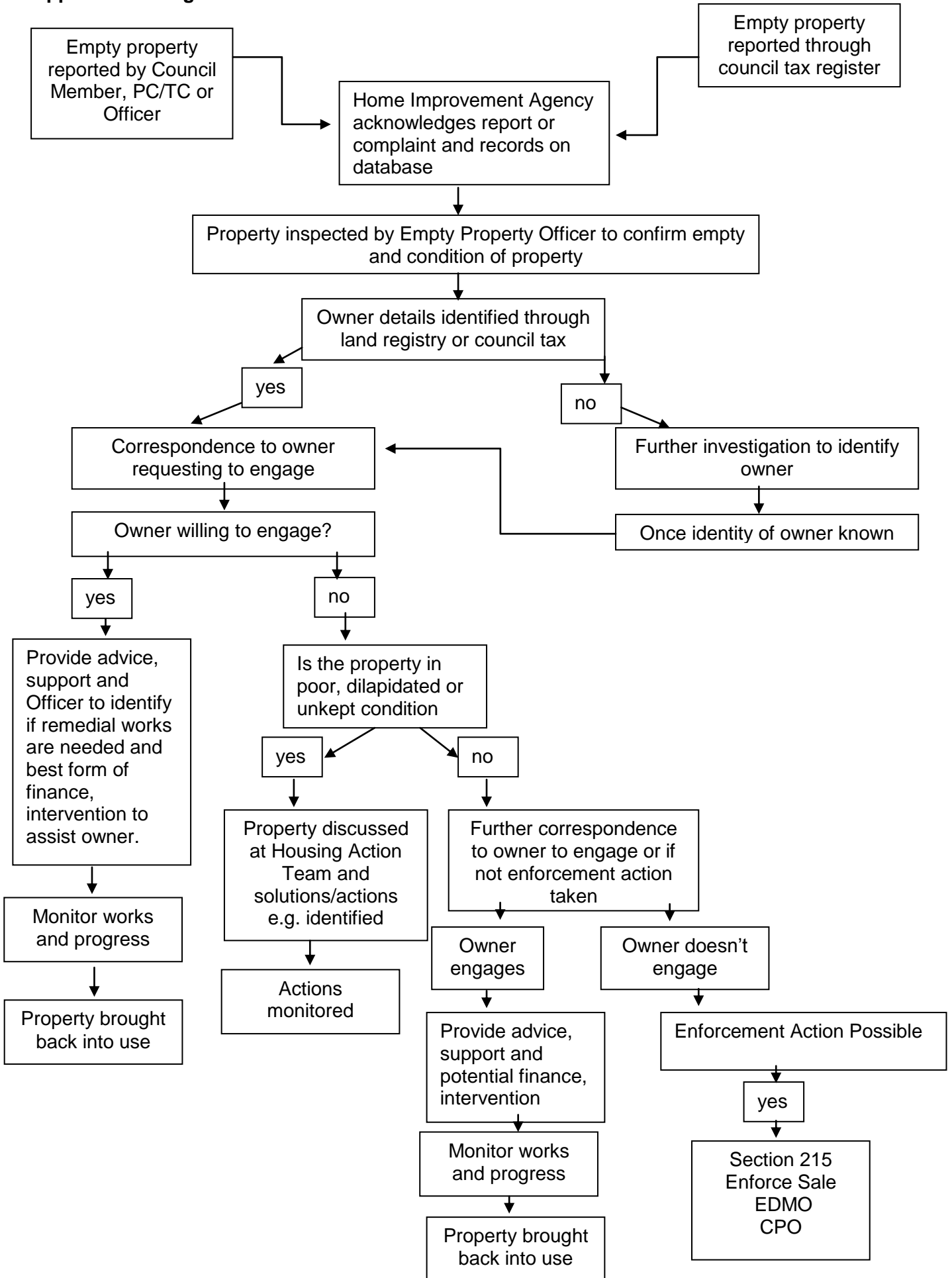
**Report prepared by Toni Keever, Home Improvement Team Leader, 01952
381860**

Appendix A: Empty Properties by Ward

Using council tax data and reported empty property information, the HIA has identified and inspected 162 empty properties to date.

Ward	No of empty properties inspected and identified
Apley Castle	2
Arleston	6
Brookside	4
Church Aston and Lilleshall	0
College	8
Cuckoo Oak	23
Dawley Magna	7
Donnington	4
Dothill	3
Edgmond	4
Ercall	1
Ercall Magna	4
Hadley and Leegomery	7
Haygate	9
Horsehay and Lightmoor	2
Ironbridge	1
Ketley and Oakengates	27
Lawley and Overdale	3
Madeley	0
Malinslee	6
Muxton	0
Newport East	0
Newport South	4
Newport North	3
Newport West	2
Park	0
Priorslee	4
Shawbirch	4
St Georges	3
The Nedge	6
Woodside	6
Wrockwardine	5
Wrockwardine Wood and Trench	4

Appendix B: Targeted Action Flow Chart



Appendix C - The Housing Action Team in the last 6 months alone has helped many housing situations. Some examples of these below:

Before



After





TELFORD & WREKIN COUNCIL

CABINET - 19th SEPTEMBER 2013

HOMELESSNESS STRATEGY

JOINT REPORT OF ASSISTANT DIRECTOR: DEVELOPMENT, BUSINESS & EMPLOYMENT and ASSISTANT DIRECTOR FOR FAMILY & COHESION SERVICES

LEAD CABINET MEMBER – CLLR CHARLES SMITH

PART A – SUMMARY REPORT

1. SUMMARY OF MAIN PROPOSALS

1.0 BACKGROUND

- 1.1 The Council has a statutory duty to support priority homeless people. In addition, the Council recognises the need to support non-statutory homeless people into sustainable housing.
- 1.2 A review of present arrangements for dealing with homelessness has been undertaken in partnership with Stay, LIFE, Maninplace, KIP, Wellington YMCA, West Mercia Police, Wrekin Housing Trust, Sanctuary House, Homeless Link and Bromford and a revised homelessness strategy developed for consultation

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 That Cabinet approves the Draft Homelessness Strategy 2013-2016 and agrees to a period of 60 days consultation with a final report being brought back to Cabinet for approval later this year.
- 2.2 That Cabinet approves the transfer of all property related functions, relating to Homelessness, to the Development, Business and Employment Service Area and grants delegated power for making decisions relating to the property currently owned or leased for the purpose of providing temporary accommodation [annex 1 attached] to the Assistant Director for Development, Business and Employment in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Housing, Development & Borough Towns.
- 2.3 That Cabinet grant delegated approval to the Assistant Director for Development, Business & Employment to enter into any contracts necessary in consultation with Cabinet Member for Housing, Development & Borough Towns to award any contracts necessary for the delivery of Phase 1 works outlined in this report.

- 2.4 That Cabinet grants delegated approval to the Assistant Director for Development, Business & Employment for the disposal and acquisition of properties in order to deliver the homelessness strategy.
- 2.5 That Cabinet recommend the utilisation of £110,000 of capital receipts towards the refurbishment of Refuge.
- 2.6 That Cabinet recognise that a revenue budget of £64,000 per annum from 2014/15 is required to allow for the delivery of the homelessness strategies for which there is currently no budget provision. This budget will be met by the identification of further savings from within the Family and Cohesion Service and Development, Business & Employment.
- 2.7 That Cabinet grant delegated approval to the Assistant Director: Law, Democracy & Public Protection to execute all legal documentation necessary to give effect to the recommendations contained within this report.

SUMMARY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

COMMUNITY IMPACT	Do these proposals contribute to specific Priorities	
	Yes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Regenerating those neighbourhoods in need and work to ensure that local Ensuring people have access to suitable housing Putting our children and young people first Improving local people’s prospects through education and skills training Protecting and supporting our vulnerable children and adults Improving the health and wellbeing of our communities and address health inequalities
	Will the proposals impact on specific groups of people?	
	Yes	Protecting and supporting our vulnerable children and adults.
TARGET COMPLETION/ DELIVERY DATE	If approved the recommendations in this report and actions within the Homelessness Strategy will be delivered by the end of 2016. Annual progress reviews will also be carried out.	
FINANCIAL/ VALUE FOR MONEY IMPACT	Yes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Council currently owns 17 houses and leases in 31 properties from the private sector which are used to accommodate homeless people in both the medium and short term. The Council owns supported accommodation hostels at Refuge and Dodmoor Grange.

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The capital cost of the alterations at the refuge are estimated at £110,000, which will be funded from the sale of existing homelessness housing stock following a review of the portfolio by the Property and Design team. • Repair and maintenance budgets for the owned stock were given up as a budget saving in 2009/10 and have been charged against capital from 2010/11 onwards. There is no further capital allocation for these costs. Revenue budget provision of £64,000 per annum from 2014/15 is required in order to carry out the necessary repairs and maintenance of the Homelessness housing stock and this will have to be met from the identification of additional savings, split equally, between Family and Cohesion Services and Development, Business and Employment Services. JAC/DR 20/08/13
LEGAL ISSUES	Yes	<p>In addition to the Statutory Powers in respect of homelessness and housing under the Housing Acts 1985 and 1996, the Council can utilise the general power of competence under the Localism Act 2011. The proposed actions must be in the social, economic or environmental interests of the Community.</p> <p>The ability to charge for the service to landlords derives from the Local Government Act 2003 and the Localism Act 2011, as it is a discretionary service the amount of the fee will be subject to the general rules for all discretionary fees. In charging a fee to Private Landlords, if providing a commercial service the Local Authority must set up a company to do so. If not on a commercial basis, the charge must not exceed the expense of provision of the service. The Private Landlord must agree to the charge. The Localism Act 2011.</p> <p>The Local Authority has a duty to produce and publish a Homelessness Strategy under the Homelessness Act 2002.</p> <p>We understand funding for the Bond Scheme and the Prevention Scheme is not coming from a central government grant but from the service areas own budget. If it were to come from a grant any restrictions on the use of the funds would need to be adhered to.</p>
OTHER IMPACTS, RISKS & OPPORTUNITIES	Yes	Working co-operatively with our partners and the voluntary sector creates opportunities to enable us to provide a co-ordinated approach to delivering services, to effectively tackle and reduce the risk of homelessness in Telford and Wrekin.
IMPACT ON SPECIFIC WARDS	No	Borough-wide impact

PART B – ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

2. INFORMATION

In 2012, a comprehensive review of homelessness in Telford & Wrekin was undertaken by a small task force in order to:

- Assess the impact of national context, in particular the introduction of the Welfare Reform Bill, introduced in April 2013, on homelessness and service provision;
- Understand the current scale and nature of homelessness on a local level and the likely increase in demand;
- Review current service provision to prevent and tackle homelessness, in the context of national and local factors.
- Assess future service needs and challenges.
- Ensure more rapid assessment of individual homelessness cases and the delivery of initiatives to meet the Council's statutory duty to prevent and tackle homelessness.

The review identified a number of issues with the most significant being:

- An over reliance on Bed & Breakfast accommodation to meet the Council's statutory duty on homelessness. This had resulted in a budget pressure and was at the same time failing to address the longer term needs of people being accommodated.
- An overreliance on officers within Family & Cohesion Services in delivering a fully integrated solution to homelessness. This includes officers being responsible for dealing with homeless presentations, determining priority need and assessing which scheme would best suit the need, the carrying out all of the property management work, including finding premises, repairs and maintenance, liaising with landlords, determining rents, arranging inspections and dealing with property related health and safety issues. The review concluded that officers in a client facing role were not best placed to manage property related functions and that there was evidence that is leading to the inefficient use of resources.

A revised Homelessness Strategy (Annex 2) has been developed which sets out how the Council will work with partners to **prevent and tackle statutory and non statutory homelessness**, including eliminating the need for rough sleeping. It identifies the following aims and priority actions over the next three years and set out how they will be achieved.

- Prevention Services to have responsibility for the development of a suite of services, including advice and support, to reduce the number of people becoming homeless and address the needs of those that are.
- The Service Area for Development, Business & Employment to take over responsibility for managing all property aspects of delivering the Homelessness Strategy including for example negotiating leases and managing repairs and maintenance. Further details are provided in Annex 3 with one immediate action being the refurbishment of existing accommodation at Refuge at a cost of circa £110k with works to be funded from the disposal of surplus properties within the homelessness portfolio.

- The strategy concentrates on meeting the temporary housing needs of service users with property solutions being brokered by Development, Business & Employment Services working with private sector partners using a “Social Letting Agency” type model
- Meeting the Council’s statutory duty to accommodate Gypsies and Travellers, in particular the need for a transit and tolerance sites and the need to increase the size of existing sites to meet need

3. FINANCIAL AND LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

Please see financial comment above.

4. PREVIOUS MINUTES

5. BACKGROUND PAPERS

- Cabinet report presented 25th July entitled ‘Acquisition of land at Donnington Wood and Snedshill ‘which gained approval to plans address the accommodation needs of the Gypsy and Traveller community.
- Cabinet report presented 19th September 2013 ‘Bringing Empty Properties back into Use and Tackling Rogue Landlords.

Report presented by Clive Jones, Assistant Director of Family & Cohesion Services and Kate Turner Assistant Director Development, Business & Employment

Annex 1 – List of Existing Property owned or Leased for temporary Accommodation

Temporary Accommodation Properties **Wrekin Housing Trust**

Brookside
TF3 1NH

Overdale
TF3 5BP

Dawley
TF4 2DH

Private Landlords

Hollinswood
TF3 2BP

Hollinswood
TF3 2BP

Hollinswood
TF3 2BS

Hollinswood
TF3 2BT

Hollinswood
TF3 2BT

Malinslee
TF3 2HF

Brookside
TF3 1TJ

Hollinswood
TF3 2BS

Hollinswood
TF3 2EH

Malinslee
TF3 2HP

Wellington
TF1 1SP

Wellington
TF1 1SP

Hadley
TF1 4LB

Madeley
TF7 5BE

Madeley
TF7 5BE

Dawley
TF4 2QN

Suttonhill
TF7 4EX

Suttonhill
TF7 4EX

Madeley
TF7 5AG

Woodside
TF7 5PE

Woodside
TF7 5PQ

Council Owned

Brookside
TF3 1SL

Brookside
TF3 1SL

Stirchley
TF3 1YU

Stirchley
TF3 1YU

Suttonhill
TF7 4HD

Suttonhill
TF7 4HD

Suttonhill
TF7 4HH

Suttonhill
TF7 4AF

Suttonhill
TF7 4JW

Suttonhill,
TF7 4AL

Malinslee
TF3 2HH

Suttonhill
TF7 4HA

Woodside
TF7 5LT

Woodside
TF7 5PS

Woodside
TF7 5QP

Woodside
TF7 5NS

Woodside
TF7 5NE

Council Owned - Units

10 properties

Randley
TF3 2AW

Refuge (Council owned)

Flat 1

Room 2

Room 3

Disabled flat 7

Flat 8

Flat 9

Room 10

Room 11

Room 12

Room 13

Room 14

Room 15

Flat 16

Room 17

Room 18

Flat 19

Annex 2 Draft Homelessness Strategy

(See Attached Document)

Annex 3 – Transfer of Property Function regarding Homelessness and Immediate and Future Actions

Priorities	Actions	
	Immediate	Future
To provide more cost effective ways of managing the portfolio of properties	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transfer responsibility (and associated budget) for all property management activity, including repairs and maintenance, to the Development, Business & Employment Service Area. • Review rents paid and charged so as to drive out further efficiencies and reduce costs. • Review arrangements for leasing in premises from the private sector and introduce a management fee to generate income. • Introduce a recovery scheme to charge tenants and landlords that abuse Council run schemes. 	
To ensure clients can move more quickly into sustainable accommodation allowing more efficient use of the resources available	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Extend initiatives above to other Council services with residential accommodation requirements (e.g. Social Services) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review the business case for increasing the budget to extend the existing Bond and Prevention Scheme to allow clients to move into sustainable accommodation more quickly and reduce the pressure on Council premises and the use of bed and breakfast accommodation*
<p>To meet a gap in the current provision of accommodation in particular for short term and non statutory homeless persons</p> <p>To meet the challenges that will arise from the welfare reforms introduced in April 2013 which is set out in the Homelessness Strategy.</p> <p>To address the geographical spread of premises to clients can, wherever possible, remain close to their local community.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conduct asbestos and condition surveys on all premises within the portfolio to determine costs to bring properties in line with Decent Homes Standards. • Carry out alterations to Refuge to increase efficiency and enable the Council to meet its objectives in providing support to non statutory homeless households as well as short term accommodation and emergency facilities. The refurbishment works, estimated to cost circa £110k and are to be funded through the disposal of surplus properties. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review in detail the existing property portfolio and look to hand back and dispose of existing properties and/or refurbish to bring up to Decent Homes Standards and/or acquire new through leasehold/freehold so as to maximise the use of resources, improve geographical location of units etc*. • Consider converting void commercial premises into residential accommodation where the location is suitable.* • Consider converting existing premises into house shares and/or houses of multiple occupation to ensure efficient use of accommodation.*

<p>To develop strong links with the private sector to enable a coordinated provision of accommodation and advice.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Create a Social Lettings Agency, within Development, Business & Employment to source affordable, good quality accommodation that is suitable for the requirements of the client in conjunction with the voluntary and private sector.• Use the Business Advice Point in Wellington as a single point of contact for landlords to get help and advice.	
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*Will require a further report to cabinet if a positive business case can be determined

DRAFT HOMELESSNESS STRATEGY
FOR THE BOROUGH OF TELFORD AND WREKIN 2013 – 2016



Homelessness Strategy for the Borough of Telford and Wrekin 2013 - 2016

Foreword

I am pleased to introduce the Homelessness Strategy for Telford and Wrekin for the next three years (2013-2016) and I would like to take this opportunity to thank all the local partners and organisations across the borough who have contributed towards its development.

The overall aims of the Homeless Strategy provide a framework for directing the Council's activity in partnership with the voluntary sector and other local partners. These are to:

1. Prevent homelessness in Telford and Wrekin
2. Have appropriate housing pathways, including advice and support for homeless households in Telford and Wrekin
3. Meet the Council's statutory duty to accommodate Gypsies and Travellers

The Strategy is set against the backdrop of unprecedented change in public spending, welfare benefits and social housing which will increase pressure on homelessness services at a time when resources are facing cuts.

We recognise that we face a challenging time over the next three years and beyond, however, by working co-operatively and recognising that tackling homelessness is 'everybody's' business, we are confident that the priority actions set out in this strategy, together with the support of our partners, will enable us to provide a co-ordinated approach to delivering services, to effectively tackle and reduce the risk of homelessness in Telford and Wrekin.

Councillor Charles Smith-Cabinet Member-Housing, Development & Borough Towns

Homelessness Strategy for the Borough of Telford and Wrekin 2013 - 2016

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1b. Commission and monitor a range of support services for vulnerable groups		
2. Have appropriate housing pathways, including advice and support for homeless households in Telford and Wrekin		17-21
2a: Establish sustainable pathways for all homeless people from temporary accommodation into sustainable tenancies and discharge the Council's homelessness duty.		
2b Enhance provision to accommodate young people		
2c: Develop a social lettings model and a Landlord Accreditation Scheme to help people into private rented sector tenancies		
2d: Adopt a No Second Night Out Model		
2e: Work with Private Landlords to bring empty properties back into use for use.		
2f: Work with local Registered Providers (RPs) (through the Council's Allocation Policy and Tenancy Strategy) to help local people to access and retain affordable housing and to make best use of the Borough's		

Homelessness Strategy for the Borough of Telford and Wrekin 2013 - 2016

housing stock.	
3. Meet statutory duty to accommodate Gypsies and Travellers	21-22
3a. Develop a strategic plan to identify appropriate locations that meet the needs of the Gypsy and Traveller community	
3b. Establish a programme of support to address health and wellbeing and educational needs of the Gypsy and Traveller community	
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Homelessness Strategy for the Borough of Telford and Wrekin 2013 - 2016

1. Introduction

The Homelessness Act 2002 places a legal duty on Councils to carry out a review of homelessness in their local area and develop a homelessness strategy based on the review, in consultation with other local authorities and voluntary organisations.

In 2012, a review of homelessness in Telford and Wrekin was undertaken to:

- Assess the national context, in particular the introduction of the Welfare Reform Bill and the potential impact on homelessness and service provision;
- At a local level understand the current scale and nature of homelessness and the likely increase in demand;
- Review current service provision to prevent and tackle homelessness, taking account of the national and local context and identify future challenges.

The Homelessness Strategy has been developed to respond to the challenges and following consultation with partners and local providers.

'Homelessness means not having a home. Some people have no roof over their head and sleep on the street, in doorways or on night buses. But much more homelessness is hidden – on a friend's sofa, spare room, or in squats.

Even if you have a roof over your head you can still be homeless, if you don't have any rights to stay where you live or your home is unsuitable due to severe overcrowding or other reasons.' (Shelter 2013)

This strategy sets out how the Council and local partners will work together to prevent and tackle statutory and non statutory homelessness, including eliminating the need for rough sleeping. It identifies aims and priority actions over the next three years and how they will be achieved.

2. Achievements since 2008

Since the 2008 Homelessness Strategy was approved, the Council and local partners have made progress in improving services and preventing homelessness in Telford and Wrekin. Some of our shared achievements so far include:

- Bringing together a range of council and multi-agency teams to deliver a new targeted approach to assessing individual homelessness cases and deliver initiatives which enable the Council to meet its statutory duty to prevent and tackle homelessness.
- The way the Council provides housing advice and support to local people has been improved:
 - Existing and new employees working at the Council's First Point Contact Centres located across the borough are trained to enable them to provide high quality, comprehensive housing advice and provide access to mediation and other support services.
 - The Council's Emergency Duty and Housing teams are now working more closely to ensure that people who approach the Council outside office hours receive housing advice and support when they need it.

Homelessness Strategy for the Borough of Telford and Wrekin 2013 - 2016

- A more co-ordinated partnership approach is taken with between the Council and local housing and support providers by:
 - Establishing a Single Allocation Panel to ensure that vulnerable households aged 16-32 receive the support they need and that their accommodation needs are met.
 - Putting in place procedures to ensure that appropriate intervention is taken to avoid evictions where possible.
- The Council has recently introduced a mediation scheme, delivered by the Council's Targeted Youth Support team by helping rebuild relationships and find solutions which allow young people to remain in the family home. Since April 2012, 91 young people have been referred.
- In 2012/13, using DCLG Homelessness Prevention Funding, the Council has:
 - Prevented nine households from losing their homes and entering temporary accommodation.
 - Resolved five Mortgage Rescue cases, alleviating £464,000 of mortgage debt.
 - Enabled 51 customers to obtain additional benefits which helped to resolve their financial difficulties.
 - The Council's Housing team have now been trained to provide information, advice and guidance to households experiencing financial difficulties.
- Since 2011, the Council has significantly reduced the use of Bed and Breakfast to accommodate statutory homeless households.
- The Council has secured funding to help vulnerable households to move from temporary accommodation to sustainable tenancies through the Bond Scheme.
- In 2012/13 the Bleak Mid Winter project which provides short term accommodation for people that are sleeping rough during the coldest months of the year prevented 100 people from sleeping rough in the borough.
- The 'Night Inn' pilot has been delivered to provide a night by night emergency provision for anyone presenting as homeless in an emergency.
- A high quality Sanctuary Scheme is delivered by the Council and local partners. Since 2011/12, 84 victims of domestic abuse have been provided with effective security measures which have enabled them to remain in their home.
- A Hospital to Home Protocol has been established to enable timely assessments to be carried out for people who are homeless at the point of admission, or become homeless during their stay in hospital.
- The Council has established a number of life skill programmes with young people accommodated within the Council's accommodation project for 16-19 year olds. This complements programmes which are provided by STAY and YMCA.
- The Council is supporting the delivery of the Freedom programme is a national programme for victims of domestic abuse.
- Working with national agencies and Registered Providers to increase the supply of new affordable homes (including general needs and specialist housing) and to make best use of the existing housing in the borough

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- Maninplace was established since 2008 and now provides 75 units of accommodation for non-statutory homeless people, and Stay has brought into management an additional 20 units of accommodation for 16-25 year olds.

3. National Context

Welfare Reform Bill

In 2012, the Government introduced the **Welfare Reform Bill** which sets out their approach to social and economic policy. Key changes in Housing Benefit policy and administration present significant implications for housing and homelessness:

- The introduction of Universal Credit to provide one single streamlined benefit
- From April 2011, the rates for Local Housing Allowance (LHA) were reduced and the rate was 'capped' at a maximum payment, set at the LHA for four bedroom properties.
- Deductions made from Housing Benefit will be gradually increased if there are non-dependent children living in the household.
- The shared accommodation rate applicable to single people has been extended from people aged 25 up to 35.
- From April 2013, Housing Benefit will be restricted for some people who are living in a property that is larger than their household size. This will also apply to working age tenants who are renting from a social landlord.

Localism Act 2011

This act changes the powers of local government and includes amendments to legislation relating to homelessness and housing.

- The option for Local Authorities to discharge homelessness duties with the offer of private rented sector accommodation. Local Authorities must be satisfied with the affordability and condition the accommodation and household circumstances. Tenancies must be a minimum of 12 months.
- The option for Local Authorities to withdraw its services if a suitable offer is not accepted.
- The introduction of new Flexible Tenancies which enable social housing landlords to offer shorter tenancies (minimum of two years).

A more detailed explanation of the national context is available in Appendix 1.

No Second Night Out Vision July 2011

The Ministerial Working Group for Homelessness which brings together eight Government departments has been working with public and voluntary sector partners to develop ways tackle the complex causes of homelessness, including housing, health, work and training.

The 'No Second Night Out Nationwide report' sets out six partnership commitments which will give local people the tools to tackle rough sleeping and put an end to second nights out on the street.

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4. Local Context

Homelessness in Telford & Wrekin

Telford and Wrekin has an estimated population of 166,641 (census 2011), however, the Council estimates suggest that this figure is slightly higher with some 170,300 people (2010).

Statutory homelessness

The Council has a statutory duty to:

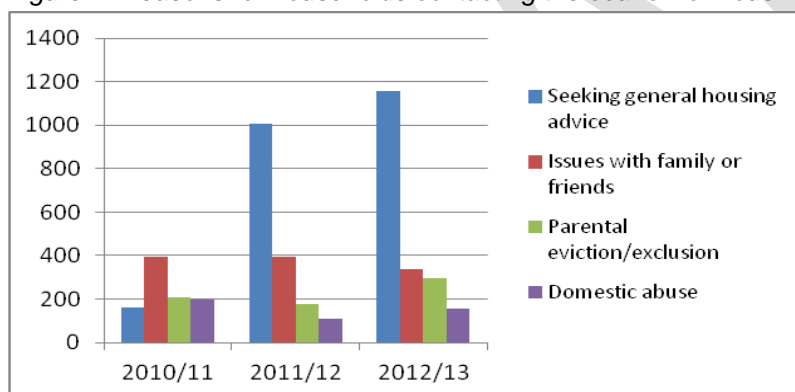
- Provide advice and guidance to all.
- Prevent homelessness where possible.
- Provide help to homeless households who are in priority need (see Appendix 2). This includes providing interim and temporary accommodation for households until they are able to move into sustainable accommodation.

The figures stated in this section are for 2012/13 (up to end January 2013), unless otherwise stated.

Housing support/advice

2,919 households contacted the Council for housing support. The most reported reasons were to seek housing advice; due to issues with family or friends; due to parental eviction/exclusion; and due to domestic abuse (see Figure 1).

Figure 1. Reasons for households contacting the council for housing support.



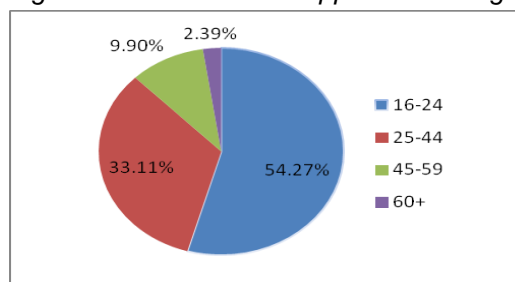
Homelessness prevention

The Council prevented 203 households from becoming homeless either by enabling them to remain in their own home (34%), assisting them to find alternative accommodation (63%), or assisting those who are intentionally homeless or are not in priority need (3%).

Homelessness applications and acceptances

Since 2010/11, the number of homelessness applications has continued to increase. In 2012/13 54% of the 293 applications made were by young people aged 16-24, of which 20.8% were aged 16-17 (see Figure 2).

Figure 2. Homelessness applications – age profile

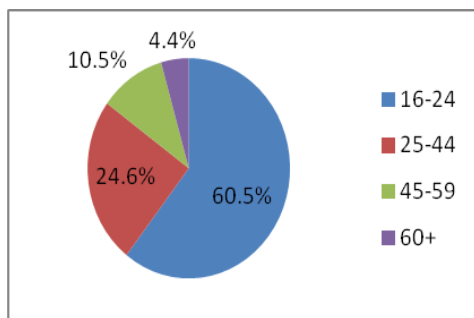


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The top reasons for people making homelessness applications are due to parents not willing to accommodate (27.3%), due to a violent partner (15.4%) and other relations not being willing to accommodate (10.6%).

Three people who were discharged from hospital to home were presented as homeless. Nine people were discharged from other institutions and four people were released from prison or remand was also forwarded to the Council’s Housing Options team.

Figure 3. Homelessness acceptances – age profile



60.5% of households who were accepted as statutory homeless and in priority need were young people (see Figure 3). This is significantly higher than the national average where 35% of priority need acceptances are aged 16-24.

For the last five years the top three priority need groups have remained the same (see Figure 4).

Since 2011/12 the number of repeat homeless acceptances has reduced from 11 to three in 2012/13 (up to end of January).

Council managed temporary accommodation

Throughout 2012/13, 304 homeless households were accommodated in council managed temporary housing.

Figure 4. Priority need acceptances

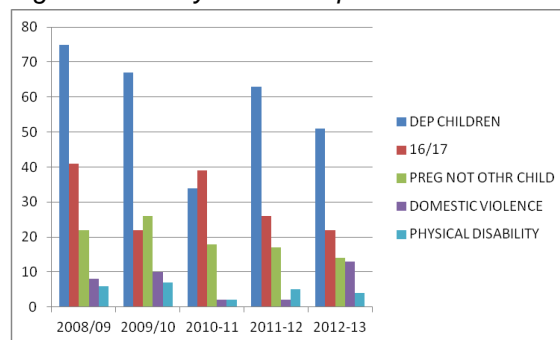
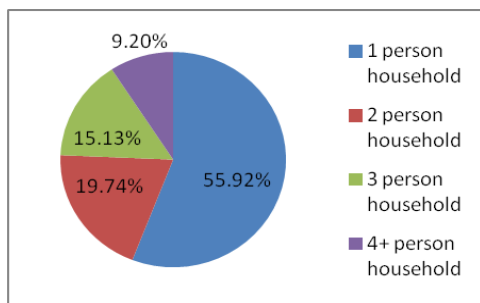


Figure 5 illustrates the size of all priority need households placed in temporary accommodation.

Figure 5. Size of priority need households in temporary accommodation in 2012/13



In 2011, 78.9% of households in Telford and Wrekin had more bed rooms in a property than they required, which is higher than the national figure of 72.6%. 5.2% of households have fewer rooms in the property than is required, compared with a national average of 8.7%.

In 2012/13, 75% of the tenancies were one and two person households indicating the demand for one and two bedroom properties.

Non statutory homelessness

It is recognised that many people who are non statutory homeless seek housing advice, accommodation and support from local partners in Telford and Wrekin. Third sector provision for the homelessness is serviced via supported housing and defined homeless provision (see Appendix 3).

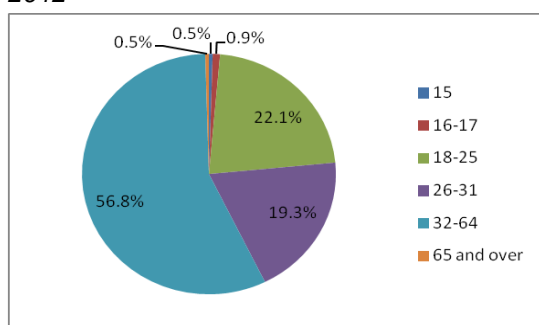
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The Salvation Army KiP Project

The number of people being referred to The Salvation Army KiP Project continues to increase each year, with 213 people contacting them between April 2011 and December 2012 compared with 134 referrals in 2010/11. Of these, the majority (87%) were men and 56.8% were aged 32-64 (see Figure 6).

Since 2010/11 there has been an increase in the number of non-statutory homeless women (15 in 2010/11 and 28 in 2012/13).

Figure 6. Age of KiP referrals Apr 2011-Dec 2012



During 2012, KiP interviewed six people who had been discharged from hospital with no fixed accommodation. In addition, 33 people who were released from prison were referred to KiP.

Each person referred reported on average three different health issues. The most common health issues reported over the last three years were depression / anxiety / panic attacks; problems with alcohol and drugs misuse/addiction.

Maninplace

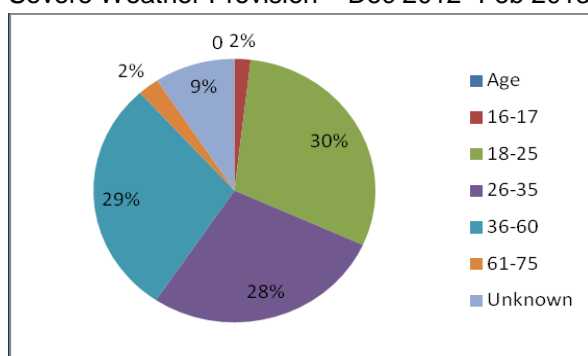
The Bleak Mid Winter Project runs every year between December and February and provides short term accommodation for people who are sleeping rough during the coldest months of the year.

70 people accessed accommodation through the project in 2012/13. In addition, 30 people were assisted to avoid them from rough sleeping through private landlord HMO, returning to family, staying with friends or other means. An additional 62 people contacted the project however, either did not leave any personal details and could not be contacted, or did not attend interview, declined an offer of accommodation or took another option.

The majority of people contacting the project were men (80%). The age profile of these people accessing is illustrated in Figure 7.

14% of people presenting themselves as homeless were due to hospital discharge and leaving prison.

Figure 7. Age profile of people accessing the Severe Weather Provision – Dec 2012 -Feb 2013



The number of people aged 18 to 25 is much higher in 2012/13 than any previous year, accounts for 30% of all who accessed this provision.

Maninplace accommodates 70 people every night in temporary accommodation, who are non-statutory homeless, of which the majority are single households.

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The Council's count for rough sleepers continues to increase each year with eleven people found to be rough sleeping in the borough on 21 November 2012 compared with two in 2010.

Wellington and District YMCA

68 people who were accommodated by YMCA in 2012/13, compared with 53 in 2011/12.

Figure 8. People accommodated by YMCA



There has been an increase in the number of 16-17 year olds and a reduction of people aged 18-25 being accommodated by YMCA.

Of these, the main way to help people to move on was either through Choose Your Home (13 people) or by helping people to move back to the family home (11 people).

In 2012/13, 59% of the young people accommodated had issues with substance misuse, 41% were not in education or training, 37% had complex issues and 32% were ex offenders.

Stay

During 2012/13, Stay supported 225 young people across its range of services including Houses in Multiple Occupation, self-contained flats and floating support. Stay supports people up to the age of 32. In 2012/13, 24% of clients were under 18 and 49% were between 18 and 21. 58% were female and 42% were male.

These figures represent a 6% increase on the previous year.

The Local Housing Market

- Whilst Telford & Wrekin Council is no longer a social landlord, it has an important strategic housing role, working with partners to meet the housing needs of local people and to help to balance the local housing market.
- Between 2001 and 2011 there was a 7.7% shift to private renting tenure and a move away from owner-occupation of 4.5%. This shift in tenure reflects national changes, which are closely associated with population growth.
- Total housing association stock has fallen slightly in last decade.
- New social housing vacancies (relets) has remained stable, however the number of households registered seeking housing (Choose Your Home') has risen significantly to around 17,747 in 2012/13.
- There is an estimated net shortfall of 1,240 affordable homes for local people every year. The majority of these should be for rent. The cost of entry level housing is on average eight times greater than household incomes, although this varies across the borough (2009).

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- There is a shortage of all property types (apart from one bed room flats) in the borough.
- Early indications are that housing providers are seeking to develop smaller house types including two bed room houses and one bed roomed flats. However, new supply will continue to represent a very small proportion of the borough's overall housing stock.
- The expected delivery of specialist housing, including extra care housing, has the potential to increase the supply of social housing vacancies.
- Long term empty homes in the borough are comparatively low.
- In 2011, 615 mortgage and landlord possession claims were made. In addition, 470 mortgage and landlord possession claims led to orders. These figures are slightly higher than the national figure (source: Ministry of Justice).

Local strategies and plans

The Homelessness Strategy supports the following local strategies and plans: Telford & Wrekin Council's Community Strategy – Our Journey to 2020; Strategic Housing Strategy (2013 - 2018), Supporting People Strategy 2013-2018, Children and Young People's plan 2012/13, Safer Stronger Communities Partnership Plan, Health and Wellbeing plan 2008-2011, Reducing Re-Offending Strategy (2013-2016), Domestic Violence Strategy (2013-2016).

5. Future Challenges in Telford and Wrekin

- As a result of the National Reforms it is expected that there will be an increase in households experiencing financial challenges and rent arrears which could lead to an increase in homelessness and a need to access homelessness services:
 - 2,613 households (47%) of all working age tenants will be affected by the 'bedroom tax' and will see a reduction in Housing Benefit.
 - The budget shortfall for a local Council Tax Support scheme will need to be found by reductions in Council Tax support paid to the 10,742 working age customers who currently receive this Council Tax benefit. Of these, 7,957 currently pay no Council Tax at all. In addition their entitlement will reduce by around 21% and from April 2013, they will have to start to pay a portion of their Council Tax.
 - The challenges that individuals face as a result of introduction of the Shared Room Rate, in particular for many young people who are unable to secure or sustain affordable accommodation and are left facing shortfalls, arrears and homelessness.
- There is an estimated net shortfall of affordable homes and a shortage of all property types (apart from one bed room flats).
- New social housing vacancies (relets) has remained stable, however the number of households registered seeking housing (Choose Your Home) has risen significantly over the last five years to 14,747 (5,769 in 2007).
- Mortgage and landlord possession claims and orders in the borough are slightly higher the national position.

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- The number of homelessness applications to the Council is increasing year on year and the majority of accepted as homeless and in priority need continue to be young people (60.5%). This is significantly higher than the national average where 35% of priority need acceptances are aged 16-24.
- The number of non-statutory homeless people being referred to the Salvation Army KiP project continues to increase each year.
- Since 2011, there has been a 65% increase in people presenting themselves as homeless to the Bleak Mid-winter project (Severe Weather Provision between the months December and February).
- There are a growing number of rough sleepers in the borough - the Council's counted 11 rough sleepers on 21 November 2012 compared with two in 2010.
- The need for the Council and local partners to deliver the Government's 'No Second Night Out' vision at a local level.
- There is a limited amount of housing advice and support for people aged 18-25 as accommodation provision for non-statutory homelessness is generally targeted at people aged 16-19. This has been compounded by the closure of STAY's Hostel which was the 'front door' where young people could get support.
- There is a growing need to accommodate people with complex needs. These include people who are being presented as homeless following discharge from hospital, release from an institution, prison and remand.
- Individuals with a substance misuse, whether alcohol or drug dependency prove an ongoing challenge as people struggle to maintain all that is necessary to stay in accommodation
- Mental health problems are a concern when Houses of Multiple Occupancy are inappropriate, finding alternatives and engaging with statutory services is problematic.
- Homeless women are more difficult to accommodate due to their potential vulnerability.
- One person households make up over half of all priority need homeless households placed council owned/leased temporary accommodation, with 75% of the tenancies being 1 and 2 person households in 2012/13. This demonstrates the demand for 1 and 2 bedroom properties.
- 1,463 (55.9%) of households affected by the 'bedroom cap' require one bed accommodation
- The current provision of accommodation to support victims of domestic abuse is no longer suitable due to its location.
- The majority of Council owned/managed accommodation is in South Telford only.
- KiP is limited to the availability of suitable Houses of Multiple Occupancy accommodation with private landlords and very often the level of deposit provides a significant problem for the homeless individual. Also the standard and quality of available properties continues to be a concern.
- The current temporary and emergency accommodation is under pressure due to the growing demand in the borough

Homelessness Strategy for the Borough of Telford and Wrekin 2013 - 2016

PART TWO: THE STRATEGY**6. Aims and priority actions**

The overall aims of the Homeless Strategy are for the Council to work in partnership with the voluntary sector and other local partners to:

4. Prevent homelessness in Telford and Wrekin
5. Have appropriate housing pathways, including advice and support for homeless households in Telford and Wrekin
6. Meet the Council's statutory duty to accommodate Gypsies and Travellers

Aim 1: Prevent homelessness in Telford and Wrekin

The Government's homelessness prevention strategy states that *'there is no place for homelessness in the 21st century'*.

The Council and local partners will work together to ensure that a proactive approach is taken to prevent homelessness in Telford and Wrekin. Early intervention and the provision of integrated services are important to help local people to stay in their homes and where this is not possible, support them to find alternative accommodation before they become homeless.

Priority action 1a: Provide a Single Referral and Access Point and Single Assessment Tool for all people who present themselves as homeless

The Council recognises the need to ensure that appropriate support is provided all local people who present themselves as homeless.

As a result of the Welfare Reforms it is expected that there will be an increase in households experiencing financial challenges and rent arrears which could lead to an increase in homelessness and a need to access homelessness services.

In order to limit the risk of homelessness, households affected by reductions to housing and welfare benefits have been provided with early advice, in particular:

- Households affected by deductions in housing benefit payments due to the Housing Benefit Social Rented Sector room cap
- Households affected by the changes to the Council Tax support scheme

The Council has delivered briefing sessions to council employees and local partners to increase awareness and understanding of the Welfare Reforms, local implications and potential impact.

The Council's Housing Options team currently provide housing advice and support to people who are eligible and in priority need. However, this does not assist and support those people who are non-statutory homeless.

Therefore, the Council and local partners will put in place a Single Referral and Access Point for all local people regardless of whether they are statutory homeless or not, providing a pathway of advice, guidance and access to support services which meet their housing needs.

The Single Referral Access Point will be managed by the Council, in partnership with local partners. A Single Assessment Tool will also be developed so that anyone who

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presents themselves as homeless will only have to be assessed once to determine the pathway to appropriate housing and support providers.

In addition, in 2013, the Telford Crisis Network has been established to respond to the needs of people who find themselves in crisis.

Until recently, emergency response in the borough has been delivered by individual organisations at the point of need, providing shelter and/or food and other basic essentials for people to live. However, these organisations have been finding it increasingly difficult to meet the rising need.

In response, local partners are working together to provide a more co-ordinated and effective crisis provision for local people. The immediate priority for the Network has been to provide emergency food provision, but longer term they will review that provision and look at other essential items to help address the underlying issues that cause people's financial crises.

Priority action 1b: Commission and monitor a range of support services for vulnerable groups

The provision of Supporting People Services is an important element of the Council's preventative service provision, providing the delivery of housing related support which encompasses a wide preventative role aiming to promote independence, confidence building and social inclusion. Supporting vulnerable residents to maintain independence and remain in their home is an underlying principle of the Supporting People programme, in particular providing services for mental health and substance misuse.

The Council is developing a new support service delivery model which will create a more flexible, equitable, joined up and needs led service, through a combination of sheltered housing for older people; floating support to people in their own homes; and hub/outreach accommodation where support is provided to them through accommodation based support schemes or Sheltered Housing schemes.

The new Single Access and Referral point which will be developed with local partners and managed by the Council to ensure that local people can access Supporting People services to meet their needs (see Priority Action 1a).

Housing advice sometimes needs to be supported by practical assistance. The Council and local partners use a range of prevention tools to reduce the number of people at risk of homelessness and to help to minimise repeat homelessness.

- The Prevention Scheme – The Council will continue to use this fund to reduce the number of households who become homeless. The fund ranging from helping to clear rent areas to mediation to enable households to remain in their homes.
- The Mediation Scheme – The Council will continue to work with families to resolve issues that lead to young people being unable to remain at home.
- The Sanctuary Scheme – the Council in partnership with the Police, Shropshire Fire Service and Wrekin Housing Trust will continue to offer a range of extra security measures to enable victims of domestic abuse to remain in their own home.
- Life skills training programme – the Council is developing a programme to support

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and develop the most vulnerable young people (aged 16-19) who are accommodated in Council temporary accommodation.

- Hospital Discharge Protocol – This Protocol enables timely assessments to be carried out for people who are homeless as at the point of admission, or become homeless during their stay in hospital. The Council will continue to work with health providers to raise awareness and ensure that that housing needs are met.
- Financial advice – The Council will continue to work with households facing financial difficulties, covering all areas of Mortgage Rescue, debt advice and counselling.
- Integrated Offender Management – The Community Safety Partnership are developing operational protocols to eliminate rough sleeping and prevent homelessness.

Aim 2: Have appropriate housing pathways, including advice and support for homeless households in Telford and Wrekin

The Council's objective is to provide suitable interim accommodation in Telford and Wrekin as quickly as possible to homeless households who are in priority need (see Appendix 2), together with a mechanism to allow households to move into sustainable accommodation.

In addition, it is recognised that many people who are non statutory homeless seek housing advice, accommodation and support from local partners in Telford and Wrekin.

The Council and local partners will continue to work together to ensure that future action and resources are focussed on overcoming the challenges impacting on homelessness in Telford and Wrekin.

Priority Action 2a: Establish sustainable pathways for all homeless people from temporary accommodation into sustainable tenancies and discharge the Council's homelessness duty.

Most affordable homes in the borough are accessed through the local choice based lettings arrangements ('Choose Your Home'). The demand for this service has increased significantly over the last five years from 5,769 to 14,747 applications. With fewer social rented homes available to meet demand, and with deposits for mortgages out of reach of those on low incomes, private renting is fast becoming the only option for many people.

The Council works with the Homes & Communities Agency (HCA) and local Registered Providers (housing associations) to increase the supply of affordable homes in the borough. As part of its strategic housing role it also:

- helps to provide a strategic framework through its Homelessness Strategy, Housing Allocation Policy and Tenancy Strategy.
- provides services that will support tenants to maintain their tenancy and prevent unnecessary evictions
- provides an Anti-Social Behaviour unit in partnership with the Police to tackle

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local issues.

In 2012/13, the Council carried out a review of how its property related schemes operate; the use of accommodation to support homeless people; and the future challenges for Telford and Wrekin which will impact on homelessness.

This has led to the development of a comprehensive package of support and accommodation to address local challenges and meet the housing needs of both statutory and non-statutory homeless households. This includes the provision of short term accommodation and a mechanism to enable households to move on into permanent accommodation quickly. The Council will:

- Restructure its portfolio of temporary accommodation, purchasing or leasing additional accommodation and carrying out alterations to existing accommodation (if economically viable).
- Consider expanding the existing Bond Scheme which provides a bond guarantee to private sector landlords to allow households to secure accommodation. The expansion of this scheme will assist more households to move on from temporary accommodation by securing sustainable tenancies and will enable the Council to discharge its homelessness duty into the private rented sector. This scheme may also be used to assist households who need to move out of accommodation with social landlords due to the Welfare Reforms.
- Work with local partners to revise the Council's Housing Allocation Policy to ensure it is fit for purpose; supports the prevention of homelessness; provides temporary accommodation; and enables service users to access and secure longer term or permanent accommodation in the community. (Also see 2f).

Priority Action 2b: Enhance provision to accommodate young people

The number of young people presenting themselves as homeless continues to increase; including people aged 18-25.

In response to this and the increasing pressures resulting from the introduction of the Shared Room Rate, the Council and local partners will increase the supply of rented, affordable, specialist accommodation for this group:

- Bromford Housing Association and Stay will develop a 16 unit supported accommodation for young people with complex needs 'Foyer provision' in Woodside.
- Sanctuary Housing Association will develop 12 units of accommodation in Ketley for young

These projects will be implemented by 2015.

The Council will look to create additional units of temporary accommodation within its current facilities for young people.

In addition, through developing their work with local private sector landlords, Stay will increase the number of accommodation units available to people aged 16-25.

Priority Action 2c: Develop a social lettings model and Landlord Accreditation

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Scheme to help people into private rented sector tenancies

The Councils Tenancy Relations Service advise both landlords and tenants on their rights and responsibilities.

Sustaining tenancies in the private rented sector and sustaining access to private rented and voluntary sector accommodation is fundamental to prevent and tackle homelessness, both as a mechanism for the initial placing of homeless and to move persons on into permanent accommodation.

Therefore, improving the ability of residents to access all housing that is available in Telford and Wrekin is crucial to enable local residents to better manage their own housing pathway. In addition, improving Council relations with the private and voluntary sector is crucial to maintaining a steady supply of accommodation for the existing Services that the Council provides for the homeless.

Currently, where households are not in priority need (see appendix 2) and are non-statutory homeless, the Council's statutory duty is to provide advice and guidance.

This usually includes information on private lettings, Choose Your Home, referrals to voluntary sector partners, referral to the Single Allocations Panel for supported housing and details of hostels for street homeless. Despite the advice provided not all of these households will successfully find somewhere to live.

To meet the above needs the Council, in partnership with voluntary sector partners and private Landlords is exploring the creation of a Social Lettings Agency to provide affordable, good quality accommodation to homeless households.

The agency will provide:

- A mechanism to find accommodation for all service areas within the Council that need residential accommodation
- To set up a Landlord accreditation scheme to apply to all private landlords that the Council uses.
- To establish links with the local private rented sector landlords to provide properties through the agency for those clients who contact the homelessness services.
- Be a main point of contact, providing information and assistance to residential landlords and being a link to all of the services that are available in the Council
- To work closely with the voluntary sector to provide accommodation for non statutory homeless.
- To purchase accommodation to provide long term tenancies for those with challenging circumstances and would otherwise be unable to move on into sustainable accommodation

Once established the Social Lettings Agency will initially focus on supporting those affected by the Welfare Reforms and setting up service level agreements with the voluntary sector. A Landlord Accreditation scheme will be developed and a programme will be put into place to purchase residential accommodation in accordance with the model.

Priority Action 2d: Adopt a No Second Night Out Model

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The Government has a requirement that before the winter months begin and severe weather becomes a factor, that there is provision across the country to prevent people from sleeping rough on the streets of England. 2011 saw the introduction of the Government's "No Second Night Out" vision, which is intended to ensure that any person that has slept rough does not do so for a second consecutive night.

In response to this, a co-operative partnership has been developed with the Council and local partners; Stay Supported Housing, The Salvation Army KiP Project, Wellington & District YMCA, Bourneville Housing Association and Maninplace to deliver the Bleak Mid-Winter Project.

The Salvation Army KiP project, provide daytime first response and Maninplace manage the project every year during the months of December to February and provides short term accommodation for people that are sleeping rough during the coldest months of the year.

In response to the increase in people presenting themselves as homeless, Telford & Wrekin Community Safety partnership has invested funding into a partnership agreement between the Council and Maninplace. This will enable the delivery of services offered through the Bleak Mid Winter Project all year round. This new initiative will be called 'Nights Inn' and an emergency line will be available 24/7.

Nationally, it is recognised that the risk of offending or reoffending is reduced when a prison leaver or an offender has the appropriate accommodation and ongoing support and given the individual and opportunity to succeed and integrate back into society.

Therefore, the 'Nights Inn' initiative will include a support service to reintegrate prison leavers back to the area.

The Council will strengthen its partnership working with the Prison Service, the Integrated Offender Management Team, Probation, and Youth Support Services to ensure that no one prison leaver or Integrate Offender Management nominal 'slips through the net' and that their accommodation needs are met.

This cooperative approach will allow all partners to develop an appropriate engagement, support and enforcement package designed to concentrate on the offender rather than the offences.

Priority Action 2e: Work with Private Landlords to bring empty properties back into use.

Within the borough there are estimated to be around 300 empty properties. These are not only a waste of a valuable housing opportunity, but are often detrimental to local communities causing blight, reducing the values of surrounding properties and contributing to a sense of general decline.

In response to this a Home Improvement Agency will be established to identify empty properties, promoting the reporting of such properties, working with each owner to identify what could be done to get the property back into use and working with a cross council Housing Action Team (HAT) to co-ordinate support/action to bring properties back into use, linked with housing options and temporary accommodation

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to meet the housing needs identified.

A further report will be brought to Cabinet detailing the interventions to be implemented to tackle empty properties.

Priority Action 2f: : Work with local Registered Providers (RPs) (through the Council's Allocation Policy and Tenancy Strategy) to help local people to access and retain affordable housing and to make best use of the Borough's housing stock

The Council's Homelessness Strategy, Housing Allocation Policy and Tenancy Strategy are closely linked and will be developed in a co-ordinated way. The Tenancy Strategy will set out how the Council will work with local Registered Providers to influence the type and length of tenancies that will be offered (including the circumstances where this may vary). It will also describe the process under which tenancies will be renewed or terminated at the end of a fixed-term. Also see 2a above.

Aim 3: Meet statutory duty to accommodate Gypsies and Travellers

The Council has a duty under The Housing Act 1996 and Homelessness Act 2002 to accommodate those gypsies and travellers which are assessed as homeless/or unlawfully encamped and have a right to be within the Borough due to a local connection in the area determined by employment, family or there are special circumstances which result in unlawful encampment in the area i.e. health.

It is recognised and accepted that the Telford & Wrekin Gypsy and Traveller community is expanding and therefore plans need to be put in place to ensure that this community is able to live and integrate as part of the wider community in the borough.

In addition, issues currently arise as a result of unlawful encampments being established in the local area by transient Gypsies and Travellers who have lawful sites elsewhere in the country. The Council will explore options for effectively managing this transient accommodation.

Priority Action 3a: Develop a strategic plan identify appropriate locations that meet the needs of the Gypsy and Traveller community

The Council has identified the following actions in order to meet its statutory obligation to provide temporary accommodation:

- Extend the existing Gypsy and Traveller site off Lodge Road in Donnington. This extension of this site will be subject to planning permission.
- Designate a site for temporary gypsy and traveller accommodation, located off Holyhead Road in Snedshill, adjacent to the M54 motorway. It is proposed that this site is used to accommodate those gypsies and travellers who we have a statutory responsibility for, whilst permanent accommodation is developed at Lodge Road. The site may also be large enough to accommodate transient gypsies and travellers who are unlawfully encamped in the Borough. The designation of this site for gypsies and travellers, whether for lawful or

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unlawful gypsies will require planning permission and an extensive period of consultation would take place with local residents and businesses as part of this process.

Travellers using either site will be required to pay an appropriate rent, service charge and Council Tax and will be subject to a tenancy agreement setting out conditions for using the site. The Council believes that by making appropriate provision for travellers it can reduce the incidence of illegal encampments and enable the faster enforcement of removing illegal encampments.

The council are developing and identifying long term solutions through the Shaping Places strategy.

Priority Action 3b: Establish a programme of support to address health and wellbeing and educational needs of the Gypsy and Traveller community

The Council will continue to work with Health and Education services to deliver statutory services to this community. Additional training opportunities are being piloted and will be reviewed to ascertain their effectiveness and develop these further if appropriate.

In addition, the Council and local partners are putting together a three year plan to look at how the Council more effectively manages illegal encampments which can adversely impact on residents and businesses within the Borough. A task group, involving officers from across the Council and the Police, will take this review forward and develop a clear policy for dealing with illegal encampments.

In 2013, the Council will initiate a formal consultation process with the Gypsy and Traveller community who legally reside in Telford and Wrekin, to listen to their views on the service that they receive and any ideas that they have for future service provision.

Priority Action 3c: Work with the wider community and the Gypsy and Traveller community to improve the understanding of the different cultures and needs

The Council will continue to be represented at the One Telford Safer Stronger Businesses meeting which is made up of local businesses. The challenges that both local businesses and the Gypsies and Travellers face will be reviewed at this meeting to identify positive solutions for both. This is also an opportunity to raise awareness of the Gypsy and Traveller culture and traditions.

The Gypsy and Traveller community access local schools, health facilities and local amenities in the borough and the designated Gypsy Liaison Officer actively encourages them to integrate with the community wherever possible, such as participating in community wide events and discussions around local decision making.

The Council will continue to offer support, advice and guidance to local residents who raise any challenges that they may be facing whilst living in the same area.

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7. Resources to implement the Homelessness Strategy

This section of the strategy outlines the following:

- the resources available for preventing and tackling homelessness;
- Arrangements to monitor the delivery of the strategy.

Resources available for preventing and tackling homelessness

Financial resources for tackling homelessness are limited and are likely to come under significant pressure in the future. Resources preventing and tackling homelessness come from a variety of sources:

- **Preventing Homelessness Grant** – this is a specific Government funding source for Local Authorities based on the level of need identified in each area and is intended to fund the development of preventative initiatives such as mediation, outreach and resettlement services. After 2013, CLG Homelessness Grant will not be specifically tied to homeless prevention and these activities will be funded through the business rates retention scheme
- **General Fund** – the Local Authority funds the majority of revenue expenditure on homelessness and related activities from the General Fund. This includes the costs of providing a housing options and advice service, grant funding to voluntary partners that provide services to homeless people and the cost of providing emergency accommodation to homeless households who have made an application for assistance.
- **Supporting People Funding** – Current and future years of funding are under pressure to generate savings and are subject to the review of the provision of Supporting People Services in 2013. *Supporting people since 2011/12 is funded through the General Fund.*
- **Discretionary Housing Payments (DHP)** – are housing benefit payments made to people who are experiencing housing difficulties and can help them to access and retain accommodation. This provides a valuable source of funding in preventing the homelessness. In fund will come under increasing pressure due to new calls on it from households at risk of rent arrears leading to a risk of homelessness due to the Welfare Reform.
- **Funding for new Affordable Homes** Capital funding for new accommodation-based services for homeless households and new affordable housing is provided by the Homes & Communities Agency (HCA) and increasingly by Registered Providers from their own resources, as national grant rates have been reduced. The HCA also has a number of targeted funding programmes, including Empty Homes and Gypsies & Travellers. The supply of non-grant funded affordable homes, e.g. through (s106) agreements with private house builders has been falling.
- **Other funding** – from time to time additional grant resources are made available for new accommodation based initiatives and/or to improve existing accommodation. It is difficult to access the size and scope of resources down to a local level or whether they will be available in future years. The Council and local

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partners will seek additional investment and funding to improve services to prevent and tackle homelessness

Homelessness Strategy Monitoring

A range of methods for monitoring the progress against actions contained in the Homelessness Strategy Action Plan will be put in place. This framework seeks to make use of existing structures:

- **Homelessness Taskforce** – This partnership of service providers will meet quarterly to review progress of the Homelessness Strategy Action Plan and challenges.
- **National Performance Indicators and Statutory Returns** – Performance will continue to be monitored through quarterly P1E returns and will be reviewed regularly by the Council.
- **Local Performance Indicators** – The Council's Cohesion Service will continue to monitor local indicators relating to homelessness. Whilst these figures are not reported to central Government they will continue to be used to give a detailed picture of service delivery and improvements needed.

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8. Homelessness Strategy action plan and performance indicators

Action	By when	Lead	Resources (within existing / to source)	Performance indicators (link to a performance framework)
Aim 1: Prevent homelessness in Telford and Wrekin				
Priority action 1a: Provide a Single Referral and Access Point and Single Assessment Tool for all people who present themselves as homeless				
Develop a Single Referral and Access Point	April 2014	Cohesion Services – T&WC (coordinate with partners)	Within existing	Number of all homelessness presentation presented
Develop a Single Assessment tool	April 2014	Cohesion Services – T&WC (coordinate with partners)	Within existing	Single assessment tool that identifies need and provides tailored support packages
Improve access to employment and training for homeless people	April 2014	Cohesion Services – T&WC (coordinate with partners)	Within existing	To be developed as part of the consultation
Seek to identify funding sources across a range of partnerships and emerging opportunities throughout the life of the strategy.	Ongoing	Homelessness Taskforce (T&WC and partners)	Within existing	Identify funding sources across a range of partnerships
Review the local partnership performance monitoring arrangements: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify gaps in strategy information Set up appropriate mechanisms to capture and report this data in the future Develop a partnership performance management framework to enable a coordinated evaluation of <u>all</u> homelessness in Telford and Wrekin (both statutory and non statutory) 	April 2014	Homelessness Taskforce (T&WC and partners)	Within existing	Develop a performance mentoring framework for the Homelessness Task Force

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Action	By when	Lead	Resources (<i>within existing / to source</i>)	Performance indicators (<i>link to a performance framework</i>)
Develop revised Council Housing Allocation Policy.	April 2014	Family & Cohesion Services, T&WC	Within existing	Ensure clear pathway and procedures back in to Social Housing
Priority action 1b: Commission and monitor a range of support services for vulnerable groups				
Map and scope the support services available to vulnerable groups	April 2014	All housing and support providers	Within existing	Monitored through the Task Force
Develop and implement briefings to front line staff and partners to raise awareness and understanding of the support services available and how to access them	ongoing	Homelessness Taskforce	Within existing	Monitored through the Task Force
Carry our refresher training to enable the Housing Options team to deliver mortgage rescue, debt advice and counselling to households facing financial difficulties.	ongoing	Cohesion Services, T&WC	Within existing	Performance framework
Improve coordination of service for older people experiencing homelessness	ongoing	Adult Services, (Older People Team) T&WC	Within existing	Monitored through the Task Force
Develop multi-agency services to help people with a learning disability	ongoing	Adult Services, (Disability Team) T&WC	Within existing	Monitored through the Task Force
Work in partnership to achieve targets around supporting all vulnerable households to live independently	ongoing	Homelessness Taskforce	Within existing	Monitored through the Task Force
Improve opportunities for service users to influence the services they receive	ongoing	Adult Commissioning Service, T&WC	Within existing	Monitored through the Task Force
Aim 2: Have appropriate housing pathways, including advice and support for homeless households in Telford and Wrekin				
Priority Action 2a: Establish sustainable pathways for all homeless people from temporary accommodation into sustainable tenancies				

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Action	By when	Lead	Resources (within existing / to source)	Performance indicators (link to a performance framework)
and discharge the Council's homelessness duty.				
Enhance current prevention and housing support schemes to all council and partner housing related services	ongoing	Family & Cohesion, Commissioning Services T&WC	Within existing	Monitored through the Task Force
Review the business case for purchasing new premises using a combination of capital received from sales and additional funds so as to maximise the effectiveness of the portfolio	April 2014	Asset & Property Management, T&WC	To be reviewed	Monitored through the Task Force
Consider conversion of two of the existing 3 bed Council owned accommodation into house shares and or Houses of Multiple Occupation	April 2014	Asset & Property Management, T&WC	Within existing	Monitored through the Task Force
Review privately leased in properties and look to hand back those which are in poor condition or subject to uncooperative landlords	April 2014	Asset & Property Management, T&WC	Within existing	Monitored through the Task Force
Consider purchasing housing from the Wrekin Housing Trust, bringing these properties up to standard to deal with the rise in demand due to the Welfare Reforms.	April 2014	Asset & Property Management, T&WC	To be considered by A&P	Monitored through the Task Force
Carry out alterations to accommodation currently used for victims of domestic abuse to improve efficiency and enable the Council to meet its objectives in providing support to non statutory homeless persons, together with emergency facilities and will create additional one bed roomed accommodation in North Telford	April 2014	Asset & Property Management, T&WC	Within existing	Monitored through the Task Force
Priority Action 2b: Enhance provision to accommodate young people				
Develop a 16 unit supported accommodation and 6 units	2015	Bromford Housing	Government	Partnership steering

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Action	By when	Lead	Resources (within existing / to source)	Performance indicators (link to a performance framework)
of first stage move on accommodation for young people with complex needs		Association and STAY	funded	group
Develop a Young Persons Hub, where young people can go and discuss housing issues and get advice and assistance	2015	Bromford Housing Association and STAY	Partnership Resources	Partnership steering group
Develop a 12 unit accommodation for young people	2015	Sanctuary Housing Association	Partnership Resources	Partnership steering group
Develop additional units of temporary accommodation within the councils current facilities for young people	April 2014	Asset & Property Management, T&WC	Within existing	Monitored through the Task Force
Develop a programme of life skills activities to promote independence for young people	ongoing	Cohesion Services, T&WC	Within existing	Monitored through the Task Force
Develop work with the private sector to provide additional units of accommodation in response to the WM Framework for 16/17 year olds, and this increasing demand in relation to 16-25 year olds.	Ongoing	STAY	Partnership Resource	Partnership steering
Priority Action 2c: Develop a social lettings model and Landlord Accreditation Scheme to help people into private rented sector tenancies				
Create a Social Lettings Agency managed by the Council to provide affordable, good quality accommodation that meets statutory and non-statutory homelessness requirements	April 2014	Asset & Property Management, T&WC	Within existing	Monitored through the Task Force
Develop a Landlord Accreditation Scheme in consultation with partners and private landlords	April 2014	Asset & Property Management, T&WC/ Family and Cohesion Services, T&WC	Within existing	Monitored through the Task Force

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Action	By when	Lead	Resources (<i>within existing / to source</i>)	Performance indicators (<i>link to a performance framework</i>)
Set up a virtual advice point (one stop shop) for landlords to get help and advice. As part of this one stop shop we will:	April 2014	Asset & Property Management, T&WC/ Family & Cohesion Services, T&WC	Within existing	Monitored through the Task Force
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to work with landlords and tenants to reduce rent arrears in the Borough 	Ongoing	Tenancy Relations Service Family & Cohesion Services, T&WC	Within existing	Monitored through the Task Force
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to work with landlords and tenants to guide them through the possession process and ensure the correct legal framework is adhered to 	Ongoing	Tenancy Relations Service Family & Cohesion Services, T&WC	Within existing	Monitored through the Task Force
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to work with landlords and tenants guiding them through the process of claiming housing benefit, discretionary housing payments, overlap payments and safeguarding, ensuring sustainable tenancies in the borough 	Ongoing	Tenancy Relations Service Family & Cohesion Services, T&WC	Within existing	Monitored through the Task Force
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to support landlords when their property is abandoned, ensuring correct surrender allowing the property to be brought back into use 	Ongoing	Tenancy Relations Service Family & Cohesion Services, T&WC	Within existing	Monitored through the Task Force
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to support landlords to set up tenancies ensuring inventories, agreements and rent books are correct and appropriate records are kept 	Ongoing	Tenancy Relations Service Family & Cohesion Services, T&WC	Within existing	Monitored through the Task Force
Review the business case for converting the house in Dodmoor Grange into a House of Multiple Occupancy	April 2014	Asset & Property Management, T&WC	To be reviewed	Monitored through the Task Force
Develop a crash pad to accommodate 18 to 65 year olds into emergency accommodation	April 2014	Asset & Property Management, T&WC	Capital investment sourced	Monitored through the Task Force

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Priority Action 2d: Adopt a No Second Night Out Model				
Establish a 'first point' response for non-statutory homeless people to be accommodated.	Ongoing	Maninplace	Partnership funding	Monitored through the Task Force
Establish and implement an Offender Protocol which will support homeless offenders into accommodation	ongoing	Integrated Offender Management Steering Group	Partnership funding	IOM steering group
Priority Action 2e: Work with Private Landlords to bring derelict properties back into use				
Encourage owners of empty properties to bring their properties back into use and rented under the bond scheme or temporary accommodation	Ongoing	Home Improvement Agency	Within existing	Monitored through the Task Force
Priority Action 2f: Work with local Registered Providers (RPs) (through the Council's Allocation Policy and Tenancy Strategy) to help local people to access and retain affordable housing and to make best use of the Borough's housing stock.				
Develop Council Tenancy Strategy.	TBC	Development, Business & Housing, T&WC / Family & Cohesion service – T&WC	Within existing	Monitored through the Task Force
Aim 3: Meet statutory duty to accommodate Gypsy and Travellers				
Priority Action 3a: Develop a strategic plan identify appropriate locations that meet the needs of the Gypsy Traveller community				
Develop local policy to respond to national requirements to manage Gypsy and Traveller sites	July 2013	Development, Business and Housing – T&W Council / Family & Cohesion service – T&WC	Within existing	Monitored through the Task Force
Develop plans for an extension of Gypsy and Traveller site at Donnington to assist with bid for HCA funding.	End April 2013	Development, Business and Housing – T&W Council	Within existing	E.g. Reduction in the number of unlawful encampments

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Action	By when	Lead	Resources (<i>within existing / to source</i>)	Performance indicators (<i>link to a performance framework</i>)
Develop and submit bid to secure partnership funding to develop site.	End of April 2013	Asset & Property Management, T&WC	Funding secured, planning permission pending.	Monitor through the Homelessness Task Force.
Identify and procure land within the borough to meet interim needs of the Gypsy and Traveller community.	End Sept 2013	Asset & Property Management, T&WC	Land identified for a temporary tolerated transit site. Pending planning permission.	Monitor through the Homelessness Task Force.
Explore future Gypsy and Traveller site locations to meet the long term needs of this community.	2018	Asset & Property Management, T&WC	Need has been identified through the "Shaping Places Strategy".	Monitor through the Homelessness Task Force.
Work with the Gypsy and Traveller community to expand sites and facilities on land which they already own.	Ongoing	Asset & Property Management, T&WC	Funding secured, planning permission pending.	Monitor through the Homelessness Task Force.
Priority Action 3b: Establish a programme of support to address health and wellbeing and educational needs of Gypsy Traveller community				
Deliver European Funded project 'Springboard' to deliver current training, review and expand the programme to the Gypsy and Traveller Community.	End Dec 2013	Education and Skills – T&WC	Within existing	Monitor through the Homelessness Task Force.
Complete formal consultation with the Gypsy and Traveller community	End Sept 2013	Community Engagement, Equality and Action – T&WC	Within existing	Monitor through the Homelessness Task Force.

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Action	By when	Lead	Resources (within existing / to source)	Performance indicators (link to a performance framework)
Use feedback from 2013 consultation exercise to inform future service provision	Ongoing	Family & Cohesion service – T&WC	TBC	Monitor through the Homelessness Task Force.
Raise awareness within the community regarding the health and well being services and facilities available within the borough	Ongoing	Gypsy & Traveller Officer	Within existing	Monitor through the Homelessness Task Force.
Work with the Gypsy and Traveller Community to encourage their participation in sport and leisure activities	Ongoing	Education and Skills – T&WC	Within existing	Monitor through the Homelessness Task Force.
Priority Action 3c: Work with the wider community and the Gypsy Traveller community to improve the understanding of the different cultures and needs				
Continue to raise public awareness of the needs and cultural lifestyles of the Gypsy and Traveller community	Ongoing	Gypsy & Traveller Officer	Within existing	Monitor through the Homelessness Task Force.
The Council will continue to be represented at the One Telford Safer Stronger Businesses meeting which is made up of local businesses. The challenges that both local businesses and the Gypsy Travellers face will be reviewed at this meeting to identify positive solutions for both. This is also an opportunity to raise awareness of the Gypsy and Traveller culture and traditions.	Ongoing	Family & Cohesion services – T&WC	Within existing	Monitor through the Homelessness Task Force.
Explore ways to encourage the Gypsy and Traveller community to participate in community wide events and discussions around local decision making.	Ongoing	Gypsy & Traveller Officer	Within existing	Monitor through the Homelessness Task Force.
Continue to offer support, advice and guidance to local	Ongoing	Gypsy & Traveller Officer	Within existing	Monitor through the

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Action	By when	Lead	Resources (<i>within existing / to source</i>)	Performance indicators (<i>link to a performance framework</i>)
residents who raise any challenges that they may be facing whilst living in the same area.				Homelessness Task Force.
Deliver awareness raising session to community groups to improve the understanding of the different cultures and needs	Ongoing	Gypsy & Traveller Officer	Within existing	Monitor through the Homelessness Task Force.
Identify measures which demonstrate the prevention of anti-social behaviour and cohesion in the community and develop further work to respond to issues raised.	March 2014	Gypsy & Traveller Officer	Within existing	Monitor through the Homelessness Task Force.

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Appendix 1 – National Context Explained

The **Housing Act 1996** is the key legislation for homelessness and contains the legal provisions for statutory homelessness.

Since then the Government introduced the **Homelessness Act 2002**, and in March 2005, the Government published '**Sustainable Communities: settled homes; changing lives: a strategy for tackling homelessness**' which places emphasis on a the need for a proactive partnership approach to the preventing and reducing homelessness, reducing the number of households in temporary accommodation and ending the use of bed and breakfast accommodation for families with children.

'Making Every Contact Count' - The Government's homelessness prevention strategy was published on 16 August 2012. The key points of the strategy reflect these conclusions:

- The responsibility for homelessness prevention is widened to all local services
- An integrated approach should be taken at local level, with a commitment to making every contact with a vulnerable person count
- Commitments are made for five cross cutting priority areas including troubled children/adolescents, health, crime, skills/employment and specific social groups.
- Ten 'local challenges' are set for local authorities. These include using elements of the Localism Act to strengthen the approach to homelessness prevention.

In 2012, the Government also introduced the **Welfare Reform Bill** which sets out their approach to social and economic policy. Key changes in Housing Benefit policy and administration present significant implications for housing and homelessness:

Universal Credit

The Universal Credit is a new single payment for people looking for work or on a low income. It will cap the total amount of benefit that can be claimed and will restrict Housing Benefit entitlement for social housing tenants whose accommodation is larger than the Government deems them to need.

The introduction of Universal Credit will be rolled out nationally from October 2013 on a geographical basis, to be fully implemented by 2017.

Some claimants may find budgeting more of a challenge due to a change from weekly to monthly payments. It is also likely to impact on the Council, both directly as set out above and as a result of increased demand for other services from those suffering financial hardship.

Housing Benefit Social Rented Sector Room Cap – 'bedroom tax'

From 01 April 2013, the Government is introducing a national Housing Benefit Social Rented Sector room cap, commonly known as the 'bedroom tax'. This will mean a reduction in the amount of Government Housing Benefit for people of working age, who rent their homes from a Housing Association if they are considered to be living in a property that has more bedrooms than they and their family require.

If the customer receiving the benefit or their partner have reached the age to claim pension credit then they are exempt from this change.

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The Department for Work and Pensions has set criteria for determining the number of bedrooms that a family require. If the house has more bedrooms than the family require based on the criteria, then Housing Benefit will be reduced by:

- 14% if the person has one extra bedroom, or
- 25% if the person has two or more extra bedrooms.

Local Housing Associations have identified that approximately 47% of all their working age tenants will be affected by this cut in benefit, which equates to around 2,613 people in Telford and Wrekin.

2,136 households in the borough have one bedroom more than they require and will receive a 14% reduction in Housing Benefit, losing an average of £13 per week. 477 households have two or more bedrooms than they require and will receive a 25% reduction in Housing Benefit, losing an average of £24 per week.

1,463 households require one bed accommodation based on their family make-up i.e. single or couples with no dependants or non dependants. This just shows the high demand there will be for one bed accommodation. 55.99% of people affected by the bedroom cap in Telford and Wrekin require one bed properties. A small number of these will require extra bedroom for overnight carer or on medical grounds. 25 households are under occupying by 3 or more bedrooms.

Council Tax Benefits

On 01 April 2013, the Government are abolishing the national Council Tax Benefit Scheme which is administered by Local Authorities on behalf of the Department for Work and Pensions. Instead, each Council has been tasked with designing its own local scheme and criteria for how it will award Council Tax reductions to customers who are financially vulnerable. This new scheme will be called Council Tax Support.

Councils will be given a ring-fenced budget from the Government from which to award Council Tax Support, which for Telford & Wrekin is approximately £3.1 million less than we would need to continue to support everyone at current levels.

The Government have stipulated that customers of pension age are protected from any loss in support and a national set of entitlement rules will remain in place for them. This means that the whole of the £3.1 million funding shortfall needs to be found by reductions in Council Tax support paid to the 10,742 customers of working age who currently receive this benefit in the borough.

Of these customers, 7957 currently receive full Council Tax Benefit and therefore pay no Council Tax at all. They will also see their entitlement reduce by around 21% and will have to start to pay a portion of their Council Tax from April 2013.

Shared Room Rate

In January 2012, the Government extended the shared room rate to single claimants aged under 35 on Housing Benefit in the private rented sector (previously under 25). These claimants are restricted to the rate for a single room in a shared house, rather than the rate for a self-contained one bedroom property.

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This act changes the powers of local government and includes amendments to legislation relating to homelessness and housing.

It enables Local Authorities to discharge homelessness duties with the offer of private rented sector accommodation. Local Authorities must be satisfied with the affordability and condition the accommodation and household circumstances. Tenancies must be a minimum of 12 months. This amendment aims to prevent homeless people from waiting in temporary accommodation for an allocation of social housing.

It enables Local Authorities to withdraw its services if a suitable offer is not accepted. However, if an offer is accepted, the person/people will retain their 'priority need' for two years. This means that if for example, the person/people become unintentionally homeless within the two year period and have cause to represent themselves as homeless they will have a priority even if their circumstances have changed and they actually no longer have a priority need.

New Flexible Tenancies have been introduced which enable social housing landlords to offer shorter tenancies (minimum of two years). This means that at the end of the term the RSL is entitled to apply to the court for repossession. Before this amendment tenancies were not for a fixed term and possession could only be regained if the tenant broke the conditions of the tenancy. Most housing associations are supporting residents to manage and maintain their tenancies; including support with skills development and seeking employment. Local authorities have the ability to influence the overall approach of providers through their tenancy strategies.

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Appendix 2 – Statutory homelessness: priority need homeless groups

- Person with whom dependant children reside or might reasonably be expected to reside
- A Pregnant woman
- Homeless or threatened with homelessness as a result of an emergency such as fire, flood or other disaster
- Vulnerable as a result of old age, mental illness or handicap or physical disability, having served a custodial sentence, been a member of Her Majesty`s regular naval, military or air forces.
- A person aged 16 or 17 who is not a “relevant child” or a child in need to whom a local authority owes a duty under section 20 of the Children Act 1989
- A person under 21 who was (but is no longer) looked after, accommodated or fostered between the ages of 16 and 18.
- A person aged 21 or more who is vulnerable as a result of having been looked after, accommodated or fostered
- Aged 18 – 20 and vulnerable, having been looked after by Social Care
- Fleeing domestic Abuse from an associate/perpetrator

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Appendix 3 – Local voluntary sector housing and support providers

- The **Salvation Army KiP Project** provides the first response service to non-statutory homeless people. This includes Drop-in, outreach, tenancy support, signposting and information service. KiP now assist individuals beyond the previous age range of 26 to 65. Due to a recognition of the increasing need, they now offer the service to 18 to 65.
- **Maninplace** operate a social lettings agency to support and provide emergency and temporary accommodation for non statutory homeless who are aged 26 to 65.
 - The Night Inn is the point of access into this accommodation and provides immediate emergency accommodation (maximum of 10 day stay) reducing the need to use Bed and Breakfast.
 - Other accommodation caters for a variety of needs and ranges from specialist accommodation for the entrenched rough sleepers.
 - Provides ring fenced accommodation in line with the No Second Night Out concept.
- **Stay** is a registered charity that supports young homeless people and young families aged between 16 and 32 in a range of services in Telford and Wrekin.

Working with Single Homeless or Vulnerable Service Users

Since Stay was established by Telford Christian Council in 1990, our role has been to house and support young, vulnerable and homeless people and young families. Our work with this client group involves the provision of a range of accommodation types – Houses in Multiple Occupation, dispersed flats in the community and supported housing schemes. We also run a floating support service for young vulnerable people.

The ethos of Stay's support is one that places the young person at the centre of their support, working with them to help them take ownership of the issues that may have contributed to their homelessness and vulnerability.

Our approach to supporting young people aims to prepare them for transition into adulthood, working with them to develop the key skills required to live independently. Our work with young people begins at the very first contact with them. This helps us to understand their needs, where they are in their own personal development, and any pertinent issues that may impact on their progression. From then on, via thorough and personalised support planning; ongoing progress reviews; and regular, creative keyworking with dedicated and professional staff, the emphasis of our work is firmly placed in helping the young person from a position where things are done for them to one where they do things for themselves.

All of Stay's work is done in partnership with housing providers, statutory and voluntary agencies. Since 2009, Stay has also worked productively with the private rented sector to broaden our property base, from where we support young people who are homeless and vulnerable

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- **LIFE Housing** provides shared accommodation and support to up to three young homeless women from the age of 16, who are either pregnant or have a child under the age of five. Support includes:
 - Access to LIFE skills training that will enable them to live successful independent lives with their children.
 - Floating support in the community enabling the client of sustaining their own tenancies
 - Early intervention work, supporting young families for up two years.

- **Wellington and District YMCA** provides accommodation and support for young homeless people. Support includes motivating and encouraging them to develop strategies to change lifestyles and improve their chances of stable tenancies.

- **Wellington and District YMCA** provide accommodation and support for young homeless people aged 16-25. Support includes motivating and encouraging clients to develop strategies in changing unacceptable or chaotic lifestyles and improve their chances of independent living.
 - YMCA success focuses on staff deploying a consistent approach with all clients regardless of their history or needs.
 - YMCAs warnings procedure is applied as a tool that teaches clients what is or is not acceptable behaviour. By showing the client how they can rectify their mistakes. Mistakes are seen as a learning curve that with the right support acts as a guide to help them through problems made on their journey into independent living
 - YMCA confronts all issues with a determination of real life solutions and consequences to actions.
 - Homeless people usually have complex issues, disgusted by the need to obtain stable accommodation. Some often present well on the surface and appear to have no needs at all. Our experience eradicates this myth and ensures that we are aware they exist by taking action immediately, during a 3-day induction. A client with complex and chaotic lifestyles can only be helped fully using other relevant agencies
 - YMCA operates because of well-established practises and working relationships with other agencies this enables us to sign post when the need arises. However, more often than not these agencies have waiting lists or the clients do not fit the full criteria for entry into a service.
 - YMCA work successfully with: Future Focus, Risq counselling, C.M.H.T, Substance misuse, NACRO, Nova training, TCAT and County Training, Stay, Maninplace, Kip, Housing providers, Telford & Wrekin Council, CAB and the Crisis Network
 - YMCA offer floating support when a client moves into independent accommodation. The support can continue up to 2 years, however, 6 weeks is often enough to help them establish their new tenancy. The support consists of, assisting clients understand their tenancy agreement their housing providers ideals, setting up utilities and assisting them to familiarise their surrounding in their chosen area

- **The Supporting People programme** provides housing related support to homeless households and those at risk of homelessness. This support is delivered to people in

Homelessness Strategy for the Borough of Telford and Wrekin 2013 - 2016

their own homes or is provided to them through accommodation based support schemes or Sheltered Housing schemes.

- **Registered Social Landlords: Wrekin Housing Trust, Bromford, Bournville and Severnside Housing** – provides social housing for local people in need of accommodation. This includes specialised support and supported accommodation for vulnerable groups.

DRAFT

TELFORD & WREKIN COUNCIL

CABINET - 19 SEPTEMBER 2013

YOUTH JUSTICE PLAN

REPORT OF ASSISTANT DIRECTOR; FAMILY & COHESION SERVICES

LEAD CABINET MEMBER – CLLR PAUL WATLING

PART A) – SUMMARY REPORT

1. SUMMARY OF MAIN PROPOSALS

The Youth Justice Plan is prepared on an annual basis on behalf of Herefordshire Council, Shropshire Council, Telford and Wrekin Council and Worcestershire County Council.

The Youth justice Plan sets out how youth justice services across West Mercia are structured and identifies key actions to address identified risks to service delivery and improvement.;

- To focus collaborative multi-agency effort on work to improve outcomes for Young Offenders by offering an exemplary service, with timely interventions and strong links and partnership across all local services including Children's Services, criminal justice and community safety sectors.
- To set strategic direction for the Youth Offending Service (YOS) across West Mercia and agree and review local youth justice planning
- To provide support and challenge to the West Mercia YOS on operational performance;
 - First Time Entrants (FTE) to the Youth Justice System
 - Use of Custody
 - Re-Offending

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

2.1 That Cabinet approves the Youth Justice Plan attached and notes performance for the first quarter

3. SUMMARY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

COMMUNITY IMPACT	Do these proposals contribute to specific Priority Plan objective(s)?	
	Yes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Put our children and young people first Protect and support our vulnerable children and adults Ensure neighbourhoods are safe, clean and well maintained
	Will the proposals impact on specific groups of people?	
	Yes	Young people already involved with offending or at risk of Offending
TARGET COMPLETION/DELIVERY DATE	The Youth justice plan is for 13/14 and the plan will be reviewed in the final quarter of 13/14 in order to prepare the Youth Justice Plan for 14/15.	
FINANCIAL/VALUE FOR MONEY IMPACT	Yes	<p>The Youth Justice Plan confirms Telford and Wrekin budgeted 2013/14 contribution to the West Mercia Youth Offending Service at £0.376m. Prior year contribution was £0.490m, achieving a 23% saving.</p> <p>The plan also refers to further “non-core” savings to be achieved by the West Mercia YOS, for services currently provided which do not have to be delivered directly by a Youth Offending service.</p> <p>Further work needs to be done on these savings by the West Mercia YOS during the remainder of 2013/14, with implementation to be completed by the end of the Financial year. It is anticipated this will result in a lower Telford and Wrekin contribution to the West Mercia YOS in 2014/15.</p> <p>Detailed anticipated savings will be agreed at remaining 2013/14 West Mercia YOS Management board meetings and then published in the Youth Justice plan for 2014/15. GS 18/07/13</p>

LEGAL ISSUES	Yes	Under Section 40 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 it is the duty of each local authority, after consultation with the relevant persons and bodies, to formulate and implement a youth justice plan for each year setting out how youth justice services are to be provided and funded in their area; and how the youth offending team or teams established by them (whether alone or jointly with one or more other local authorities) are to be composed and funded, how they are to operate, and what functions they are to carry out. The youth justice plan is required to be submitted to the Youth Justice Board and be published in such manner and by such date as the Secretary of State may direct.
OTHER IMPACTS, RISKS & OPPORTUNITIES	Yes	The Youth Justice Plan outlines actions to reduce offending and reoffending by young people
IMPACT ON SPECIFIC WARDS	No	Borough-wide impact

PART B) – ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

4. INFORMATION

Under section 40 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 each Local Authority has a duty to produce a Youth Justice Plan setting out how Youth Justice Services in their area are provided and funded and composed. The plan is submitted to the Youth Justice Board for England and Wales.

The Youth Justice Plan for 2013/14 was prepared in April 2013 in line with the guidance issued by the Youth Justice Board (YJB), agreed at the West Mercia Youth Offending Service Management Board on 1st May 2013 and submitted to the YJB at the end of June 2013.

The Youth Offending Service is subject to three national indicators. Performance against the indicators is outlined in the plan and actions identified to address the risks to performance improvement.

Each Local Authority, in cooperation with Police, Probation and Clinical Commissioning Groups must put in place a Youth Offending service for their area, and in doing so the Local Authority may act together with one or more

Local Authorities to establish a joint service for their area. Following a review of the delivery of youth justice services across West Mercia, undertaken in 2012, a decision was taken by the four Local Authorities in West Mercia to establish a joint Youth Offending Service.

The plan identifies five main priorities¹ for 2013/14 as follows:

- Reduce Youth Offending and Protecting Communities from Harm – key areas of focus for 2013/14 will be looked after children and care leavers, diversion and restorative approaches
- Finishing the Job – Although the West Mercia YOS was established in October 2012, the service is still in transition. Key areas of focus include, facilities and enabling services and transitions
- Get Connected, Stay Connected – ensuring greater integrated working between the YOS and other children and family services with the shared aim of improving outcomes for young people in the youth justice system.
- Enabling staff to deliver now and into the future – ensuring staff receive the right training, knowledge and support to deliver quality services for children and young people
- Know the Right Thing – ensuring that the YOS has the information required to develop services and improve outcomes.

The following progress has been made towards these priorities during the first quarter of the year:

In order to address offending by looked after children (LAC) and care leavers the YOS has set up a reference group to analyse the joint issues and joint working in relation to LAC and care leavers. In September 2012 an analysis of LAC on the YOS caseload was undertaken which showed that 28% of the total YOS cases were looked after children.

The Commissioning group has undertaken an evaluation of specifications and have already invited tenders for operating an appropriate adult service. The contract has been awarded to YSS. The new contract will provide an extended service for young people, supporting work undertaken by the Councils' Emergency Duty Team.

The YOS has successfully moved onto the fifth floor of Darby House facilitating improved outcomes in line with plan priorities through integrated working.

Performance

- First Time Entrants (FTE) to the Youth Justice System

For year ending March 2013 (latest figures) the rate per 100,000 of 10-17year olds is 487. This compares favourably to 2012 figures of 515. With

¹ See page 14 of the Youth Justice Plan

a change in pre court disposals it is not possible at this point to be clear about whether this reduction is significant and will continue to reduce.

- Use of Custody

The use of custody rate for year ending June 2013 is 0.40 custodial sentences per 1000 of the youth population. During 2012 the figure was also 0.40 and historically the YOS has performed well against this measure compared with a National figure of 0.6.

- Re-Offending

The reoffending frequency rate concerns the average number of re offences by an agreed cohort of young people. The last figures available are from 2011 where the figure was 0.90 compared with a National figure of 1.03.

The West Mercia Youth Offending service became operational on 1st October 2012 and consists of core service teams aligned to each Local Authority area supported by commissioned services delivering key youth justice interventions and activities which support key outcomes. The Management of the Youth Offending Service is currently hosted by West Mercia Probation trust on behalf of the four Local Authorities.

5. IMPACT ASSESSMENT – ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

The Principal aim of the Youth justice System is the prevention of offending and re offending by children and young people. The Youth justice plan sets out an action plan to address the significant risks identified to future service delivery and improvement.;

6. PREVIOUS MINUTES

Thursday, 28th June, 2012 at 5.00 p.m. at the Civic Offices, Telford

7. BACKGROUND PAPERS

- West Mercia YOS Board minutes 20th June 2013
- West Mercia Youth Offending Service – Youth justice Plan 2013/14

Report prepared by:

Keith Barham, Head of West Mercia Youth Offending Service
Jas Bedesha, Service Delivery Manager Cohesion Services
Steve Hosking, Group Manager Cohesion Services

WEST MERCIA YOUTH OFFENDING SERVICE

YOUTH JUSTICE PLAN 2013/14



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1. INTRODUCTION

West Mercia Youth Offending Service was established on the 1st October 2012 and replaced the previous Shropshire, Telford and Wrekin Youth Offending Service and the Worcestershire and Herefordshire Youth Offending Service following a review of how youth justice services were provided across the West Mercia area.

The result of the review, the West Mercia model, is fundamentally more than a simple merger of the two previous services to bring about a single service. The new service is based on a core Youth Offending Service, hosted by West Mercia Probation Trust on behalf of the four Local Authorities, supported by commissioned non-core activities.

The core services are basically court facing services and the assessment, planning interventions, monitoring and review functions, along with victim liaison and support of Community Panel Members. All other services, previously delivered by the Youth Offending Services have been defined as non-core and are subject to a commissioning process. The commissioning process is ongoing and the new delivery arrangements for the non-core activities are due to be identified by October 2013. Until then the non-core activities are being delivered by an interim provider services arm of the West Mercia Youth Offending Service.

The hosting arrangement by the Probation Trust opens the opportunity for developing a flexible and more integrated approach to work with young adult offenders between the two services. The current arbitrary change of agency at 18 coincides with the peak age of offending, and often young people at this transition point are in need of greater support than has been traditionally able to be offered by the Probation Trust.

Although established on 1st October 2012, the service is still in transition from the previous structural arrangements to the single service with moves to new accommodation, implementation of a single ICT system and the adoption of a new and single case management system being progressed into 2013/14. This year, will, therefore be one in which the transition is completed and the benefits from the new arrangement are realised.

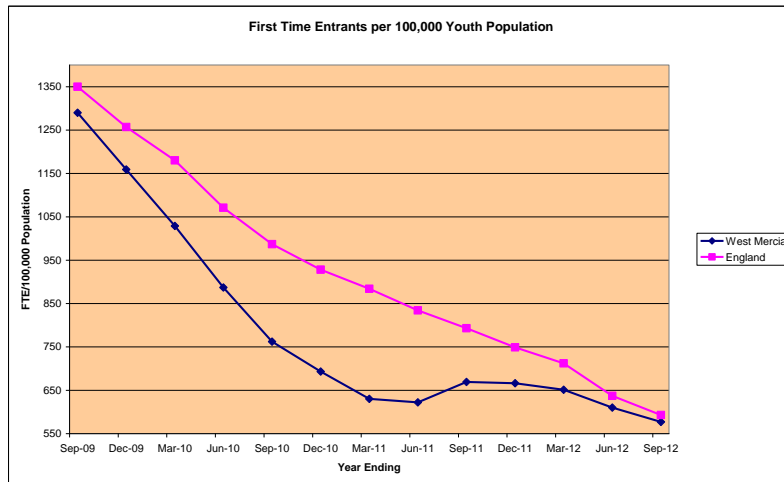
2. PERFORMANCE REVIEW

Youth Justice Partnerships are subject to three national indicators;

- First Time Entrants (FTE) to the Youth Justice System
- Use of Custody
- Re-Offending

1 First Time Entrants to the Youth Justice System (FTEs)

The first time entrant measure is expressed as the number of first time entrants per 100,000 of 10 to 17 year old population. First time entrants are those young people receiving a first formal youth justice sanction (prior to 01.04.12 these were a Reprimand, Final Warning or Conviction). A lower figure denotes good performance.

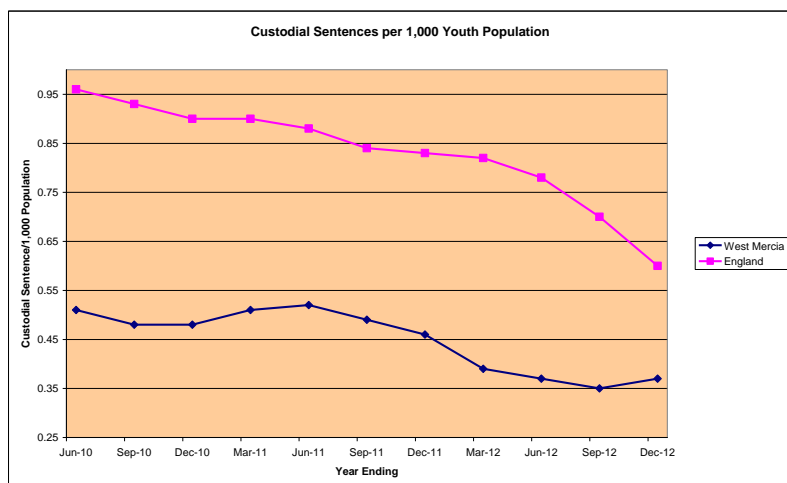


The number of FTEs across West Mercia for the year ending September 2012 was 577, which was lower than for England (593) and compares favourably with the two previous Youth Offending Services YOT family groups (statistical neighbour groups), where the Shropshire, Telford and Wrekin (STW) family group performance was 610 and the Worcestershire and Herefordshire (W&H) family group performance was 580.

The percentage reduction in FTEs in West Mercia over the three year period between the year ending September 2009 and the year ending September 2012 was -55.3% compared to -56.1% for England. The three year reduction for West Mercia compares favourably with the reductions for the two family groups, where the reduction for the STW family group was -52.7% and the W&H family group was -48.7%.

2. Use of Custody

The use of custody measure is expressed as the number of custodial sentences per 1,000 of 10 to 17 year population. West Mercia has, historically, had a low rate of custodial sentences. A lower figure denotes good performance.



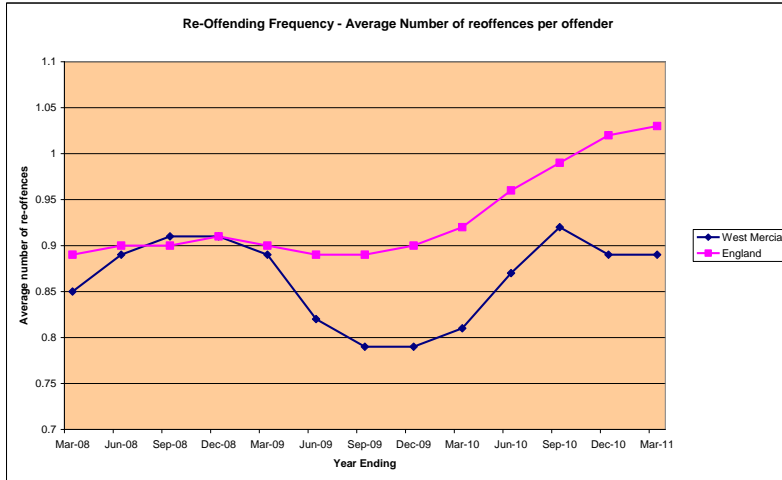
For the year ending December 2012 the use of custody rate for West Mercia was 0.37 against the rate for England of 0.60, West Mercia performance is, therefore significantly better than the national performance and in line with the YOS family groups performance of 0.39 for the STW group and 0.35 for the W&H group.

Over the two year period of the year ending December 2012 and the year ending December 2010 the rate has reduced from 0.48 to 0.37, a reduction of -22.9% compared to a reduction of -20.4% over the same period for both YOS family groups.

The fall in custodial sentences was from 57 in the year ending December 2010 to 43 in the year ending December 2012, a reduction of -24.6%.

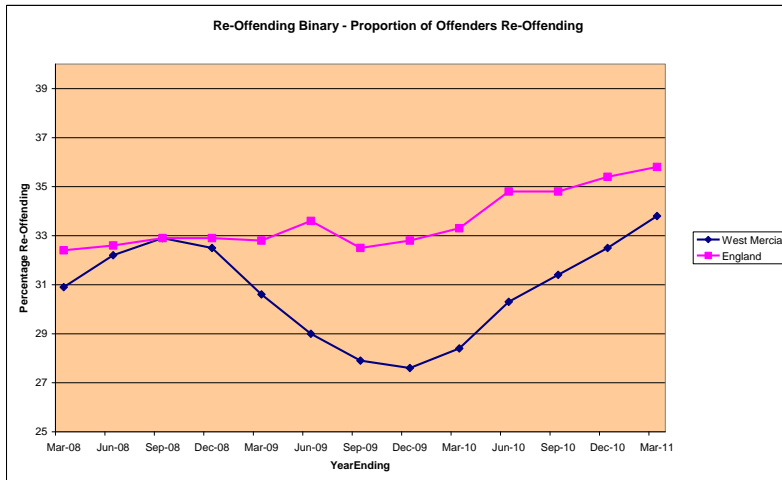
3. Re-Offending

There are two re-offending measures, both measuring re-offending in the same cohort of offenders over a 12 month period following the youth justice sanction that placed the young person in the cohort. The first, the frequency measure, is the average number of re-offences per offender in the cohort. The second measure, the binary measure, is the percentage of the offenders in the cohort re-offending. The most recent data for the re-offending measure is for the year ending March 2011. In both measures a lower figure denotes good performance.



For the year ending March 2011 the frequency measure performance for West Mercia was 0.89, compared to national performance 1.03. The range of performance across YOTs in England for the same period is 0.55 to 1.83. The West Mercia performance compares favourably with the performance of the family groups of the previous services where the STW family group performance is 0.96 and the W&H family group performance is 0.94.

A comparison over the three year period of the year ending March 2008 and the year ending March 2011, shows a small increase in the rate from 0.85 to 0.89 an increase of 4.4%, however the graph shows an increase in the 2011 rate to 0.91 in the year ending Dec 2008 followed by a decrease until the year ending December 2009, then a increase peaking at 0.92 in the year ending September 2010.



The increase in the frequency rate for England over the same period is more significant from 0.89 to 1.03, an increase of 15.7%. The West Mercia increase is also less significant than for the family groups over the same period, with an increase of 11.4% in the STW family group and an 11.9% increase in the W&H family group.

The binary measure performance for the year ending March 2011 for West Mercia is 33.8% compared with national performance of 35.8%. The West Mercia performance for this period is in line with the performance for the family groups of 33.9% for the STW family group and 33.6% for the W&H family group. The range of performance for YOTs across England is 24.2% to 52.2%.

A comparison over the three year period of the year ending March 2008 and the year ending March 2011, shows increase in the rate from 30.9% to 33.8% an increase of 2.9 percentage points. The graph reveals a similar pattern of performance over time as for the frequency measure. An increase over this three year period is reflected both nationally, an increase of 3.4 percentage points, and within the family groups with a 2.8 percentage point increase for the STW family group and a 3.0 percentage point increase for the W&H family group.

It has been recognised by the Youth Justice Board (YJB) that although significant progress, nationally, has been made for reducing first time entrants and reducing custody, the re-offending measure remains an area of concern. There is, currently, little research into the reasons for the decreases in the performance but it is thought that a large part of this may be down to the differences in the characteristics of more recent cohorts to the previous cohorts due to very significant decreases in first time entrants and the development of informal disposals for minor offences.

The YJB is to be undertaking work with YOTs during 2013/14 in order to understand more what is driving the trend in re-offending performance and look at how YOTs can be supported in addressing reducing re-offending. Locally the West Mercia YOS will be conducting some work to investigate the characteristics of cohort members and investigating whether a method of obtaining more real time performance data can be developed.

3. RESOURCES

The Youth Offending Service has a complex budget structure comprising of partner agency cash, seconded staff and in kind contributions and the Youth Justice Grant from the Youth Justice Board for England and Wales. The table below outlines the agreed contributions for 2013/14. The figures in the table are the total contribution, which include cash contributions, the cost of seconded staff and any costed services provided in kind.

Agency	Contribution £
West Mercia Police	361,291
West Mercia Probation Trust	310,115
Worcestershire County Council	799,943
Herefordshire Council ¹	276,150
Telford and Wrekin Council	375,920
Shropshire Council	329,598
Health – Worcestershire	98,060
Health – Herefordshire	38,554
Health – Shropshire and Telford and Wrekin	78,578
Youth Justice Board	1,526,822
Police and Crime Commissioner ²	179,100
Total Youth Offending Service Income	4,374,131
Worcestershire County Council Early Help ³	180,000
Total Income	4,554,131

As part of the YOS review and establishment of the West Mercia service a target was set of achieving an overall saving of 20%, from a 2011/12 baseline, by 2015. The draft budget for 13/14 of £4,374,131 represents a 9% saving from 12/13 and a 16% saving from 11/12 baseline. These figures include the Youth Justice Grant.

Further savings are to be achieved through the commissioning process, to be completed during 13/14 and from non-pay costs, in particular from the rationalising of the use of buildings, with plans for the co-location of YOS teams with other services being progressed early on in 2013/14.

¹ Includes a £19,475 contribution from the reserves account

² Two ring fenced time limited (13/14) grants to provide substance misuse services and for the development of the revised out of court disposal framework

³ Ring fenced grant for the provision of Worcestershire YISP, currently managed by the Youth Offending Service

4. STRUCTURE AND GOVERNANCE

The West Mercia Youth Offending Service comprises five multi-agency service delivery teams, aligned to the Local Authority areas (two teams in Worcestershire) to deliver the core service. The core service has been defined as court facing services including the preparation of pre-sentence reports and remand management, and case management which includes assessment, planning interventions, the management of risk, monitoring and review of intervention plans and where necessary the enforcement of court orders. A central services team supports the service providing data management, quality assurance and commissioning support functions. The co-ordination of Referral Order work, including the recruitment, training and support of Community Panel Members is also a function of the core service as well as the co-ordination of work with victims and the service's engagement with partnerships and other agencies.

There are 60 full time equivalent posts in the core service, and the area based teams include Advanced Case Managers, Case Managers, Assistant Case Managers, Probation Officers, Health Workers, Police Officers, Victim Liaison Officers and Administrators.

Activities that have been previously delivered from within the previous two Youth Offending Services but which do not have to be directly delivered by a YOS have been defined as non-core services. These activities include reparation, intensive supervision and surveillance, bail supervision, programmes and activities, substance misuse interventions, ETE support and parenting interventions. These services are subject to a commissioning process which is due to be completed by October 2013. Until the commissioning process has been concluded these services are being provided by the YOS from an interim provider services team.

The YOS is managed on behalf of the Local Authorities and the YOS partnership by West Mercia Probation Trust. Day to day management of the Head of Service is provided by the Chief Executive of the Probation Trust and the Youth Offending Service is accountable to the YOS Management Board.

The Board is currently chaired by the Director of Children Services for Worcestershire County Council and this is initially for a two year period, until October 2014.

The Membership of the Board at 1st April 2013 is outlined in the table below:

Agency	Representative	Role
Worcestershire County Council	Gail Quinton	Director for Children Services
Shropshire Council	Karen Bradshaw	Director for Children Services
Telford and Wrekin Council	Laura Johnston	Director for Children Services
Herefordshire Council	Jo Davidson	Director for People Services
West Mercia Probation Trust	David Chantler	Chief Executive
West Mercia Police	Gareth Morgan	Assistant Chief Constable
Local Area Team – NHS England	Becki Hipkins	Project Manager

In addition to the members a Youth Justice Board regional representative attends meetings in an advisory capacity

The Board has adopted the following purpose and underlying principles:

Purpose

- To focus collaborative multi-agency effort on work to improve outcomes for Young Offenders by offering an exemplary service, with timely interventions and strong links and partnership across all local services including Children's Services, criminal justice and community safety sectors.
- To set strategic direction for the Youth Offending Service across West Mercia and agree and review local youth justice planning
- To provide support and challenge to the West Mercia YOS on operational performance.

Underpinning Principles

- To demonstrate effective leadership, support and challenge to the West Mercia YOS.
- To ensure that the YOS is compliant with relevant national standards, including Youth Justice Board and local arrangements, and deals with exceptions/risks appropriately
- To ensure available resources are used efficiently to run an effective YOS.
- To ensure that Local Authorities jointly and singly manage the agreement with the host agency (WMPT).
- To provide the necessary governance to effectively steer the delivery of the service

The changes to the health commissioning landscape that were implemented on 1st April 2013 have complicated health representation in the governance arrangements, and it is not feasible for a representative from each commissioning body to sit as a member of the YOS Management Board. To ensure adequate representation the Board has established a health sub-group comprising of health commissioners for each of the local areas. The chair of the group is the Management Board health representative, a manager from a Local Area Team of NHS England, with responsibility for offender health.

NHS England are currently reviewing mental health diversion schemes for both adult and youth offenders and during 2013 will be developing a service specification for schemes to be operationalised during 2014 as part of a cross governmental programme.

For 2013/14 the Board has established a reference group to analyse issues relating to Looked After Children and Care Leavers who are in the Youth Justice System.

The Management Board will ensure that, where relevant, commissioning across partner agencies take account of the needs of young people in or at risk of entering the youth justice system, and where appropriate explore joint commissioning arrangements.

Priorities for 2013/14

The Management Board have agreed five main service priorities with three key areas of focus for each of the priorities for 2013/14.

In setting the priorities for 13/14 the Management Board has ensured that these support three of the four strategic aims of the West Mercia Police and Crime Plan. The YOS will directly contribute to objective 5 of the Police and Crime Plan, to reduce re-offending and bring offenders to account, under which two of the success measures are the YOS First Time Entrant and Re-offending Indicators.

The priorities and key areas of focus are outlined in the table below.

Priority		Key Areas of Focus	
1	Reduce Youth Offending and Protecting Communities from Harm	1a	Looked After Children and Care Leavers
		1b	Diversion
		1c	Restorative Processes
2	Finishing the Job	2a	Commissioning
		2b	Facilities and Enabling Services
		2c	Transitions
3	Get Connected, Stay Connected	3a	Pathways and Protocols
		3b	Information Sharing
		3c	How we become more included
4	Enabling staff to deliver now and into the future	4a	Training Strategy and Plan
		4b	Communication and Engagement
		4c	Management oversight
5	Know the Right Thing	5a	Performance and Quality Assurance Frameworks
		5b	Using intelligence to inform our and others service delivery
		5c	Putting the right policies, procedures and guidance in place

The priorities are outlined in more detail in section 5 of this plan

5. PRIORITIES FOR 2013/14

1 Reduce Youth Offending and Protecting Communities from Harm

The YOS is committed to ensuring that the risks posed by and to young people in the youth justice system are minimised through robust assessment and risk management. The service has adopted new safeguarding and management of risk policies and revised case management guidance is due for implementation in the first quarter of 2013/14. Key areas of focus under this priority for 2013/14 are looked after children and care leavers, diversion and restorative approaches.

1a Looked after children and care leavers

Looked after children (LAC) and care leavers who are in the youth justice system have been identified as a particularly vulnerable subset of both the LAC population and the youth offending population. LAC form a significant proportion of young people on YOS case loads across the West Mercia area teams. There is also a significant proportion of LAC from other Local Authorities who are temporarily placed in Shropshire and in Herefordshire and managed by the YOS. An operational reference group, as a sub-group of the Management Board, is being established in 13/14, comprising of representatives of the social care services and the YOS to analyse the joint issues and develop joint working in relation to LAC and care leavers.

1b Diversion

On the 1st April 2013 a new out of court disposal framework was implemented replacing the previous reprimand and final warning system. A priority will be the establishing the joint decision making process required under the new framework and ensuring the delivery of intervention programmes in support of Youth Cautions and Conditional Cautions. Diversion from custody is another area of focus particularly in respect of remands to the secure estate. The commissioning process will ensure the development of robust and credible community based alternatives to secure remands.

1c Restorative Approaches

The YOS has good reparation services and victim liaison arrangements. Despite this the proportion of victims participating in direct restorative processes remains low. In 13/14 the YOS will develop a new victim and restorative justice strategy,

continue to implement the restorative justice training for Panel Members and staff and develop restorative approaches within the new out of court disposal framework.

2 Finishing the Job

Although West Mercia YOS was established on 1st October 2012, at 1st April 2013 the service is still in transition from the previous YOS arrangements across West Mercia to the single service. In order to complete the transition the three key areas of focus identified are commissioning, facilities and enabling services and transitions.

2a Commissioning

The evaluation of specifications and service re-design stages of the commissioning process for non-core activities will be completed in the first two quarters of 13/14, with implementation of any new arrangements for service delivery completed by the end of the year.

2b Facilities and Enabling Services

There are three main outstanding areas of implementation under this area of focus to be progressed in 13/14, firstly accommodation moves from current premises into co-location arrangements with other services, secondly implementing a single ICT system for West Mercia YOS and thirdly merging the two case management system data sets and upgrading the case management system.

2c Transitions

West Mercia Probation Trust hosting the YOS provides an opportunity to develop a flexible and more integrated approach to work with young adult offenders between the two services. In 13/14, working with YSS, a third sector organisation who have been managing a Barrow Cadbury Trust funded T2A (Transition to Adulthood) project in West Mercia, and the Probation Trust a plan for more integrated working across the 15 to 20 year age group will be developed.

3. Get Connected, Stay Connected

One of the aims of the service review was to ensure that there is greater integrated working between the YOS and other children and family services with the shared aim of improving outcomes for young people in the youth justice system. Key areas of focus for this priority in 13/14 are pathways and protocols, information sharing and how the YOS becomes more included.

3a Pathways and Protocols

In 13/14 defined pathways will be agreed for young offenders to obtain timely and appropriate services with key agencies. These pathways will be underpinned by joint protocols.

3b Information Sharing

Ensuring that relevant information is shared between agencies is essential for undertaking accurate assessments, managing risk and ensuring that young people receive the right services. In 13/14 the information sharing agreements with key agencies will be reviewed. The first agreement to be reviewed will be with West Mercia Police in relation to the information exchanges required for the new out of court disposal joint decision arrangements.

3c How we become more included

Promoting greater integrated and joint working between the YOS and other services is a key area of focus. Initially in 13/14 this will be focused, in particular, on the work to be undertaken on joint issues with LAC and care leavers and also in ensuring linkages with the Troubled Families and Early Help developments in each of the Local Authorities.

4. Enabling staff to deliver now and into the future

This priority is concerned with ensuring that staff have the right training, knowledge and support to deliver quality services for children and young people. Key areas for focus for 13/14 are training, communication and engagement and management oversight.

4a Training Strategy and Plan

During the re-structuring that took place during quarters 3 and 4 of 2012/13, some staff changed roles, and a priority for 13/14 is to develop a service training strategy and plan, and to bring together the two previous service's training records into a single database.

4b Communication and Engagement

In 13/14 the service will put in place a staff communication and engagement strategy to ensure that staff are regularly provided with information they need to undertake their work and ensure their involvement in developing the service.

4c Management Oversight

As part of the planning for inspections the service will define those activities where management oversight is required, and how that management oversight is achieved, ensuring this is consistent across the service.

5. Know the Right Thing

Knowing the right thing is about ensuring that the YOS, the Management Board and other agencies have the information required to develop services and improve the outcomes for children and young people in the youth justice system and those at risk of entering the youth justice system.

5a Performance and Quality Assurance Frameworks

The service will, in 13/14 develop a performance framework which will measure outcomes and outputs that are identified as priorities across West Mercia, in addition to the national indicators. A single quality assurance framework will be developed to ensure consistency across the service, and drive improvements in service delivery.

5b Using intelligence to inform ours and others service delivery

A priority for 13/14 will be trying to understand what is driving the downward trend in the re-offending performance and planning to improve this area of performance and improving the outcomes for young people in the youth justice system.

5c Putting the right policies, procedures and guidance in place

In the first two quarters of 13/14 there will be a systematic review of YOS policies and procedures to ensure that these reflect the revised national standards, recent legislation and policy changes and are consistent across the service.

6. ACTION PLAN

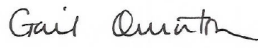


Action	Key Priority & Area of Focus	Owner	Timescale
Establishment of and agreement of work plan for the LAC and Care Leavers operational reference group	1a & 3c	HS	Q1
Develop of OoCD framework which addresses needs of young people and their families	1b	TM (T)	Q1
Agreeing data sharing arrangements with early help services to enable FTE monitoring	1b & 5b	CM/TM (PS)	Q3
Agree pathways into services to support young people subject to the OoCD framework	1b & 3a	CM/TM (PS)	Q3
Development of a YOS RJ Strategy and Plan	1c	TM (H)	Q2
Agreeing process of victim liaison at the pre-court stage of the YJS	1c & 1b	TM (H)	Q1
Complete the evaluation and services redesign stages of the commissioning process for non core activities	2a	CM	Q1 & Q2
Implementation of commissioning process decisions	2a	CM	Q3 & Q4
Movement of Shropshire and Telford Teams to new accommodation arrangements	2b	CM	Q1
Agree accommodation arrangements for Worcestershire Teams	2b	CM	Q1
Agree co-location arrangements for Herefordshire Team	2b	CM	Q2
Agreement and implementation of ICT hosting arrangements for WM YOS	2b	CM/HS	Q1 & Q2
Implementation of ChildView Youth Justice (Case Management System)	2b	CM/HS	Q3
Agreeing plan for transition to adulthood arrangements	2c	HS	Q2
Review and revise pathways into universal and targeted services	3a	CM/TM (S)	Q3
Underpin pathways into universal and targeted services with joint protocols	3a	CM/TM (S)	Q3
Review process of receiving victim details	3b & 1c	CM (H)	Q2
Putting an information sharing agreement in place with WMP in respect of the OoCD framework	3b & 1b	HS	Q1
Review of how governance structure can include other key stakeholders	3c	HS	Q4
Ensure links between local teams and the authorities troubled families programmes	3c	CM	Q4
Development of training strategy and plan	4a	CM/HS	Q2

Action	Key Priority & Area of Focus	Owner	Timescale
Training to be commissioned on intervention planning to include sequencing and inclusion of protective factors	4a	HS	Q2
Training to be commissioned for risk assessment and planning	4a	HS	Q2
Audit of staff understanding and training in safeguarding and addressing deficits	4a	TM (SW)	Q2
Complete the RJ training for staff and volunteers	4a	CM	Q1 & Q2
Development of a service wide RJ/Victims service development group	4b & 1c	TM (H)	Q2
Implementation of regular auditing of Assets and timeliness of reviews	4c & 5a	HS	Q1
Implementation of detailed risk management guidance	4c & 5c	TM (NW)/TM (T)	Q2
Implementation of regular auditing of risk assessment and risk plan	4c & 5c	CM	Q2
Develop and agree a performance framework	5a	CM	Q2
Develop and agree a quality assurance framework	5a	CM	Q2
Monitor completion and results of young peoples feedback	5a & 5b	HS	Q2
Develop QA process for MAPPA L1 meetings	5a	CM	Q2
Agree a tool and process for evaluating programmes of intervention	5a	CM	Q3
Identify data schedule and develop mechanisms to share key information with stakeholders	5b	HS/CM	Q3
Undertake analysis into the characteristics of the re-offending cohort	5b	TM (T)	Q1
Review and revise remand management guidance	5c	HS	Q2
Review and revise current DYO processes	5c	TM (T)/TM (H)	Q1
Implement revised case management guidance	5c	TM (T)/TM (NW)	Q1
Develop of recording guidance to support implementation of ChildView YJ and ensure outcome data is recorded	5b & 4b	CM	Q3

Key to owners:

HS	Head of Service
CM	Commissioning, Performance and QA Manager
TM (H)	Team Manager, Herefordshire
TM (S)	Team Manager, Shropshire
TM (T)	Team Manager, Telford
TM (NW)	Team Manager, North Worcs
TM (SW)	Team Manager, South Worcs
TM (PS)	Team Manager, Provider Services

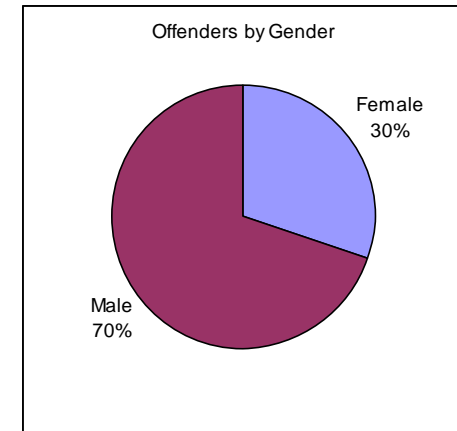
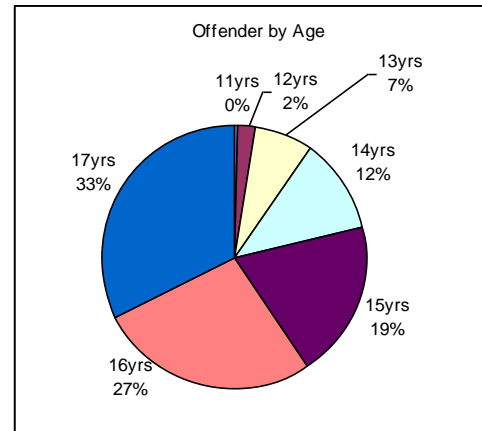
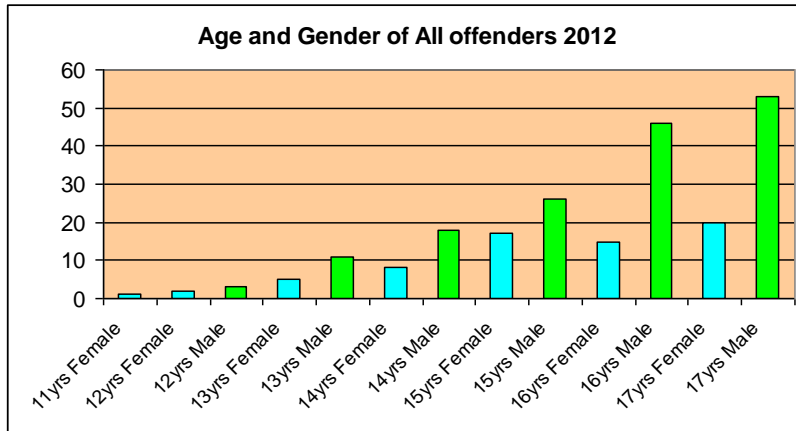
7 MANAGEMENT BOARD APPROVAL

Agency	Agency	Signature	Date
Gail Quinton	Worcestershire County Council		01.05.13
Karen Bradshaw	Shropshire Council		01.05.13
Laura Johnston	Telford and Wrekin Council		01.05.13
Jo Davidson	Herefordshire Council		01.05.13
David Chantler	West Mercia Probation Trust		01.05.13
Gareth Morgan	West Mercia Police		01.05.13
Becki Hipkins	NHS England		01.05.13

APPENDIX 1 - AREA PROFILE – HEREFORDSHIRE

Youth Offending Population – all Young People

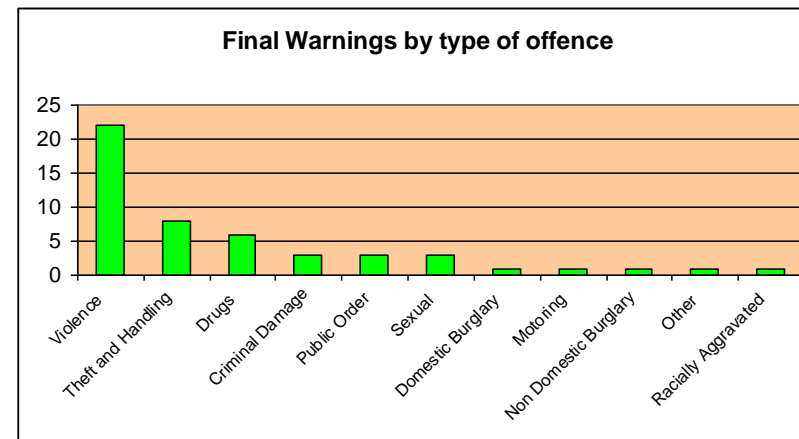
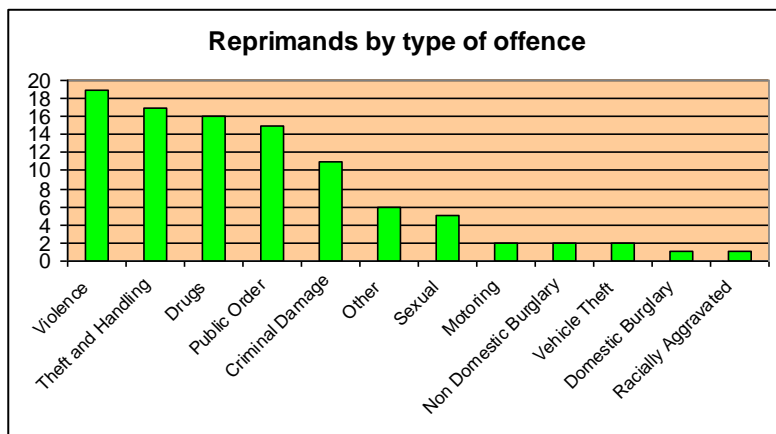
There are 17,224 young people aged 10 to 17 in Herefordshire. In 2012 there were 275 youth justice sanctions (reprimands, final warnings or convictions) made on Herefordshire young people. A total of 225 individual young people accounted for these 275 outcomes, 1.3% of the youth population.



Of the 225 young people entering or in the youth justice system in 2012, 70% were male. The majority, 79%, were aged 15 to 17 years. The peak age of offending for both young males and females was 17 years.

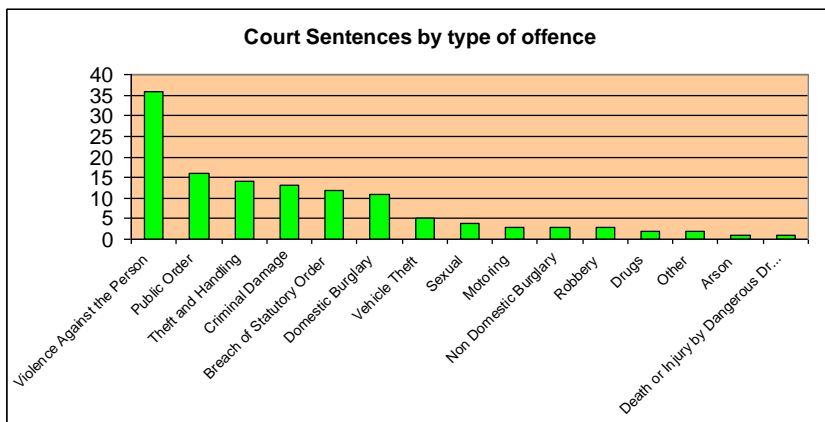
Youth Offending Population – Young People Subject to Out of Court Disposals

During 2012 there were a total of 127 pre-court disposals made on Herefordshire young people, 97 of these were Reprimands and 50 Final Warnings. The YOS is required to assess all young people made subject to Final Warnings, and if assessed appropriate provide a programme of intervention, in 2012 intervention programmes were provided for 24 (48%) of the Final Warnings.



The most frequently occurring primary offence for reprimands was violence against the person, 20%, followed by theft and handling, 18%, drug offences, 16%, public order offences, 15% and criminal damage 11%. These five offence categories accounting for 80% of the reprimands but also 84% of all final warnings. Violence against the person accounted for 44% of all Final Warnings.

Youth Offending Population – Young People Subject to Court Outcomes



In 2012 a total of 99 Herefordshire young people accounted for 126 court outcomes. Orders requiring YOS interventions (Referral Orders, YROs and Custodial sentences) accounted for 89 of the 126 court outcomes.

The majority, 71% of young people receiving court sentences were aged 15 to 17, with 17 year olds accounting for a third (33%) of young people receiving a court sentence.

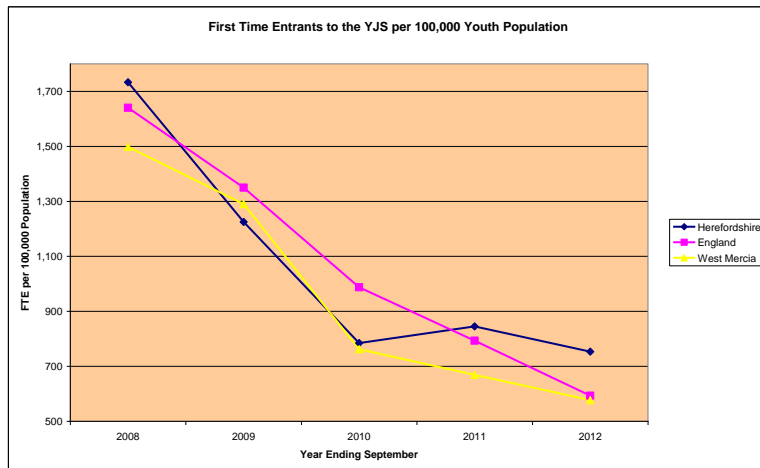
The most frequently occurring primary offence for court sentences was violence against the person, accounting for 29% of all outcomes. Public order offences was the next frequently occurring offences, 13%,

followed by theft and handling, 11% and criminal damage 10%. These four categories of offences accounted for 63% of all sentencing outcomes.

Performance Against National Indicators

(i) First Time Entrants

The first time entrant measure is expressed as the number of first time entrants per 100,000 of 10 to 17 year old population. First time entrants are those young people receiving a first formal youth justice sanction (prior to 01.04.12 these were a Reprimand, Final Warning or Conviction).



In the year ending September 2012 there were 753 first time entrants per 100,000 youth population in Herefordshire, representing a reduction of -56.6% since the year ending September 2008. This compares with a reduction for England of -63.8% and for West Mercia of -61.5% over the same period.

At 753 Herefordshire has the highest rate of FTEs across West Mercia, the next highest rate being 554. The reason for the higher rate is currently unknown and will be investigated during 13/14.

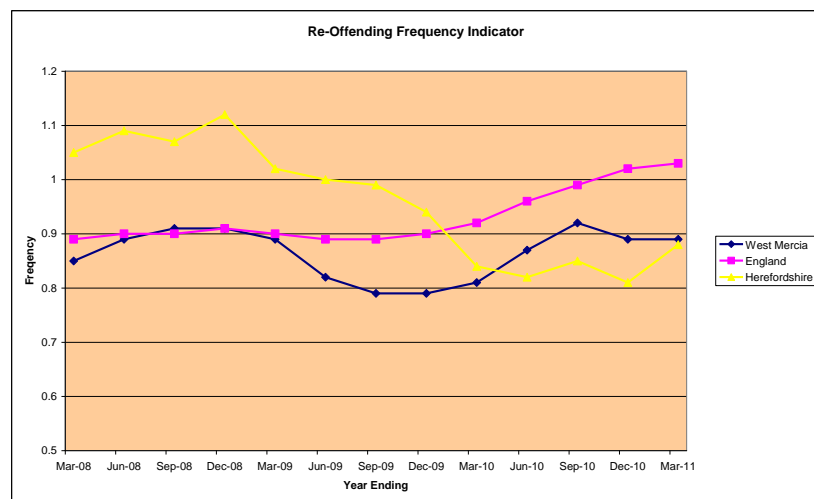
(ii) Use of Custody

The use of custody measure is expressed as the number of custodial sentences per 1,000 of 10 to 17 year population. Herefordshire has, historically, had a low rate of custodial sentences.

There were 7 custodial sentences during 2012, equating to a rate of 0.4 custodial sentences per 1000 youth population. This compares to a West Mercia rate of 0.38 and a national rate of 0.6. Custodial sentences accounted for 5.5% of all court outcomes in Herefordshire, compared to 6.4% of all court outcomes across West Mercia.

(iii) Re-Offending

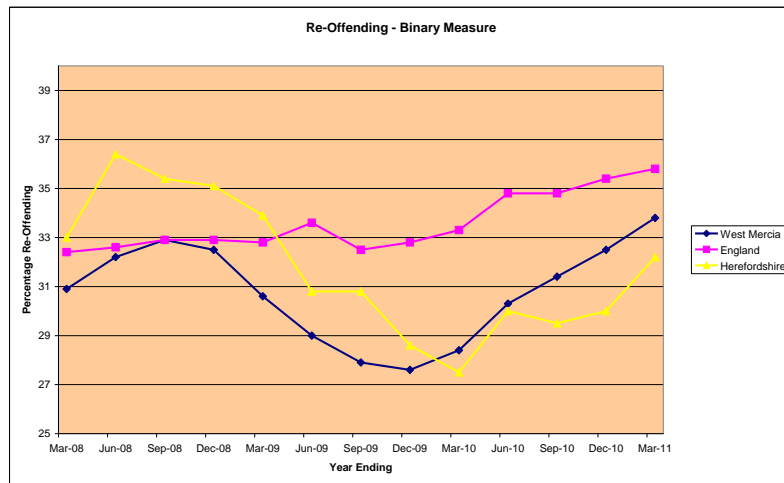
There are two re-offending measures, both measuring re-offending in the same cohort of offenders over a 12 month period following the youth justice sanction that placed the young person in the cohort. The first, the frequency measure, is the average number of re-offences per offender in the cohort. The second measure, the binary measure, is the percentage of the offenders in the cohort re-offending. The most recent data for the re-offending measure is for the year ending March 2011.



The frequency measure performance for Herefordshire for the year ending March 2011 is 0.88, compared to the West Mercia performance of 0.89 and national performance of 1.03. Herefordshire is, therefore, performing slightly better than for West Mercia and significantly better than the national performance. Herefordshire is showing improved performance for the year ending March 2011 from the year ending March 2008 of a reduction of -16.1%. This compares with increases in the frequency rate for West Mercia of 4.4% and England of 15.7%.

For the year ending March 2011 the binary measure for Herefordshire is 32.2% compared with a West Mercia performance of 33.8% and a national performance of 35.8%. For the three year period 2008 to 2011 Herefordshire is showing a slight improvement in performance from 33.0% to 32.2%, a reduction of 0.8 percentage points or a reduction of -

2.4%, whereas West Mercia and England are both showing an increase over the same period. It should be noted, however, that although Herefordshire is showing better performance than both West Mercia and England, the binary measure percentage has been increasing since the year ending March 2010.



The increasing rate is a national picture and the YJB has noted that there is currently little evidence as to why this is happening. The YJB is to be undertaking work with YOTs during 2013/14 in order to understand more what is driving the trend in performance and look at how YOTs can be supported in addressing reducing re-offending.

Locally the West Mercia YOS will be conducting some work to investigate the characteristics of cohort members and investigating whether a method of obtaining more real time performance data can be developed.

Education, Training and Employment

The YOS has previously measured whether a young person is in full time education, training or employment at the end of their order. The table below outlines the results for year ending March 2012.

	Herefordshire % in ETE	West Mercia % in ETE
Young People of School Age	89%	83%
Young People above School Age	56%	62%
Overall Performance	72%	70%

The performance for Herefordshire for school age young people is better than for West Mercia, but slightly worse for young people above school age. Figures for the first 3 quarters of 2012/13 show worsening performance. Education, training and employment has been adopted as an local performance indicator and is due to be a focus of

scrutiny in a themed YOS Management Board meeting during the second quarter of 13/14.

It should be noted that those young people of school age not in full time education (11%) are not necessarily NEET, but are receiving an education provision which is not 25 hours a week.

Looked After Children

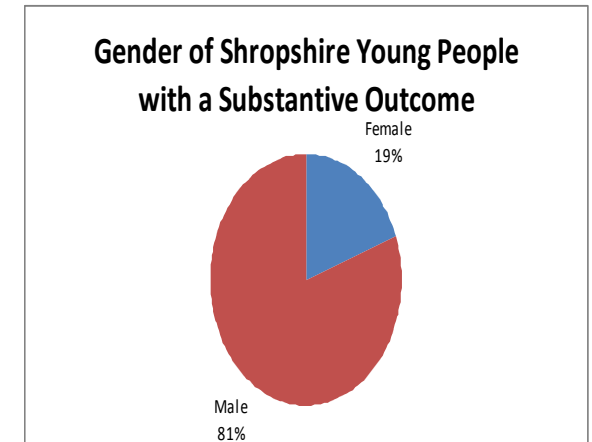
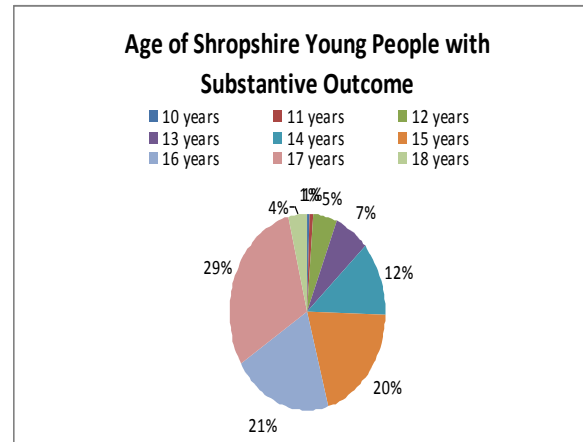
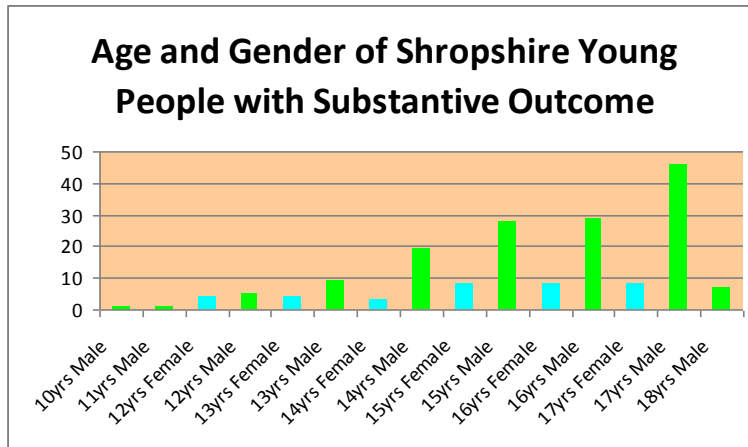
On the 30th September 2012 an analysis of LAC on the YOS case load was undertaken. This showed that of the total case load of the Herefordshire YOS Team, 26.7% were looked after children. At this point in time 15% of the case load were LAC from other areas temporarily placed in Herefordshire. The proportion of Herefordshire LAC aged 10 to 17 who were under the supervision of the YOS at this time was 6.9%.

The YOS Management Board have established an operational reference group for 13/14 to analyse the issues between the YOS and Social Care in relation to LAC and Care Leavers and make operational recommendations in relation to joint working to improve the outcomes for LAC and Care Leavers who are in the youth justice system.

APPENDIX 2 - AREA PROFILE – SHROPSHIRE

Youth Offending Population – all Young People

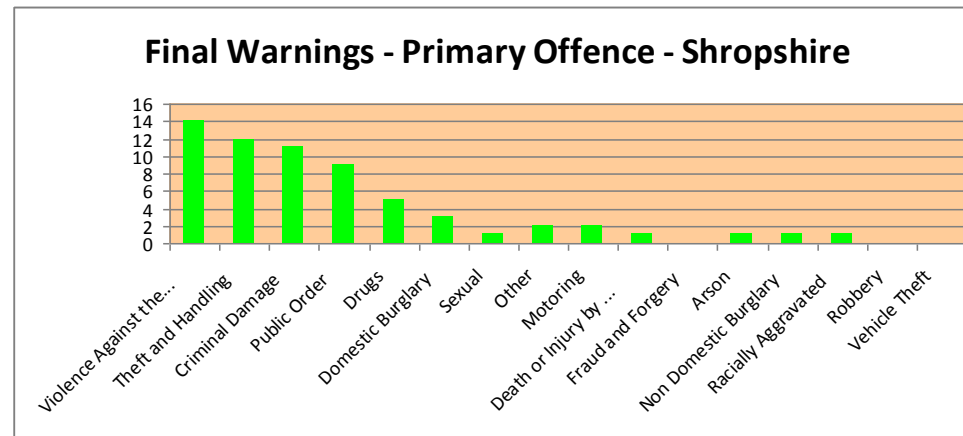
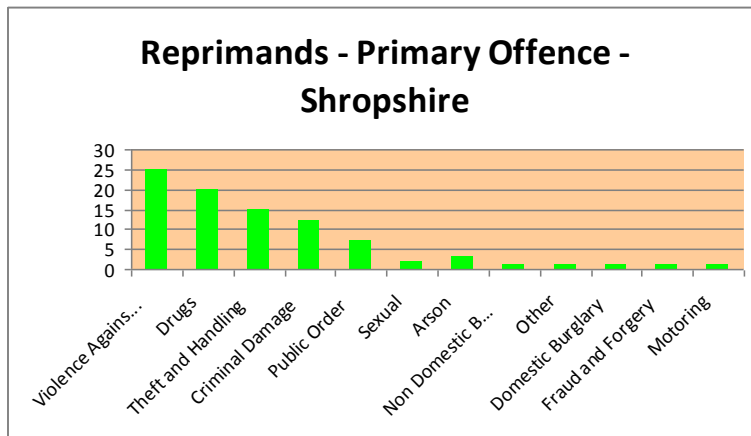
There are 29,933 young people aged 10 to 17 in Shropshire. In 2012 there were 236 youth justice sanctions (reprimands, final warnings or convictions) made on Shropshire young people. A total of 180 individual young people accounted for these 236 outcomes, 0.78% of the youth population.



Of the 180 young people entering or in the youth justice system in 2012, 81% were male. The majority, 70%, were aged 15 to 17 years. The peak age of offending for young males was 17 years and females 16 years.

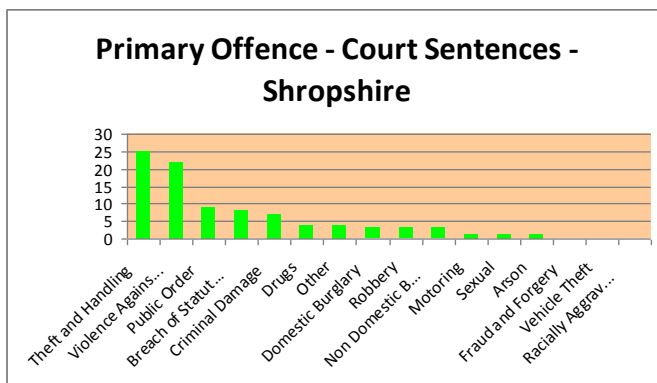
Youth Offending Population – Young People Subject to Out of Court Disposals

During 2012 there were a total of 152 pre-court disposals made on Shropshire young people, 89 of these were Reprimands and 63 Final Warnings. The YOS is required to assess all young people made subject to Final Warnings, and if assessed appropriate provide a programme of intervention, in 2012 intervention programmes were provided for 14 (22%) of the Final Warnings.



The most frequently occurring primary offence for reprimands was violence against the person, 28%, followed drug offences, 22%, theft and handling, 17%, criminal damage, 14% and public order offences 8%. These five offence categories accounting for 89% of the reprimands and also 51% of all final warnings. Violence against the person accounted for 22% of all Final Warnings.

Youth Offending Population – Young People Subject to Court Outcomes



In 2012 a total of 57 young people in Shropshire accounted for 91 court outcomes. Orders requiring YOS interventions (Reparation Orders, Referral Orders, YROs and Custodial sentences) accounted for 70 of the 91 court outcomes.

The majority, 80% of young people receiving court sentences were aged 15 to 17, with 17 year olds accounting for just under half (46%) of young people receiving a court sentence.

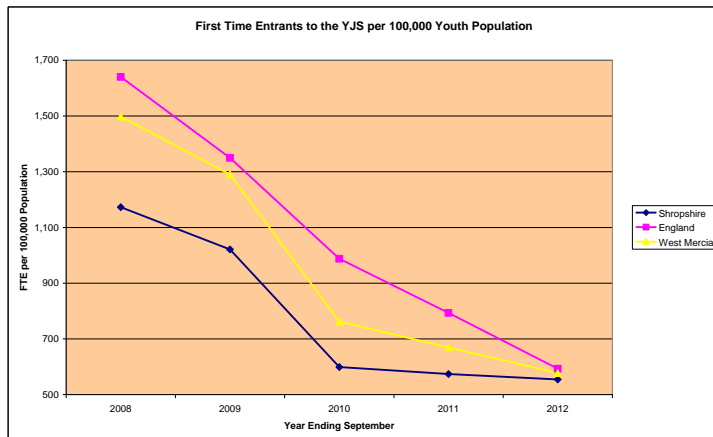
The most frequently occurring primary offence for court sentences was theft and handling, accounting for 28% of all outcomes. violence against the person were the next frequently occurring offences, 24%, followed by public order offences,

10%, breach of a statutory order, 9% and criminal damage 8%. These five categories of offences accounted for 79% of all sentencing outcomes.

Performance Against National Indicators

(i) First Time Entrants (FTE)

The first time entrant measure is expressed as the number of first time entrants per 100,000 of 10 to 17 year old population. First time entrants are those young people receiving a first formal youth justice sanction (prior to 01.04.12 these were a Reprimand, Final Warning or Conviction). A lower figure denotes good performance.



In the year ending September 2012 there were 554 first time entrants per 100,000 youth population in Shropshire, representing a reduction of -52.8% since the year ending September 2008. This compares with a reduction for England of -63.8% and for West Mercia of -61.5% over the same period.

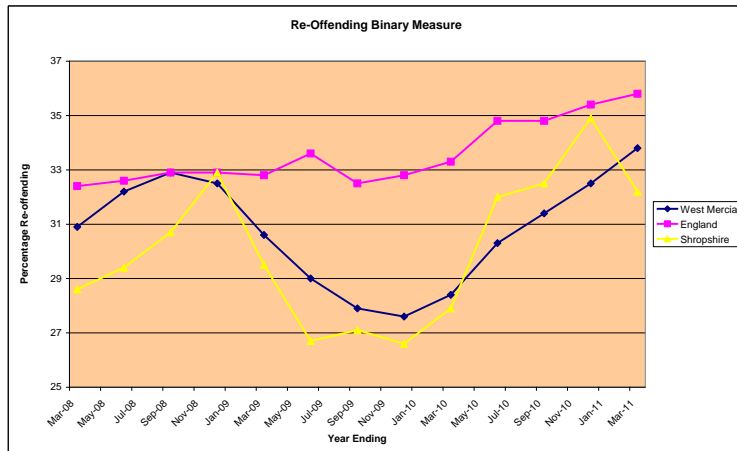
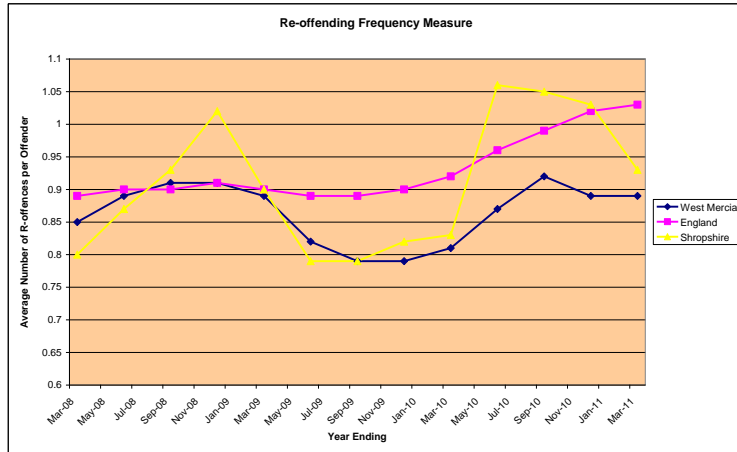
The FTE rate for Shropshire of 554 is better than for West Mercia, 577 and for England at 593.

(ii) Use of Custody

The use of custody measure is expressed as the number of custodial sentences per 1,000 of 10 to 17 year population. A lower figure denotes good performance. Shropshire has, historically, had a low rate of custodial sentences.

There were 7 custodial sentences during 2012, equating to a rate of 0.23 custodial sentences per 1000 youth population. This compares to a West Mercia rate of 0.38 and a national rate of 0.6. Custodial sentences accounted for 7.2% of all court outcomes in Shropshire, compared to 6.4% of all court outcomes across West Mercia.

(iii) Re-Offending



There are two re-offending measures, both measuring re-offending in the same cohort of offenders over a 12 month period following the youth justice sanction that placed the young person in the cohort. The first, the frequency measure, is the average number of re-offences per offender in the cohort. The second measure, the binary measure, is the percentage of the offenders in the cohort re-offending. The most recent data for the re-offending measure is for the year ending March 2011.

The frequency measure performance for Shropshire for the year ending March 2011 is 0.93, compared to the West Mercia performance of 0.89 and national performance of 1.03. Shropshire is, therefore, performing slightly worse than for West Mercia but significantly better the national performance. Shropshire is showing slight decrease in performance for the year ending March 2011 from the year ending March 2008 of a increase in the frequency rate of 16.2%. This compares with increases in the frequency rate for West Mercia of 4.4% and England of 15.7%.

For the year ending March 2011 the binary measure for Shropshire is 32.2% compared with a West Mercia performance of 33.8% and a national performance of 35.8%. For the three year period 2008 to 2011 Shropshire is showing a slight decrease in performance from 28.6% to 32.2%, an increase of 3.6 percentage points. West Mercia and England are both showing an increase over the same period of 2.9 percentage points for West Mercia and 3.4 percentage points for England. The performance trend in Shropshire follows the general trend nationally and for West Mercia over the period 2008 to 2011.

The increasing rate is a national picture and the YJB has noted that there is currently little evidence as to why this is happening. The YJB is to be undertaking work with YOTs during 2013/14 in order to understand more what is driving the trend in performance and look at how YOTs can be supported in addressing reducing re-offending.

Locally the West Mercia YOS will be conducting some work to investigate the characteristics of cohort members and investigating whether a method of obtaining more real time performance data can be developed.

Education, Training and Employment

The YOS has previously measured whether a young person is in full time education, training or employment at the end of their order. The table below outlines the results for year ending March 2012.

	Shropshire % in ETE	West Mercia % in ETE
Young People of School Age	87%	83%
Young People above School Age	71%	62%
Overall Performance	77%	70%

The performance for Shropshire for all young people is better than for West Mercia. Figures for the first 3 quarters of 2012/13 show worsening performance. Education, training and employment has been adopted as a local performance indicator and is due to be a focus of scrutiny in a themed YOS Management Board meeting during the second quarter of 13/14.

It should be noted that those young people of school age not in full time education (13%) are not necessarily NEET, but are receiving an education provision which is not 25 hours a week.

Looked After Children

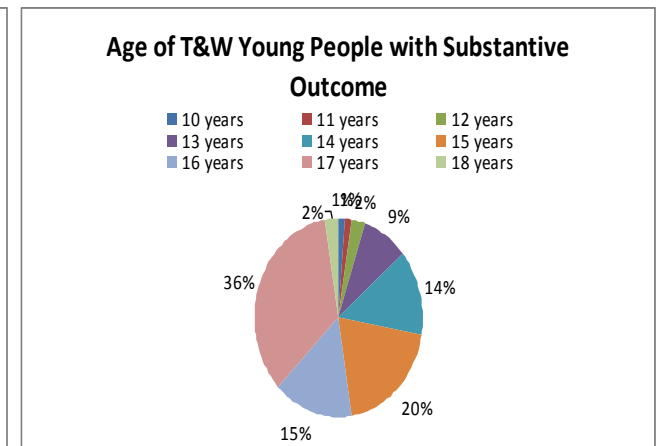
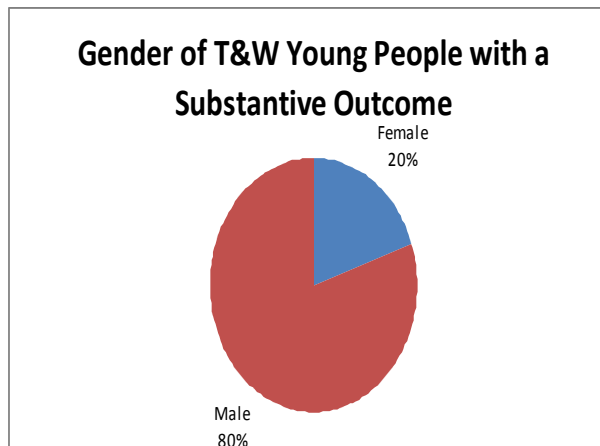
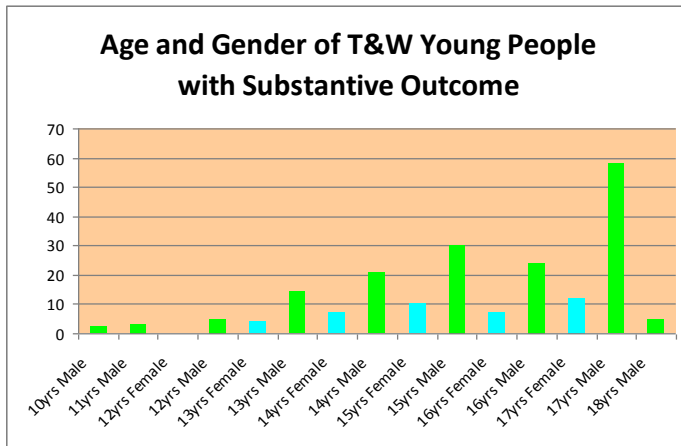
On the 30th September 2012 an analysis of LAC on the YOS case load was undertaken. This showed that of the total case load of the YOS Team in Shropshire, 50.3% were looked after children. At this point in time 23.3% of the case load were LAC from other areas temporarily placed in Shropshire. The proportion of Shropshire LAC aged 10 to 17 who were under the supervision of the YOS at this time was 15.2%.

The YOS Management Board have established an operational reference group for 13/14 to analyse the issues between the YOS and Social Care in relation to LAC and Care Leavers and make operational recommendations in relation to joint working to improve the outcomes for LAC and Care Leavers who are in the youth justice system.

APPENDIX 3 - AREA PROFILE – TELFORD AND WREKIN

Youth Offending Population – all Young People

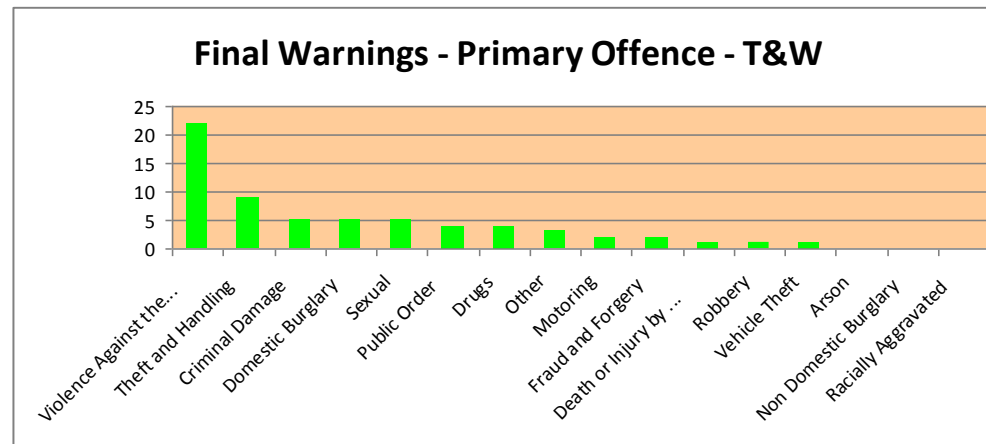
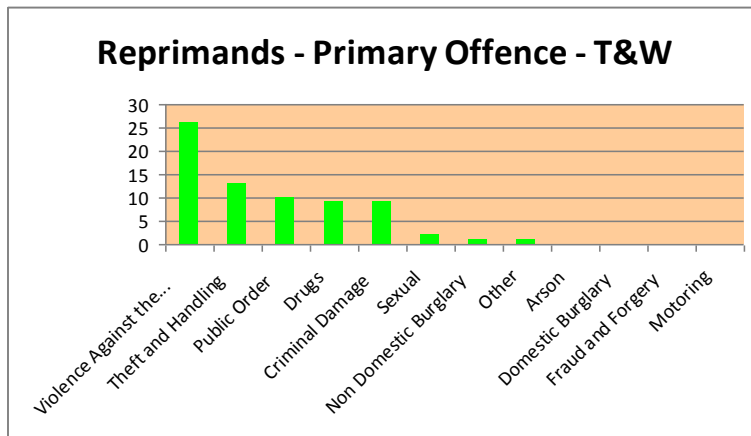
There are 17,525 young people aged 10 to 17 in Telford and Wrekin. In 2012 there were 254 youth justice sanctions (reprimands, final warnings or convictions) made on Telford and Wrekin young people. A total of 202 individual young people accounted for these 254 outcomes, 1.15% of the youth population.



Of the 202 young people entering or in the youth justice system in 2012, 80% were male. The majority, 60%, were aged 15 to 17 years. The peak age of offending for young males was 17 years and females 17 years.

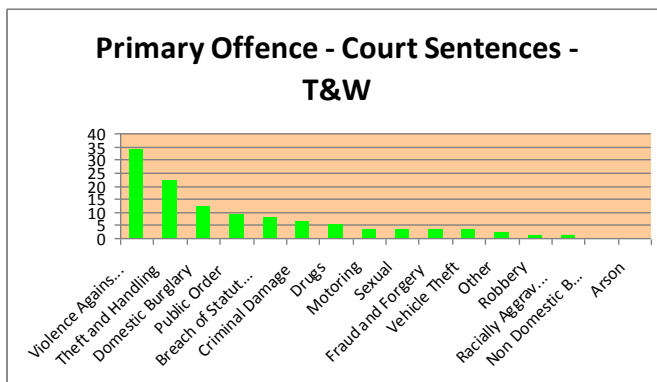
Youth Offending Population – Young People Subject to Out of Court Disposals

During 2012 there were a total of 135 pre-court disposals made on Telford and Wrekin young people, 71 of these were Reprimands and 64 Final Warnings. The YOS is required to assess all young people made subject to Final Warnings, and if assessed appropriate provide a programme of intervention, in 2012 intervention programmes were provided for 20 (31%) of the Final Warnings.



The most frequently occurring primary offence for reprimands was violence against the person, 37%, theft and handling, 18%, public order offences, 14% drug offences 13% and criminal damage, 13%. These five offence categories accounting for 95% of the reprimands and also 69% of all final warnings. Violence against the person accounted for 34% of all Final Warnings and domestic burglary and sexual offences for 8% each.

Youth Offending Population – Young People Subject to Court Outcomes



In 2012 a total of 81 Telford and Wrekin young people accounted for 119 court outcomes. Orders requiring YOS interventions (Reparation Orders, Referral Orders, YROs and Custodial sentences) accounted for 101 of the 119 court outcomes.

The majority, 83% of young people receiving court sentences were aged 15 to 17, with 17 year olds accounting for just over a third (38%) of young people receiving a court sentence.

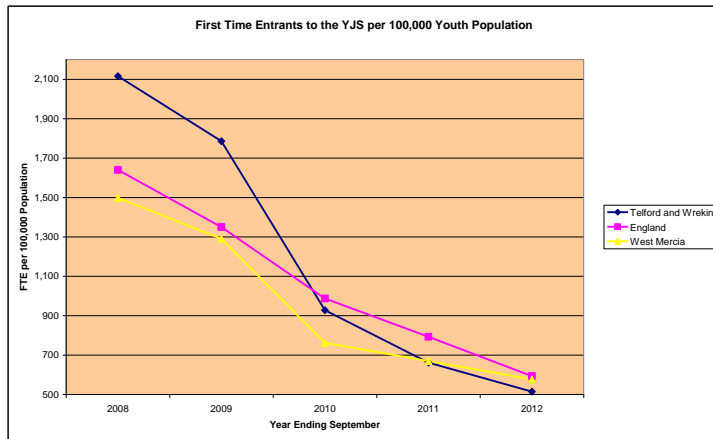
The most frequently occurring primary offence for court sentences was violence against the person, accounting for 30% of all outcomes. Theft and handling

offences were the next frequently occurring offences, 19%, followed by domestic burglary, 11%, public order, 8% and breach of a statutory order 7%. These five categories of offences accounted for 75% of all sentencing outcomes.

Performance Against National Indicators

(i) First Time Entrants (FTE)

The first time entrant measure is expressed as the number of first time entrants per 100,000 of 10 to 17 year old population. First time entrants are those young people receiving a first formal youth justice sanction (prior to 01.04.12 these were a Reprimand, Final Warning or Conviction). A lower figure denotes good performance.



In the year ending September 2012 there were 515 first time entrants per 100,000 youth population in Telford and Wrekin, representing a reduction of -75.7% since the year ending September 2008. This compares with a reduction for England of -63.8% and for West Mercia of -61.5% over the same period.

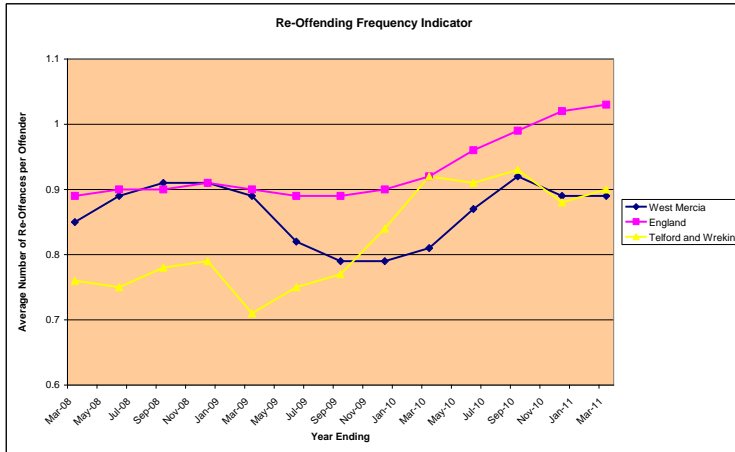
The FTE rate for Telford and Wrekin of 515 is better than for West Mercia, 577 and for England at 593.

(ii) Use of Custody

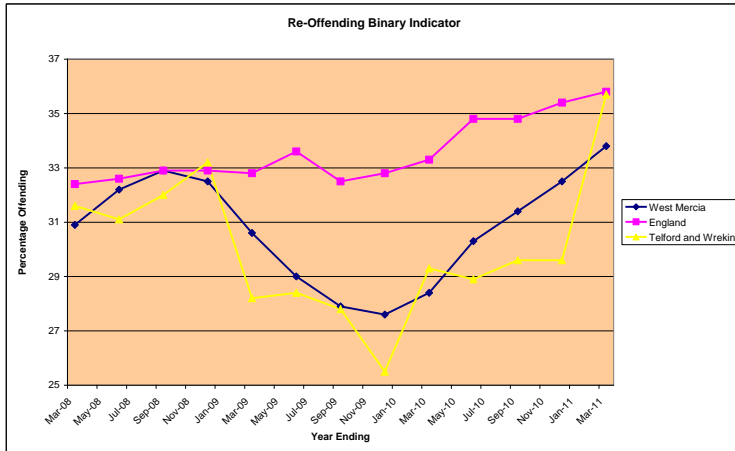
The use of custody measure is expressed as the number of custodial sentences per 1,000 of 10 to 17 year population. A lower figure denotes good performance. Telford and Wrekin has, historically, had a low rate of custodial sentences.

There were 7 custodial sentences during 2012, equating to a rate of 0.40 custodial sentences per 1000 youth population. This compares to a West Mercia rate of 0.38 and a national rate of 0.6. Custodial sentences accounted for 5.8% of all court outcomes in Telford and Wrekin, compared to 6.4% of all court outcomes across West Mercia.

(iii) Re-Offending



There are two re-offending measures, both measuring re-offending in the same cohort of offenders over a 12 month period following the youth justice sanction that placed the young person in the cohort. The first, the frequency measure, is the average number of re-offences per offender in the cohort. The second measure, the binary measure, is the percentage of the offenders in the cohort re-offending. The most recent data for the re-offending measure is for the year ending March 2011.



The frequency measure performance for Telford and Wrekin for the year ending March 2011 is 0.90, compared to the West Mercia performance of 0.89 and national performance of 1.03. Telford and Wrekin is, therefore, performing slightly worse than West Mercia but significantly better than the national performance. Telford and Wrekin is showing a decrease in performance for the year ending March 2011 from the year ending March 2008 of an increase in the frequency rate of 18%. This compares with increases in the frequency rate for West Mercia of 4.4% and England of 15.7%.

For the year ending March 2011 the binary measure for Telford and Wrekin is 35.7% compared with a West Mercia performance of 33.8% and a national performance of 35.8%. For the three year period 2008 to 2011 Telford and Wrekin is showing a decrease in performance from 31.6% to 35.8%, an increase of 4.2 percentage points. West Mercia and England are both showing an increase over the same period of 2.9 percentage points for West Mercia and 3.4 percentage points for England. The performance trend in Telford and Wrekin follows the general trend nationally and for West Mercia over the period 2008 to 2011.

The increasing rate is a national picture and the YJB has noted that there is currently little evidence as to why this is happening. The YJB is to be undertaking work with YOTs during 2013/14 in order to understand more what is driving the trend in performance and look at how YOTs can be supported in addressing reducing re-offending.

Locally the West Mercia YOS will be conducting some work to investigate the characteristics of cohort members and investigating whether a method of obtaining more real time performance data can be developed.

Education, Training and Employment

The YOS has previously measured whether a young person is in full time education, training or employment at the end of their order. The table below outlines the results for year ending March 2012.

	Telford and Wrekin % in ETE	West Mercia % in ETE
Young People of School Age	79%	83%
Young People above School Age	64%	62%
Overall Performance	69%	70%

The performance for Telford and Wrekin for all young people is slightly lower than for West Mercia. Figures for the first 3 quarters of 2012/13 show an increase in overall performance. Education, training and employment has been adopted as a local performance indicator and is due to be a focus of scrutiny in a themed YOS Management Board meeting during the second quarter of 13/14.

It should be noted that those young people of school age not in full time education (21%) are not necessarily NEET, but are receiving an education provision which is not 25 hours a week.

Looked After Children

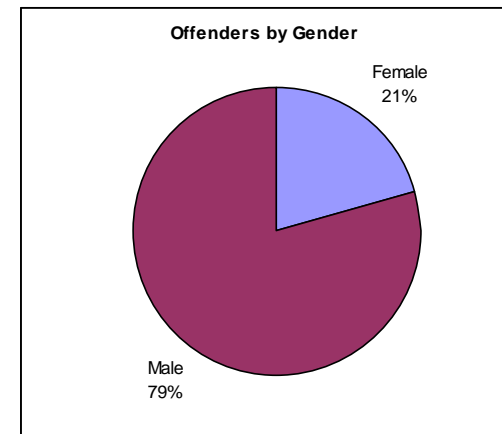
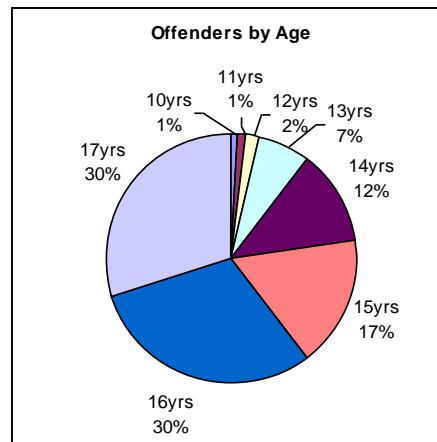
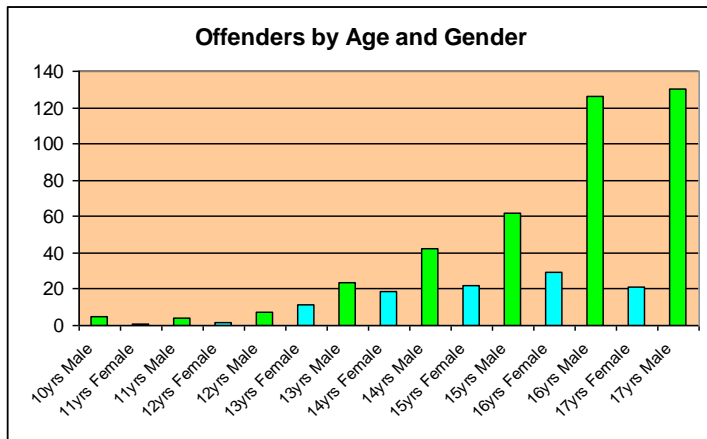
On the 30th September 2012 an analysis of LAC on the YOS case load was undertaken. This showed that of the total case load of the YOS Team in Telford and Wrekin, 28% were looked after children. At this point in time 8% of the case load were LAC from other areas temporarily placed in Telford and Wrekin. The proportion of Telford and Wrekin LAC aged 10 to 17 who were under the supervision of the YOS at this time was 9.1%.

The YOS Management Board have established an operational reference group for 13/14 to analyse the issues between the YOS and Social Care in relation to LAC and Care Leavers and make operational recommendations in relation to joint working to improve the outcomes for LAC and Care Leavers who are in the youth justice system.

APPENDIX 4 - AREA PROFILE – WORCESTERSHIRE

Youth Offending Population – all Young People

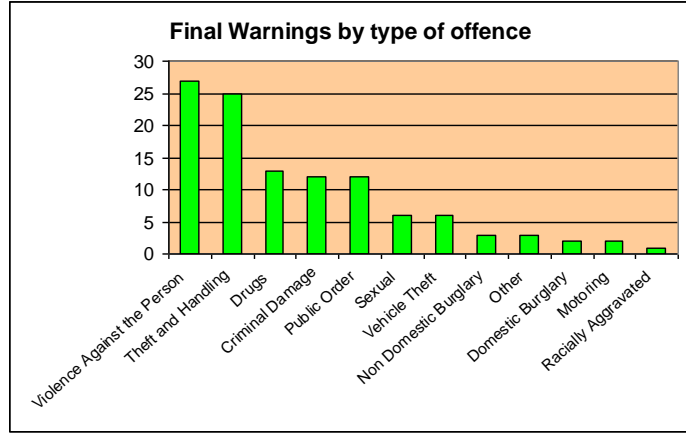
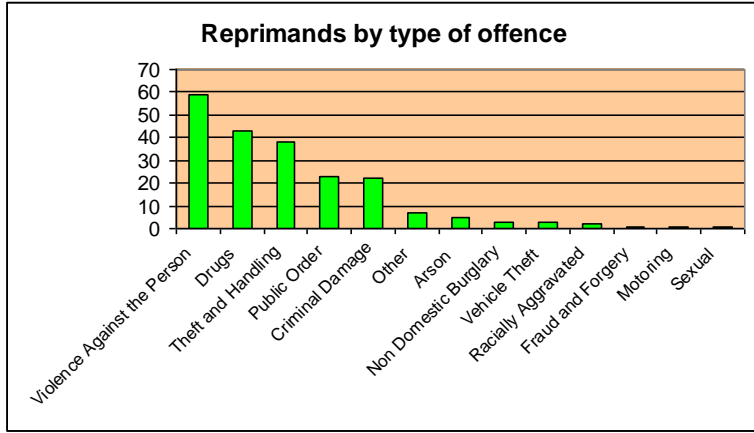
There are 53,835 young people aged 10 to 17 in Worcestershire. In 2012 there were 661 youth justice sanctions (reprimands, final warnings or convictions) made on Worcestershire young people. A total of 505 individual young people accounted for these 661 outcomes, 0.93% of the youth population.



Of the 505 young people entering or in the youth justice system in 2012, 79% were male. The majority, 77%, were aged 15 to 17 years. The peak age of offending for both young males was 17 year and females 16 years.

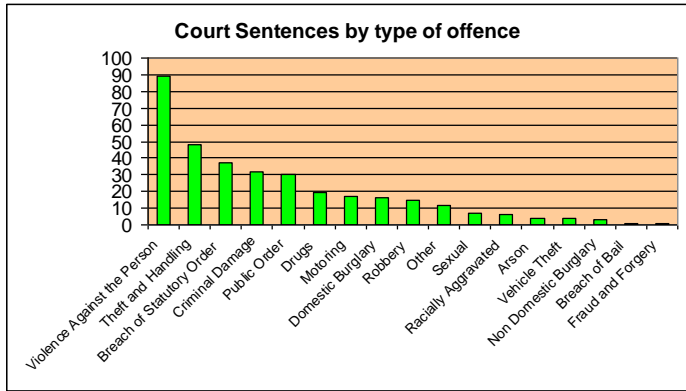
Youth Offending Population – Young People Subject to Out of Court Disposals

During 2012 there were a total of 320 pre-court disposals made on Worcestershire young people, 208 of these were Reprimands and 112 Final Warnings. The YOS is required to assess all young people made subject to Final Warnings, and if assessed appropriate provide a programme of intervention, in 2012 intervention programmes were provided for 22 (20%) of the Final Warnings.



The most frequently occurring primary offence for reprimands was violence against the person, 28%, followed drug offences, 21%, theft and handling, 18%, public order offences, 11% and criminal damage 11%. These five offence categories accounting for 89% of the reprimands and also 80% of all final warnings. Violence against the person accounted for 24% of all Final Warnings.

Youth Offending Population – Young People Subject to Court Outcomes



In 2012 a total of 239 in Worcestershire young people accounted for 341 court outcomes. Orders requiring YOS interventions (Reparation Orders, Referral Orders, YROs and Custodial sentences) accounted for 256 of the 341 court outcomes.

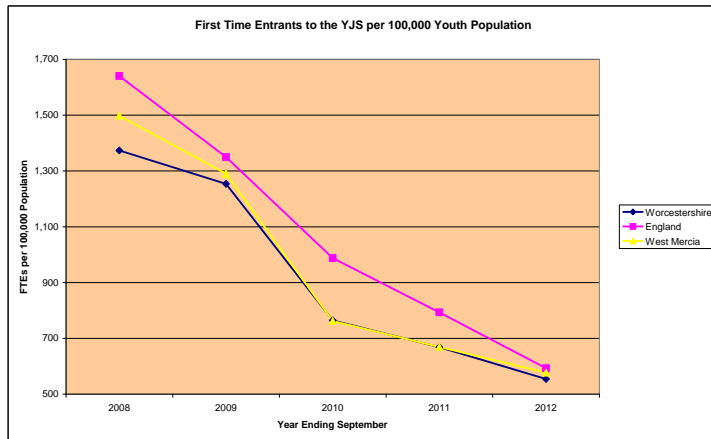
The majority, 75% of young people receiving court sentences were aged 15 to 17, with 17 year olds accounting for approximately a third (34%) of young people receiving a court sentence.

The most frequently occurring primary offence for court sentences was violence against the person, accounting for 26% of all outcomes. Theft and handling offences were the next frequently occurring offences, 14%, followed by breach of statutory orders, 11%, criminal damage, 9% and public order 9%. These five categories of offences accounted for 69% of all sentencing outcomes.

Performance Against National Indicators

(i) First Time Entrants (FTE)

The first time entrant measure is expressed as the number of first time entrants per 100,000 of 10 to 17 year old population. First time entrants are those young people receiving a first formal youth justice sanction (prior to 01.04.12 these were a Reprimand, Final Warning or Conviction). A lower figure denotes good performance.



In the year ending September 2012 there were 554 first time entrants per 100,000 youth population in Worcestershire, representing a reduction of -59.6% since the year ending September 2008. This compares with a reduction for England of -63.8% and for West Mercia of -61.5% over the same period.

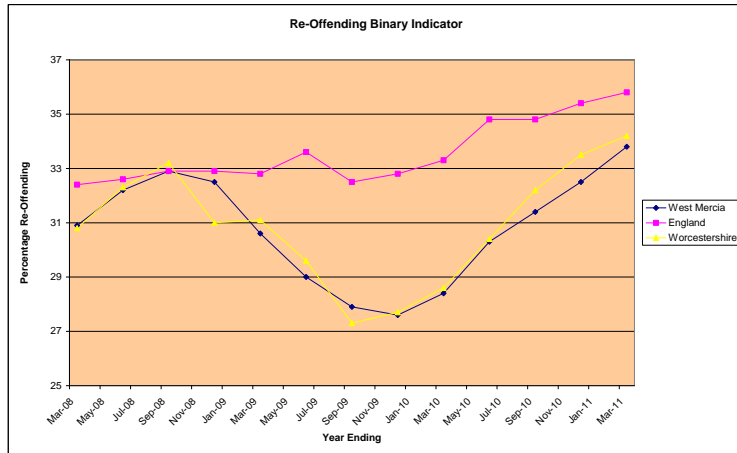
The FTE rate for Worcestershire of 544 is better than for West Mercia, 577 and for England at 593.

(ii) Use of Custody

The use of custody measure is expressed as the number of custodial sentences per 1,000 of 10 to 17 year population. A lower figure denotes good performance. Worcestershire has, historically, had a low rate of custodial sentences.

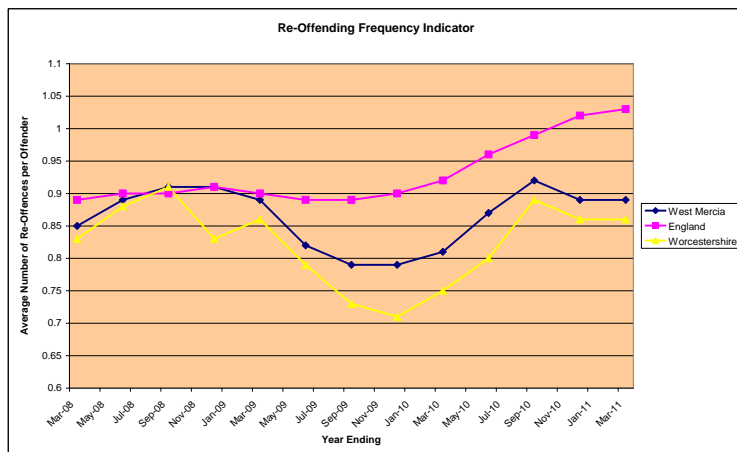
There were 23 custodial sentences during 2012, equating to a rate of 0.43 custodial sentences per 1000 youth population. This compares to a West Mercia rate of 0.38 and a national rate of 0.6. Custodial sentences accounted for 6.7% of all court outcomes in Worcestershire, compared to 6.4% of all court outcomes across West Mercia.

(iii) Re-Offending



There are two re-offending measures, both measuring re-offending in the same cohort of offenders over a 12 month period following the youth justice sanction that placed the young person in the cohort. The first, the frequency measure, is the average number of re-offences per offender in the cohort. The second measure, the binary measure, is the percentage of the offenders in the cohort re-offending. The most recent data for the re-offending measure is for the year ending March 2011.

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The YOS Management Board have established an operational reference group for 13/14 to analyse the issues between the YOS and Social Care in relation to LAC and Care Leavers and make operational recommendations in relation to joint working to improve the outcomes for LAC and Care Leavers who are in the youth justice system.

TELFORD & WREKIN COUNCIL

CABINET – 19 SEPTEMBER 2013

WEST MERCIA ADOPTION PROJECT

REPORT OF ASSISTANT DIRECTOR: CHILDREN'S SAFEGUARDING

LEAD CABINET MEMBER – CLLR PAUL WATLING

PART A) – SUMMARY REPORT

1. SUMMARY OF MAIN PROPOSALS

The overall aim of the project is to develop a single West Mercia Adoption Service across Worcestershire, Shropshire, Telford and Wrekin and Herefordshire which delivers a more efficient and effective service to a wider range of children, with particular emphasis on improving the timeliness of placing children and young people for adoption.

The three most promising options identified as potentially able to deliver this will be subject to a cost/benefit analysis. None of the options preclude going into partnership with a voluntary organisation in line with the government agenda.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 To approve in principle the proposal to develop a West Mercia Adoption Service as set out in the attached Outline Business Case**
- 2.2 To seek approval to explore the options described in the Outline Business Case**
- 2.3 To receive a further report when the full Business case is available in February 2014**

3. SUMMARY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

COMMUNITY IMPACT	Do these proposals contribute to specific Priority Plan objective(s)?	
	Yes	1. Putting Children and Young People first 2. Vulnerable Children and Adults Protected
	Will the proposals impact on specific groups of people?	
	Yes	Implementation of these proposals will enable more children who need adoption to be placed more quickly
TARGET COMPLETION/DELIVERY DATE	Full implementation plan by April 2014	
FINANCIAL/VALUE FOR MONEY IMPACT	Yes	There is a budgeted contribution of £347k to the Joint Adoption Service, administered by Shropshire Council, in the current financial year. Further work will be required on the various options to enable the full financial implications to be identified but the anticipated 20% saving to be delivered would be an ongoing full year save of £69k for T& W. Depending on the final commencement date of the new service a save of £40k may be achieved in 13/14 with the remaining £29k potentially being released in 14/15.

		The Adoption Reform Grant awarded to T&W in 13/14 is £542k of which £12.5k which will be used to fund 25% of the full project budget of £50k. TAS 22.8.13
LEGAL ISSUES	Yes	<p><i>“Given that the Options listed in the Outline Business Case are very much at the formative stage it is difficult to set out the full legal implications of each, other than in very general terms. There is also the possibility that the Children and Families Bill might be further amended before being implemented. The Outline Business Case observes that depending on the option finally recommended there might be TUPE implications and the need for LAs to delegate their adoption functions to another LA or even a separate body. In the latter case it would be necessary to examine in some detail the extent to which such functions can legally be discharged other than by a LA.”</i></p> <p>Tim Collard - Shropshire Council Legal Lead for all 4 authorities</p> <p>In addition to the legal comment provided above, the Children and Families Bill is due to start the Committee Stage in the House of Lords on 9 October 2013.</p> <p>In respect of Telford & Wrekin, the current employees of the Shropshire and Telford & Wrekin Joint Adoption Service are employees of Shropshire Council in respect of any TUPE transfer of undertaking considerations.</p> <p>Legal Services from each LA will need to liaise on this project to consider the implications of the options. Kirsty Fisher - Telford & Wrekin Council</p>
OTHER IMPACTS, RISKS & OPPORTUNITIES	Yes	<p>Opportunity to develop an innovatory solution to improve the prospects of adoption for a wider range of children</p> <p>Conflict between the project's vision/objectives and the strategic direction of each individual adoption service or authority reduces the potential benefit for children and adopters and affects realisation potential savings</p>
IMPACT ON SPECIFIC WARDS	Yes	<p>Children who might benefit from adoption live in all parts of Telford and Wrekin</p> <p>Supports the recruitment of adoptive carers across all ward areas and provides more opportunities to people who have the potential to provide loving homes to children who need them</p>

PART B) – ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

4. INFORMATION

Shropshire and Telford & Wrekin councils have had a joint adoption service run by Shropshire council. Worcestershire and Herefordshire each have their own adoption service.

Under new powers provided to the Government under the Children and Families Bill 2013, local authorities that are not performing appropriately will have their role as adoption agencies withdrawn. In addition, there is a longer term proposal in the Government's 'Action Plan for Adoption: Tackling Delay' which proposes as a default position that the recruitment and training of adopters will be transferred to voluntary organisations.

The four local authorities in the West Mercia region recognise that working collaboratively provides a genuine opportunity to respond to the national agenda. By delivering a single service whilst maintaining functions at a regional and local level, partners envisage achieving economies of scale and delivering a faster and more cost efficient process of providing alternative permanent homes for children across the West Mercia region.

The governance arrangements to deliver the project have been agreed and established. A strategic Project Board, made up of the four Directors of Children's Services, has been established. A Steering Group at Assistant Director level chaired by Laura Johnston, Director of Children and Families Services, Telford and Wrekin council, reports into the Board. A Working Group which reports to the Steering Group and Project Teams have been established and a Project Lead and Project Manager have also been assigned to the project. The Board, Steering Group and Working Group each meet monthly and have met regularly since May 2013.

5 options have been considered to improve the service across West Mercia. The benefits from two are negligible or minimal. It is possible that a model mixing elements of the other 3 may be feasible based on a cost/benefit analysis. More detail is provided in the Outline Business Account - Appendix 1

Consultation activity with stakeholders including children, adopters, staff and panel members is being arranged

5. IMPACT ASSESSMENT – ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Not applicable

6. PREVIOUS MINUTES

Not applicable

7. BACKGROUND PAPERS

An Action Plan for Adoption: Tackling Delay. March 2012, Department for Education
Children and Families Bill 2013

Report prepared by Karen Perry, Assistant Director: Children's Safeguarding

WEST MERCIA ADOPTION PROJECT

OUTLINE BUSINESS CASE

Document Purpose	
To provide an initial outline of the project sufficient to identify why it is being proposed and what it seeks to achieve.	
Document Details	
Version	0.5
Version Date	10.9.13

1. PROJECT DEFINITION

1.1 Project Aim

The overall aim of the project is to develop a single West Mercia Adoption Service which delivers a more efficient and effective service to a wider range of children.

1.2 Project Description

The project will develop a single West Mercia Adoption Service across Worcestershire, Shropshire, Telford and Wrekin and Herefordshire which delivers a more efficient and effective service to a wider range of children, with particular emphasis on improving the timeliness of placing children and young people for adoption.

The new service will at least maintain the quality of current provision, improve outcomes, deliver savings based on lower service costs arising from a more efficient staffing structure and economies of scale arising from aggregated workloads. It is anticipated that cashable savings up to 20% from 2014/15 for each authority will be made through the project (savings in 2014/15 will be part year). The 2013/14 budget will be taken as the baseline budget.

Project Scope

- Explore the opportunity to establish a shared adoption service covering West Mercia.
- To look at how we might best organise recruitment and training of adopters which would be compliant with government targets over the next three or four years.
- To look at the organisation of panels in West Mercia and determine the appropriate number of these.
- To review existing post adoption support arrangements and how these might best be organised to meet future need including the level of financial support provided.
- To review existing post adoption counselling arrangements for birth family members and how these might be developed to meet future need.
- Consider under these arrangements how particular groups are targeted and adoptive homes located e.g. older children, children with disabilities, sibling groups, BME groups.
- Explore arrangements for overseas adoption and how these might be delivered more effectively.
- To assess the feasibility of different models of working, including joint working with a voluntary adoption agency/not for profit groups or a mutual and how this might be achieved.
- To look at the relationship with the West Midlands Adoption Consortium in order to ensure that any development is complementary.
- To think about relationships between the adoption team and field work teams and the way in which children and young people needing permanent alternative homes are identified and tracked.
- To assess the impact of change on our relationships with local courts and how this would be managed.

- To consider how this body will relate to regional and national bodies.
- To look at the governance arrangements of such an organisation and how this might be managed.
- To determine options as to who might run such an organisation.
- To consider arrangements for prospective adopters wishing to consider the Fostering to Adopt scheme.
- To consider arrangements for foster carers wishing to adopt children already placed with them.

1.3 Project Background

Under new powers provided to the Government under the Children and Families Bill 2013, local authorities that are not performing appropriately will have their role as adoption agencies withdrawn. In addition, there is a longer term proposal in the Government's 'Action Plan for Adoption: Tackling Delay' which proposes as a default position that the recruitment and training of adopters will be transferred to voluntary organisations.

The four local authorities in the West Mercia region - Herefordshire Council, Worcestershire County Council, Telford & Wrekin Council and Shropshire Council - recognise that working collaboratively provides a genuine opportunity to respond to the national agenda and, following the success of a similar approach to establish a West Mercia Youth offending Service, are exploring the possibility of joining forces to provide a single adoption service.

By delivering a single service whilst maintaining functions at a regional and local level, partners envisage achieving economies of scale and delivering a faster and more cost efficient process of providing alternative permanent homes for children across the West Mercia region.

1.4 Project Objectives

The key objectives of the project are:

- To retain local accountability and service delivery based on local need.
- To maintain or improve outcomes for children, young people and adopters, building on the strengths of existing services.
- To improve efficiency through:
 - Streamlining management costs by creating a single service.
 - Streamlining service delivery via processes and pathways.
 - Ensuring better value from commissioning non-core functions.
- To identify the most appropriate delivery arrangements for the single service.
- To support the establishment of the single service by September 2014.

1.5 Project Outcomes

The key outcomes for the project are:

- Retained local accountability and services based on local need.
- A reduction in the length of time taken in the 'end-to-end' adoption process, ie, from initial inquiry to a child being placed.
- A reduction in the overall cost of adoption for the four authorities across a number of different budgets.
- Children waiting for adoption will be matched more quickly and placed with adoptive families sooner, particularly 'hard to place' children.
- Children's social workers will have increased choice of potential adopters to enable the successful matching of children.
- The four authorities will be assisted to meet new Government requirements on timescales.
- Swifter and more effective assessment, training, approval and support for adopters.

1.6 Innovation

Many local authorities have embarked on or are looking at joint ventures, such as WWiSH (Wigan, Warrington and St Helen's joint adoption service), Adoption in the Black Country (joint venture between Wolverhampton, Dudley, Walsall and Sandwell) and indeed Shropshire and Telford & Wrekin's existing joint adoption service. This project's intention is to learn from and build on such models and combine adoption services over the West Mercia footprint, which covers a much larger geographical area and demographic sector. We are not aware of any other authority/group of authorities looking at adoption service delivery on this scale.

2. CURRENT SERVICE PROVISION

Shropshire and Telford & Wrekin councils have had a joint adoption service since 1998. This service came out of LGR with Telford separating from Shropshire, but keeping some joint services. The joint service has 31 posts and a combined adoption budget of £835k (Shropshire £488k / Telford £347k). The majority of functions are delivered in-house with the exception of marketing for the recruitment of prospective adopters, birth parent support and counselling, and access to records from other LAs for adopted adults, which are commissioned.

Worcestershire's adoption service has 24 posts and a £1m budget. All its functions are delivered in-house with the exception of adopter support groups which are commissioned.

Herefordshire's adoption service is the smallest with 14 posts and a budget of £458k. All of its functions are delivered in-house.

3. OUTLINE BUSINESS CASE

3.1 Options

The following delivery options for the new service are being considered:

Option 1

Do nothing and stay 'as is', with each service maintaining its existing service set up, using 3rd parties independently procured.

Option 2

Deliver some key functions together and maintain delivery of other functions within individual authorities.

- Partnership arrangement involving a number of SLAs for certain tasks/duties.
- Sharing of some costs and collaboration on 'placement 'selling' and 'purchasing'.
- Joint activity days.
- Share training opportunities.
- Occasional use of voluntary sector as and when required.
- Co-located teams.

Option 3

Deliver a core adoption service across West Mercia, with commissioned non-core services based on local needs.

- West Mercia 'union' of LAs.
- Pooling some budgets to deliver efficiencies.
- Host authority arrangement.
- One management structure but reporting from/to the 4 LAs.
- Joint activity days.
- One training procedure but shared.

Option 4

Deliver a single adoption service, incorporating all core and non-core services, delivered by a lead West Mercia authority.

- Combined governance arrangements – single entity, fully integrated service (social enterprise?)
- Voluntary organisation fully integrated into arrangement – for hard to place children/birth ties/BRC work.
- One 'brand' and one set of common procedures.
- One marketing partner providing front door services.
- One IT system.
- Joint activity days.
- One route (funnel) from marketing partner into the agency then two or four consistent allocation streams.
- Core staff groups supported by a pool of bank staff to assist at times of high demand.
- Flexible and mobile adoption panels.
- Central training team.

Option 5

Contract out all core and non-core services (on a not for profit basis), eg, by going into partnership with a voluntary organisation or establishing a staff mutual.

Options Appraisal

There are five main options, with benefits from Option 1 being negligible and benefits from Option 2 being minimal. It is possible that a model mixing elements of Options 3, 4 and 5 may be feasible based on a cost/benefit analysis. None of the options preclude going into partnership with a voluntary organisation.

To achieve the desired project outcomes it is recommended that by working together the four West Mercia authorities will be able to carry out a more in-depth appraisal of Options 3-5 in the first instance to the benefit of all authorities and which maintain local accountability and service delivery based on local need.

In doing so, the areas that would need to be considered and explored further include our legal obligations and boundaries (if we go into partnership with a voluntary organisation what functions can be legally discharged), the governance and audit framework around adoption and human resource implications (TUPE arrangements, etc).

3.2 Project Costs

The bulk of the work in designing the overall structure, including developing the management and staffing structure, determining the core and non-core offer of the new service, pathways to/from the service, the transfer of staff and any redundancies, etc, is likely to fall to existing staff across the four authorities. During this period costs will, therefore, include the backfill of posts to do this work and project management.

Each authority has an Adoption Reform Grant which can specifically be used for adoption transformation; therefore, each authority has contributed £12,500 of this grant into a pooled budget to support the project.

3.3 Return on Investment

Cashable Savings

The overall aim of the project is to maintain and improve the quality of current provision and improve outcomes whilst making financial efficiencies. The new service will deliver savings based on lower service costs arising from a more efficient staffing structure and economies

of scale arising from aggregated workloads. This is expected to be up to 20% in 2014/15 for each authority.

Non Cashable Benefits

The primary focus of this project is to deliver an improved adoption service to a wider range of children. Reducing the length of time taken in the “end to end” process of the adoption journey, ie, from initial inquiry to a child being placed for adoption, will minimise the impact of delays for both the children and adopters. Whilst operational efficiencies will be achieved through the pooling of resources, the organisational changes expect to improve on the quality of the current provision across the region.

3.4 Risks

The key high level risks associated with this project are:

- Conflict between the project's vision/objectives and the strategic direction of each individual adoption service or authority.
- Change in leadership in any of the authorities could lead to buy-in to the project being lost.
- Lack of stakeholder support.
- Lack of resources to deliver the project effectively and within timescale.
- Ability to resolve complex issues such as IT within timescale.
- Loss of key quality staff through the change process.
- Under the Children and Families Bill, the Secretary of State will have the power to direct Local Authorities to arrange for the recruitment, assessment and approval of prospective adopters to be carried out by one or more other adoption agencies.
- Target savings may not be achievable across the board.

3.5 Stakeholders

The main stakeholders associated with this project are:

- Children and young people in the LAC system at all stages of the adoption process.
- Adopters at all stages of the assessment/approval process.
- Approved adopters waiting for placements.
- Adopters with placements pre adoption order.
- Adoptive families in receipt of adoption support services.
- Birth families.
- Adopted adults.
- Adoption Service staff in each authority.
- Children's Social Workers and Fostering Social Workers in each authority.
- Adoption Panel chairs and members in each authority.
- Elected Members with responsibility for children and families in each authority.
- Providers.
- West Mercia Adoption Project Working Group.
- West Mercia Adoption Project Steering Group.
- West Mercia Adoption Project Board.

4. HIGH LEVEL PROJECT PLAN

4.1 Timescales

Key Milestone	Date
Produce Outline Business Case	September 2013
Produce Detailed Business Case	December 2013
Produce Detailed Implementation Plan for approval	February 2014
Implementation	April - August 2014
New Service Operational	September 2014

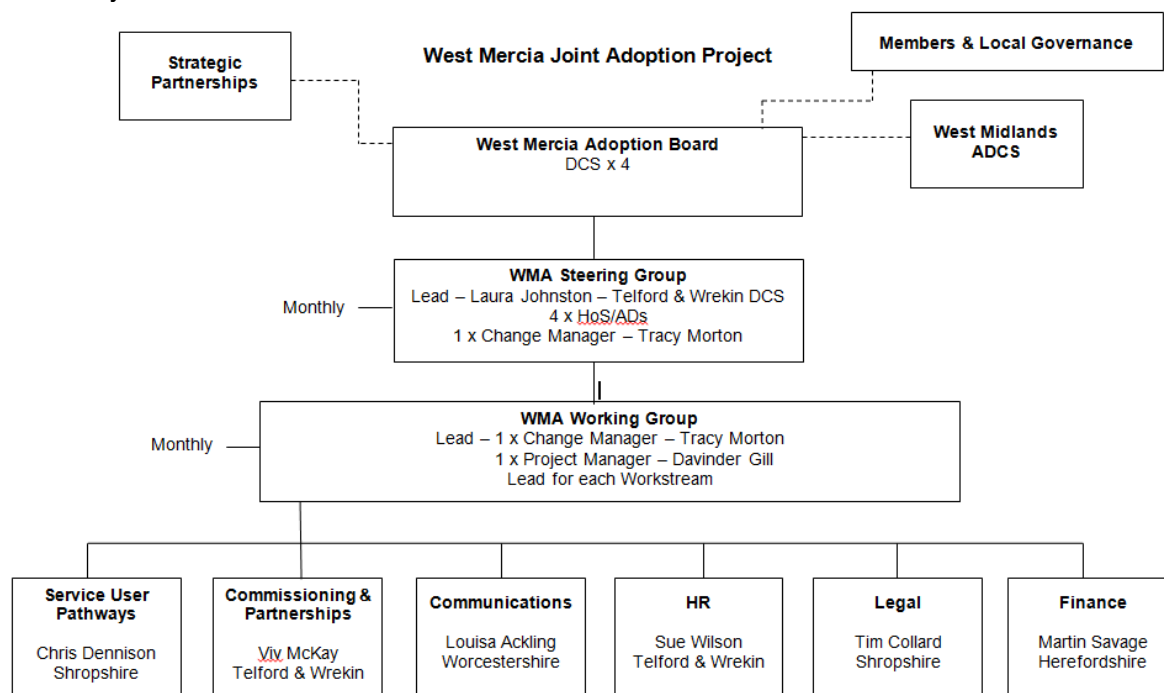
4.2 People Resources

Refer to paragraph 3.2 and 4.3.

4.3 Project Structure and Governance

A West Mercia Adoption Board, Steering Group, Working Group and Project Teams have been established to deliver the project, as illustrated in the structure chart below. A Project Lead and Project Manager have also been assigned to the project.

The Board, Steering Group and Working Group each meet monthly and have met regularly since May 2013.



5. EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT SCREENING

	Positive Impact	Negative Impact	Neutral Impact	Comments
Age	X			The project aims to improve outcomes for children aged 0-18 and adopters over the age of 21.
Disability	X			The project aims to improve outcomes for children/young people and adopters regardless of disability.
Gender	X			The project aims to improve outcomes for children/young people and adopters regardless of gender.
Race	X			The project aims to improve outcomes for children/young people and adopters regardless of race.
Religion/Belief	X			The project aims to improve outcomes for children/young people and adopters regardless of religion/belief.
Sexual Orientation	X			The project aims to improve outcomes for young people and adopters regardless of their sexual orientation.
Gender Reassignment	X			The project aims to improve outcomes for adopters regardless of gender reassignment.
Pregnancy and maternity	X			The project aims to improve outcomes for birth parents.

Amendment History		
Document Owner: Davinder Gill		
Version Number	Date	Reason for Amendment
0.1	14.8.13	-
0.2	15.8.13	Comments by WM Adoption Steering Group 14.8.13
0.3	19.8.13	Final comments by WM Adoption Steering Group
0.4	6.9.13	Minor amendment to wording in para 1.2 by Telford
0.5	10.9.13	Comments by WM Adoption Project Board 6.9.13

Approvals		
Approved By	Date	Version
WM Adoption Steering Group	19.8.13	0.3
WM Adoption Project Board	6.9.13	0.4

TELFORD & WREKIN COUNCIL

CABINET - 19 SEPTEMBER 2013

THE BUILDING SCHOOLS FOR THE FUTURE PROGRAMME – APPROVAL TO ENTER INTO AN EARLY WORKS AGREEMENT AT TELFORD CO-OPERATIVE ACADEMY ON THE SITE OF THE OAKENGATES LEISURE CENTRE.

REPORT OF THE ASSISTANT DIRECTOR: EDUCATION AND CORPORATE PARENTING

LEAD CABINET MEMBER – CLLR PAUL WATLING

PART A) – SUMMARY REPORT

1. PURPOSE

- 1.1 This report seeks approval to enter into an Early Works Agreement on the Telford Co-operative Academy site which will be constructed on the site of the Oakenages Leisure Centre.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 That the Assistant Director: Education and Corporate Parenting in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Children, Young People and Families be authorised to enter into an early works agreement with Shepherd Construction Ltd on the Telford Co-operative Academy site, prior to the signing of the main Design and Build Contract, allowing enabling works to be undertaken to provide revenue income from the proposed 3G synthetic pitch and bring forward essential works for the new school building to open in September 2015.

3. SUMMARY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

IMPACT ASSESSMENT AT A GLANCE

COMMUNITY IMPACT¹?	Do these proposals contribute to specific Priority Plan objective(s)?	
	Yes	Children & Young People – supports strategic priority for developing learning communities across the Borough.
	Are there any measures that will be used to show the proposals are making a difference?	
	Yes	Long term improved attainment and reduced revenue costs for the school. Provision of a new 3g synthetic pitch to replace a facility that is circa 10 years old
	Will the proposals impact on specific groups of people?	
	Yes	The children at this school will benefit from new facilities and the community will benefit from improved leisure facilities and pitches.
COMPLETION/ DELIVERY DATE?	The Final Business Case is due to be approved by the Education Funding Agency (EFA) in November 2013 and the contract placed by December 2013.	
FINANCIAL (VALUE FOR MONEY) IMPACT?	Yes	The anticipated contract price for the scheme is within the funding envelope set by the Council and within the funding approval obtained through the Council's Capital Programme. The value of the Early Works Agreement (EWA), which forms part of the contract price, is £1.18m.
LEGAL IMPACT?	Yes	Detail provided in Section 7.
OTHER RISKS & OPPORTUNITIES ?	Yes	Detail provided in Section 8.
IMPACT ON SPECIFIC WARDS?	Yes	Ketley and Oakengates Wrockwardine Wood and Trench

4. SUMMARY

- 4.1 Telford Co-Operative Academy:** The development of The Telford Co-Operative Academy will consist of: creation of a new 1200 place school building, partial refurbishment of the adjacent Oakengates Leisure Centre and the provision of a 3g synthetic pitch.

Plans Board are due to consider the planning application, and the target Plans Board date is 25th September 2013 for the 3g pitch and 6th November 2013 for the main school application. The Final Business Case is being targeted for submission to the EFA at the same time as the main school planning application. Once these approvals are in place, the Council will enter into a contract with Shepherd Construction for the delivery of the new school and associated works on the Oakengates Leisure Centre site.

- 4.2 Telford Co-operative Academy is running to an exceptionally tight schedule in order for the school to be open and available for occupation in September 2015. To meet this deadline, Shepherd need to undertake the enabling works as soon as possible. In addition, to avoid the loss of income from the 3g pitch, the target date for availability of the new pitch is November 2013. . These circumstances demand that Shepherd and the Council enter into an Early Works Agreement (“EWA”) to enable the works to start. The total cost of the works under the proposed EWA is in the region of £1.18m.
- 4.3 Even if the Design and Build contract is not entered into for the new school there would still be a need to replace the 3g pitch. The existing facility was removed as part of intrusive site investigations as part of the BSF process. The works to form the coach turning circle, alterations to the junction and highways improvements would also benefit the site as this would improve current poor access and vehical movement.
- 4.4 At Cabinet on 8th November 2012 approval was given to enter into a “Future Schools Agreement” with Shepherd allowing the Council to give a series of works contracts to Shepherd without the need for separate procurements. The Future Schools Agreement was entered into on 5th February 2013 and remains in place. However, as with the Ercall Wood School project, Cabinet will be asked to give approval to enter into Single School Design & Build Contracts for each of the remaining projects together with all other associated contract documentation. As a consequence of this report not being presented to Cabinet until 19th September 2013 it has proved necessary to seek approval for the the works which need to be started prior to the main contract under the proposed EWA.

5.0 LEGAL COMMENT

- 5.1 At financial close the Council is required to execute the contract documents listed in paragraph 5.4. The contract documents are based on the required EFA standard form documentation and will be developed in accordance with the Council’s project specific requirements by the Council’s project team in consultation with external Legal Advisors, Ward Hadaway.
- 5.2 The award of the design and build contract for the Telford Co-Operative Academy site development to Shepherd Construction is subject to full planning permission being granted. In addition, the award of the design and build contract is subject to approval by the EFA which will not be forthcoming until the planning permission is agreed and the contract documents are in an approved form.
- 5.3 Financial close and signing of the Contract is targeted for December 2013. In awarding the contract and proceeding with the Final Business Case , the Council must continue to ensure that there is compliance with procurement legislation and the financial and contract procedure rules contained within the Council’s constitution at Part 4, Sections 6 and 7 respectively. A close working relationship with the EFA will also be required to ensure that

the Final Business Case is acceptable and that the project can proceed. These areas will need to be continuously reviewed and those who are granted delegated authority in paragraph 2.1 of the report will require updates and information to ensure that these risks are addressed and that informed decisions can be made. If delegated authority is allowed by the Cabinet, the delegated decision making set out in paragraph 2 should be formally recorded.

5.4 Legal Documents. The main documents to complete and execute are:

- The Single School Design and Build Contract (between the Council and Shepherd Construction Limited jointly and severally with Regional and Local Education Partnership Limited, a Shepherd trading company established for the purpose of participating on the EFA framework)
- A Parent Company Guarantee from the contractor's parent company (between the Council and Shepherd Building Group Limited).
- A Development Agreement (between the Council and Telford Co-operative Multi Academy Trust) which will include a contract for the transfer of the existing sites by the Academy to the Council and for the Council to transfer the new site to the Academy.
- A Broker's Letter of Undertaking (between the Council, the contractor and the contractor's insurance broker).
- Collateral warranties will also be provided in favour of the Council and the Academy Trust by the contractor's professional team. Where these are not available at the date of completion, the contractor is obliged to procure them following completion.

6.0 OPPORTUNITIES AND RISKS

6.1 The main risk to the Telford Co-operative scheme is the planning decision. Full planning permission is required to ensure that the Final Business Case receives approval from the EFA and DfE thereby guaranteeing the funding. To mitigate this risk a series of engagement sessions with the local community and pre application engagement with the Local Planning Authority has been undertaken prior to the submissions. The planning approval for the 3g pitch will already have been sought prior to works commencing.

7.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

Early Works Agreement

- 7.1 The anticipated contract price, submitted by the contractor, for the Telford Co-Operative Academy is £16.95m. The contract price falls within the funding envelope set by the Council and approved through the Council's Capital Programme.
- 7.2 The value of the EWA, which forms part of the contract price, is £1.18m. The EWA will be part funded by BSF Grant which is predicated on the basis that the Council's Final Business Case for the full Telford Co-Operative Academy scheme is approved by Education Funding Agency, due to be submitted November 2013, and that the Council has entered into the Design and Build contract with the Framework Contractor, due to be signed December 2013.
- 7.3 The scope of works and schedule of costs, included at Appendix 1 (exempt paper), are scheduled to begin October 2013 and are anticipated to take 8-9wks to complete prior to the Design & Build contract being in place.
- 7.4 At the time of the main planning application for the school the outstanding liability for the Council would be £855K. The main allocation being to provide the 3g pitch which the Council is required to reinstate at full cost. If at this time planning was not approved for the main school application the remaining works could be aborted.
- 7.5 An interim payment for works completed under the EWA will be due upon the signing of the Design and Build contract for Telford Co-Operative Academy. If the contract has not been entered into by December 2013 the full liability (see Appendix 1 – exempt paper) will be

payable to Shepherd Construction Ltd. The works completed will be subject to the same valuation and payment methodology as detailed in Section 16 (Payment) of the Design and Build Contract.

8.0 PREVIOUS MINUTES

- Cabinet 24th November 2008 - Planning of School Places: Campus Telford & Wrekin. Minute CB94 refers.
- Cabinet 6th April 2009 - Campus Telford & Wrekin: Additional Post-16 Provision, Trust School Status, BSF Procurement Approval. Minute CB182 refers.
- Cabinet 15th September 2009 – Planning of School Places: Campus Telford & Wrekin – Part 2. Minute CB60 refers.
- Cabinet 23rd March 2010 – Borough Towns Initiative Sports & Learning Community – Final Business Case and Award of Contracts relating to BSF and Abraham Darby Sports & Learning Community. Minute CB181 refers.
- Cabinet 11th January 2011 – School Organisation – Borough Towns Initiative – Sports and Learning Community Update. Minute CB109 refers.
- Cabinet 22nd September 2011 – Planning of School Places – Secondary School Provision. Minute CB45 refers.
- Cabinet 26th January 2012 – Ercall Wood Land Acquisition and Disposal. Minute CB-92 refers.
- Cabinet 29th March 2012 – Building Schools for the Future – Contractors Framework Procurement Approval. Minute CB-123 refers.
- Cabinet 8th November 2012 – Building Schools for the Future – Approval to submit the Final Business Case for Ercall Wood and Priorslee Land Acquisition. Minute CB-63
- Cabinet 30th May 2013 – Building Schools for the Future – Approval to submit the Final Business Case for Southall School and entry into an Early Works Agreement. Minute CB-10.

9. WARD IMPLICATIONS - There are implications for the following wards:

Ward	Member
Ketley & Oakengates	Cllr A Singh Jhawar, Cllr G Reynolds, Cllr H Rhodes
Wrockwardine Wood & Trench	Cllr S Reynolds, Cllr C Smith

TELFORD & WREKIN COUNCIL

CABINET - 19 SEPTEMBER 2013

DESIGNATION OF A NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN AREA FOR ERCALL MAGNA

REPORT OF ASSISTANT DIRECTOR: PLANNING SPECIALIST

LEAD CABINET MEMBER – CLLR CHARLES SMITH

PART A) – SUMMARY REPORT

1. SUMMARY OF MAIN PROPOSALS

- 1.1 The Localism Act introduced legislation to allow Parishes to produce a Development Plan for their neighbourhood. Ercall Magna Parish Council is one of five Parish/Town Councils in the Borough currently preparing Neighbourhood Plans.
- 1.2 Ercall Magna Parish Council lead on the Ercall Magna Neighbourhood Development Plan and in line with the Neighbourhood Planning Regulations has applied to Telford & Wrekin Council to designate Ercall Magna Parish Council area as a Neighbourhood Area. On the basis of the information set out in this Report it is recommended that the Council support the designation as shown on the plan in Appendix A.
- 1.3 Once the Parish Council has prepared their Plan, this will be submitted to the Council to consider, and be the subject of a local examination and local referendum. If supported through these stages, the Plan would then be adopted as part of the Development Plan for the Borough.

2. RECOMMENDATION

2.1 That Cabinet support the Neighbourhood Area application by Ercall Magna Parish Council and approve the designation of the area shown in Appendix A as a Neighbourhood Area

3. SUMMARY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

COMMUNITY IMPACT	Do these proposals contribute to specific Priority Plan objective(s)?	
	Yes	Co-operative Council: - Involving local people more in planning and running services - As a Council, supporting our community better and encouraging people to do more to help their own communities
	Will the proposals impact on specific groups of people?	
	Yes	Designation of the Ercall Magna Parish Council area as a neighbourhood plan area will help engage all parts of the community in planning.
TARGET COMPLETION/ DELIVERY DATE	The process would commence following Cabinet approval.	
FINANCIAL/ VALUE FOR MONEY IMPACT	Yes	The costs associated with the introduction of Neighbourhood Plans, including the additional costs of designations, referendum and examinations; have to be met by the Local Authority. Neighbourhood Planning Front Runner funding has been received in respect of Ercall Magna Parish and additional funding, up to a maximum of £30,000 is available from the

		DCLG in 2013/14 to offset costs incurred by the Local Authority. Should the examination process not be completed until the 2014/15 financial year there is a risk that DCLG funding will not be available and any costs in excess of the available Front Runner funding will be a budget pressure to the Local Authority. JAC 15/08/13
LEGAL ISSUES	Yes	The Localism Act 2011 provided a framework for a new statutory regime to establish Neighbourhood Planning. The 2012 Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations (SI 2012/637) (“the Regulations”) add more detail to that framework. Part 2 of the Regulations makes provision in relation to the procedure for designating a neighbourhood area, including the content of the application and what the local planning authority must do to publicise such an application. In considering the Ercall Magna Parish Council application, the Council in its capacity as Local Planning Authority has been mindful of the provisions of the Regulations, and in the view of Legal Services any risk of successful challenge to the process on procedural grounds is minimal.
OTHER IMPACTS, RISKS & OPPORTUNITIES	Yes	The development of Neighbourhood Plans does pose some potential risks to the preparation of the Local Plan including potential duplication or inconsistency with Borough Policy. This is being mitigated by regular Officer engagement with the Parish ensuring early discussion of any potential issues. Opportunities include a strengthening of local engagement in the planning process and in the development of Shaping Places Local Plan and acceptance of development proposed in the area. A successful frontrunner plan will raise the profile of the Council locally and nationally.
IMPACT ON SPECIFIC WARDS	Yes	Ercall Magna Ward

PART B) – ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

4. INFORMATION

4.1 The Localism Act (2011) introduced Neighbourhood Planning as a mechanism to increase local engagement in plan making. In May 2011 Telford & Wrekin Council successfully bid with Ercall Magna Parish Council for the area to become one of the Government’s Frontrunners in Neighbourhood Planning

4.2 The development of a Neighbourhood Plan involves a number of stages:

- Designation of the Neighbourhood Plan area
- Establishing a local working/steering group
- Identification of the issues that the Neighbourhood Plan needs to address
- Developing the Plan’s vision and objectives and proposals to meet these including a proposals map
- Undertaking a sustainability appraisal of the Plan’s proposals
- Effective local consultation on the Plan
- Submission of the Plan to the Council for consideration
- Examination whereby an examiner, appointed by the Council, examines the Plan to establish if it meets all statutory obligations

- Referendum; a yes/no vote on the local implementation of the plan

4.3 Telford & Wrekin Council's role in the Neighbourhood Plan process is to:

- Give assistance and advice on the content of the plan and process
- Agree and formally designate the Neighbourhood Area
- Check the plan is in general conformity with relevant legislation and regulations and conforms with national planning policy and the strategic policies of Telford & Wrekin Councils Local Plan
- Arrange and pay for an independent examination
- Arrange and pay for a referendum of the Neighbourhood Plan
- Subject to the outcome of the previous stages, adopt the Neighbourhood Plan as part of Telford & Wrekin Councils Local Plan

4.4 The proposed neighbourhood plan area for Ercall Magna reflects the boundaries of the Parish Council and is shown in Appendix A. Under part 2 of the Neighbourhood Planning Regulations (2012), Telford & Wrekin Council is required to publicise the request for designation for 6 weeks, to consider the responses received and determine whether or not to support designation.

4.5 A legal notice, together with the correspondence submitted by the Parish Council requesting designation, were publicised via Telford & Wrekin Council's Website. The period of consultation ended on 24th May 2013 and no representations have been submitted to the Council.

4.6 It is therefore recommended that Ercall Magna Parish Council's request to designate the neighbourhood area is supported. No concerns with this boundary area have been raised, its correlation with the Parish Council area will assist with any future referendum and it provides a good model for future neighbourhood plan proposals.

4.7 Subject to the neighbourhood area being approved, the Ercall Magna Parish Council will continue to engage with local people and stakeholders, including Telford & Wrekin Council to develop the neighbourhood plan. The Parish Council will lead the development of the Plan. Members will be kept informed of this process with reports being brought to Cabinet at key stages.

4.8 The Council has no dedicated officer resource for neighbourhood planning but officers from the Business & Development Planning Unit offer advice on planning matters and can coordinate input from other parts of the Council to support the Parish Council to develop the Plan. This is important to avoid inconsistency between National/Borough Policy and service priorities and the neighbourhood plan proposals.

5. **IMPACT ASSESSMENT – ADDITIONAL INFORMATION**

N/A

6. **PREVIOUS MINUTES**

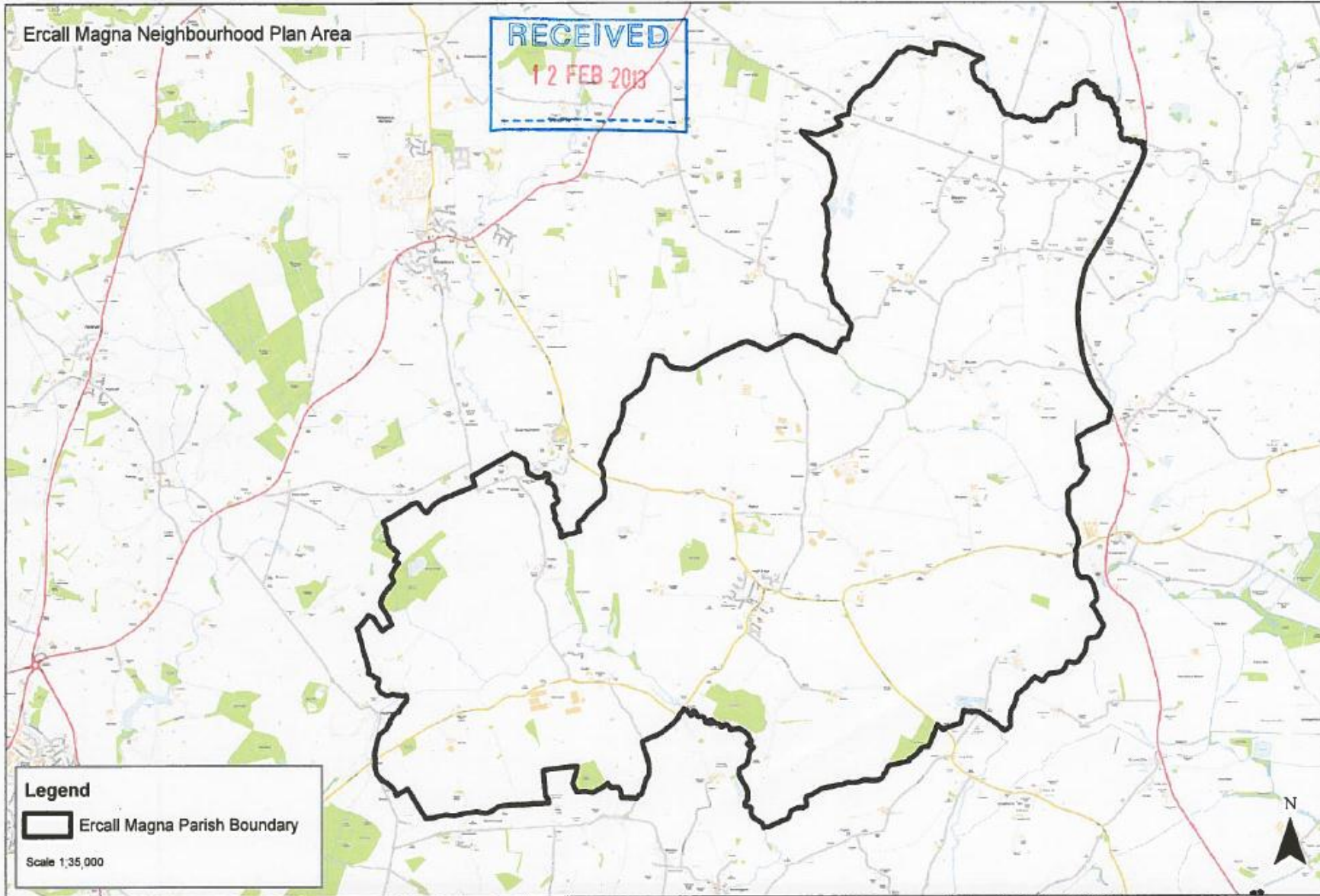
N/A

7. **BACKGROUND PAPERS**

N/A

Report prepared by Clare Francis, Project Officer, Environment & Planning Policy Team

Appendix A



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Produced by R. Overy 21/01/2013
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TELFORD & WREKIN COUNCIL

CABINET - 19th SEPTEMBER 2013

SCRAP METAL DEALERS ACT 2013

REPORT OF THE INTERIM MANAGER – PUBLIC PROTECTION

LEAD CABINET MEMBER – CLLR RICHARD OVERTON

1. Purpose

- 1.1 To inform Cabinet of the implementation of the Scrap Metal Dealers Act 2013.
- 1.2 For the Cabinet to consider the proposed level of Licence Fees.
- 1.3 For the Cabinet to consider delegating authority to officers.

2. Recommendations

It is recommended that :

- 2.1 That Cabinet approve the proposed level of licence fees for Site Licences and for Collectors Licences**
- 2.2 That Cabinet delegate authority to grant, refuse, vary or revoke licences and to impose licence conditions to the Principal Licensing Officer.**
- 2.3 That Cabinet delegate authority to the Principal Licensing Officer, following consultation with the Cabinet Member for Public Health and Public Protection, to establish a policy in respect of determining applications and an appropriate procedure for dealing with representations**

3. Summary

- 3.1 The Scrap Metal Dealers Act 2013 replaces the previous registration system for scrap metal dealers under the Scrap Metal Dealers Act 1964 and the licensing system for motor salvage operators under the Vehicles (Crime) Act 2001.

4. Previous Minutes

There are no previous minutes.

5. Information

5.1 Background

- 5.1.1 The Scrap Metal Dealers Act 2013 comes into effect on 1st October 2013. It was introduced as a Private Members Bill by Richard Ottaway MP in order to tackle scrap metal theft and will cover England and Wales.
- 5.1.2 Local Authorities will be responsible for administration and compliance in relation the Act. There will be greater powers of entry for the police.
- 5.1.3 There will be two types of licences, one is for a site licence and the other is for a mobile collector licence. A site licence requires all of the sites at which the licensee carries on the business as a scrap metal dealer within the local authority area to be identified and a site manager to be named for each site. They will be permitted to operate from those sites as a scrap metal dealer, including transporting scrap metal to and from those sites from any local authority area. A collector's licence authorises the licensee to operate as a mobile collector in the area of the issuing local authority, permitting them to collect any scrap metal as appropriate. This includes commercial as well as domestic scrap metal. The licence does not permit the collector to collect from any other local authority area. A separate licence should be obtained from each local authority which the individual wishes to collect in.
- 5.1.4 Only suitable dealers will be allowed to operate. Licensing Authorities can consider relevant criminal convictions and will have to determine whether an applicant is a suitable person to operate as a scrap metal dealer. They will have the power to revoke licences.
- 5.1.5 The new Act will oblige all dealers to keep records of traders, to keep receipts and it will be an offence for dealers to pay for scrap in cash.
- 5.1.6 There will be increased financial penalties for breaches of the Act. The fine will be at level 5 on the standard scale, however, with proposed changes to the size of fines that Courts can impose, this will mean that a fine at that level will become unlimited.
- 5.1.7 There will be a national register of scrap metal dealers maintained by The Environment Agency and the Natural Resources Body for Wales.

5.1.8 The power to set licence fees has been passed to Local Authorities. The licence fee should cover the cost of the time spent assessing and administering an application but it cannot cover the cost of enforcement activity against unlicensed operators. Any activity taken against unlicensed operators must be funded through existing funds. Draft fees are attached at Appendix A, together with benchmarking data on other local authorities' draft fees.

Also attached at Appendix B is the full costing exercise calculated by Finance which was based on corporate overheads for the Licensing function plus projected officer time for :

- processing applications,
- assessing the suitability of applicants,
- report writing,
- hearing representations
- inspections for the duration of the 3 year licence
- exchanging data with the Environment Agency

5.1.9 As this is a new licensing function, officer time has been based on projections. It is proposed, therefore, to review licence fees after a year.

5.1.10 We know that nationally proposed licensing fees have varied considerably from £170 to £1200.

5.1.11 Cabinet Members are now asked to determine an appropriate fee level for Telford & Wrekin Council based on the information that has been provided within Appendices A & B.

5.2 **Equal Opportunities**

5.2.1 None – statutory provisions being implemented only.

5.3 **Legal Comment**

5.3.1 The 2013 Act repeals the Scrap Metal Dealers Act 1964 and consolidates scrap metal dealers and motor salvage operators under one licensing regime.

5.3.2 The determination of licence applications must be reasonable and is subject to the usual public law considerations. As such, a policy in respect of factors to be taken into account when determining such applications is required along with an appropriate procedure for hearing representations made by applicants. It is suggested that, due to the short timescales prior to implementation of the Act, the policy and procedures be determined by the

Principal Licensing Officer following consultation with the
Cabinet Member for Public Health and Public Protection

5.4 **Links with Corporate Priorities**

5.4.1 This report has links to the following priorities :

- Protect and create jobs as a “Business Supporting, Business Winning Council”

5.5 **Financial Comment**

5.6.1 The license fees shown at appendix A have been calculated including staff time, license production costs and 20% of associated overheads. The fees were initially calculated on a full cost recovery basis including 100% of associated overheads however the rates were considered to be too high and would price the Council out of the market. Income generated from Scrap Metal Dealers will be additional income to the Council.

5.6.2 There are currently 10 Scrap Metal sites within the Borough and 9 Scrap Metal Collectors. Income from the initial license applications would be £5.4k. This would be received in the first year and would cover a 3 year period so would equate to £1.8k additional annual income. When the licenses are renewed after 3 years this would generate £2.5k additional income over a 3 year period so £0.8k per year. Should any new sites be opened in the Borough or further Scrap Metal Collectors operate within the Borough then additional income would be generated.

MLB 10.09.13

5.6 **Risks and Opportunities**

5.6.1 In proposing this action the Corporate Risk Management Methodology has been complied with. This approach is not intended to eliminate risks but to identify the risks and manage them. However not all risks can be managed all of the time and some risks may not have been identified.

5.6.2 The following key risks and opportunities associated with this action have been identified and assessed and arrangements will be put in place to manage them.

- (i) A legal challenge by way of Judicial Review should the Council not implement the changes brought about by the Scrap Metal Dealers Act 2013.

6. Ward Implications

6.1 This report has Borough wide Implications.

7. Background Papers

7.1 Scrap Metal Dealers Act 1964

7.2 Vehicles (Crime) Act 2001

7.3 LGA Guide to the Scrap Metal Dealers Act 2013

7.4 Scrap Metal Dealers Act 2013: Guidance on Licence Fee Charges –
Home Office

Report prepared by, Suzanne Fisher, Public Protection Team Leader Licensing Services, Darby House - For further information please telephone 01952-383261 or email Licensing@telford.gov.uk

Appendix A – Draft Licence Fees

Type of Licence	T&WC Fee to Recover costs	T&WC Proposed Fee	Worcester Regulation Services	Coventry City Council	Birmingham City Council	Northampton BC	Dacorum BC	West Oxford	North Somerset	Sandwell BC	Norwich City
Site Licence (New)	£940.24	£360	£350	£300	£1275	£486	£248	£480	£395	£295	£300
Site Licence (Renewal)	£500.14	£195	-	-	-	-	-	-		-	-
Site Licence (Variation)	£231.81	£95	-	-	-	-	£68	£53	£53	-	£82
Collector's Licence (new)	£537.75	£205	£220	£200	£330	£274	£178	£480	£170	£175	£275
Collector's Licence (Renewal)	£164.73	£65	-	-	-	-		-		-	-
Collector's Licence (Variation)	£231.81	£90	-	-	-	-	£68	£53	£53	-	£82

Pay Grade	Task	Time Taken	Total Number of Licences	Duration of Licence	Actual In mins	Rounded up to nearest 30 mins	Staff Rate	Staff cost	Overhead	TOTAL	
Grade 4	Administration of Scrap Metal Dealer New Application including providing information for inclusion in the register of dealers	70 mins	10	3yrs	70	90	21.18	£31.77	£114.70	£146.47	1464.7
Grade 4	Administration of Scrap Metal Dealer Renewal Application	45 mins		3yrs	45	60	21.18	£21.18	£76.47	£97.65	0
Grade 4	Variation to Licence	45 mins			45	60	21.18	£21.18	£76.47	£97.65	0
S01	Administration of Scrap Metal Dealer New Application (including initial inspection and 1 x 3 compliance visits)	210 mins			210	210	29.1	£101.85	£367.72	£469.57	0
S01	Administration to vary a licence including inspection where appropriate	60 mins			60	60	29.1	£29.10	£105.06	£134.16	0
S01	Administration of Scrap Metal Dealer Renewal Application (including inspection)	180 mins			180	180	29.1	£87.30	£315.19	£402.49	0

PO3

Administration of
Scrap Metal Dealer
New Application (time
spent preparing for a
hearing & making
policy)

120 mins

120

120

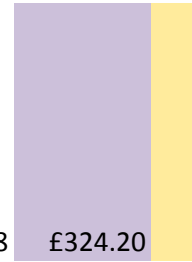
35.16

£70.32

£253.88

£324.20

0



Licence

Minutes

New Application

420

Renewal Application

240

Variation Application

120

Fee

£940.24

£500.14

£231.81

20%

Fee (if above %age of O'head charged)

£351.20

£186.81

£86.59

Pay Grade	Task	Time Taken	Total Number of Licences	Duration of Licence	Actual In mins	Rounded up to nearest 30 mins	Staff Rate	Staff cost	Overhead	TOTAL	
Grade 4	Administration of Scrap Metal Dealer New Application	70 mins									
			9	3yrs	70	90	21.18	£31.77	£114.70	£146.47	1318.23
Grade 4	Administration of Scrap Metal Dealer Renewal Application	45 mins									
				3yrs	45	60	21.18	£21.18	£76.47	£97.65	0
Grade 4	Variation to Licence Administration of New Scrap Metal Dealer Application	45 mins			45	60	21.18	£21.18	£76.47	£97.65	0
S01	Administration of Scrap Metal Dealer Application	30 mins			30	30	29.1	£14.55	£52.53	£67.08	0
S01	Administration of Scrap Metal Dealer Renewal Application	30 mins			30	30	29.1	£14.55	£52.53	£67.08	0
S01	Administration to vary a licence including an inspection if appropriate	60 mins			60	60	29.1	£29.10	£105.06	£134.16	0
PO3	Administration of Scrap Metal Dealer New Application (including time spent preparing for and attending a hearing)	120 mins									
					120	120	35.16	£70.32	£253.88	£324.20	0

Licence	Minutes	Fee	20% Fee (if above %age of O'head charged)
New Application	240	£537.75	£200.86
Renewal Application	90	£164.73	£61.53
Variation Application	120	£231.81	£86.59

CABINET

Decision Notices and Minutes of a meeting of the Cabinet held on Thursday, 19th September, 2013 at 5.00 p.m. at the AFC Telford Learning Centre, Haybridge Road, Wellington, Telford

PUBLISHED ON WEDNESDAY, 25th SEPTEMBER, 2013

(DEADLINE FOR CALL-IN: MONDAY, 30th SEPTEMBER, 2013)

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 and P.R. Watling

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

CB-27 MINUTES

RESOLVED – that the minutes of the meeting of the Cabinet held on 25th July 2013 be confirmed and signed by the Chairman.

CB-28 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Councillor C.F. Smith

CB-29 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor A.R.H. England declared a personal interest in agenda item 7 – Youth Justice Plan – in relation to his role as a JP in the Youth Court.

Councillor S. Davies declared a personal interest in agenda item 7 – Youth Justice Plan – in relation to his work as a Solicitor representing people in the Youth Court.

Councillor E.A. Clare declared a personal interest in agenda item 9 – Early Works Agreement at Telford Co-operative Academy – in relation to her role as Governor at Sutherland Academy.

CB-30 SOLAR FARM

Key Decision identified as **Commercial Energy Project – Solar Farm** in the Notice of Key Decisions published on 19 August 2013.

Councillor S. Davies, Cabinet Member: Neighbourhood Services, Employment & Skills, presented the report of the Managing Director, which set out an initial business case for the development of a solar farm in the Borough, and the next steps to progress this project.

As part of the Council's wider energy strategy, it was proposed to develop a commercial-scale solar farm of approximately 5MW capacity on Council-owned land at Wheat Leasows. The main reasons for developing a solar farm were:

- Financial benefit – generation of renewable energy would provide an income stream for the Council that could potentially be offset against the Council's energy costs. Income would be guaranteed for a 20 year period via Government schemes.
- Environmental benefit – a 5MW capacity solar farm was likely to save more than 2,300 tonnes of CO₂ and to generate enough electricity to power more than 1,000 homes.
- Economic & Community benefit – including for example the use of local suppliers during the construction phase, and including educational activities as part of the scheme.

To connect with the national Grid, the Council would be dependent on the local Distribution Network Operator, and the costs of this were being evaluated. The business case was still being developed, and was subject to potential changes in the price of the solar panels and in the Feed-In Tariff rate. The initial financial model, showing likely returns based on different rates of energy price inflation, was appended to the report as an exempt appendix. External financial advice was being taken to ensure that the business case was as robust as possible. Another risk associated with the project was obtaining planning consent. A planning consultant had been appointed to co-ordinate the planning process.

There were a number of residential properties near to the proposed site, as well as HLC Queensway School. Councillor P.R. Watling, Cabinet Member for Children, Young People & Families, reported that initial discussions had been held with the School. In addition, there was likely to be interest in the project from the wider community. A communication and engagement plan had been developed, with Phase 1 involving direct contact with those living and working in the immediate vicinity, as well as with relevant Ward members and Parish/Town Councils. Once a planning application had been submitted, there would be formal consultation with stakeholders and the wider community on the specific proposals.

Councillor A.J. Eade (Conservative Group Leader) expressed some concerns regarding the risks involved with this scheme, and some of the assumptions in the financial model. There could also be adverse impacts for local residents if large scale screening or security measures were required around the site. The Chair advised that the detailed financial case for the scheme was classified as exempt information, and this part of the report could only be discussed following the exclusion of the public and press later in the meeting.

It was therefore

RESOLVED – to adjourn further consideration of the report until later in the meeting following the exclusion of the public and press.

CB-31 BRINGING EMPTY PROPERTIES BACK INTO USE AND TACKLING ROGUE LANDLORDS

Key Decision identified as **Bringing Empty Homes Back into Use** in the Notice of Key Decisions published on 30 April 2013.

Councillor R.A. Overton, on behalf of the Cabinet Member: Housing, Development & Borough Towns, presented the report of the Assistant Director: Development, Business & Employment, which set out proposals to bring empty properties back into use and tackle rogue landlords by establishing a social lettings agency and implementing a landlord accreditation scheme.

In Telford & Wrekin, there were estimated to be around 400 homes known to have been empty for longer than 6 months, of which around 162 had been inspected to date. 97% of these properties were privately owned. At the same time, the waiting list for social housing was continuing to increase, which meant it was vital for every source of accommodation to be maximised in order to meet demand. Empty properties were often detrimental to local communities if they were left to deteriorate. In response to these issues, it was proposed that the cross-Council Housing Action Team co-ordinate a programme of action/support to identify and monitor empty properties, and work with owners to identify what could be done to bring the property back into use. This could include the renovation, conversion and refurbishment of empty properties via a loans scheme. It was proposed to use £150,000 generated from capital receipts from disposals in Sutton Hill to fund a loans scheme, with loans of up to £20,000 being made available to landlords to bring empty dwellings in Sutton Hill back into use. Loans of between £5,000 and £15,000 were also being made available via the national Empty Homes Community Grants Programme – for which Telford & Wrekin would be an early adopter. Where properties were dilapidated or in a very poor condition, there were a number of other potential solutions including enforcement action, enforced sale or the making of an Empty Dwelling Management Order.

With increasing demand for private rented accommodation, it was proposed to introduce a Landlord Accreditation Scheme and take co-ordinated action to address poor landlord practices. The Scheme would involve the development of a register of landlords that adhered to correct practices. The Scheme would also provide advice and support to landlords in managing their properties. It was also proposed to create a Social Lettings Agency to source affordable, good quality accommodation.

Members welcomed the actions being proposed, particularly the introduction of a Landlord Accreditation Scheme which was a good step in giving tenants reassurance that they were dealing with a responsible landlord. In response to a question from Councillor W.L. Tomlinson (Liberal Democrat/Independent Group Leader), the Home Improvement Team Leader reported that it was hoped to be able to inspect all the known empty properties in the Borough within the next 6-12 months, following which a further report on the situation could be brought to Members.

RESOLVED –

- (a) that a capital allocation and expenditure of £150,000, funded from existing capital receipts, to reduce the significant number of empty homes within Sutton Hill be approved;
- (b) that the implementation of a Landlord Accreditation Scheme, as set out in the report, be approved;
- (c) that authority be delegated to the Home Improvement Agency Team Leader, in consultation with the Cabinet Member: Housing, Development & Borough Towns, to serve an Empty Dwelling Management Order, Compulsory Purchase Order and/or instigate an Enforced Sales Procedure;
- (d) that an Enforced Sales Procedure on an empty property be commenced where a minimum debt of £1,000 is outstanding on the property.

CB-32 HOMELESSNESS STRATEGY

Key Decision identified as **Homelessness Task Force – Homeless Strategy** in the Notice of Key Decisions published on 30 April 2013

Councillor R.A. Overton, on behalf of the Cabinet Member: Housing, Development & Borough Towns, presented the joint report of the Assistant Director: Development, Business & Employment and the Assistant Director: Family & Cohesion Services, which referred to a revised homelessness strategy that had been developed following a review of the present arrangements for dealing with homelessness. There was a minor amendment to recommendation 2.5 to make clear that the proposed use of capital receipts was a recommendation to full Council. A copy of the draft Strategy was appended to the report, and a minor typographical error on page 38 of the document would be amended.

A comprehensive review of homelessness in Telford & Wrekin had been undertaken by the Council in partnership with a number of other agencies. The key issues identified by the review were an over-reliance on bed and breakfast accommodation to meet the Council's statutory duty on homelessness, and an over-reliance on officers within Family & Cohesion Services to deliver a fully integrated solution to homelessness. The review concluded that officers in a client facing role were not best placed to manage property related functions and this was leading to the inefficient use of resources.

The revised Strategy set out how the Council would work with partners to prevent and tackle statutory and non-statutory homelessness, including eliminating the need for rough sleeping. The Strategy included an action plan setting out how the aims and priorities would be achieved over the next three years. It was proposed that the Development, Business & Employment service area would take over responsibility for managing all property aspects,

including for example negotiating leases and managing repairs and maintenance. Further details were appended to the report, but one immediate action being proposed was the refurbishment of existing accommodation at Refuge at a cost of c£110k, to be funded from the disposal of surplus properties within the homelessness portfolio. The temporary housing needs of service users would be brokered by Development, Business & Employment Services, working with private sector partners using a "Social Letting Agency" type model. The Strategy also addressed the need to accommodate Gypsies and Travellers in transit and tolerance sites, and the need to increase the size of existing sites to meet demand.

A query was raised on the figure quoted in the Strategy for the number of households registered with the 'Choose Your Home' scheme. Members, however, welcomed the involvement of charitable and voluntary groups in the development of the Strategy.

RESOLVED –

- (a) that the draft Homelessness Strategy 2013-2016 be approved for consultation, with a final report being brought back to Cabinet for approval later this year;**
- (b) that all property related functions relating to homelessness be transferred to the Development, Business & Employment Service area, and that delegated powers for making decisions relating to the property currently owned or leased for the purpose of providing temporary accommodation (as shown at Appendix 1 of the report) be granted to the Assistant Director: Development, Business & Employment, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Housing, Development & Borough Towns;**
- (c) that authority be delegated to the Assistant Director: Development, Business & Employment, following consultation with the Cabinet Member: Housing, Development & Borough Towns, to enter into, and award, any contracts necessary for the delivery of the Phase 1 works as outlined in the report;**
- (d) that authority be delegated to the Assistant Director: Development, Business & Employment for the disposal and acquisition of properties in order to deliver the Homelessness Strategy;**
- (e) TO RECOMMEND to COUNCIL that the utilisation of £110,000 of capital receipts towards the refurbishment of Refuge be approved;**
- (f) that it be noted that a revenue budget of £64,000 per annum from 2014/15 was required to allow for the delivery of the Homelessness Strategy, to be met by the identification of further savings from within the Family & Cohesion Service and Development, Business & Employment Service;**

- (g) that authority be delegated to the Assistant Director: Law, Democracy & Public Protection to execute all legal documentation necessary to give effect to the resolutions above.

CB-33 **YOUTH JUSTICE PLAN**

Key Decision identified as **Youth Justice Plan** in the Notice of Key Decisions published on 19 August 2013

Councillor P.R. Watling, Cabinet Member: Children, Young People & Families, presented the report of the Assistant Director: Family & Cohesion Services regarding the Youth Justice Plan which was prepared on an annual basis on behalf of Herefordshire Council, Shropshire Council, Telford & Wrekin Council and Worcestershire County Council. There was an amendment to the recommendation in the report in order to reflect the requirement for the Plan to be approved by full Council. A copy of the Plan for 2013/14 was appended to the report.

The Youth Justice Plan was a statutory document that set out how youth justice services across West Mercia were to be structured, provided and funded. It identified a number of priorities, and key actions to address risks to service delivery and improvement. These included focussing collaborative multi-agency effort on work to improve outcomes for Young Offenders; setting a strategic direction for the Youth Offending Service (YOS) across West Mercia; and to provide support and challenge to the YOS on operational performance.

In respect of the latter, the report detailed current performance on key national indicators for First Time Entrants to the youth justice system, the use of custody, and re-offending rates. These all compared favourably in comparison with national and regional performance. It also provided information on progress made during the first quarter of the year towards the main priorities in the Plan.

Phil Kendrick from the Youth Offending Service was present and was invited to answer questions from Members. In relation to the figures showing a rise in re-offending rates while the use of custody was falling, Mr Kendrick advised that the national trend was seeing persistent re-offending by a smaller group of offenders with complex needs and problems. Work was being done locally to gain a better understanding of this and to reduce the re-offending rate.

RESOLVED –

- (a) **TO RECOMMEND to COUNCIL that the Youth Justice Plan 2013/14 be approved;**
- (b) **that the performance for the first quarter be noted.**

CB-34 WEST MERCIA ADOPTION PROJECT

Key Decision identified as **West Mercia Adoption Project** in the Notice of Key Decisions published on 19 August 2013

Councillor P.R. Watling, Cabinet Member: Children, Young People & Families, presented the report of the Assistant Director: Children's Safeguarding which sought approval in principle to the development of a West Mercia Adoption Service across Herefordshire, Shropshire, Telford & Wrekin and Worcestershire.

Currently, Telford & Wrekin and Shropshire had a joint adoption service run by Shropshire Council. Herefordshire and Worcestershire each had their own adoption service. In response to new powers being proposed by Government in the Children & Families Bill 2013 (including taking over the running of adoption services that were not deemed to be performing appropriately), it was recognised that by working collaboratively, the four local authorities could deliver a more efficient and effective service to a wider range of children, with particular emphasis on improving the timeliness of placing children and young people for adoption.

The governance arrangements to deliver the project had been agreed and established, with a strategic Project Board made up of the four Directors of Children's Services. An Outline Business Case had been prepared to provide an initial outline of the project and what it sought to achieve. A copy of the Outline Business Case was appended to the report. A number of delivery options had been looked at, and it was proposed that the three most promising options be further explored via cost benefit analysis etc. None of the options precluded going into partnership with a voluntary organisation. Consultation activity with stakeholders was being organised.

Members welcomed the work being undertaken to develop a regional Adoption Service, and noted that it could result in 20% cost savings as a result of greater efficiencies.

RESOLVED –

- (a) That the proposal to develop a West Mercia Adoption Service, as set out in the Outline Business Case appended to the report, be approved in principle;**
- (b) that the options described in the Outline Business Case be explored further;**
- (c) that a further report be received when the Full Business Case is available in February 2014.**

CB-35 **BUILDING SCHOOLS FOR THE FUTURE – APPROVAL TO ENTER INTO AN EARLY WORKS AGREEMENT AT TELFORD CO-OPERATIVE ACADEMY ON THE SITE OF THE OAKENGATES LEISURE CENTRE**

Key Decision identified as **Building Schools for the Future – Approval to Enter into an Early Works Agreement at Telford Co-operative Academy, Oakengates** in the Notice of Key Decisions published on 19 August 2013

Councillor P.R. Watling, Cabinet Member: Children, Young People & Families, presented the report of the Assistant Director: Education & Corporate Parenting which sought approval to enter into an Early Works Agreement with the main contractor for the Borough's Building Schools for the Future (BSF) programme for development of the site for the Telford Co-operative Academy.

There was an exceptionally tight schedule in order for the new Academy to be open in September 2015 and for the new 3G synthetic pitch to be available by November 2013. To meet these deadlines, Shepherd Construction needed to undertake the enabling works as soon as possible. The total cost of the works under the proposed Early Works Agreement was in the region of £1.18m. Planning applications for the 3G pitch and the main school building were to be determined over the next few weeks, and the Final Business Case was being prepared for submission to the Education Funding Agency. Once the approvals were in place, the Council would enter into a contract with Shepherd Construction for the delivery of the new school and associated works on the Oakengates Leisure Centre site. Detailed financial information and legal advice was contained within the report.

RESOLVED – that authority be delegated to the Assistant Director: Education & Parenting, in consultation with the Cabinet Member: Children, Young People & Families, to enter into an Early Works Agreement with Shepherd Construction Ltd on the Telford Co-operative Academy site, prior to the signing of the main Design and Build contract, allowing enabling works to be undertaken to provide revenue income from the proposed 3G synthetic pitch and to facilitate the opening of the new school building in September 2015.

(NB: Councillor E.A. Clare did not vote on this item)

CB-36 **DESIGNATION OF A NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN AREA FOR ERCALL MAGNA**

Key Decision identified as **Application for the Designation of a Neighbourhood Area – Ercall Magna** in the Notice of Key Decisions published on 19 August 2013

Councillor R.A. Overton, on behalf of the Cabinet Member: Housing, Development & Borough Towns, presented the report of the Assistant Director: Planning Specialist, which detailed an application from Ercall Magna Parish Council for the designation of their area as a Neighbourhood area for planning purposes.

In May 2011 the Council successfully bid with Ercall Magna Parish Council for the Parish area to become one of the Government's 'Frontrunners in Neighbourhood Planning'. The development of a Neighbourhood Plan required the Council to agree and formally designate the area that would be the subject of the Plan. The proposed Neighbourhood Plan area for Ercall Magna, which reflected the current Parish Council boundaries, was appended to the report. The request was subject to a statutory consultation period, which ended on 24 May 2013. No representations were submitted. It was suggested that the correlation with the Parish Council area would assist in any future referendum and provided a good model for future Neighbourhood Plan proposals. Given that no concerns to the proposed boundary had been raised, it was therefore recommended that the designation request be supported.

RESOLVED – that the Neighbourhood Area application by Ercall Magna Parish Council be supported, and that the area shown at Appendix A of the report be designated as a Neighbourhood Area.

CB-37 SCRAP METAL DEALERS ACT 2013

Non-Key Decision

Councillor R.A. Overton, Cabinet Member for Public Health and Public Protection, presented the report of the Interim Manager – Public Protection, which outlined the Council's responsibilities arising from the introduction of the Scrap Metal Dealers Act 2013.

The Scrap Metal Dealers Act 2013 came into effect on 1 October 2013, replacing the previous registration system for scrap metal dealers. Local Authorities would be responsible for administration and compliance in relation to the Act. A site licence would make it a requirement for a licensee to identify all of the sites within the local authority that were used for the business of a scrap metal dealer, and a site manager to be named for each site. A separate mobile collectors licence would be required for the collection of domestic and commercial scrap metal in the area of the issuing authority. Only suitable dealers would be allowed to operate, with Councils being able to consider relevant criminal convictions when determining whether an applicant was a suitable person to be a scrap metal dealer. There were new requirements for dealers to keep records and it would be an offence for dealers to pay for scrap in cash.

The power to set licence fees had been passed to Local Authorities, and proposed fees for the new licences under the Act were appended to the report. Benchmarking data on other Authorities' proposed fees was also provided to provide comparison, along with a full costing exercise showing the projected costs of administering the new licensing system.

RESOLVED –

- (a) that the proposed licence fees for Site Licences and Collectors Licences set out at Appendix A of the report be approved;**

- (b) that authority be delegated to the Principal Licensing Officer to grant, refuse, vary or revoke licences and to impose licence conditions;
- (c) that authority be delegated to the Principal Licensing Officer, following consultation with the Cabinet Member for Public Health and Public Protection, to establish a policy in respect of determining applications and an appropriate procedure for dealing with representations.

CB-38 EXCLUSION OF PUBLIC AND PRESS

RESOLVED – that the public and press be excluded from the meeting for the following items of business on the grounds that they may involve the disclosure of information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information) as defined in paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972.

CB-39 SOLAR FARM

Key Decision identified as **Commercial Energy Project – Solar Farm** in the Notice of Key Decisions published on 19 August 2013.

Further to minute CB-30 above, Cabinet resumed their consideration of this item of business.

Councillor W.A.M. McClements, Cabinet Member: Finance & Enterprise, presented the confidential information relating to the financial case for the scheme. There were slight amendments to the projected surplus figures shown in the report in order to take account of the lost rental income from the current use of the site. The figures for the likely returns from the solar farm shown in the financial model were considered to be on the conservative side. Government was encouraging Local Authorities to find innovative ways of generating income, and this scheme would bring other wider benefits to the environment.

In response to concerns raised by the Conservative Group Leader regarding the borrowing costs for the scheme, the Cabinet Member stated that these costs would be more than recouped from the income generated by the solar farm.

RESOLVED –

- (a) that the submission of a planning application to develop a solar farm on land at Wheat Leasows, as shown on the plan appended to the report, be approved;
- (b) that, subject to planning permission being granted, authority be delegated to the Managing Director, in consultation with the

Cabinet Member for Finance & Enterprise and the Cabinet Member for Neighbourhood Services, Employment & Skills, to procure the design, build and operation contract(s) for the solar farm;

- (c) **that authority be delegated to the Assistant Director: Law, Democracy & Public Protection to execute all legal documentation necessary to give effect to the recommendations contained in the report.**

CB-40 PROVISION OF COMMUNITY MEALS – FROZEN MEALS SERVICES

Key Decision identified as **Provision of Community Meals – Frozen Meals** in the Notice of Key Decisions published on 19 August 2013

Councillor A.R.H. England, Cabinet Member: Adult Social Care, presented the report of the Assistant Director: Care & Support, which sought approval for the completion of arrangements and a tendering process for the award of a contract for the supply and delivery of frozen meals for regeneration and for direct home delivery.

The report detailed the current service provision under the existing contract which was due to expire on 31 March 2014. While the tender for the new contract would primarily be on a like-for-like basis with the current provision, it did allow an opportunity to explore new options for the delivery of this service. Detailed financial and contractual information regarding the service and the tendering process was contained within the report.

RESOLVED –

- (a) **that the re-tendering for the provision of the supply and delivery of individual frozen meals for adults living in the community and to designated regeneration centres within the Borough of Telford & Wrekin be approved;**
- (b) **that authority be delegated to the Assistant Director: Care & Support, in consultation with the Cabinet Member: Adult Social Care, to award a contract for a term of three years (with an option to extend for up to a maximum of a further two years subject to satisfactory performance and pricing) for the provision of frozen meals services in accordance with the Council's Constitution and Contract Procedure Rules, such contract being subject to the terms and conditions recommended by the Assistant Director: Law, Democracy & Public Protection;**
- (c) **that authority be delegated to the Assistant Director: Law, Democracy & Public Protection to execute all documentation required to give effect to any agreement reached pursuant to the resolutions above;**

The meeting ended at 6.07pm.

Signed for the purposes of the Decision Notices

Jonathan Eatough
Assistant Director: Law, Democracy & Public Protection
Date: 25 September 2013

Signed:

Date: