

CABINET

Decision Notices and Minutes of a meeting of the Cabinet held on Thursday, 16th October, 2014 at 5.00 p.m. at the AFC Telford Learning Centre, Haybridge Road, Wellington, Telford

PUBLISHED ON WEDNESDAY, 22nd OCTOBER, 2014

(DEADLINE FOR CALL-IN: MONDAY, 27th OCTOBER, 2014)

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

CB-42 MINUTES

RESOLVED – that the minutes of the meeting of the Cabinet held on 18 September 2014 be confirmed and signed by the Chair.

CB-43 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

None

CB-44 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillors A.R.H. England and P.R. Watling declared a personal interest in agenda item 6 – Madeley Neighbourhood Development Plan – as members of Madeley Town Council.

CB-45 FINANCIAL MONITORING 2014/15

Key Decision identified as **2014/15 Financial Monitoring** in the Notice of Key Decisions published on 15 August 2014.

Part Recommendation to Full Council in relation to decision (b) below not subject to Call-in

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 2014/15.

The net outturn position for the General Fund revenue budget was currently projected to be within budget. This was a significant improvement on the

position in July when a net overall overspend of £0.483m was reported. This was a reflection of the strength of the financial management being exercised by Cabinet Members and officers. Proposals for further in-year savings had had a positive impact, and there would be no complacency about the actions needed to deal with the continued budget pressures faced by the Council. KPMG, the Council's external auditors, had completed their review of the Council's statement of accounts for 2013/14, and had issued an unqualified opinion. Therefore there were no changes to the accounts that might impact on the revenue budget position. Credit was due to the Assistant Director and his team for the positive outcome of the audit of accounts.

There were a number of variations from the approved budget, including the cost of Children in Care placements (overspend of £1.2m); the cost of Adult Care and Support services (projected overspend of £6.3m relating to care packages); provision of in-house services to Adults with Learning Disabilities (overspend of £0.3m); and the cost of supporting 16-18 year olds as they leave care (overspend of £0.3m). Projected variances of over £0.100m for individual service delivery units were detailed in the report. There were benefits from active treasury management of £1.5m, £0.1m from additional dividend income from West Mercia Energy and £1.8m from the implementation of single status which was now unlikely to happen in this financial year.

The capital programme totalled £134m, which included slippage and all approvals since the budget was set. Spend was currently standing at around 19%. The report detailed a number of new approvals, along with some changes to the funding of the capital programme.

Collection levels for Council Tax, NNDR and Sales Ledger debt were all slightly behind the targets set for the year. However, it was noted that from April to August 2014, the gross liability for business rates had increased by £1.1m which reflected the success of the Council's growth agenda.

In relation to the overspend in Adult Social Care, Councillor McClements and Councillor A.R.H. England, Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care, reported on the measures that were being taken to reduce costs and re-design the way in which services were delivered. There were clear plans in place, and every aspect of the budget was being examined to find ways of providing the best service for the best value. However, due to the need to properly consult with service users etc, the impact of the measures being taken did sometimes take a bit longer to feed through.

In response to a question from Councillor W Tomlinson (Liberal Democrat/Independent Group Leader) about the equality implications of not implementing single status in the current year, the Assistant Director: Law, Democracy & People Services advised that work was continuing on single status and as roles were being re-designed through service re-structures equal pay was one of the considerations.

RESOLVED –

- (a) that it be noted that 2014/15 revenue spending is currently projected to be within budget at year end, and that Cabinet Members and the Senior Management Team are continuing to review savings opportunities so that the budget is in the best possible position by year end;
- (b) that the position in relation to capital spend and receipts be noted, and that it is **RECOMMENDED** to **COUNCIL** that the new allocations, virements and slippage detailed in Appendix 3 and the funding changes to the capital programme detailed at paragraph 6.2 of the report be approved;
- (c) that the collection rates for NNDR, council tax and sales ledger be noted.

CB-46 LAND AT STATION ROAD, NEWPORT – UPDATE AND ALTERNATIVE DEVELOPMENT

Key Decision identified as **Land at Station Road, Newport** in the Notice of Key Decisions published on 8 October 2014.

Not subject to Call-in – the Chair of the Housing, Economy & Infrastructure Scrutiny Committee has approved a request for this decision to be exempt from Call-in as any delay in implementation is likely to result in the Council incurring additional costs.

Councillor W.A.M. McClements, Cabinet Member: Finance & Enterprise, presented the joint report of the Director: Development, Business & Customer Services and Assistant Director: Law, Democracy & People Services, which sought approval to enter into agreements for the termination of the existing agreements in relation to the sale and development of the Station Road, Newport site, and to seek approval to enter into an agreement to deliver a residential-led development on the site.

The report detailed the planning and contractual history relating to the development of the site since the appointment of St Modwen Developments Ltd as the Council's Development Partner in February 2011. The conditional sale of the site to Sainsburys for the construction of a supermarket, and a joint venture development agreement with St Modwen, were agreed later in 2011. The subsequent approval of other sites in Newport for supermarket development had significantly affected the factors supporting the proposed development at Station Road. In addition, the current planning application for Station Road was facing another public inquiry after the original inquiry was halted following the death of the Planning Inspector. In the face of these changed circumstances, the parties had together reconsidered the position and had agreed, in principle, to withdraw the planning application that was currently subject to call-in by the Department for Communities & Local Government. It was therefore proposed to enter into a settlement agreement

with St Modwens and Sainsburys to terminate existing agreements and release the parties from their obligations.

The Cabinet Member reminded Members that the Council had a duty to maximise the value of its assets, and that the proposed supermarket development at Station Road would have generated a significant capital receipt which would have helped mitigate some of the effects of Government cuts on Council front line services, as well as creating many new jobs. As the Council was now unable to secure the previously anticipated land value, consideration had been given to ways in which the Council could comply with its duty to achieve best value for its assets. This work had been supported by independent external experts, and it was proposed to develop the land for use as a residential-led development. To take this forward, it was proposed that the Council enter into a development agreement with St Modwen to make use of the large amount of work that had already been undertaken to support the retail application that could be reused and updated – thus saving significant costs on a new planning application.

Councillor A Eade (Conservative Group Leader) expressed the view that the pursuit of the supermarket application was against the wishes of local people and had cost the Council a significant amount of money. He also expressed concerns that the proposed residential-led development on a green field site would again be imposed on the local community without proper consultation. There then followed a lengthy discussion regarding the past decisions that had been made for the development of the Station Road site, and when. In terms of the proposed residential-led development, the Cabinet Member advised that the pre-planning work would involve public consultation and the planning process would be subject to the usual public scrutiny.

The Chair advised that in order for Members to fully consider all the options available to them in reaching a decision, it was necessary to consider more detailed information on the proposed development agreement, settlement terms and the financial implications. These were contained in an Appendix to the report, but which the other parties involved required the Council to keep confidential in order to protect their commercial interests. It was therefore moved, seconded and

RESOLVED – that the public and press be excluded from the meeting during consideration of Appendix 2 of the report on the grounds that it may involve the disclosure of exempt 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.

The public and press then left the meeting room.

The Cabinet Member: Finance & Enterprise presented Appendix 2 of the report, and Members had the opportunity to ask questions about the information contained therein.

The public and press were then readmitted to the meeting room.

The Cabinet Member summarised the position regarding the land at Station Road, Newport and recommended the way forward detailed in the report as the best option for the Council to achieve best consideration for the land. It was then moved, seconded and

RESOLVED –

- (a) that the position in respect of the original plans for the site be noted, and that the new plans as contained within the report be endorsed;
- (b) that approval be given to entering into the settlement agreement and development agreement, as detailed in the exempt Appendix 2 of the report, with authority being delegated to the Assistant Director: Law, Democracy & People Services to sign the settlement agreement and the Director: Development, Business & Customer Services to sign the development agreement, both on substantially the same terms as detailed in Appendix 2 as they consider are in the best interests of the Council.

**CB-47 MADELEY NEIGHBOURHOOD DEVELOPMENT PLAN:
CONSIDERATION OF EXAMINER'S RECOMMENDATIONS
AND PROPOSED MODIFICATIONS PRIOR TO
REFERENDUM**

Key Decision identified as **Madeley Neighbourhood Development Plan: Consideration of the Examiner's Recommendations and Modifications prior to Referendum** in the Notice of Key Decisions published on 17 September 2014.

Councillor C.F. Smith, Cabinet Member: Housing, Development & Borough Towns, presented the report of the Assistant Director: Planning Specialist, which updated Members on the statutory process for the development of the Madeley Neighbourhood Development Plan (NDP) and the approvals now needed to proceed to a Referendum.

Following the submission of the Plan and supporting documents by Madeley Town Council in February 2014, the Borough had appointed an Independent Examiner, John Parmiter, to conduct the required Examination. This included a public hearing on 6 June 2014. The Examiner asked for clarification of policies H1 (housing) and R1 (retail) in terms of their conformity with local and national planning policies. The Town Council submitted modifications to address these points, and these had been accepted by the Examiner. There were a number of other relatively minor modifications being proposed by the Examiner. All the modifications were set out in the Examiner's Report, which was appended to the report. Whilst the proposed modifications were not binding, they were considered to be appropriate. Members needed to be satisfied that the Plan met certain 'basic conditions' before it could proceed to a Referendum, and both Officers and the Examiner were of the view that these conditions had been met.

Subject to approval, the NDP would proceed to a Referendum in Madeley Parish (as the Neighbourhood Plan area) to ask electors whether they want the Local Planning Authority to use the NDP to help decide planning applications. It was anticipated that the Referendum would be held in January 2015.

Consideration was given to the recommendations made by the Examiner in terms of modifications to the NDP, and to whether the NDP met the 'basic conditions'. In respect of the area in which the Referendum was to take place, Members also considered the Examiner's recommendation that this should not change, and should be the same as the designated NDP area.

RESOLVED –

- (a) that, subject to the modifications recommended by the Examiner being made, the Madeley Neighbourhood Development Plan meets the 'basic conditions' and all other legal requirements as set out in the report and appendix;**
- (b) that the required modifications be made to the Madeley Neighbourhood Development Plan, and that the Plan should then proceed to Referendum;**
- (c) that the Referendum Area should not be extended beyond the designated area to which Madeley Neighbourhood Development Plan relates;**
- (d) that authority be delegated to the Managing Director (and any other officer authorised in writing by him) to exercise all the relevant powers and duties for undertaking all necessary arrangements for the Madeley Neighbourhood Development Plan (Referendum Version) to proceed to referendum on the question of whether Telford & Wrekin Council should use the Plan to help it decide planning applications in the Neighbourhood Development Plan area.**

CB-48 CARE ACT 2014

Non-Key Decision

Councillor A.R.H. England, Cabinet Member: Adult Social Care, presented the report of the Director of Health, Wellbeing & Care which provided an update on progress towards implementation of Part 1 of the Care Act which came into force on 1 April 2015, with Part 2 from 1 April 2016.

The Care Act replaced various pieces of adult social care legislation, and would fundamentally change the law and practice relating to the provision of community care services for adults and their carers. It would require major changes in the way that community care services were delivered. Whilst the Act addressed concerns of the public about the costs of care provision falling

on an individual's life savings, there was concern that the Government had under-estimated the costs to local authorities of implementing the Act.

Government had made money available to each local authority to help plan and prepare for the implementation of the Act, with a further sum of money available for collective partnership working. Some initial modelling work had been completed to predict the impact of Part 1 of the Act and to compare the outcomes with the indicative amount of new monies that the Council would receive from Government. Analysis suggested that the Council was making "moderate progress" in preparing for implementation and that it was "fairly confident" it would be in a position to deliver the reforms from April 2015. The arrangements that had been set up locally to prepare for and implement Part 1 were detailed in the report.

As yet there had been no specific announcements about funding for the Part 2 funding reform changes to be implemented from April 2016 or how the money would be distributed between local authorities. Some modelling work had been done to gauge the impact of existing self-funders who, from April 2016, would qualify for local authority support, but this was complicated by a number of "unknowns" and assumptions. There was a significant risk that any shortfall in funding for Part 2 reform would compound the existing budget position and any shortfall in funding the Part 1 reforms.

The final Part 1 Guidance and Regulations were still awaited from Government, but there would be a need for decisions to be taken on a number of Council adult social care policies in order to ensure that they were compliant with the new Care Act.

Members expressed concern at the potential complexity of the new arrangements for funding care provision, and the implications for the Council if the additional costs were not fully funded by central Government.

RESOLVED –

- (a) that authority be delegated to the Director of Health, Wellbeing & Care, in consultation with the Cabinet Member: Adult Social Care, to agree new Adult Social Care policies resulting from the Care Act ;**
- (b) that it be noted that further reports will be brought to Cabinet in the run up to implementation of Part 1 of the Act in April 2015, and through 2015/16 in preparation for Part 2 implementation in April 2016;**
- (c) that a wider briefing of all Councillors be arranged through a dedicated seminar.**

The meeting ended at 6.09 pm.

Signed for the purposes of the Decision Notices

Jonathan Eatough
Assistant Director: Law, Democracy & People Services
Date: 22 October 2014

Signed:

Date:

TELFORD & WREKIN COUNCIL

CABINET - 13th NOVEMBER 2014

HOMELESSNESS STRATEGY

REPORT OF: ASSISTANT DIRECTOR FOR FAMILY & COHESION SERVICES

LEAD CABINET MEMBER – CLLR CHARLES SMITH

PART A – SUMMARY REPORT

1. 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 The Homelessness Strategy was approved by Cabinet in September 2013; however, Cabinet requested that a further consultation period, alongside the implementation of the strategy, should be undertaken with non statutory and statutory providers (Stay, LIFE, Maninplace, KIP, Wellington YMCA, West Mercia Police, Wrekin Housing Trust, Sanctuary House, Homeless Link and Bromford), prior to the strategy being formally adopted.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 That Cabinet adopt the Homelessness Strategy in light of the consultation.**
- 2.2 That Cabinet notes progress being made on the Strategy which is summarised in the action plan contained within Annex 1 of this report.**

3. 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 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	<p>The financial implications of implementing the strategy were set out in the report to Cabinet in September 2013. The actions proposed in the Homelessness Strategy include a combination of actions some funded from revenue and some from capital funding. A number are proposed to be delivered or have already been delivered from within existing staff resources and therefore from existing revenue budgets, or from partner resources. However, to meet demand for the Housing Options service, two 24 month fixed term posts will be appointed at a cost of £47k per annum, the funding for these posts is one off funding and can not meet a continuing higher level of demand. A number of schemes are completed or are already in progress and where issues are identified they are included within current financial monitoring reports. One development identified as having a potential revenue cost implication is still being reviewed, this is in Aim 3 and is the possibility of developments to the Gypsy and Travellers Service following the consultation in 2013. Until this review is concluded and proposals put forward it is not possible to comment on the financial implications.</p> <p>A number of capital infrastructure developments have happened, are in progress or are proposed. For some the funding is determined but some are still subject to business case or review development and funding is yet to be sourced. Once considered these will either be subject to further reports or managed from within existing approvals or partner funding.</p> <p>The future of any of the proposals, revenue or capital funded, will be subject to the scrutiny of funding proposals as part of the determination of future capital or revenue budget strategy.</p> <p>Therefore, by adopting the strategy there are no additional budgetary implications which need to be considered which have not been addressed through the current reporting framework.</p> <p>RP-3rd October 2014</p>
LEGAL ISSUES	Yes	In addition to the existing statutory duties to respond to homelessness the introduction of the Homelessness Act

		<p>2002 imposed a new obligation upon local authorities to carry out Homelessness Reviews and thereafter develop strategies to prevent homelessness from occurring.</p> <p>The development of a Homelessness Strategy is a statutory requirement and the Act requires that homelessness strategies must be kept under review and renewed at least every five (5) years.</p> <p>The Homelessness Strategy for the Borough of Telford and Wrekin has been produced in accordance with the Homelessness Act 2002, statutory guidance and good practice guidance.</p> <p>The extended period of consultation recommended by Cabinet means that the Authority has likely complied with its duty to consult with all such public or local authorities, voluntary organisations and other persona as they consider appropriate.</p> <p>The Authority is required to make a copy of its Homelessness Review, the Homelessness Strategy and any associated documentation available for inspection, without charge, by members of the public, and to provide (on payment of a reasonable charge if it wishes) a copy of such documents.</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

4. INFORMATION

- 4.1 The Homelessness Strategy 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.

- 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.
- 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 transit and tolerated sites and the need to increase the size of existing sites to meet need.

4.2 Cabinet approved the draft Homelessness Strategy 2013-2016 on 19th September 2013 and agreed a further period of consultation with a final report being brought back to Cabinet for approval. Further consultation was undertaken with Maninplace, KIP, Stay, YCMA, private and registered landlords and the Scrutiny Management Board on 15th November 2013. The Board and partners welcomed the improvements that had been made working collaboratively with partner organisations which was affirmed by providers attending the meeting, and commended the Council’s approach in recognising the needs of both statutory and non-statutory homeless and these comments were reflected in the Board’s response to the Strategy.

4.3 Significant progress has been made through the delivery and implementation of the action plan (Annex 1); overseen by the Homelessness Task Force, and moving forward this will be overseen by the Homelessness Partnership. The four key achievements to date are:

- The launch of Telford Housing Options Tool, which has replaced the Wrekin Housing Trust’s Choose Your Home Scheme and went live on 7th July 2014.
- The development of a gypsy and traveller transit site in Snedshill which has significantly reduced the number of unlawful encampments across Telford and Wrekin.
- The commencement of works to extend the existing permanent gypsy and traveller site at lodge Road in Donnington Wood, following approval of £1.75m of funding from Homes & Communities Agency. The development of the Foyer which will be called ‘The Woodlands’ which is a 16 unit accommodation targeting 16-25 year olds with complex needs and will be offering 24/7 support.
- The phasing out of use of Bed and Breakfast for emergency accommodation.

4.4 The Homelessness Partnership will continue to work in collaboration to ensure the needs of all people presenting are being met to ensure sustainable tenancy and reduce the number of people presenting.

5. FINANCIAL AND LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

Please see financial comment above.

6. **PREVIOUS MINUTES**

Cabinet report 19th September 2013

7. **BACKGROUND PAPERS**

- Cabinet report presented 25th July 2013 entitled 'Acquisition of land at Donnington Wood and Snedshill' which gained approval for plans to 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.
- Cabinet Report presented 19th September 2013 Homelessness Strategy

Report prepared by Jas Bedesha, Service Delivery Manager Cohesion Services

Annex 1 – Homelessness Strategy Action Plan

Homelessness Strategy Action Plan V1				
		Aim 1	Aim 2	Aim 3
RAG rating	complete	7	14	11
	on schedule	6	3	1
	In progress	6	9	4
	behind schedule	0	0	0
Total number of actions		16	26	17
Aim 1	Prevent homelessness in Telford and Wrekin			
Aim 2	Have appropriate housing pathways, including advice and support for homeless households in Telford and Wrekin			
Aim 3	Meet statutory duty to accommodate Gypsy, Romani and Traveller Community			

Aim 1: Prevent homelessness in Telford and Wrekin									
Action Number	Action	Completion date	Lead	Resources (within existing / to source)	Performance indicators (link to a performance framework)	Success criteria	Date progress updated	Progress	RAG rating
1a	Provide a Single Referral and Access Point and Single Assessment Tool for all people who present themselves as homeless								
i	Develop a Single Referral and Access Point	Apr-14	Cohesion Services – T&WC (coordinate with partners)	Within existing	Number of all homelessness presentation presented		26.08.2014	This is now part of Southwater 1.	complete
ii	Develop a Single Assessment tool	Apr-14	Cohesion Services – T&WC (coordinate with partners)	Within existing	Single assessment tool that identifies need and provides tailored support packages		26.08.2014	The Housing Options Tool is up and running.	complete
iii	Improve access to employment and training for homeless people	Dec-14	Jas Bedesha and Bromford Housing	Within existing	To be developed as part of the consultation		15.09.2014	Meetings have begun with THRIVE to put in a package of support for tenants to manage their own tenancy more efficiently that will develop their skills to access employment and training.	In progress
iv	Seek to identify funding sources across a range of partnerships and emerging opportunities throughout the life of the strategy.	Ongoing	Homelessness Partnership (T&WC and partners)	Within existing	Identify funding sources across a range of partnerships		26.08.2014	Ongoing	complete
v	Review the local partnership performance monitoring arrangements:	Apr-14	Jas Bedesha	Within existing	Develop a performance monitoring framework for the Homelessness Partnership		May-14	The strategy is in place.	complete
	- Identify gaps in strategy information							The strategy is in place.	complete
	- Set up appropriate mechanisms to capture and report this data in the future							The strategy is in place.	complete
	- Develop a partnership performance management framework to enable a coordinated evaluation of all homelessness in Telford and Wrekin (both statutory and non statutory)							A performance monitoring framework is in place and is being further developed. This will also provide qualitative information as well as quantitative.	on schedule
vi	Develop revised Council Housing Allocation Policy.	Nov-14	Chris Winter	Within existing	Ensure clear pathway and procedures back in to Social Housing			Initial scoping exercise completed. Initial policy being drafted.	on schedule
1b	Commission and monitor a range of support services for vulnerable groups								
i	Map and scope the support services available to vulnerable groups	Apr-14	All housing and support providers	Within existing	Monitored through the Homelessness Partnership			THRIVE is in place.	complete
ii	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	Jas Bedesha	Within existing	Monitored through the Homelessness Partnership			Part of the restructure and once implementation of the above. Briefing notes will be completed following each Homelessness Partnership Meeting to share with all agencies/practitioners.	In progress

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

Action number	Action	Completion date	Lead	Resources (within existing / to source)	Performance indicators (link to a performance framework)	Success criteria	Date progress updated	Progress	RAG rating
2a. Priority Action 2a: Establish sustainable pathways for all homeless people from temporary accommodation into sustainable tenancies and discharge the Council's homelessness duty.									
i	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		28.08.2014	Prevention Grant in place	complete
ii	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	ongoing	Sue Millward, Surveyor, Regeneration & Investment Team	To be reviewed	Monitored through the Task & Finish Group - Chaired by Sue Millward		16.09.2014	The Surveying Department have started liaising with the private sector to acquire properties that will meet the Council's need in discharging duty from temporary accommodation.	In progress
iii	Consider conversion of two of the existing 3 bed Council owned accommodation into house shares and or Houses of Multiple Occupation	Apr-14	Sue Millward, Surveyor, Regeneration & Investment Team	Within existing	Monitored through the Task Force		28.08.2014		complete
iv	Review privately leased in properties and look to hand back those which are in poor condition or subject to uncooperative landlords	Apr-14	Sue Millward, Surveyor, Regeneration & Investment Team	Within existing	Monitored through the Task Force		28.08.2014	Service Level Agreement is in place.	complete
v	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.	Apr-14	Sue Millward, Surveyor, Regeneration & Investment Team	To be considered by A&P	Monitored through the Task & Finish Group		28.08.2014		In progress
vi	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	Apr-14	Sue Millward, Surveyor, Regeneration & Investment Team	Within existing	Monitored through the Task Force		28.08.2014		In progress
2b Enhance provision to accommodate young people									
i	Develop a 16 unit supported accommodation and 8 units of first stage move on accommodation for young people with complex needs	2015	Bromford Housing Association and STAY	Government funded	Partnership steering group		28.08.2014	Contract in place and provision in Woodside.	complete
ii	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		28.08.2014	Contract in place and provision in Lightmoor	complete
iii	Develop a 12 unit accommodation for young people	2015	Sanctuary Housing Association	Partnership Resources	Partnership steering group		28.08.2014	Contract in place and provision in Lightmoor	on schedule
iv	Develop additional units of temporary accommodation within the councils current facilities for young people	Apr-14	Sue Millward, Surveyor, Regeneration & Investment Team	Within existing	Monitored through the Task Force		28.08.2014	In place but not successful so under review	complete

v	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		28.08.2014	Programme in place. Youth Innovation Team Leader has is being recruited to	on schedule
vi	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.	Dec-14	John Green, STAY	Partnership Resource	Partnership steering		28.08.2014	They are looking to gain HCA. Once this has been gained this can progress. (Application has been submitted; awaiting response)	In progress
2c	Develop a social lettings model and Landlord Accreditation Scheme to help people into private rented sector tenancies								
i	Create a Social Lettings Agency managed by the Council to provide affordable, good quality accommodation that meets statutory and non-statutory homelessness requirements	Apr-14	Toni Keever, Home Improvement Team leader, Regeneration & Investment	Within existing	Monitored through the Task Force		28.08.2014	In place - Coordinator appointed. Landlord accreditation scheme started.	In progress
ii	Develop a Landlord Accreditation Scheme in consultation with partners and private landlords	Apr-14	Toni Keever, Home Improvement Team leader, Regeneration & Investment	Within existing	Monitored through the Task Force		28.08.2014	In place - Coordinator appointed. Landlord accreditation scheme started.	In progress
iii	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:	Apr-14	Toni Keever, Home Improvement Team leader, Regeneration & Investment	Within existing	Monitored through the Task Force		28.08.2014	In place in Wellington	complete
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to work with landlords and tenants to reduce rent arrears in the Borough 	Ongoing	Toni Keever, Home Improvement Team leader, Regeneration & Investment	Within existing	Monitored through the Task Force		28.08.2014		complete
	<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	Toni Keever, Home Improvement Team leader, Regeneration & Investment	Within existing	Monitored through the Task Force		28.08.2014		complete
	<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	Toni Keever, Home Improvement Team leader, Regeneration & Investment	Within existing	Monitored through the Task Force		28.08.2014		complete
	<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	Toni Keever, Home Improvement Team leader, Regeneration & Investment	Within existing	Monitored through the Task Force		28.08.2014		complete
	<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	Toni Keever, Home Improvement Team leader, Regeneration & Investment	Within existing	Monitored through the Task Force		28.08.2014		complete

iv	Review the business case for converting the house in Dodmoor Grange into a House of Multiple Occupancy	Apr-14	Tim Moore, Commissioning Specialist, Commissioning (Children & Families and Transport)	To be reviewed	Monitored through the Task Force		28.08.2014	Business case being developed.	In progress
v	Develop a crash pad to accommodate 18 to 65 year olds into emergency accommodation	Apr-14	Tim Moore, Commissioning Specialist, Commissioning (Children & Families and Transport)	Capital investment sourced	Monitored through the Task Force		28.08.2014	Business case being developed.	In progress
2d	28.08.2014								
i	Establish a 'first point' response for non-statutory homeless people to be accommodated.	Ongoing	Maninplace	Partnership funding	Monitored through the Task Force		28.08.2014	In place	complete
ii	Establish and implement an Offender Protocol which will support homeless offenders into accommodation	ongoing	Integrated Offender Management Steering Group	Partnership funding	IOM steering group		28.08.2014	in place	complete
2e	Work with Private Landlords to bring derelict properties back into use								
i	Encourage owners of empty properties to bring their properties back into use and rented under the bond scheme or temporary accommodation	Ongoing	Toni Keever, Home Improvement Team leader, Regeneration & Investment	Within existing	Monitored through the Task Force		28.08.2014	A report to Scutiny was presented in May 2014.	In progress
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.								
i	Develop Council Tenancy Strategy.	Nov-14	Chris Winter, Development, Business & Housing, T&WC / Family & Cohesion service – T&WC	Within existing	Monitored through the Task Force		28.08.2014	Part of the allocation policy	on schedule
	complete								
	on schedule								
	In progress								
	behind schedule								

Aim 3: Meet statutory duty to accommodate Gypsy, Romani and Traveller Community

Action Number	Action	Completion date	Lead	Resources (within existing / to source)	Performance indicators (link to a performance framework)	Success criteria	Date progress updated	Progress	RAG rating
3a Priority Action 3a: Develop a strategic plan identify appropriate locations that meet the needs of the Gypsy, Romani and Traveller community									
i	Develop local policy to respond to national requirements to manage Gypsy, Romani and Traveller sites	Jul-13	Development, Business and Housing – T&W Council / Family & Cohesion service – T&WC	Within existing	Monitored through the Task Force		28.08.2014	in place	complete
ii	Develop plans for an extension of Gypsy, Romani and Traveller site at Donnington to assist with bid for HCA funding.	Sep-14	Development, Business and Housing – T&W Council	Within existing	E.g. Reduction in the number of unlawful encampments		28.08.2014	Contract out for tender, work starting September 2014.	on schedule
iii	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 Partnership.		28.08.2014	Successful	complete
iv	Identify and procure land within the borough to meet interim needs of the Gypsy, Romani 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 Partnership.		28.08.2014	Site open.	complete
v	Explore future Gypsy, Romani 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 Partnership.		28.08.2014	Part of the Shaping Places strategy	complete
vi	Work with the Gypsy, Romani 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 Partnership.		28.08.2014	Complete	complete
3b Establish a programme of support to address health and wellbeing and educational needs of Gypsy, Romani and Traveller community									
i	Deliver European Funded project 'Springboard' to deliver current training, review and expand the programme to the Gypsy, Romani and Traveller Community.	End Dec 2013	Andy Cooke	Within existing	Monitor through the Homelessness Partnership.		28.08.2014		complete
ii	Complete formal consultation with the Gypsy, Romani and Traveller Community	End Sept 2013	Community Engagement, Equality and Action – T&WC	Within existing	Monitor through the Homelessness Partnership.		28.08.2014		complete

iii	Use feedback from 2013 consultation exercise to inform future service provision	Ongoing	Family & Cohesion service – T&WC	TBC	Monitor through the Homelessness Partnership.		28.08.2014		complete
iv	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 Partnership.		28.08.2014	Developed as part of the Cohesion restructure. In place.	complete
v	Work with the Gypsy, Romani and Traveller Community to encourage their participation in sport and leisure activities	Sep-14	Andy Cooke	Within existing	Monitor through the Homelessness Partnership.		28.08.2014	Work in place Gypsy Liaison Officer has been appointed to.	on schedule
3c Priority Action 3c: Work with the wider community and the Gypsy Traveller community to improve the understanding of the different cultures and needs									
i	Continue to raise public awareness of the needs and cultural lifestyles of the Gypsy, Romani and Traveller Community	Ongoing	Michael Benting - Gypsy & Traveller Officer	Within existing	Monitor through the Homelessness Partnership.		28.08.2014	Cultural awareness leaflet completed.	in progress
ii	The Council will continue to be represented at the One Telford Safer Stronger Businesses meeting which is made up of local businesses. The challenges those local businesses and the Gypsy, Romani 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, Romani and Traveller culture and traditions.	Ongoing	Family & Cohesion services – T&WC	Within existing	Monitor through the Homelessness Partnership.		28.08.2014		complete
iii	Explore ways to encourage the Gypsy, Romani 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 Partnership.		28.08.2014	GRT working group to be re-established.	in progress
iv	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.	Ongoing	Gypsy & Traveller Officer	Within existing	Monitor through the Homelessness Partnership.		28.08.2014	GRT working group to be re-established.	in progress
v	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 Partnership.		28.08.2014	Started but further work to be completed. GHT group will lead on this work .	in progress
vi	Identify measures which demonstrate the prevention of anti-social behaviour and cohesion in the community and develop further work to respond to issues raised.	Mar-14	Gypsy & Traveller Officer	Within existing	Monitor through the Homelessness Partnership.		28.08.2014	Transferred service to be part of Community Safety.	complete

HOMELESSNESS STRATEGY
FOR THE BOROUGH OF TELFORD AND WREKIN 2014 – 2017



Homelessness Strategy for the Borough of Telford and Wrekin 2014 - 2017

Foreword

I am pleased to introduce the Homelessness Strategy for Telford and Wrekin for the next three years (2014 - 2017) and I would like to take this opportunity to thank all the local partners and organisations across the borough who has contributed towards its development.

The overall aims of the strategy is to 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 Gypsy, Romani 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 2014 - 2017

Contents

PART ONE: STRATEGIC CONTEXT	Page(s)
1. Introduction	5
2. Achievements since 2008	5 - 7
3. National context Welfare Reform Bill Localism Act 2011 No Second Night Out Vision	7
4. Local context Homelessness in Telford & Wrekin The Local Housing Market Local strategies and plans	8-12
5. Future challenges in Telford and Wrekin	12-13
PART TWO: THE STRATEGY	
6. Aims and priority actions	14
1. Prevent homelessness in Telford and Wrekin	14-16
1a. Provide a Single Referral Access Point and a Single Assessment Tool for all people who present themselves as homeless	
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	16-20
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 2014 - 2017

housing stock.	
3. Meet statutory duty to accommodate Gypsy, Romani and Travellers	20-22
3a. Develop a strategic plan to identify appropriate locations that meet the needs of the Gypsy, Romani and Traveller Community	
3b. Establish a programme of support to address health and wellbeing and educational needs of the Gypsy, Romani and Traveller Community	
3c. Work with the wider community and the Gypsy, Romani and Traveller Community to improve the understanding and integration of different cultures	
7. Resources to implement the Homelessness Strategy	22-23
8. Action plan, performance measures and monitoring arrangements	24-39
Appendix 1 – National context explained	
Appendix 2 – Statutory homelessness: Priority Need groups	
Appendix 3 – Local voluntary sector providers	

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 2014 - 2017

- 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

Homelessness Strategy for the Borough of Telford and Wrekin 2014 - 2017

- 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.

Homelessness Strategy for the Borough of Telford and Wrekin 2014 - 2017

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:

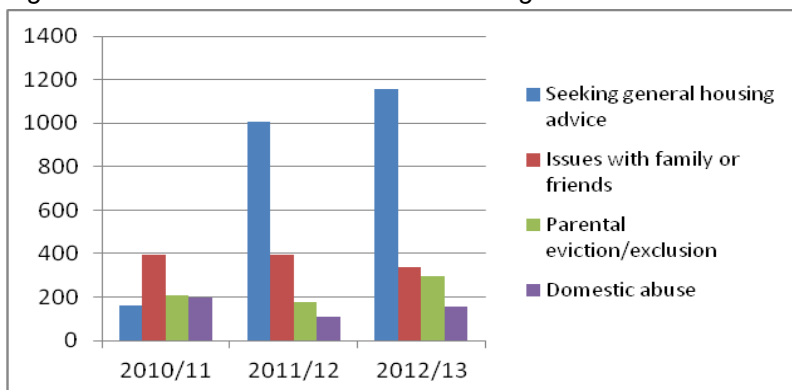
- Provide advice and guidance to all.
- Prevent homelessness where possible.
- Provide help to homeless households who are in priority need (see Appendix 2). This includes providing interim and temporary accommodation for households until they are able to move into sustainable accommodation.

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.



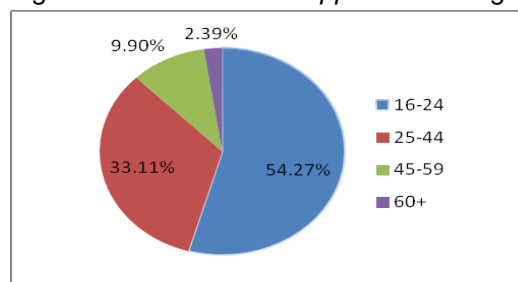
Homelessness prevention

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

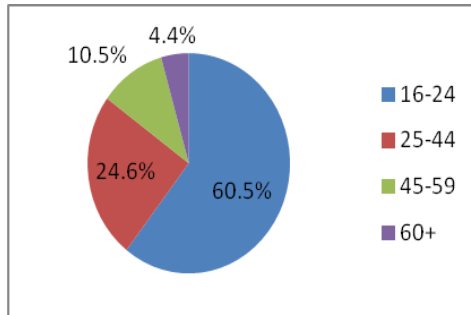


Homelessness Strategy for the Borough of Telford and Wrekin 2014 - 2017

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

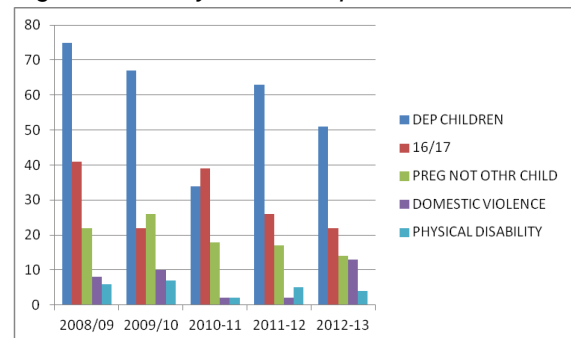
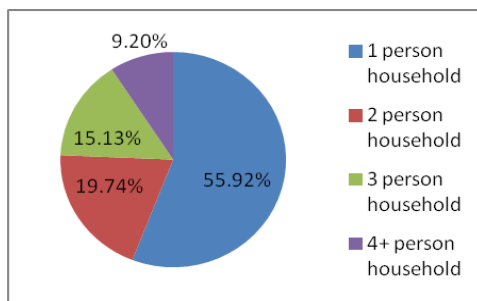


Figure 5 illustrates the size of all priority need households placed in temporary accommodation.

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).

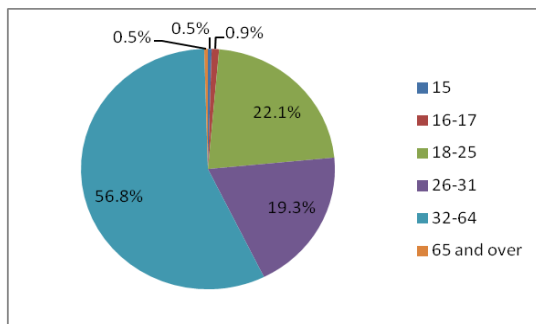
Homelessness Strategy for the Borough of Telford and Wrekin 2014 - 2017

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

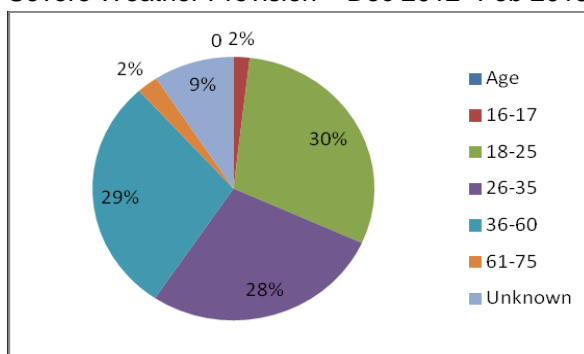
The Bleak Mid Winter Project runs every year between December and February and provides short term accommodation for people who are sleeping rough during the coldest months of the year.

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.

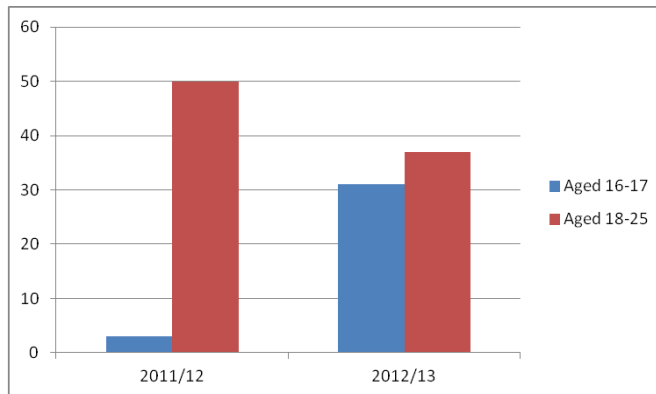
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The Council's count for rough sleepers continues to increase each year with eleven people found to be rough sleeping in the borough on 21 November 2012 compared with two in 2010.

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).

Homelessness Strategy for the Borough of Telford and Wrekin 2014 - 2017

- 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.

Homelessness Strategy for the Borough of Telford and Wrekin 2014 - 2017

- 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

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 Gypsy, Romani 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

Homelessness Strategy for the Borough of Telford and Wrekin 2014 - 2017

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

Homelessness Strategy for the Borough of Telford and Wrekin 2014 - 2017

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

Homelessness Strategy for the Borough of Telford and Wrekin 2014 - 2017

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

Homelessness Strategy for the Borough of Telford and Wrekin 2014 - 2017

Scheme to help people into private rented sector tenancies

The Councils Tenancy Relations Service advises 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

Homelessness Strategy for the Borough of Telford and Wrekin 2014 - 2017

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

Homelessness Strategy for the Borough of Telford and Wrekin 2014 - 2017

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 Gypsy, Romani and Travellers

The Council has a duty under The Housing Act 1996 and Homelessness Act 2002 to accommodate those Gypsy, Romani 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, Romani 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 Gypsy, Romani 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, Romani 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, Romani 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, Romani 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 Gypsy, Romani and Travellers who are unlawfully

Homelessness Strategy for the Borough of Telford and Wrekin 2014 - 2017

encamped in the Borough. The designation of this site for Gypsy, Romani and Travellers, whether for lawful or 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, Romani 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, Romani 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, Romani 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 Gypsy, Romani 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, Romani and Traveller culture and traditions.

The Gypsy, Romani 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.

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 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, Romani & 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

Homelessness Strategy for the Borough of Telford and Wrekin 2014 - 2017

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.

Homelessness Strategy for the Borough of Telford and Wrekin 2014 - 2017

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

Homelessness Strategy for the Borough of Telford and Wrekin 2014 - 2017

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				

Homelessness Strategy for the Borough of Telford and Wrekin 2014 - 2017

Action	By when	Lead	Resources (<i>within existing / to source</i>)	Performance indicators (<i>link to a performance framework</i>)
Priority Action 2a: Establish sustainable pathways for all homeless people from temporary accommodation into sustainable tenancies 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				

Homelessness Strategy for the Borough of Telford and Wrekin 2014 - 2017

Action	By when	Lead	Resources (within existing / to source)	Performance indicators (link to a performance framework)
Develop a 16 unit supported accommodation and 6 units of first stage move on accommodation for young people with complex needs	2015	Bromford Housing Association and STAY	Government funded	Partnership steering 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,	Within existing	Monitored through the Task Force

Homelessness Strategy for the Borough of Telford and Wrekin 2014 - 2017

Action	By when	Lead	Resources (<i>within existing / to source</i>)	Performance indicators (<i>link to a performance framework</i>)
		T&WC		
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

Homelessness Strategy for the Borough of Telford and Wrekin 2014 - 2017

Action	By when	Lead	Resources (<i>within existing / to source</i>)	Performance indicators (<i>link to a performance framework</i>)
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, Romani and Traveller Community				
Priority Action 3a: Develop a strategic plan identify appropriate locations that meet the needs of the Gypsy, Romani and Traveller community				
Develop local policy to respond to national requirements to manage Gypsy, Romani 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, Romani and	End April	Development, Business and	Within existing	E.g. Reduction in the

Homelessness Strategy for the Borough of Telford and Wrekin 2014 - 2017

Action	By when	Lead	Resources (<i>within existing / to source</i>)	Performance indicators (<i>link to a performance framework</i>)
Traveller site at Donnington to assist with bid for HCA funding.	2013	Housing – T&W Council		number of unlawful encampments
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, Romani 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, Romani 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, Romani 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, Romani and Traveller community				
Deliver European Funded project ‘Springboard’ to deliver current training, review and expand the programme to the Gypsy, Romani and Traveller Community.	End Dec 2013	Education and Skills – T&WC	Within existing	Monitor through the Homelessness Task Force.

Homelessness Strategy for the Borough of Telford and Wrekin 2014 - 2017

Action	By when	Lead	Resources (<i>within existing / to source</i>)	Performance indicators (<i>link to a performance framework</i>)
Complete formal consultation with the Gypsy, Romani and Traveller Community	End Sept 2013	Community Engagement, Equality and Action – T&WC	Within existing	Monitor through the Homelessness Task Force.
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, Romani 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, Romani 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 those local businesses and the Gypsy, Romani 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, Romani and Traveller culture and traditions.	Ongoing	Family & Cohesion services – T&WC	Within existing	Monitor through the Homelessness Task Force.

Homelessness Strategy for the Borough of Telford and Wrekin 2014 - 2017

Action	By when	Lead	Resources <i>(within existing / to source)</i>	Performance indicators <i>(link to a performance framework)</i>
Explore ways to encourage the Gypsy, Romani 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 residents who raise any challenges that they may be facing whilst living in the same area.	Ongoing	Gypsy & Traveller Officer	Within existing	Monitor through the 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.

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.

Homelessness Strategy for the Borough of Telford and Wrekin 2014 - 2017

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.

Homelessness Strategy for the Borough of Telford and Wrekin 2014 - 2017

Localism Act 2011

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.

Appendix 2 – Statutory homelessness: priority needs 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

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 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

Homelessness Strategy for the Borough of Telford and Wrekin 2014 - 2017

- **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** provides 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 and 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 2014 - 2017

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.

TELFORD & WREKIN COUNCIL

CABINET – 13 NOVEMBER 2014

REVISED SCHOOL FUNDING FORMULA 2015/16

REPORT OF THE ASSISTANT DIRECTOR: EDUCATION & CORPORATE PARENTING

LEAD CABINET MEMBER – COUNCILLOR PAUL WATLING

PART A) – SUMMARY REPORT

1. SUMMARY OF MAIN PROPOSALS

- 1.1 From April 2013, a new funding formula has been in place for Telford & Wrekin mainstream schools, which meets the requirements of revised Department for Education (DfE) regulations. Each year we review the funding formula for schools in the context of any revisions to DfE regulations or any other relevant developments.
- 1.2 The most significant change for 2015/16 is an increase in the amount of Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) for Telford and Wrekin pupils in mainstream schools, increasing from £4,367 per pupil to £4,428 pupil. Like for like (i.e. ignoring any change in pupil numbers) this will deliver £1.3m of additional DSG funding to T&W. This arises as a result of the DfE adopting a 'minimum funding levels' methodology to ensure that each Local Authority has sufficient funding to fund its schools at minimum levels. 152 local authorities fund schools and T&W is one of 69 to receive an increase.
- 1.3 Following consultation with the Schools Forum it is proposed to utilise the additional funds as follows:
 - £1m to be used to remove the cap on increases in individual school funding per pupil. This will enable the new funding formula to take effect more quickly. Any remaining funding will be used to increase the basic per pupil funding rates.
 - £300,000 to be used to support 'High Needs' education budgets. The High Needs part of the overall school budget is facing considerable pressure due to an upward trend in the demand for High Needs resources (for example special school places and out of area provision).
- 1.4 The revised funding formula has to be submitted to the Education Funding Agency (EFA), a DfE agency, by 31 October 2014. Telford & Wrekin's formula will be submitted (as is allowed) subject to cabinet approval on 13 November 2014.
- 1.5 This report seeks Cabinet approval for the proposed funding formula for Telford & Wrekin mainstream schools.

2. RECOMMENDATION

- 2.1 **That the revisions to the funding formula for Telford & Wrekin mainstream schools be approved.**

SUMMARY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

COMMUNITY IMPACT	Do these proposals contribute to specific Co-operative Council priority objective(s)?	
	Yes	By ensuring that as far as is possible schools receive fair funding for their pupils, this supports the objective to Improve local people's prospects through education and skills training.
	Will the proposals impact on specific groups of people?	
	Yes	Children, young people, parents and the wider community served by schools
TARGET COMPLETION/DELIVERY DATE	The revised funding formula will take effect from 1 April 2015 for maintained schools and from 1 September 2015 for academies. Details of the formula have to be provided to the EFA by 31 October 2014, but ours will be submitted (as is allowed) on the basis of being 'subject to Cabinet approval.'	
FINANCIAL/VALUE FOR MONEY IMPACT	Yes	As there has been an increase in T&W funding, it has been possible to move more rapidly to the full implementation of the new funding formula, introduced in 2013/14 and modified in 2014/15. This is achieved by removing the cap on increases to individual schools. Any schools with reductions in funding per pupil continue to be protected by the national Minimum Funding Guarantee (MFG) for schools which means that no school's funding can reduce by more than 1.5% per pupil, per year.
LEGAL ISSUES	Yes	The revised arrangements have to comply with the School Finance Regulations.
OTHER IMPACTS, RISKS & OPPORTUNITIES	No	
IMPACT ON SPECIFIC WARDS	Yes	The revised funding formula will affect all schools in T&W, including academies, with the exception of nursery schools, special schools and independent schools and so will impact upon all Wards across the Borough.

PART B) – ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

4 NATIONAL CONTEXT AND CHANGES TO DFE REGULATIONS

- 4.1 The DfE required Local Authorities to implement a simpler funding formula for schools from April 2013. These changes were described by the DfE as the first stage towards a planned national funding formula for schools. However, at present, the local funding formula for schools continues to determine how much of the total funding received by T&W is allocated to each individual school.
- 4.2 Following on from some changes in 2014/15, the DfE have generally made only minor changes to school funding regulations for 2015/16. The exception has been the introduction of Minimum Funding Levels for LAs. These have been calculated by attaching sums of money to the main school formula funding factors and topping up LAs that would not be able to deliver these sums from their existing level of per pupil funding. 69 of the 152 relevant English LAs received increases as a result of this process, the largest being 11.5%. T&W's increase is 1.6% reducing to a net figure of 1.4% once the DfE's top-slice from all LAs for carbon reduction commitment charges is accounted for. The net gain arising from this is approximately £1.3m.
- 4.3 Adopting the principle of minimum funding levels has been a helpful DfE policy for T&W, and whilst the increase in funding it has delivered is modest in percentage terms, it supports our view that in the context of the area's demographics, the previous formula model was not particularly generous to the area.

5 LOCAL CONTEXT AND PROPOSED FORMULA CHANGES

Removing the cap on per pupil increases for schools whilst continuing to protect schools with falling pupil numbers

- 5.1 The most significant feature of changes to the local funding formula in 2014/15 was the decision to rebalance the funding between secondary and primary schools. DfE data showed that our existing formula produced one of the highest secondary to primary ratios, at around 1.48, i.e. secondary schools received on average 48% more funding per pupil than primary schools. The national average was around 1.30.
- 5.2 Part of the context of our local formula was declining pupil numbers in our secondary sector, resulting in some small and shrinking schools. The high secondary-primary ratio helped these schools to remain financially viable. However, a change in the regulations for 2014/15 enabled us to introduce a falling rolls fund, targeting additional resources at schools with falling rolls. With this in place Cabinet agreed to a new funding formula which would eventually bring the secondary to primary ratio below 1.40.
- 5.3 Progress towards this new formula is slowed by the need to comply with the DfE's MFG, which requires that no school's funding reduces by more than 1.5% per pupil in each year. In addition to slowing the pace of decreases in funding for some schools, the requirement to pay MFG to these schools made it unaffordable to deliver the full increase to schools that gained under the new formula. As a result, we applied a local cap, such that no school in 2014/15 received an increase in funding of more than 2.5% per pupil.

- 5.4 The increase in funding arising from Minimum Funding Levels enables us to remove this cap. This means that whilst schools that will receive lower funding under the new formula continue to receive MFG protection, schools that would receive higher funding can move to the new formula without adjustment from April 2015 (September 2015 for academies).
- 5.5 Whilst numbers in the secondary sector overall are stabilising, at present we still have some small, and in some cases shrinking, schools. With this in mind, the Schools Forum have again agreed to a falling rolls fund in 2015/16, offering additional protection for one year to schools (primary or secondary) with decreases in pupil numbers of more than 3%. To comply with DfE rules this can, however, only be awarded to schools with an Ofsted rating of 'Good' or 'Outstanding'.
- 5.6 In addition, in September 2015 Wrockwardine Wood and Sutherland are due to merge on a new school site at Oakengates, and Blessed Robert Johnson closes, to be replaced by a new school in Priorslee. These organisational changes arising from the Building Schools for the Future capital programme should also assist the secondary sector to stabilise financially.

Moving £300,000 from Schools Block to High Needs Block

- 5.7 We have been able to remove the cap as described above using £1m of the estimated £1.3m additional funds delivered by the Minimum Funding Levels increase. We propose to use the remaining £300,000 to support the High Needs education sector, consisting predominantly of special schools and special units.
- 5.8 In recent years there has been substantial upwards pressure on costs in this area, with the increasing numbers of complex children leading to extended provision being developed, such as The Den at Haughton School, Queensway at HLC and the forthcoming move of the Bridge's post 16 provision to TCAT, freeing up space for the increasing numbers of pupils needing to access the Bridge's pre 16 provision.
- 5.9 In this context, in order to support the budgetary provision in 2015/16, we discussed with the Schools Forum utilising some of the increase in Schools Block DSG to support the High Needs sector. This specific proposal was discussed with the Forum as part of a package of measures for 2015/16 and future years, including the falling rolls fund and the removal of the cap, with the aim of achieving a consensus on the overall funding strategy for education. The Forum unanimously supported the approach that was proposed.

6. IMPACT ASSESSMENT – ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

- 6.1 Any change to the distribution of funding for schools leads to some schools being allocated more funding, and some schools less, compared to the existing situation. However, the increase in funding in 2015/16 enables us pass on additional funds to some schools without detrimentally changing the funding formula for other schools. In the short term the impact of the changes per pupil is cushioned by the MFG. In addition, the top-slice described above mitigates for one year reductions in income associated with significant declines in pupil numbers.
- 6.2 Under current regulations, the formula can be reviewed and if desirable it can be amended each year. It will be kept under review in the context of local circumstances and further changes in government regulations.

7. PREVIOUS MINUTES

Minutes of the meeting of the Cabinet held on Thursday, 8th November, 2012 (concerning the 2013/14 funding formula for schools) and Thursday 14th November 2013 (concerning the 2014/15 funding formula).

8. BACKGROUND PAPERS

“Fairer schools funding: Arrangements for 2015/16” DfE, July 2014

T&W Schools Forum, Minutes and accompanying papers of meetings held on 23 May 2014 and 26 September 2014

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TELFORD & WREKIN COUNCIL

CABINET - 13TH NOVEMBER, 2014

**AWARD OF NETWORK SERVICES, TELEPHONY, CONTACT CENTRE
AND ASSOCIATED SUPPORT CONTRACT**

REPORT OF ASSISTANT DIRECTOR: CUSTOMER SERVICES

LEAD CABINET MEMBER – CLLR HILDA RHODES

PART A) – SUMMARY REPORT

1. SUMMARY OF MAIN PROPOSALS

- 1.1 Telford and Wrekin's network provides data and voice services for 186 sites including 75 schools and supports over 150 home and mobile workers. The 'network' is literally the 'motorways and exits' over which all our voice and data travels, not only within our organisation and schools but also information leaving us and coming in from customers, suppliers etc. It is an essential part of our fabric and without it we wouldn't be open for business.
- 1.2 This report seeks approval to enter into a new contract with Capita IT Services following an EU restricted tender exercise for the upgrade and ongoing essential maintenance of the Voice and Data Network for a minimum of 5 years with an option to extend for a further 5 years thereafter in 12 month increments.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 **That the Assistant Director of Customer Services in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Customer Services, Libraries and Transport be authorised to award to Capita ICT Services, the Network Services, Telephony, Contact Centre and Associated Support Contract.**
- 2.2 **That the Assistant Director of Law, Democracy & People Services be authorised to agree and execute all necessary documentation. This authorisation to include delegation to the Assistant Director of Law, Democracy and People Services to affix the common seal of the Council to contractual documentation as, in the opinion of the Assistant Director of Law, Democracy & People Services, is appropriate under article 14.06 of the Constitution.**
- 2.3 **That Cabinet approve capital and revenue investment as detailed in the report, Section 6.0 and outlined in the Capital ICT programme in respect of the Network Services, Telephony, Contact Centre and Associated Support Contract**

3. SUMMARY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

COMMUNITY IMPACT	Do these proposals contribute to specific Co-Operative Council priority objective(s)?	
	Yes	All Council Priorities are supported by these proposals.
	Will the proposals impact on specific groups of people?	
	No	
TARGET COMPLETION/DELIVERY DATE	The contract is to be awarded in December 2014 and the new services/improvements to be in place by June 2015.	
FINANCIAL/VALUE FOR MONEY IMPACT	Yes	See Financial Implications in section 6.
LEGAL ISSUES	Yes	See the Legal comments in Section 7
OTHER IMPACTS, RISKS & OPPORTUNITIES	Yes	The current 'network' is now 9 years old and is in urgent need of upgrading and replacement of failing component parts and switches and routers reaching 'end of life'. Over the last 12 months the infrastructure has struggled to cope with additional demands placed upon it for example the amount of traffic to the councils website and contact centres, therefore this upgrade is urgently required and will help stabilise and enhance our data and telephony service in line with our customer services strategy 'Making Every Contact Count'. This investment will secure an improvement to the customers experience of calling the council and will help to enhance customers experience of doing business with us on line for those who choose do to so. This new contract will also see schools who buy back into our ICT managed service benefitting from ongoing saving helping to secure their buy back over a longer period of time.
IMPACT ON SPECIFIC WARDS	No	Borough-wide impact

PART B) – ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

4. INFORMATION

Background

- 4.1 Telford and Wrekin's network provides data and voice services for 186 sites including 75 schools and supports over 150 home and mobile workers. The 'network' is literally the 'motorways and exits' over which all our voice and data travels, It is a critical part of the council's infrastructure without which we could not operate or deliver our services. It is also the platform upon which our website and contact centres such as Family Connect, First Point for Business, Access for adults as well as the Councils main contact centre operates on.
- 4.2 Our network is now 9 years old and is in urgent need of investment to upgrade some of the critical component parts, such as switches and routers which have recently started to fail with many reaching their end of life. We also need to have a voice and data network that can support and promote our channel shift objectives to encourage customers who are able to using more cost effective channels to do business with us, such as our website, suite of Apps, social media etc.
- 4.3 Our existing contract with Capita ICT Services (formerly Synetrix) for the supply of our current network expires in June 2015 after being in place for 7 years.
- 4.4 During 2014 and following Cabinet approval on 30th January, 2014 we have undertaken an EU Restricted Tender process to test the market place in order to select a preferred supplier for the provision of our voice and data network. The contract is to be let is for 5 years with the option to extend for a further 5 years (5 + 5).
- 4.5 The new contract will be signed in December 2014 subject to Cabinet approval. The new contract will enable the upgrade of critical network links across our whole portfolio, which are currently operating at full capacity with recent evidence of some parts of our network failing and impacting on business. The new contract with supporting capital investment will also secure the replacement of essential network equipment and will support our new contact centre upgrades as outlined in the report to Cabinet in January 2014 which will see the introduction of:-
- ✓ Register your place in the phone queue for a call back
 - ✓ Automation for simple processing e.g. making a payment, reporting a problem,
 - ✓ Web Chat, where customers who are using the councils website but who need some help can press the web chat button and speak directly to a customer service advisor

- ✓ Call recording to help when training and improving the skills of our customer service advisors
- ✓ Contact Centre Manager which allows the council more control over how it operates the call centres, e.g. call routing, messages, better reporting on performance all of which previously needed input from the external provider to bring about the changes.

5.0 OVERVIEW OF PROCUREMENT

- 5.1 An EU Restricted Tender process has been undertaken. The contract is for 5 years with the option to extend for a further 5 years in 12 month increments (5 + 5). In order to manage the bids received it was decided that a maximum of 6 applicants would be taken through to the ITT.
- 5.2 The OJEU notice and PQQ were published on 12th February 2014, and attracted 9 applicants.
- 5.3 The criteria and method for evaluation had already been developed to ensure a fair and robust analysis of all bids received. A scoring mechanism was also in place to support this process, which in turn was used to rank the providers at each stage of evaluation. This stage also includes an examination by the council's Financial Team of the companies' financial standing and viability.
- 5.4 An evaluation group was created, made up of representatives from the Council's ICT Team, Corporate Procurement, Finance, Audit and Health and Safety. Six successful suppliers were taken through to Invitation to Tender (ITT) stage.
- 5.5 The ITT was published on 9th July 2014 and closed on 29th August 2014. Five of the six applicants notified the Council during the tender process of their withdrawal from the process leaving a sole bidder. The sole bidder met all requirements and had compliance to the contract and was invited to participate in the site visit stage. Site visits were carried out to evidence information submitted in the tender documentation.
- 5.6 In addition to all of the above, references were taken up from Local Authorities/Public sector organisations which supports this evaluation process.
- 5.7 Following the tender process the preferred supplier is Capita ICT Services. A copy of the full tender process, scoring matrix and evaluation of all bidders can be made available to decision makers on request. The absence of this detail has made it possible for this report to be considered in the public session.

6.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 The capital cost of the broadband and telephony contract of £444k is funded through the Council's ICT capital programme in 2014/15 and 2015/16.
- 6.2 The revenue cost of the new broadband and telephony contract is £789k per annum in year 1. This reduces to £737k from year 3 onwards due to the deletion of a number of main circuits as a result of planned changes in building usage along with appropriate reductions in the level of support provided through the contract. Schools are charged a proportion of the contract costs through the ICT Managed Service for Schools.
- 6.3 Budget savings of £160k were put forward as part of the 2014/15 and 2015/16 budget around the new contract. The overall budget for the broadband and telephony contract is £778k for 2015/16 after removing the £160k savings proposals. There is a small gap between the budget and the cost of the new contract in year 1 only, however this will be managed from within Customer Services budgets. Schools will directly benefit from the reduced contract costs as the reduced cost will be fed into the charging model for the ICT Managed Service for Schools in 2015/16 helping to retain their business longer term.
- 6.4 There are specific costs within the new contract around the introduction of the new Contact Centre solution in support of our channel shift plans. This is specifically funded through the Council's budget for their share of the contract costs and not passed onto schools.
MLB 17.10.14

7. LEGAL COMMENTS

- 7.1 The award of contracts by local authorities, and other bodies in the public sector is governed by the Public Contracts Regulations 2006.
- 7.2 The Regulations have established a legal framework to ensure that where contracts fall within the scope of the rules, and exceed specified financial values, that they are advertised at EU level in the Official Journal of the European Union (OJEU).
- 7.3 The value of the current proposed contract with Capita exceeds the specified value, and an appropriate OJEU notice was published as required.
- 7.4 Following the OJEU notice a legally compliant procurement process has been carried out resulting in the recommendation that Capita ICT Services be awarded a contract as the preferred supplier.

8. PREVIOUS MINUTES

8.1 None

9. BACKGROUND PAPERS

9.1 Voice and Data Network Procurement Report – 30th January, 2014
Cabinet

**Report prepared by Kirsty King, ICT Service Delivery Manager,
Telephone: 01952 383480**

TELFORD & WREKIN COUNCIL

**CABINET –13 NOVEMBER 2014
COUNCIL – 27 NOVEMBER 2014**

COMMUNITY PRIDE FUND – GRANT ALLOCATION

REPORT OF MANAGING DIRECTOR

LEAD CABINET MEMBER – CLLR SHAUN DAVIES

PART A) – SUMMARY REPORT

1. SUMMARY OF MAIN PROPOSALS

- 1.1 The Community Pride Fund is being delivered as part of the Pride in Your Community programme to support the physical, social and economic regeneration of the Borough. This report provides an update on the implementation of the Community Pride Fund and proposes that the original budget of £1m is increased by a further £260,000. This is due to the significant response to the fund and the contribution that some applications can make to delivering the Council's priorities.
- 1.2 Each application has been evaluated and assessed by a range of Council Officers and an independent, politically balanced Funding Advisory Panel, the report outlines the evaluation process, and membership and role of the Funding Advisory Panel. The qualitative evaluations carried out by the Funding Advisory Panel have been used to prioritise the projects that are recommended to receive funding, as outlined in Appendix 1 of this report. It is proposed that 37 projects with a total value of £1,257,447.50 are funded through the Community Pride Fund.
- 1.3 It is proposed that delegated authority is given to the Managing Director in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Neighbourhood Services and Employment & Skills to re-allocate funding if any projects are unable to spend their Community Pride Fund grant. This funding would be allocated to the next project on the list that was prioritised using the panel member's evaluations. The process of dispersal of the grants and ongoing monitoring are also outlined.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 That the budget for the Community Pride Fund is increased to £1,260,000 to enable a greater number of projects that contribute to the Council's priorities to be supported through the Community Pride Fund.**

2.2 That Cabinet agree that the projects outlined in Appendix 1 that have been prioritised using the Funding Advisory Panel evaluations are funded through the Community Pride Fund.

2.3 That if any project that has been approved for funding is unable to spend their allocated grant within the timescales for the scheme, that delegated authority is given to the Managing Director, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Neighbourhood Services and Employment & Skills, to re-allocate the funding using the list of projects prioritised by the Funding Advisory Panel. The funding would be allocated to the next project on the list from the appropriate funding pot.

2.4 That Cabinet recommend Council to approve the transfer of £0.260m into the Community Pride Fund which will be funded from the delivery of additional in year savings in 2014/15.

3. SUMMARY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

COMMUNITY IMPACT	Do these proposals contribute to specific Co-Operative Council priority objective(s)?	
	Yes	One of the essential criteria for the Community Pride Fund is that applications contribute towards the delivery of at least one Council Priority.
	Will the proposals impact on specific groups of people?	
	No	The range of projects that are recommended for support through the Community Pride Fund have the potential to have a positive impact on a wide cross section of the community, some projects do target specific groups.
TARGET COMPLETION/DELIVERY DATE	It is envisaged that grant payments will commence following the receipt of an appropriate signed agreement from each successful applicant, projects have been made aware that the deadline for the allocation of their funding is 31 March 2016.	
FINANCIAL/VALUE FOR MONEY IMPACT	Yes	The original budget of £1m was part of the 2014/15 approved Service & Financial Planning Strategy (capital programme) which not only focussed on the delivery of savings but also

		<p>had clear investment priorities for the benefit of the borough. The last financial monitoring report to Cabinet on 16 October showed a significantly improved financial position for 2014/15, with £2.71m projected to be available at year end. This is a reflection of the strength of the financial management being exercised by Cabinet Members and senior managers and the delivery of in year savings. £1.5m of the projected benefit at year end has arisen from a second phase of work re-profiling the Council's Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) payments. The first phase of MRP re-profiling work generated a back-dated benefit of almost £5m which was prudently set aside to fund the debt charges on the Community Pride Programme capital expenditure and it is therefore possible to fund an increase in the Community Pride budget by making a virement from this further MRP benefit to fund the additional projects identified in this report.</p>
<p>LEGAL ISSUES</p>	<p>Yes</p>	<p>The legal recommendations of the report dated 24 April 2014 were fully implemented in order to ensure that a legally compliant, robust and transparent assessment procedure was developed.</p> <p>Terms of Reference were drawn up to guide the Funding Advisory Panel along with a detailed application form and robust assessment/evaluation criteria.</p> <p>Openness and transparency of the process was maintained by advising all applicants of the assessment/evaluation criteria and the terms and conditions of funding at the time of making their applications. Detailed guidance was also produced to assist applicants in submitting their bids.</p>

OTHER IMPACTS, RISKS & OPPORTUNITIES	No	
IMPACT ON SPECIFIC WARDS	No	Borough-wide impact

PART B) – ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

4. Community Pride Fund Application Process

- 4.1 The Community Pride Fund was established to support the delivery of the Council's Pride in Your Community Programme. The fund comprises of £1m capital funding to support the physical, social and economic regeneration of Telford. The £1m was divided into two separate pots of £500,000, one for applications of £2,000 to £50,000, the other for applications of £50,001 to £100,000; these levels were set to ensure that there is a spread of small to medium and large projects supported through the Community Pride Fund.
- 4.2 The Community Pride Fund opened for applications on 30 May 2014 with the scheme being widely promoted through the Council's website, Town and Parish Council's and Elected Members, publicity and posters in a range of venues across the Borough, promotion through Social Media and through local networks such as CVS and through the Council's Business Support Officers. Applications were available via the Council's website along with the criteria for the fund and guidance for applicants.
- 4.3 Potential applicants were able to access a range of support and information relating to the fund via a specific 'Community Pride Fund' email enquiry and from a range of Council Officers from within the Community Participation and Business Support Teams. Two information sessions were held in July at Meeting Point House and Wellington library, to provide an opportunity for potential applicants to ask questions about the fund, these sessions were attended by 26 different organisations.
- 4.4 The applications fell into four categories, £2,000 to £10,000, £10,000 to £25,000, £25,001 to £50,000 and £50,001 to £100,000. The forms were developed with advice from a range of Council services including, Finance, Legal, Information Governance and Investment and Property and required different levels of information from applicants depending upon the level of funding requested. These services were also involved in developing and carrying out the evaluation process for assessing the Community Pride Fund applications.
- 4.5 Applicants were encouraged to submit applications electronically wherever possible, where organisations were unable to submit an application in an electronic format support was given by the Council, the aim was to ensure that the fund was as accessible as possible to a wide range of organisations. The fund closed for applications on 5

September 2014, a total of 66 applications were received from 60 different organisations, and the total amount of funding requested from organisations was over £2 ½ m.

- 4.6 Due to the significant response to the Community Pride Fund and the quality of the applications received, it is proposed to increase the budget for the fund. Through in year savings it has been possible to identify £260,000 that is available to be added to the Community Pride budget. This would enable a greater number of projects that meet the Community Pride Fund criteria, and that have been assessed as making a contribution to the delivery of the Council priorities to be funded. It is proposed that the funding for applications with a value of between £2,000 and £50,000 is increased to £578,808.89 and that the funding for applications with a value of between £50,001 and £100,000 is increased to £678,638.61. This would require an additional £257,447.50 to be added to the budget and would enable the prioritised applications to be allocated the full amount of funding requested in line with the funding panel's recommendations.

5. Evaluation of Applications

- 5.1 There were a number of essential criteria that applications needed to meet to be eligible for funding from the Community Pride Fund which include the following;

- Projects needed to be delivered within Telford and Wrekin
- Expenditure could only relate to capital items
- Religious and political activities would not be funded
- Projects must contribute to the delivery of at least one Council priority
- Projects need to commence within 12 months of the grant being offered and be complete by 31 March 2016

Applications were assessed against the following aims of the fund;

- Jobs created/safeguarded
- Training provided
- Volunteers supported
- Building brought back into use/prevented from closure
- Increase in participants

The evaluation process also took into account the following;

- Community need for the project
- Sustainability of the project
- Proposed impact of the project in relation to level of funding requested

- 5.2 The process of evaluating the Community Pride Fund applications involved two stages, an initial detailed check and assessment of the applications by a number of Council Officers as outlined in 4.4, followed by an evaluation of each application by each of the members of the Community Pride Funding Advisory Panel as outlined in 6.1 below.
- 5.3 The Officer evaluation involved checking each application in relation to the following;
- Financial - all expenditure related to capital, costs consistent with market values, organisation had relevant financial procedures, sustainability of project and match funding
 - Delivery of project – appropriate plan for delivery, delivery within fund timescales (by March 2016), appropriate permissions would be gained e.g. building control, and appropriate policies in place such as child protection
 - Project outcomes – contribution of the project towards aims of Community Pride Fund criteria outlined above

A brief summary of this evaluation was provided to the Community Pride Funding Advisory Panel for information.

6. Community Pride Funding Advisory Panel

- 6.1 The Funding Advisory Panel was an independent, politically balanced group comprising of volunteers from the Cooperative Commission and Elected Members of the Council. The role of the Community Pride Funding Advisory Panel was to evaluate each individual application against the criteria set out in 5 above, and to agree as a panel the projects that should be recommended for funding to Cabinet. The panel was made up of the following; **Elected Members** - Cllr Gill Green, Cllr Mike Ion, Cllr Leon Murray, Cllr Gilly Reynolds and Cllr Jacqui Seymour, **Cooperative Commission Members** - Paul Hinkins, Mike Lowe, Arul Selvaratnam, and Paul Shuttleworth. Ian Dosser, the Chair of the Cooperative Commission was unable to take part in the process due to a clash between the funding panel meetings and other work commitments. Paul Shuttleworth was appointed as Chair of the Funding Advisory Panel in Ian's absence. Thanks are given to Paul for taking on this role.
- 6.2 Panel members have made a significant time commitment to this process which has involved attending a panel briefing session, two panel meetings, and a considerable amount of time evaluating each individual application. The panel are to be commended for the level of commitment and professionalism that they have shown. We are also grateful for the level of experience and knowledge that the panel members have been able to bring to this process.

- 6.3 The process for prioritising the applications involved each panel member evaluating each application and making their own recommendation on whether they felt the project should be approved. This process was carried out on an individual basis prior to each panel meeting; this information was then shared as a panel. If panel members had any 'interest' in the project they were advised not to evaluate the application. Declarations of interest included location of a project within an Elected Members Ward, or any other involvement with a project or organisation, such as being a Board Member or Trustee.
- 6.4 The panel's evaluations have been used to prioritise the projects that are recommended to Cabinet to be funded from the Community Pride Fund. This prioritisation is based on the criteria outlined in 5.1 of the report, with those applications that were felt to most clearly demonstrate that they meet these criteria being 'ranked' highest. The panel suggested that applications be prioritised by the relative number of yes/no votes for each application. This was considered, however, it was felt that the assessment of the projects against the fund criteria was a more appropriate way of prioritising the projects.
- 6.5 The panel also had a detailed discussion regarding providing 'part funding' to projects. This would involve not awarding the full amount requested to some organisations to enable a larger number of projects to receive funding and therefore allow more organisations to benefit from the Community Pride Fund. Following discussion the panel voted against this proposal with 5 members being against and 4 members being for awarding partial funding. The reasons given by panel members for not wanting to recommend this option to Cabinet included concerns that the projects may not be able to be delivered with a reduced level of funding, and that they had carried out their evaluation based on the amount of funding that the applicant had requested. However, there was a strong feeling amongst other panel members that as many projects as possible should be able to benefit from the Community Pride Fund. In recognition of this it is proposed that the budget for the Community Pride Fund be increased as outlined in 2.1 of this report.

7.0 Allocation of Grants

- 7.1 The projects that are recommended for allocation of a Community Pride Fund grant are attached in Appendix 1. It is proposed that 28 small to medium applications (between £2,000 and £50,000) are funded with a total value of £578,808.89. It is proposed that 9 large projects (£50,001 to £100,000) are funded with a total value of £678,638.61. It is proposed that 37 projects with a total value of £1,257,447.50 are funded through the Community Pride Fund.
- 7.2 The projects that are recommended for funding will make a contribution to delivering a number of Council priorities including supporting local jobs, creating training and volunteering opportunities, providing

opportunities for children and young people and vulnerable adults and supporting healthy lifestyles. The outcomes delivered by these projects will be monitored as part of the grant conditions as outlined in 8.3. The projects outlined in Appendix 1 have identified match funding of over £550,000 which will also contribute to the delivery of their projects, and the Community Pride Fund grant will enable some organisations to lever in additional funding from other sources.

- 7.3 The Funding Advisory panel also recommended that plans be put in place to re-allocate funding should any of the projects that were initially prioritised for funding are not be able to deliver their project and spend their grant within the timescales of the fund (31 March 2016), delegated authority is sought for the Managing Director, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Neighbourhood Services and Employment & Skills to re-allocate the funding to the next project on the list using the panel's evaluations as the method of prioritisation.

8.0 Awarding and Monitoring of Grants

- 8.1 All projects that wish to accept an offer of a grant through the Community Pride Fund will be required to sign an appropriate agreement. For grants of up to £10,000 this will be a 'letter of award' and for grants over £10,000 this will be based on the Council's standard grant agreement, both of these documents have been developed by the Council's Legal Services. The agreements may include additional funding conditions relevant to each project. These conditions are based on both the officer assessments and the evaluations that were carried out by funding panel members.
- 8.2 The funding agreements will include the schedule of payment of the grant and the monitoring arrangements. Finance will advise on the funding schedules and it is envisaged that for larger grants staged payments will be made. It may be appropriate to make 'up-front' payments to small organisations with limited access to funding; evidence of expenditure following the grant payment would still be required.
- 8.3 It will be important to track the impact of the funding that is allocated through the Community Pride Fund; this will be done through ongoing monitoring of the projects against the outcomes they included within their applications. Successful applicants will also be required to submit regular updates and will be encouraged to contribute to the Community Pride Fund 'blog'. Projects will be required to acknowledge the receipt of Community Pride Funding within their publicity about their project. It is suggested that funding panel members be invited to take part in visits to successful projects, so that they are able to see the impact of the fund at first hand, panel members were keen to take up this opportunity.

- 8.4 Due to the high level of applications it won't be possible to give detailed individual feedback to all organisations that weren't successful in securing Community Pride Funding. Overall feedback on why their application was not successful will be provided, and organisations will also be provided with information about other potential funding opportunities where possible.

9. PREVIOUS MINUTES

Cabinet – 9 January 2014 – Report – 'Everyday Telford – Pride in Your Community Programme'

Cabinet – 24 April 2014 – Report – 'Pride in Your Community – Community Pride Fund'

10. BACKGROUND PAPERS

None

**Report prepared by Rachael Jones, Service Delivery Manager,
Community Participation Team, Telephone: 01952 382135**

Projects Recommended for Funding from the Community Pride Fund

Large Projects - £50,001 to £100,000		
Applicant	Project Description	Amount Allocated
The Hub, Newport	Purchase of building to deliver Youth and Community Activities	£57,986.61
Park Lane Centre	Install 'play barn' and refit community cafe in centre	£100,000.00
Trench Tots Nursery	Build new neighbourhood nursery to enable re-location of existing facility	£100,000.00
Admaston House	Replace windows and doors in community facility	£50,652.00
Telford Hornets Rugby Club	Levelling and resurfacing of car park at Telford Hornets Rugby club	£55,000.00
Wombridge Primary School	Build a botanical greenhouse to deliver educational and community projects	£60,000.00
Lawley Overdale Parish Council	Refurbishment of Lawley Community Centre	£60,000.00
Madeley Town Council / Anstice Community Team	Purchase of building to convert to community facility	£100,000.00
Edgmond Village Hall	Rebuild and refit Edgmond Village Hall	£95,000.00
Total Allocated		£678,638.61

Small to Medium Projects – £2,000 to £50,000

Applicant	Project Description	Amount Allocated
Old Park Primary School & Children's Centre	Purchase I.T equipment as part of community music project	£8,725.00
Shropshire Deaf & Hard of Hearing Forum	Purchase portable hearing loop for use at range community venues	£2,600.00
Newport Cottage Care	Refurbish kitchen in Newport Cottage care facility	£5,000.00
Dawley Brook Scouts	Extension to lighthouse building to enable relocation of Scout Group	£50,000.00
Telford and Wrekin Citizens Advice Bureau	IT system upgrade and purchase of computer equipment for client access	£23,513.00
Wellington Cottage Care	Improvements to corridor and toilets within Wellington Cottage Care facility	£20,640.00
Captain Webb Primary School	Purchase eco friendly building/container to provide community facility with Captain Webb Children's Centre	£50,000.00
Hollinswood and Randlay Parish Council	Drainage works to playing field and internal improvements to Hollinswood Pavilion	£35,000.00
Telford Aftercare Team	Purchase of mini bus to enable to recovery service users to access facilities and training	£45,140.00
Creative Steps	Conversion of property to nursery	£25,200.00
Belmont Hall	Replacement of windows of in Belmont Hall	£5,000.00

Small to Medium Projects – £2,000 to £50,000

Applicant	Project Description	Amount Allocated
All Saints Parish Church	Extension to car park for Parish Centre	£36,000.00
Bowring Bowls & Social Club	Purchase of mower and storage container	£11,300.00
Longdon Upon Tern Village Hall	Improvements to village hall car park	£24,900.00
Sutton Hill Village Green	Improvements to footpaths, drainage and surfacing around area of Sutton Hill Village Green	£17,941.20
Ketley Parish Council	Install paths, fencing and signage to area of Paddock Mound	£36,251.60
Families In Telford	Purchase equipment and storage container for Parent and Child learning project	£14,168.00
Heavenly Quest	Improvements to shop and equipment to set up social enterprise	£29,719.00
Ironbridge Coracle Trust	Purchase coracle workshop to enable delivery of education and training on making coracles	£40,000.00
Creative Support	Purchase storage container to store bikes for people with Learning Disabilities	£5,440.12
Polish Saturday School	Computer Equipment for Saturday School	£2,879.00
Newport Men's Shed	Refurbish building to enable delivery of wood working skills training	£8,464.00

Small to Medium Projects – £2,000 to £50,000

Applicant	Project Description	Amount Allocated
Oakengates Carnival Committee	Staging and Equipment for Oakengates Carnival	£5,000.00
Friends of Dawley Park	Installation of outdoor fitness equipment in Dawley Park	£21,043.00
St Matthews Church Donnington Wood	Contribution to repairs to church building which is used as a community facility	£8,799.97
Pisces WM	Improve facilities including disabled access and upgrading toilets to support delivery of Job Junction at Dawley Social Club	£21,922.00
Kickassendurance	Equipment to deliver outdoor sports events	£8,513.00
St Leonards Church	Improvements to building including storage to enable increased community activity	£15,650.00
Total Allocated		£578,808.89

TELFORD & WREKIN COUNCIL

CABINET - 13th NOVEMBER 2014

LOCAL CRISIS and LOCAL RESETTLEMENT ASSISTANCE POLICY

REPORT OF ASSISTANT DIRECTOR: CUSTOMER SERVICES

LEAD CABINET MEMBER – CLLR BILL McCLEMENTS

PART A) – SUMMARY REPORT

1. SUMMARY OF MAIN PROPOSALS

- 1.1 To seek approval for the Council's revised policy for Emergency Welfare Assistance (currently known as Local Crisis Assistance and Local Resettlement Assistance) which is to be funded directly by the Council following the announcement that Government funding for the scheme will cease on 31st March 2015. The proposal is supported by the Co-operative and Communities Scrutiny Committee.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 That Cabinet approve the change of name for the scheme to Emergency Welfare Assistance
- 2.2 That Cabinet approve the Emergency Welfare Assistance Policy (Appendix A).
- 2.2 That Cabinet allocate £138,000 to fund the administration and awards of assistance under this policy.

3. SUMMARY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

COMMUNITY IMPACT	Do these proposals contribute to specific Co-Operative Council priority objective(s)?	
	No	
	Will the proposals impact on specific groups of people?	
	Yes	These proposals will affect all future residents who are likely to have need to apply for assistance from the Emergency Welfare Assistance fund.
		A Community Impact Assessment has been completed which contains more

		information about how we are meeting the general equality duty.
TARGET COMPLETION/DELIVERY DATE	The new scheme will be operative from 1 st April 2015, the point at which we anticipate that Government funding for the scheme will be withdrawn.	
FINANCIAL/VALUE FOR MONEY IMPACT: Yes		
<p>The Government are withdrawing the Crisis Assistance Grant funding in 2015/16. The total grant for 2014/15 is £581k with £94k of this being for administration of the scheme. £100k has been identified within the current budget model to continue the scheme in 2015/16 in light of the grant cuts.</p> <p>As detailed in paragraph 7.3 above commitments of £138k have been identified against the scheme for 2015/16. The gap of £38k against the £100k allocation can be met from the £104k rolled forward from 2014/15. The scheme will need to be reviewed again in 2015/16 to consider cost implications for 2016/17.</p> <p>MLB 07.10.14</p>		
LEGAL ISSUES: Yes		
<p>From 1 April 2013 Department of Work and Pensions administered discretionary Social Care Fund Community Care Grants and Crisis Loans [under Section 138 Social Security Contributions and Benefits Act 1992] were abolished by Section 70 of the Welfare Reform Act 2012. Thereafter, discretionary Local Welfare Provision was to be provided by local authorities through reallocated funding from the Secretary of State [under Section 168(1) of the Social Security Administration Act 1992].</p> <p>The local arrangements are set out in the body of this report and the policy.</p> <p>Responsibilities under the Human Rights Act 1998 and the Equality Act 2010 continue.</p> <p>The announcement in January 2014 that there would be no further funding for Local Welfare Provision after 2014/15 was made without any formal announcement, consultation or consideration of the equality duty and before a proposed review of localised schemes had taken place.</p> <p>On 30 September 2014 a letter was sent to all Chief Executives by the DWP, Treasury and Department for Communities and Local Government. The letter was sent further to a judicial review [R (Christian Jump) v (1) Secretary of State for Work and Pensions and (2) Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government CO/1838/2014] and a Consent Order sealed on 16/09/14 in which the Government agreed to reconsider its decision to cease funding for Local Welfare Provision. The Order requires the DWP, DCLG and the Treasury to complete the ongoing review of local welfare provision; conduct an “appropriate” consultation; consider the impact on equality and discrimination; and make a new decision on funding for local welfare provision for 2015/16.</p>		

The above steps must be completed by the time of the Provisional Local Government Finance Settlement (i.e. December 2014).

KF
07.10.14

OTHER IMPACTS, RISKS & OPPORTUNITIES	No	
IMPACT ON SPECIFIC WARDS	No	Borough wide impact

PART B) – ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

4. INFORMATION

4.1. Background

4.1.1 As part of the Welfare Reform Act 2012 two parts of the discretionary Social Fund that were administered by the Department for Work and Pensions were abolished with effect from 1 April 2013 with the government instead providing each council with funding to develop their own local welfare provision.

4.1.2 In the Telford & Wrekin area, the Job Centre Plus awarded £585,000 in 2010/11 and £514,200 in 2011/12.

4.1.3 The reason that the scheme was abolished is that it was considered to be “not particularly successful”. It was a self nominating scheme; it was expensive and not reaching the target audience. Since 2005/06 expenditure has dramatically increased, although DWP had some limited success in trying to bring back expenditure to 2005/06 levels in the final year of the scheme.

4.1.4 In order to administer our local scheme the DWP provided Telford & Wrekin Council with annual programme funding of £486,724 for 2013/14 and 2014/15 and administration funding of £102,848 for 2013/14 £94,272 for 2014/15.

4.1.5 It was for each council to decide how they will allocate this new Local Welfare Provision funding. The funding is to allow councils to give flexible help to those in genuine need and it is the Government’s intention that the funding should be used for this purpose. There was no expectation for councils to replicate the DWP’s scheme in fact there was a desire not to do so for the reasons outlined above.

4.1.6 Telford & Wrekin Council’s Crisis Assistance and Resettlement Assistance Policy was approved by Cabinet on the 28th March 2013. The basic principals of Telford & Wrekin Councils scheme are that the assistance will be via the provision of goods or services. Neither cash payments nor payments into bank accounts will be made unless in very rare

circumstances where the Council is unable to procure the goods or service on behalf of the applicant. There will be no expectation for successful applicants to repay the cost of the award. Wherever possible, good quality second hand goods are provided rather than new goods.

- 4.1.7 People who require food are referred to Telford Crisis Network who operate the food bank scheme.
- 4.1.8 Responsibility for the administration of Local Crisis and Local Resettlement assistance was delegated to the Benefit Service Delivery Manager.
- 4.1.9 In January 2014, the Government advised Local Authorities that it would not be providing any funding for the provision of Local Welfare Provision after 2014/15. It would be for each Local Authority to determine whether it wished to continue to provide support from its own budgets. Despite lobbying on this matter from the LGA, to date there has been no formal reversal of this decision but an acceptance to review by December 2014 following the threat of a judicial review.

4.2 Review of the existing scheme

- 4.2.1 The number of applications for assistance under the Policy has been significantly less than we initially forecast, and considerably lower than the demand experienced previously by the Job Centre Plus.

	2013/14	1 st April 2014 – 30 th September 2014	2014/15 forecast Higher expenditure predicted in 2 nd half of the year due to colder weather
Number of applications received for assistance	1,274	603	1,508
Number of applications where an award was fully or partially granted	1,005	429	1,073
Total value of assistance awarded	£83,155	£29,653	£74,133

- 4.2.2 The forecasted financial value of the direct assistance granted will be 16.16% of the programme funding that has been provided by the DWP over the first two years of the scheme. This has enabled us to use the additional funding to provide grants to partner organisations such as CAB and Telford Crisis Network to develop alternative support and assistance schemes targeted at helping the most financially disadvantaged residents in the Borough.

- 4.2.3 The key reasons why residents receive Crisis Assistance in the Borough are:

- Poor budgeting skills

- Prioritising of non essential expenditure over items like utilities
- Debt (including payday and doorstep lenders)
- High cost contracted services, such as SKY or mobile phones
- Homeless and moving into Temporary Accommodation
- Suspension of benefits while a change in circumstances is reassessed
- Delay in payment of benefit while moving from one to another
- Homeless and moving into temporary accommodation
- Benefit sanctions applied by the Job Centre Plus

4.2.4 The main reasons why assistance was refused are:

- Applicant has sufficient income to be able to manage
- Reason for needing assistance falls outside our policy, (e.g. someone choosing to leave a stable home environment without good cause and asking for help in furnishing the property)
- Assistance being requested is not considered essential, (e.g. single person asking for a washing machine)

4.2.5 The main types of assistance and support provided are:

- Voucher for pre-paid electric meter
- Voucher for pre-paid gas meter
- Beds
- Bedding (duvet, pillow, cover, sheet)
- Fridge
- Cooker
- Washing Machine

4.2.6 When considering an application for assistance, the Discretionary Awards Team will undertake a detailed analysis of the customer's circumstances. This includes looking at data and information that we already hold about the customer, speaking to other service areas or support workers who may already be assisting or supporting the applicant with other issues, and a detailed interview with the customer either face to face or by telephone. This enables the team to look at all of the issues that have given rise to the crisis and discuss a range of support options that may be of benefit, in addition to the crisis assistance. This ensures that where possible, the customer is advised of longer-term solutions that may prevent them from being in a similar situation again in the future.

4.2.7 The scheme that was operated by the Job Centre Plus was based upon applicants receiving loans or grants by way of a cash payment. This in itself was a factor that made the scheme attractive for exploitation and abuse. Our scheme was designed to be a cashless system, where rather than monetary awards, customers would receive the specific goods or services that they required to enable them to deal with the crisis. To date

we have made no cash awards to any applicant which we believe is a large factor in the success of the scheme in reducing the amount of demand.

- 4.2.8 Where applicants have a requirement for emergency gas or electricity top-ups, this is provided by way of a time-limited electronic voucher which the customer can credit specifically against their utility account.
- 4.2.9 Where the applicant requires white goods or furniture, they are procured through a network of 5 local suppliers of used or reconditioned goods with whom we contract for the supply, delivery and installation. This has meant that we have had to purchase very few brand new items of furniture and white goods which have again reduced the costs of the scheme considerably
- 4.2.10 We have worked with Children's Services and the Housing and Cohesion Team to provide items to some of the most vulnerable residents of our Borough to whom they provide support. This includes purchasing items / services that would previously have been funded from Section 17 of the Children Act 1989. We have also provided the Housing Team with kitchen, bedding and toiletry packs for homeless people housed within the Council's temporary accommodation.
- 4.2.11 The scheme has undoubtedly provided local residents with an invaluable safety net that ensures that there is a provision to meet their essential needs in the event of a personal or financial crisis
- 4.2.12 The introduction of crisis assistance coincided with the commencement of the majority of the government's main welfare reforms. Although we are seeing signs that the economy is improving and unemployment is reducing, there is the likelihood that welfare benefits will continue to be reduced over coming years. Therefore demand for crisis assistance is likely to continue for some years to come.

4.3 Recommended changes to the scheme from 1st April 2015

- 4.3.1 In the light of the experience we have gained in operating the scheme we have taken the opportunity to review and refresh the Local Crisis Assistance and Resettlement Assistance Policy. The core principals of policy remain unchanged, but the document itself has been simplified. It also re-emphasises the primary principal that the crisis must pose a genuine risk to the life, health or wellbeing of the applicant or their family, and must have arisen through circumstances beyond their control or were unforeseeable.
- 4.3.2 We are also recommending that the name of the scheme be changed from "Local Crisis and Resettlement Assistance" to "Emergency Welfare Assistance". This change of name is to avoid confusion with the Telford Crisis Network who operates the food bank scheme. This does currently cause a great deal of confusion for customers and advisers who often are unsure who operates which scheme and what each scheme does.

4.4 Funding the scheme for 2015/16

4.4.1 We are forecasting that there will be £104k unspent in 2014/15 funding from the Local Welfare Provision grant provided by the DWP. We are recommending that this sum be rolled forward to fund the scheme for 2015/16

4.4.2 An additional £100k has already been modelled in the 2015/16 budget to fund the scheme should no government funding be provided, we recommended that a portion of this funding should be used to top up the under spent funding to meet the forecasted costs of operating the scheme next year.

4.4.3 As the demand for Crisis Assistance has been less than anticipated when we introduced the scheme, we have already made a reduction in the amount of resource required to operate the scheme. For 2015/16 we therefore forecast that the required funding to operate the scheme will be:

	Cost per year
Overheads to administer the scheme (eg staffing)	£52,610
Gas and Electricity Voucher System	£2,800
Online Application and Administration System	£8,250
Forecasted cost of value of the awards	£74,340
TOTAL	£138,000

4.4.4 We are therefore recommending that £138,000 be budgeted to continue the operation of the scheme in 2015/16.

4.4.5 This would not include funding to support CAB or the Foodbank which has been supported via this funding for the last 2 years and which will instead need to be funded from other Council funds to meet our commitment to continue with their grants through to April 2016.

4.4.6 However, it must be noted that during the operation of the scheme so far we have not experienced a particularly cold winter. Winter 2013/14 was much milder than the 2 preceding winters and therefore it is reasonable to assume that this would have reduced the level of demand for assistance that we might usually expect. The forecasted scheme costs do include an increased allowance for the winter months, but having never operated the scheme during a truly cold winter it is difficult to predict precisely what additional demand this may cause.

5. IMPACT ASSESSMENT – ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

5.1 A Community Impact Assessment of the scheme has been undertaken. This policy does not have a negative effect on any group and has been developed to help support those people in the Borough who are most deprived.

- 5.2 The Co-operative and Communities Scrutiny Committee were involved in the early development of the current arrangements for Local Crisis Assistance and Local Resettlement Assistance Policy. The Committee commend the officers who have implemented this policy successfully ensuring that those in personal or financial crisis receive the assistance to which they are entitled while at the same time ensuring value for money for the Council.
- 5.3 The Committee recognise that the decision to end the funding for the Local Welfare Provision has been taken at a national level and support the continued provision of Emergency Welfare Assistance in line with the policy set out in Appendix A. The Committee also support the change in name for the scheme as the current terms are confusing.
- 5.4 The Committee hope that every alternative funding opportunity will be explored to support the continued work of the Foodbank and CAB and request that Members are kept informed of the outcome of the Government's review and any judicial review.

6. **PREVIOUS MINUTES**

Minute CB-118 of the Cabinet meeting of 28th March 2013 (Local Crisis and Local Resettlement Assistance Policy)

7. **BACKGROUND PAPERS**

None

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Emergency Welfare Assistance Policy

1. Introduction and aim of policy

From April 2013 Community Care Grants and Crisis Loans for living expenses administered by the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) were abolished. A grant was awarded to unitary and first tier Councils for them to spend on local welfare provision for 2013/14 and 2014/15. How the money was spent was for each council to determine but there was no expectation to replicate the scheme that was operated by the DWP. The DWP will still administer some types of assistance including:

- **Short term benefit advances (STBA)** which will give financial assistance to people making a new claim or who have a significant change in circumstances until their benefit is in pay.
- **Budgeting Loans** which are interest free loans to help pay for essential things such as furniture, clothes, rent or hire purchased debt. In order to be able to apply for such a loan the applicant must have been in receipt of certain benefits for at least 26 weeks or more. Applications will be unsuccessful if the applicant does not have the means to pay back the loan or if they already owe the Social Fund a specified amount.

From 2015/16 the Government was due to withdraw funding, however they are currently reconsidering this decision, however regardless of this Telford & Wrekin Council have committed to providing a level of assistance to the most vulnerable residents who find themselves in a crisis situation. This policy outlines how Telford & Wrekin Council will assist residents who either;

- a) experience a crisis by granting emergency welfare assistance . A crisis refers to an urgent need as a consequence of an emergency, disaster, unforeseen circumstance or an urgent need that is strikingly different from the pressures generally associated with managing on a low income. Examples include no access to essential items for healthy living (food, heating and clothing), a flood, fire or gas explosion ; or
- b) require assistance to remain or to help them establish themselves in the community by granting emergency resettlement welfare assistance This includes assistance for people leaving care to establish themselves in the community, assistance for people to stay in the community rather than enter care, assistance for a prisoner or young offender on home leave or release to re-adjust to life outside of prison and assistance for people to set up a home as part of a resettlement programme following a period without a settled way of life;

where the person or their immediate family do not have the funds available or access to funds to meet their basic living expenses.

The core eligibility criteria are that the applicant must:

- Be aged 16 or over.
- Be without sufficient resources to meet an urgent need that poses a serious risk to the health and well being of the applicant or their immediate family member(s).
- A resident within the Telford & Wrekin Borough. However, exceptions will be granted where the applicant requires refuge or care following abuse, harm or has an unsettled way of life.
- Legally resident in the UK

In the case of those requiring help to establish themselves in the community under the Emergency Resettlement Welfare Assistance element of this policy the applicant must also be in receipt of one of the following benefits:

- Income Support
- Jobseekers Allowance (Income Based)
- Employment and Support Allowance (Income Related)
- Pension Credit
- Anyone who has yet to apply for the above but who is likely to qualify

Each case will be treated on its own merits within the scope of this document. All applicants will receive equal and fair treatment to take account of the Council's responsibilities under all relevant legislation, for example the Human Rights Act and Equality Act 2010.

Telford & Wrekin Council is committed to working with the local community, partnership organisations, the voluntary sector and other interested parties to facilitate this scheme.

2. Operation of the scheme

Applicants will need to complete the designated claim form. This will be available on the Council's website, for those who are not able to access the internet a telephone application can be made. In most instances the completion of an application will be made by a support worker already involved in supporting the applicant e.g. social worker, resettlement officer, or officer / volunteer of a partner organisation.

Evidence may be required to support the application but this will vary depending on the reason for the application. It may be necessary for a decision maker to visit the applicant to corroborate the application.

Telford & Wrekin Council will consider granting assistance to applicants who meet the eligibility criteria set out in this policy document. The operation of the scheme is at the Council's discretion and applicants do not have an automatic right to assistance. The scheme's budget position will be taken into consideration when making a decision on whether or what assistance can be granted.

The budget will be profiled over the year, with consideration being given in the profiling for certain peak pressure points. The Council has a limit on the funding available and profiling the available budget each month will hopefully prevent the fund running out before the end of the year. In an extreme case it may with a Revenues or Benefits Service Delivery Manager's permission be possible to grant assistance for someone experiencing a crisis. Any budget not spent will roll into the next month.

Assistance will not be granted where another statutory body is obliged to provide assistance.

An application for Emergency Welfare Assistance , Discretionary Housing Payment or Council Tax Support Hardship Assistance will be considered under whichever scheme best suits the applicant's needs. For example if an applicant completes an application for Emergency Welfare Assistance but their needs would be best met under a Discretionary Housing Payment then their application will be considered under the Discretionary Housing Payment scheme. If there are no funds left within the Discretionary Housing Payment or Council Tax Support Hardship Assistance then it may be possible to provide assistance under this policy.

Basic Principles

The following are the basic principles of the scheme:

- The assistance will be granted not loaned
- If an applicant qualifies for assistance this will be in the form of goods or service. Cash will not usually be granted. In exceptional circumstances it may be necessary to make a small cash award for an item or service which it is not possible to procure.

The following are deemed to be the essential expenditure that the scheme may cover:

- Gas or electric provided via a prepaid meter
- Essential white goods or the cost of repair of those goods
- Essential Furniture i.e. bed and a seat
- Bedding
- Crockery and cutlery
- Basic clothing i.e. a change of clothes and protective outerwear such as a coat and a pair of shoes.
- Travel warrants
- Other items or service where it is deemed that the applicant or their immediate family require the item or service to ensure their basic health or wellbeing.

The precise items that are essential for an individual will depend on their personal circumstances.

Food parcels are provided via the Telford Crisis Network.

3. Emergency Crisis Welfare Assistance

Emergency Crisis Welfare Assistance may be granted in situations where a household has insufficient resources to meet an urgent need that poses an immediate and substantial risk to their health and wellbeing.

A crisis refers to an urgent need as a consequence of an emergency, disaster, unforeseen circumstance or a pressing need that is strikingly different from the pressures generally associated with managing on a low income. A crisis could, for example, cover the following risks:

- No access to essential items necessary for healthy living (food, heating and clothing)
- The imminent risk of homelessness
- The imminent risk of children being taken into care
- Unexpected death of an immediate family member
- The breakdown of a family relationship due to cases of domestic abuse, neglect or harm
- Help to ease exceptional pressures such as exceptionally poor living conditions or the onset of, or deterioration in the health of an immediate family member
- A flood, fire and gas explosion

Issues that we will not treat as a crisis include: Minor mishaps or damage, lost or spent money, unable to access savings or capital.

Benefit disallowance or sanctions will not usually be treated as a crisis unless we are satisfied that the sanction has been applied through no avoidable fault of the applicant or they are at risk of one of the situations listed above. Any assistance will only be to ease the customer over the initial crisis period, they will then need to seek their own solution e.g. apply for hardship payments from Jobcentre Plus.

In order to validate a request for an item / service arising from exceptional pressures, we will usually require information confirming the situation from an agency working within a health or social care or support role.

In determining the nature and complexity of a crisis, we will consider:

- Circumstances that place the household / immediate family members under greater pressure than might generally be associated with managing on a low income;
- It does not matter whether it is a single major pressure or the cumulative effect of a number of less significant pressures, which may not be exceptional if taken individually. It is the overall impact on the household's circumstances that is important;
- The individual's / household's resources and skills for coping with the crisis;

- The point the crisis occurred and the date the application was received in relation to the number and type of associated incidences happening within this period; and

We will also take into account, whether the urgent need:

- Should be considered by another organisation or agency that has a statutory responsibility for assessing assistance in relation to the specific need;
- Can be met through the income, savings or resources that are available to the members of the household;
- Can be met by other sources of help or the possibility that some other person or body may wholly or partly meet the need;
- Would not abate without immediate support;
- Is the consequence of an act or omission for which the applicant or partner is responsible; and the applicant or partner could not have taken reasonable steps to avoid.

If the crisis has been compounded by factors such as a deterioration in health, drug and alcohol problems, unemployment, an abusive relationship and so on; we will review whether the applicant:

- Is in receipt of agency support to address the factors that underscore the crisis;
- This support will prevent the crisis from re-occurring, so the applicant is unlikely to submit another application within the next 12 months.

Core Eligibility Criteria for Emergency Crisis Welfare Assistance

To be considered eligible for Local Crisis Assistance applicants must satisfy ALL of the following conditions:

- Be aged 16 or over.
- Be without sufficient resources to meet an urgent need that poses a serious risk to the health and safety of the applicant or their immediate family member(s).
- A resident within the Telford & Wrekin Borough. However, exceptions will be granted where the applicant requires refuge or care following abuse, harm or has an unsettled way of life.
- Legally resident in the UK

Exclusions

The following people are excluded for support in all circumstances:

- A person in hospital or care home (independent or local authority), unless their discharge is planned to take place imminently

- A person or immediate family member that has been granted assistance under this policy on 3 separate occasions within a rolling 12 month period, commencing from the date their last application was received. Exemptions may be granted in exceptional circumstances. In such cases, the applicant may be required to attend a face to face interview.
- Prisoners and people lawfully detained.
- Members of a religious order who are fully maintained by the order.

The following people are also excluded from support, except in very exceptional circumstances:

- Full-time or part-time students not on Income Support, Income Based Job Seekers Allowance, Income Related Employment Support Allowance, Pension Credit (including payments on account) or equivalent welfare benefits – they can only receive support for expenses arising out of a disaster.
- A person from abroad who fails or would fail the habitual residence test for the purpose of welfare benefits and other entitlements.
- A person subject to immigration control by virtue of the Immigration and Asylum Act

Emergency Crisis Welfare Assistance **will not** help with the following;

- a need which occurs outside the United Kingdom
- **or** an educational or training need including clothing and tools (these may be granted by the school e.g. through the pupil premium)
- **or** travelling expenses to or from school
- **or** school meals for those eligible to free school meals
- **or** expenses in connection with court (legal proceedings) such as legal fees, court fees, fines, costs, damages, subsistence or travelling expenses
- **or** domestic assistance and respite care
- **or** any repair to a rented property which is the responsibility of the landlord
- **or** replacing or repairing of any goods provided by a landlord as part of a tenancy
- **or** help with removals where the person is moving to Telford from outside the Borough, unless in exceptional circumstances where the move is required by Social Services.
- **or** a medical, surgical, optical, aural or dental item or service (these needs can be provided free of charge by the National Health Service, if the applicant or their partner is in receipt of Income Support, income-based Jobseeker's Allowance, Employment and Support Allowance (income-related) or Pension Credit (which includes the guarantee credit) or replacement under Universal Credit
- **or** work related expenses
- **or** debts to government departments
- **or** investments
- **or** council tax or arrears of community charge

4. Emergency Welfare Resettlement Assistance

Emergency Welfare Resettlement Assistance is intended to help vulnerable people live independent lives to remain or become integrated within their community. The applicant can be the person requiring assistance, a member of their immediate family, or someone else the applicant or their family will be providing support for.

An application may be considered for one of four categories of assistance:

- Assistance for people leaving care to establish themselves in the community
- Assistance for people to stay in the community rather than enter care
- Assistance for a prisoner or young offender on home leave or release to re-adjust to life outside of prison
- Assistance for people to set up a home as part of a resettlement programme e.g. through Housing and Cohesion Team following a period without a settled way of life

Only those who meet all elements of the core eligibility criteria will be considered for Emergency Welfare Resettlement Assistance. However, by itself, the benefits specified in the core eligibility do not give an entitlement to assistance; therefore, regard to all circumstances will be taken into account.

The applicant must demonstrate that the need cannot be met by another source, they have not got the funds to provide the goods / items themselves and the assistance will have a substantial and immediate effect on improving their circumstances.

The applicant will be required to supply information about their circumstances and the nature of the circumstances that have led to them requiring assistance.

If necessary, applicants may be advised to seek assistance from statutory health and social care agencies, as well as community and voluntary organisations that can assist the process by providing a professional opinion on the needs of the claimant, as well as delivering support and assistance in relation to the applicant's ongoing support and welfare.

Assistance for people leaving care to establish themselves in the community

This category of need is intended to help people establish themselves in the community following a stay in institutional or residential care. Care refers to institutional or residential accommodation in which the person concerned has received care. This could include: residential care homes, rehabilitation units, hospitals or local authority care.

Assistance is also available to people if they are within 6 weeks of leaving one of the above institutions or residential accommodations.

The length of time the applicant has been in care should normally be:

- a period of three months or more, or
- a pattern of frequent or regular admission to care; linked to the nature of their presenting health problems.

In the case of children and young people leaving care, we will liaise with health and social care agencies to ensure they are able to establish themselves safely and securely in the community to prevent the risk of homelessness, exploitation and harm. Assistance may be granted for children and young people who: have left care in the last 12 months; or are in the process of setting up a new home, if age appropriate.

Applicants may be required to demonstrate what other broader support will be in place to help the person concerned to:

- Make the immediate transition from care to the community;
- Remain in the community and not return to care

Being in receipt of a 'personal budget' for adult social care or disability related benefits does not automatically qualify someone for assistance.

Each application will be assessed on its own merits in the context of the individuals; symptoms, level of functioning; finances, family and community resources.

If the person concerned is suffering from a deteriorating medical condition, a serious illness or is exposed to a harmful situation that will inevitably lead to return to care; granting Emergency Welfare Resettlement Assistance award may delay such a decision, and for this reason, an award may be refused. Making a decision to refuse an application in such cases will be based on the recommendation of a professional such as a Social Worker.

Assistance for people to stay in the community rather than enter care

This category of need is designed to support someone to live independently, rather than go into institutional or residential accommodation, such as a residential care home, hospital, rehabilitation units or local authority care. An award may also be made to help prevent a child being taken into care. Prisoners or young offenders on release or home leave cannot apply for this category [see section "Assistance for a prisoner or young offender on home leave or release to re-adjust to life outside of prison"].

The risk of the person being taken into care has to be substantial – supported by a statutory authority or lead health or social care practitioner to substantiate;

- the threat of care is immediate or imminent; and

- there is a direct link between the threat of care and the need in question

The person concerned should require a significant and substantial amount of care or supervision because they;

- cannot adequately look after themselves or others;
- would be a danger to themselves or others;
- are at risk of harm or abuse

In order to validate a care need, we will require verification from professional agencies working within a health or social care role.

If the person concerned is suffering from a deteriorating medical condition, an illness or a harmful situation that will inevitably lead them to going into care and granting Emergency Welfare Resettlement Assistance will delay such a decision then assistance may be refused. Making a decision to refuse an application in such cases will be based on the recommendation of a professional such as a Social Worker.

Being in receipt of a 'personal budget' for adult social care or disability related benefits does not automatically qualify someone for assistance. Each application will be assessed on its own merits in the context of the individual's; symptoms, level of functioning; finances, family and community resources.

Assistance for a prisoner or young offender on home leave or release to re-adjust to life outside of prison

This category of need is designed to support prisoners and young offenders, leaving prison, or on home leave, adjust to life outside of prison through the provision of essential items.

One of the intentions of this category is to support the individual, immediately after their release, to prevent the likelihood of re-offending and the risk of harm.

An application can be made 6 weeks in advance of the person's release date.

If the person is on temporary release, the person caring for the prisoner or young offender must make the application.

When considering a case under this section of the policy the following will be considered:

- How long the person has been released from prison
- The goods e.g. clothing, furniture etc. that the person may have access to from before they went to prison
- The support they have in place e.g. from family / Probation Service

- If they have applied for any discharge grants from the prison they may be eligible for e.g. for clothing, travel etc.
- That they have applied for all relevant benefits.

Telford & Wrekin Council reserves the right to reject applications where it becomes clear that the planned resettlement or temporary release does not have sufficient arrangements in place to reduce the likelihood of re-offending and risk of harm to the public. This information is likely to be provided by a professional working with the offender e.g. Prison Service or Probation Service.

Assistance for people to set up a home as part of a resettlement programme following a period without a settled way of life

This assistance is intended to help people establish a settled way of life following a period of continuous instability.

The fact that someone has lacked accommodation does not necessarily constitute an unsettled way of life. For instance, an applicant evicted from a longstanding tenancy who, after staying with their relatives for a month, obtains a new tenancy will not satisfy requirements under this category.

Assistance will only be considered if the application forms part of a planned resettlement programme. The programme may be provided by the Council or other agency or charity providing support to the person. This programme must include:

- Help to set up a new home or secure stable accommodation; and
- Activities / actions designed to help the applicant settle in the community

If the requested item(s) / service(s) are for the purpose of setting up a new home, the home need not be permanent. For instance, applicants may satisfy requirement if they are moving into assured short hold tenancies, temporary accommodation or a refuge that will eventually lead to a settled way of life. In such instances there will be an expectation that the applicant will take any items granted with them when they move into more permanent accommodation.

To determine whether an applicant has an unsettled way of life, a range of circumstances will be considered, in particular:

- When the applicant last lived in settled accommodation;
- The different places they have stayed;
- The types of accommodation involved;
- The periods spent in each place;
- The reasons for leaving; and
- Factors that may have caused and maintained an unsettled way of life.

If the unsettled way of life is a consequence of an act or omission to which the applicant is responsible for or could have taken steps to avoid, assistance will not be made, unless there are exceptional circumstances for doing so.

An unsettled way of life, for example, may refer to the following situations;

- a rough sleeper
- a person using a night shelter, temporary accommodation or a hostel over a prolonged period of time.
- victim(s) of domestic abuse seeking refuge

However, this does not mean that everyone who is staying in a hostel or temporary accommodation is without a settled way of life. Each case will be considered on its own merits.

Core Eligibility Criteria for Emergency Welfare Resettlement Assistance

To be considered eligible for Local Resettlement Assistance applicants must satisfy ALL of the following conditions:

- Be aged 16 or over.
- Be without sufficient resources to meet an urgent need that poses a serious risk to the health and safety of the applicant or their immediate family member(s).
- A resident within the Telford & Wrekin Borough. However, exceptions will be granted where the applicant requires refuge or care following abuse, harm or has an unsettled way of life.
- Legally resident in the UK

The applicant must also be in receipt of one of the following benefits:

- Income Support
- Jobseekers Allowance (Income Based)
- Employment and Support Allowance (Income Related)
- Pension Credit
- Anyone who has yet to apply for the above but who is likely to qualify

Where;

- the applicant's capital and that of their immediate family is less than the amount they would need to meet their or their families basic living expenses for a period of 1 month and the applicant or their immediate family do not have the funds available to cover the cost of the items / service requested.

If an applicant requires help to set up a new home, they must be at the start or in the process of doing so. No assistance will be granted for applicants that have completed this process.

In determining whether an applicant is in the process of setting up a home, we will take into account:

- how long the applicant has been living in the property;
- the furniture and equipment they have in their home; and
- how they are managing without the items they lack

Exclusions

The following people are excluded from assistance in all circumstances:

- A person in hospital or care home (independent or local authority), unless their discharge is planned to take place imminently
- A person moving into care settings such as nursing and residential homes.
- A person subject to immigration control by virtue of the Immigration and Asylum Act as they are not able to claim benefits. This may be because they haven't got permission to enter or remain in the UK, only have permission to enter or remain in the UK if they don't claim benefits or use other public services or were given permission to enter or remain in the UK because someone has formally agreed to support them.
- A person or immediate family member that has been granted assistance under this policy on 3 separate occasions within a rolling 12 month period, commencing from the date their last application was received. Exemptions may be granted in exceptional circumstances. In such cases, the applicant will be required to attend a face to face interview.
- Prisoners and people lawfully detained with the exception of those due to be released imminently and who fall under the criteria for "Assistance for a prisoner or young offender on home leave or release to re-adjust to life outside of prison".
- Members of a religious order who are fully maintained by the order.

The following people are also excluded from assistance, except in very exceptional circumstances:

- A person from abroad who fails or would fail the habitual residence test for the purpose of welfare benefits and other entitlements.
- Unless there are exceptional circumstances, applications from people living with family members or in a furnished property who are moving out to set up home in a none furnished property will not be awarded help.

Emergency Welfare Resettlement Assistance **will not** help with the following;

- a need which occurs outside the United Kingdom
- **or** an educational or training need including clothing and tools (these may be granted by the school e.g. through the pupil premium)
- **or** travelling expenses to or from school
- **or** school meals for those eligible to free school meals

- **or** expenses in connection with court (legal proceedings) such as legal fees, court fees, fines, costs, damages, subsistence or travelling expenses
- **or** domestic assistance and respite care
- **or** any repair to a rented property which is the responsibility of the landlord
- **or** a medical, surgical, optical, aural or dental item or service (these needs can be provided free of charge by the National Health Service, if the applicant or their partner is in receipt of Income Support, income-based Jobseeker's Allowance, Employment and Support Allowance (income-related) or Pension Credit (which includes the guarantee credit) or replacement under Universal Credit
- **or** work related expenses
- **or** debts to government departments
- **or** investments
- **or** council tax or arrears of community charge

5. Decision Making

Whilst recognising the need for individual consideration of the circumstances of each case, consistency is also important. Each case needs to be looked at on its own merits but all customers need to be treated equitably and fairly when the scheme is administered.

Requests for Further Information

Although some decisions may be able to be made based on the information provided within the application, it may be necessary to request further information to enable the decision maker to reach a decision. Extra information may be requested by:

- Telephone to verify information provided, identify whether the customer has the funds available to purchase requested items, clarify details of the crisis or care need; review what has caused the urgent need and to discuss other types of support that may be appropriate to the specific need.
- Interview to verify the same information as would be requested during a telephone call. Sometimes however it is easier to speak with applicant face to face.
- Visit – it may be necessary for a visiting officer to visit the applicant in their home to gather information or assess their requirements.
- Liaising with advocacy services, agencies and statutory authorities – through working with the applicant these bodies may have additional information on the applicant's circumstances and the impact on the applicant's health and wellbeing the requested item or service will have. It may also be necessary to seek additional advice or guidance from appropriate bodies on the other options that may be available to the applicant to alleviate their circumstances.
- In writing – when dealing with urgent requests it is unlikely that requests for additional information will be made in writing, however on occasions it may be deemed appropriate to request information in writing. An example may be a non-urgent Emergency Welfare Resettlement Assistance where the person is not yet in a position to move back into the community or where all other methods of communication have not elicited a response.

The applicant will need to provide information within a tight time limit due to the urgent need for a decision to be made. In most instances an applicant for Local Crisis Assistance will need to provide information within 1 working day of any request. In most instances for Local Resettlement Assistance the applicant will need to provide information within two weeks of the request. The time limit can be adjusted according to the circumstances of the application. If a person fails to provide the necessary information then the application will be rejected.

Rejection of Application

On reviewing the applicant's circumstances, case details and eligibility; a decision maker may reject an application on the basis:

- The urgent need can be met by other sources of help or the applicant has failed to demonstrate how they have sought to address their need through other types of assistance;
- The applicant is deemed to have sufficient resources to meet the urgent need;
- Following the date the crisis or care need had arisen, the circumstances of the applicant or their family members' have changed in such a way that they no longer satisfy the criteria for assistance;
- The applicant has been granted assistance on 3 separate occasions within a rolling 12 month period, commencing from the date their last application was received. Exemptions may be granted;
- The applicant is deemed to not meet the considerations for assistance set out in this policy;
- The item(s) or service(s) applied for are ineligible as set out in sections 3 and 4;
- The application is deemed to be fraudulent [see section 8];
- Insufficient information is provided to verify the applicant's need, circumstances or eligibility;
- The operation of the scheme is at the Council's discretion and applicants do not have an automatic right to assistance.

Making Decisions

In reaching a decision a decision maker may decide that:

- An application is rejected.
- Partial assistance is granted as it is deemed that not all of the requested items or services will directly reduce the health and safety risks associated with the applicant's circumstances.
- Having regard to all the applicant's circumstances a decision maker may decide that alternative item(s) or service would best suit their needs to reduce the health and safety risks with the circumstances they find themselves in. Such decisions will usually be made after consultation with any support worker that is assisting the applicant.
- Full assistance is granted i.e. the items or services requested are granted in full.
- Not all qualifying applications can be paid as this scheme has a cash limited budget. A decision will take account of monthly budget positions, demand patterns and resource levels.

Telford & Wrekin Council reserves the right to reject applications at any stage of the assessment process.

Timescales for Decision Making

It will be necessary to make decisions on Emergency Welfare Crisis Assistance applications in most cases within one working day, for example if the applicant is in need of a gas or electricity voucher for a prepaid meter Applications received before 4:45pm Monday – Friday will usually be looked at the same day to determine the urgency of the case. Some applications are less urgent e.g. a request for washing machine or cooker. For these requests decisions will be made within 3 working days or as soon as is practically possible. In many instances the decision on Emergency Welfare Resettlement Assistance applications is less urgent as usually there is notice of the person returning to the community, decisions in these cases will where possible be made within 2 weeks of the application or as soon as is practically possible. In some instances a more urgent decision will need to be made e.g. if someone has to move quickly due to suffering domestic violence.

6. Granting of Assistance

Assistance may be in the form of:

- Items of essential furniture. Where the appropriate item(s) are available they will be sourced from local community recycling schemes for which the Council will recompense the scheme for the value of the goods. Where it is not possible to purchase used goods the Council will look to purchase a new item. The Council will arrange for the item to be delivered.
- Essential white goods which where there is an appropriate item available will be sourced from local community recycling schemes for which the Council will recompense the scheme for the value of the goods. Where it is not possible to purchase second hand goods the Council will look to purchase a new item. The Council will arrange for the goods to be delivered, installed and any existing item which is being replaced to be removed to be repaired or recycled.
- Essential items of crockery and cutlery. Where appropriate the items will be sourced from second hand providers.
- New beds and bedding
- Voucher for essential clothing
- Travel warrant
- A pre-paid voucher which can be used at any PayPoint facility to credit the applicant's gas or electricity key, card or account. The voucher will only be able to be redeemed against the applicant's specific key, card or account.
- Other items or service where it is deemed that the applicant or their immediate family require the item or service to ensure their basic health or wellbeing.

No cash awards will be made unless a grant is awarded under unusual circumstances where it is not possible to procure the item or service. If a cash award is to be made this will either be made directly into an appropriate bank account or by way of a PayPoint voucher which the applicant can cash at a local PayPoint terminal.

Depending on the applicant's circumstances assistance may be granted to:

- The applicant
- Their partner or immediate family member acting as an appointee
- An advocate service or statutory authority acting on behalf of the applicant.
- Other third party where the applicant has an illness or disability that impairs their ability to make a transaction or receive a delivery for the agreed item / service

A decision on assistance being granted may be conditional upon the applicant agreeing or meeting certain requirements to prevent the risks associated with the crisis or the support need reoccurring. For example, if an unsettled way of life has been mediated by drug and alcohol addiction, the applicant will be required to seek treatment / therapies as advised by specialist health workers.

Should an applicant be unsuccessful, they can ask for their decision to be reviewed if there is reasonable grounds to do so [see section 10].

7. Notification

Applicants will be notified of their decision either in writing (including e-mail) or via telephone (including text message). In some cases a decision may be made face to face.

The reasons for a decision will be explained as well as the options available to the applicant.

8. Fraud

Telford & Wrekin Council is committed to the fight against fraud in all its forms. An applicant who tries to fraudulently claim a grant by falsely declaring their circumstances, providing a false statement or evidence in support of their application, may have committed an offence under the Fraud Act 2006.

Where it is alleged, or the authority suspects that such a fraud may have been committed, the matter will be investigated and if fraud is found to have occurred, action will be taken including, if appropriate, criminal proceedings.

9. Officer Roles

Decision Maker (Discretionary Awards Officer or equivalent) – will gather all necessary information they deem necessary to make a decision. Where further information is required the decision maker will telephone, arrange a meeting or visit the applicants in their home. Or where appropriate they will contact any third party who may be able to provide additional information.

The decision maker will consider all the information available and with regard to the qualifying criteria and factors to consider will decide whether assistance can be granted.

The decision maker will notify the applicant or their representative of their decision and will offer advice on any other steps the applicant can take to ease their circumstance or other support available. The decision maker where necessary will refer the applicant to other agencies or departments who can provide support and assistance.

The Benefit Service Delivery Manager has the authority to delegate decision making powers to another suitably experienced officer if there should be a need.

Review Officer – any appeals received will be decided by the Discretionary Awards Team Leader, or where they have made the original decision the Benefit Welfare & Assurance Group Manager will undertake the review.

The Benefit Service Delivery Manager has the authority to delegate this function to another suitably experienced officer if there should be a need.

10. Reviews

Emergency Welfare Assistance are discretionary awards however an applicant who is dissatisfied with a decision regarding one of these awards may apply for it to be reviewed. Applications for a review must be in writing and contain reasons for the application and be received within 14 days of being notified of the original decision.

A reviewing officer will consider the request for a review. It may be necessary to speak to the applicant or their representative either via the telephone or face to face.

The outcome of the review will be notified in writing.

Should the applicant remain dissatisfied with the outcome of the review, they have the right to contact the Local Government Ombudsman.

11. Publicity

Details of the scheme and the application will be included on the Council's website. The Council will work with relevant interested parties who work with people who are most likely to require assistance from the scheme. The Revenues and Benefits Service will seek the co-operation of various service areas across the Council and partner organisations including social services, family and cohesion services, housing associations, the probation service and voluntary sector organisations.

TELFORD & WREKIN COUNCIL

CABINET - 13th NOVEMBER 2014

GRANT FOR PROVISION OF SHORT TERM COMMUNITY LOANS

REPORT OF: ASSISTANT DIRECTOR: CUSTOMER SERVICES

LEAD CABINET MEMBER – CLLR BILL McCLEMENTS

PART A) – SUMMARY REPORT

1. SUMMARY OF MAIN PROPOSALS

- 1.2** Many people need additional help with everyday costs and the Benefits Service is seeing increasing numbers of people using payday or other short-term loans to meet these needs. Nationally, both the Citizen Advice Bureaux and the StepChange Debt Charity have similarly reported increasing numbers of people having problems with payday loans with particular growth in the number of people with 5 or more payday loans.
- 1.3** This report outlines a recommendation to use £100,000 of funding from the 13/14 Crisis Assistance allocation to fund a grant to enable a local credit union to provide an ethical Short-term loans scheme to support some of the most vulnerable residents in our community who are currently using payday loan schemes, many with APR in excess of 1,500%.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1** Cabinet ring fence £100,000 of funding from the 2013/14 Crisis Assistance allocation to be used to fund a grant to enable a local credit union to provide an ethical short-term loans scheme to local residents who would otherwise be unable to access low-interest rate credit, that mirrors some of the benefits of the payday loans concept at significantly reduced charges.
- 2.2** Cabinet to confirm that the grant should be allocated to Just Credit Union Ltd, who have successfully bid through a competitive process to receive the grant.
- 2.3** Delegate responsibility to the Assistant Director: Customer Services, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Finance & Enterprise, to approve the detail of an ethical short-term loans scheme and oversee its implementation.

2.4 Delegate responsibility to the Assistant Director: Law, Democracy & People Services to approve and execute all necessary contractual documentation in accordance with the Constitution.

3. SUMMARY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

COMMUNITY IMPACT	Do these proposals contribute to specific Co-Operative Council priority objective(s)?	
	No	
	Will the proposals impact on specific groups of people?	
	Yes	An ethical short-term loans scheme will provide a more affordable alternative option for those residents who would otherwise take out payday loans or unregulated alternatives. This will include some of the most vulnerable and financially excluded people in our Borough'.
TARGET COMPLETION/DELIVERY DATE	The new scheme will be operative from 1 st April 2015, the point at which we anticipate that the national funding for the scheme will be withdrawn.	
FINANCIAL/VALUE FOR MONEY IMPACT: Yes		
<p>The Crisis Assistance funds for 2014/15 contain an amount rolled forward from 2013/14 to fund the £100k payment to Just Credit Union as a one off grant. This will still leave sufficient funding available for the remaining commitments against the Crisis Assistance pot in 2014/15.</p> <p>There is no financial risk to the Council relating to the loans made to individuals as the loan transaction will be between the individual and Just Credit Union. Regular information will be provided from Just Credit Union to enable the Council to monitor outcomes of the grant on a bi monthly basis initially and then quarterly after 6 months. This will include information such as the number of loans applied for granted and refused, value of loans granted, purpose of loans and number and value of loans in default.</p> <p>The £100k will be made as a grant payment to Just Credit Union. The grant will be paid in instalments in relation to the up front and administration costs incurred by Just Credit Union and the amount issued as loans.</p>		
MLB 07.10.14		
LEGAL ISSUES: Yes		
<p>The proposed grant meets the requirements set out in a Settlement letter dated 6 August 2012 which was sent to Chief Executives by the Minister for State and Pensions regarding the abolition of the discretionary social fund and transfer of funding for a new provision. The letter states that no restrictions would be placed on how the funding was used, but stated that the intention</p>		

was to localise funding to give local authorities the flexibility to help those in genuine need as they see fit.

The grant is also in accordance with the government's expectation that funding should be concentrated on those facing greatest difficulty in managing their income, and to enable a more flexible response to an unavoidable need.

A legally compliant tender process has been undertaken, and the successful provider will be required to enter into a legally binding agreement to ensure that the use of the funding meets the requirements contained in the settlement letter.

The grant will include specific and measurable standards and outcomes, which will require active management through the collation and analysis of key performance indicators and regular meetings with the provider.

OTHER IMPACTS, RISKS & OPPORTUNITIES	No	
IMPACT ON SPECIFIC WARDS	No	Borough wide impact

PART B) – ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

4. INFORMATION

4.1 Background

4.1.1 As part of the Welfare Reform Act two parts of the discretionary Social Fund which were administered by the Department for Work and Pensions were abolished with effect from 1 April 2013. The government instead provided each council with funding for new Local Welfare Provision. On 1st April 2013 Telford & Wrekin Council launched its Local Crisis Assistance and Resettlement schemes as a replacement to the Crisis Loans and Community Care Grants.

4.1.2 The Crisis Assistance scheme provides applicants with essential goods or services that they do not have the means to purchase themselves, and without which there is a genuine risk to the health or wellbeing of them or their family.

4.1.3 The Resettlement scheme provides applicants with essential items of furniture or services that they require to enable to them set up home and live independently following a period living in some form of institutionalised environment, such as prison, care, or statutory temporary accommodation.

4.1.4 The funding received from the Department for Work and Pensions in 2013/14 to enable us to provide Crisis and Resettlement funding is:

Programme Funding	£486,724
Administrative Funding	£102,848

Funding for 2014/15 has been confirmed to be at a similar level, although the DWP have announced that funding will be withdrawn entirely from 2015/16. A separate report on this issue is being brought to Cabinet so that the future of the Crisis and Resettlement Assistance schemes for 2015/16 and beyond can be considered.

- 4.1.5 Although the Crisis and Resettlement Assistance schemes provide help with the absolute essential items that are required to set-up a home, or ensure that someone's health or wellbeing are not compromised, the scheme does not provide assistance outside of that quite restricted definition. We would not for example provide items such as carpeting, curtains, tumble dryer or a television.
- 4.1.6 Many people still need additional help with everyday costs and the Benefits Service is seeing increasing numbers of people using payday or other short-term loans to meet these needs. Nationally, both the Citizen Advice Bureaux and the StepChange Debt Charity have similarly reported increasing numbers of people having problems with payday loans with particular growth in the number of people with 5 or more payday loans
- 4.1.7 Payday loans are presented by the companies who offer them as a quick, easy and affordable way to solve money problems. However, in practice, payday loan interest rates tend to be very high (research suggests interest rates vary from 1300% to more than 7000% APR).
- 4.1.8 In 2012, there were about 240 payday loan firms in the UK. In Telford & Wrekin, there are at least 7 shops offering payday loans or similar services (2 in Telford Town Centre, 3 in Wellington, 1 in Dawley and 1 in St. Georges).
- 4.1.9 There are still limited affordable alternatives to payday and other short-term loans. Credit unions (member-owned not for profit organisations) offer lower-cost loans. However, unlike payday lenders, they tend not to offer loans for shorter time periods.
- 4.1.10 The three credit unions that operate in Telford & Wrekin (FAIRshare, Just Credit Union and MWS Credit Union) do not currently offer a comparable alternative to a payday loan.

However, some credit unions, such as London Mutual, Oldham and Nottingham, are starting to offer affordable alternatives to payday loans. The difference in cost between a typical payday loan and a credit union alternative (£400 over 30 days) is illustrated below:

	Interest rate (APR)	Number of days	Interest and other costs
Credit union short-term loan (based on London Mutual CUOK loan)	27%	30	£19
Payday loan company	5600%	30	£108

4.1.11 Although there is a growing awareness of these issues, most activity has focused on restricting promotion and advertising, for example many councils, including Telford & Wrekin, have prevented access to payday loan sites from public access computers in libraries. In 2013, Telford & Wrekin made the decision to block any access to websites of “pay-day lenders” from its publicly accessible internet connections.

4.1.12 What does not currently exist in the Borough for customers of limited incomes, or poor credit ratings, is access to fast, affordable, ethical short-term loans.

4.1.13 The loans currently available through local Credit Unions require the borrower to have saved continuously for a period of 3 months before the loan. The reality is that if a customer needs to borrow money fast, the 3 month delay will act as a significant barrier, often instead pushing them towards the pay-day lender route.

4.2 Development of a local scheme and awarding of the grant

4.2.1 In April 2014, a joint officer member working group along with colleagues from CAB convened to investigate the viability of working with a local credit union to create a low-cost ethical loans scheme that could be accessed by residents who are not usually able to access low cost credit.

4.2.2 The working group designed a specification for an ethical loan product to be delivered through a local credit union, the key objectives of which are:

- To provide residents in the Telford and Wrekin area with access to affordable short term loans that mirror the benefits of the payday loans concept at significantly lower charges
- The loans product would initially only be available to those residents who are usually financially excluded from accessing low-interest rate credit
- The loan product would be for small loans of between £50 - £300, payable over no longer than 52 weeks
- Loans would be available immediately upon applying, without the need to be a pre-existing member of the lending organisation

- Loans would only be granted subject to an affordability assessment being undertaken.
- Alongside the repayment of the loan, the borrower would also be committed to saving a small weekly amount of £1.50, which could not be accessed until the loan was repaid in full
- The application and decision process for the loans needed to match the ease and simplicity of pay-day lender loans to ensure that the product was seen as a real alternative
- Telford & Wrekin Council will provide a grant of up to £100,000 to a single Credit Union to cover any set-up and administration costs for the life of the project and to fund the capital pot to be used for the awarding of the loans.

4.2.3 In June 2014, a joint meeting of the Co-operative & Communities and Budget & Finance Scrutiny Committees took place at which they reviewed the viability and draft specification of the scheme. The Committee were wholly supportive of the proposal and suggested some practical changes to the detailed scheme specification, all of which were adopted and included in the final specification.

4.2.4 In July 2014 invitations were issued to the three local credit unions asking them to submit bids for the funding by responding to the detailed scheme specification that had been designed.

4.2.5 The period for bidding ended on the 1st September, with just one bid being received, from Just Credit Union Ltd. Just Credit initially provided services to the rest of Shropshire County, but has been providing access to its services for residents in Telford since 2008. Just Credit's services in Telford are provided in partnership with Wrekin Housing Trust who provides them with the facilities to provide outreach services from Wrekin Housing Trust premises in Woodside, Wellington, Dawley and Donnington with a designated outreach worker. They currently have 1,255 active members in Telford of whom 705 are defined as being financially excluded.

4.2.6 Over an estimated 2 year life-span for the product, Just Credit have estimated that the £100,000 grant will enable them to make loans to the value of £272,160.

4.2.7 Just Credit will aim to launch the loan product in early December 2014 with the aim of attracting borrowers who may turn to more expensive forms of lending over the Christmas period. This will be supported with a wide ranging marketing campaign over the Christmas and New Year period, which will be supported by the Council.

4.2.8 The Council will support Just Credit by raising awareness of the loan scheme amongst front line staff and partners who interact with residents who are struggling with debt caused by high-cost borrowing,

so that they can make them aware of the alternative options available through Just Credit.

- 4.2.9 The Council will also support Just Credit by raising awareness of its other available schemes and products, including the promotion of its savings schemes to employees, and offering services such as direct payroll deduction for staff who want to save with Just Credit.
- 4.2.10 As part of the specification for the product we stated that it would be desirable if the credit union were to have a town-centre presence in addition to its existing out-reach sessions. Subject to further discussions it is proposed that an offer be made to provide desk space to Just Credit in First Point in Southwater One, initially for two half-day sessions per week.

5. IMPACT ASSESSMENT – ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

- 5.1 This policy does not have a negative effect on any group and has been developed to help support those people in the Borough who are most deprived.
- 5.2 The Co-operative and Communities Scrutiny Committee has welcomed the opportunity to be involved in the development of the short term community loans. The proposals were considered by the Scrutiny Committee in detail at an early stage in the development and it is recognised that the Committees comments have informed this policy. The Scrutiny Committee is also in the process of concluding a review on the effect of benefit sanctions and have received evidence of the hardship and financial pressure they can cause. The Committee therefore fully endorse the Short Term Community Loan Scheme and commend those who have developed it as this will prevent families and individuals putting themselves at financial risk through the use of payday loans. The Committee is supportive of the loan scheme and the related services of the provider being widely promoted.
- 5.3 The Committee support the model that has been developed and are assured that there is no financial risk to the Council, but would recommend that in addition to the outcomes that will be monitored as set out in paragraph 4.2.2 that the social benefit of the loans is also recorded e.g. case studies which demonstrate the difference this scheme has made to individuals and families.

6. PREVIOUS MINUTES

- 6.1 Minute 82a) of the full Council meeting of the 7th March 2013 within with the following motion was unanimously voted for.

“This Council urges the Government to take immediate action to counteract the proliferation of legal loan sharking by ensuring that a bill introducing a cap on the amount of interest that can be charged on

short-term and payday loans is scheduled for debate during this parliament. The Council also urges the Government to further strengthen consumer protections by ensuring a breach of these rules would make any loan agreement unenforceable by the lender”.

7 BACKGROUND PAPERS

7.1 None

**Report prepared by Lee Higgins, Benefit Service Delivery Manager,
Telephone: 01952 383835**

CABINET

Decision Notices and Minutes of a meeting of the Cabinet held on Thursday, 13th November, 2014 at 5.00 p.m. at the AFC Telford Learning Centre, Haybridge Road, Wellington, Telford

PUBLISHED ON WEDNESDAY, 19th NOVEMBER, 2014

(DEADLINE FOR CALL-IN: MONDAY, 24th NOVEMBER, 2014)

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

CB-49 MINUTES

RESOLVED – that the minutes of the meeting of the Cabinet held on 16 October 2014 be confirmed and signed by the Chair.

CB-50 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

None

CB-51 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None

CB-52 HOMELESSNESS STRATEGY

Key Decision identified as **Homelessness Strategy** in the Notice of Key Decisions published on 15 October 2014.

Councillor C.F. Smith, Cabinet Member: Housing, Development & Borough Towns, presented the report of the Assistant Director: Family & Cohesion Services, which detailed the consultation that had taken place with stakeholders following approval of the draft Homelessness Strategy in September 2013. A copy of the finalised Strategy for the period 2014-2017 was appended to the report.

The Homelessness 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. It also included an Action Plan (which was appended to the report) to achieve the three principal aims of the Strategy:

- Preventing homelessness in Telford & Wrekin
- Having appropriate housing pathways, including advice and support for homeless households in the Borough
- Meeting the statutory duty to accommodate the Gypsy, Romani and Traveller community.

Further consultation had taken place with Maninplace, the Salvation Army KIP project, Stay Supported Housing, Wellington & District YMCA, private and registered landlords and the Scrutiny Management Board. This had strengthened the collaborative working with partner organisations, which was co-ordinated through the local Homelessness Partnership.

Significant progress had been made through the delivery and implementation of the Action Plan, with key achievements to date including the launch of the Telford Housing Options Tool, the development of a gypsy and traveller transit site at Snedshill, the commencement of works to extend the permanent gypsy and traveller site at Lodge Road, Donnington Wood, and the phasing out of Bed and Breakfast for emergency accommodation.

Members welcomed the Strategy and the multi-agency approach being taken to supporting people and to ensuring there was joined-up working to prevent and tackle homelessness. It was noted that the impact of the Government's welfare reforms was leading to more evictions for rent arrears and people then presenting themselves as homeless.

RESOLVED –

- (a) that the Homelessness Strategy 2014-2017, as appended to the report, be adopted;
- (b) that the progress being made on the Strategy, as summarised in the action plan shown at Annex 1 of the report, be noted.

CB-53 REVISED SCHOOL FUNDING FORMULA 2015/16

Key Decision identified as **Revised Funding Formula for Telford & Wrekin Schools for 2015/16** in the Notice of Key Decisions published on 15 October 2014.

Councillor P.R. Watling, Cabinet Member: Children, Young People & Families, presented the report of the Assistant Director: Education & Corporate Parenting, which sought approval for revisions to the funding formula used to allocate Government funding to mainstream schools in Telford & Wrekin.

The Department for Education had made only minor changes to the school funding regulations for 2015/16, apart from the introduction of Minimum Funding Levels for local authorities which sought to ensure that each local authority had sufficient money to fund its schools at minimum levels. This had resulted in Telford & Wrekin receiving a net increase in grant of 1.4%, which equated to £1.3m of additional Dedicated Schools Grant.

Consultation had taken place with the Telford & Wrekin Schools Forum on how to utilise the additional funds, and the Cabinet Member thanked the Forum for their input. It was proposed that £1m be used to remove the cap on increases in school funding per pupil. This would enable the new funding formula to take effect more quickly, with any remaining funding to be used to increase the basic per pupil funding rates. £300,000 would be used to support the 'High Needs' education budgets which were currently facing considerable pressures.

In response to a question from Cllr W Tomlinson (Liberal Democrat/Independent Group Leader) regarding how far the Government looked ahead in terms of pupil numbers and schools funding, the Assistant Director: Education & Corporate Parenting advised that the Department for Education captured numbers twice during an academic year and used that information to help determine the following year's grant allocation. So it was in effect "lagged" funding based on the previous year's pupil numbers.

RESOLVED – that the revisions to the funding formula for Telford & Wrekin mainstream schools for 2015/16 be approved.

CB-54 AWARD OF NETWORK SERVICES, TELEPHONY, CONTACT CENTRE AND ASSOCIATED SUPPORT CONTRACT

Key Decision identified as **Network & Voice Tender** in the Notice of Key Decisions published on 15 October 2014.

Councillor H. Rhodes, Cabinet Member: Customer Services, Libraries & Transport, presented the report of the Assistant Director: Customer Services, which advised Members of the procurement and tendering process that had been undertaken for the supply of the Council's voice and data network.

Telford & Wrekin's network provided data and voice services for 186 sites, including 75 schools, and supported over 150 home and mobile workers. The network was now 9 years old and in need of investment to upgrade critical component parts, and to support new contact centre upgrades and the use of more cost effective channels for customers to do business with the Council. The existing contract with Capita ICT Services (formerly Synetrix) for the supply of the current network expired in June 2015. Following Cabinet approval on 30 January 2014, an EU Restricted Tender process had been undertaken to test the market place in order to select a preferred supplier for the provision of the voice and data network after June 2015. The contract would be for 5 years, with the option to extend for a further 5 years. Full details of the procurement process were outlined in the report. The new contract would enable the upgrade of critical network links and replacement of equipment as well as supporting new customer service innovations.

At the end of the tender process, the preferred supplier was Capita ICT Services. The capital cost of the contract would be funded through the Council's ICT capital programme. In revenue terms, the new contract would deliver budget savings of £160k. Schools would benefit as the reduced

contract costs would be fed into the charging model for the ICT Managed Service for Schools in 2015/16.

In response to a question from Cllr W Tomlinson (Liberal Democrat/Independent Group Leader) regarding guarantees against network out-ages and faults, the ICT Service Delivery Manager advised that the new contract had very robust arrangements for the supplier to provide financial recompense for disruption to business as a result of identified network problems. These arrangements could also be reviewed over the course of the contract.

RESOLVED –

- (a) that authority be delegated to the Assistant Director: Customer Services, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Customer Services, Libraries & Transport, to award to Capita ICT Services the Network Services, Telephony, Contact Centre and Associated Support Contract;**
- (b) that authority be delegated to the Assistant Director: Law, Democracy & People Services to agree and execute all necessary documentation, including the affixing of the common seal of the Council to contractual documents as appropriate;**
- (c) that the capital and revenue investment as detailed in the report and outlined in the ICT Capital Programme be approved.**

CB-55 COMMUNITY PRIDE FUND – GRANT ALLOCATION

Non-Key Decision

Part Recommendation to Full Council in relation to decision (d) below not subject to Call-in

Councillor S. Davies, Cabinet Member: Neighbourhood Services, Employment & Skills, presented the report of the Managing Director which provided an update on the implementation of the Community Pride Fund and the process that had been undertaken to allocate grants from the Fund to applicants from the local community.

The Community Pride Fund was established to support the delivery of the Council's Pride in Your Community Programme, with £1m of capital funding being available to support local schemes/projects that would benefit the physical, social and economic regeneration of the Borough. The response had been overwhelming and, by the closing date of 5 September 2014, a total of 66 applications had been received from 60 different organisations amounting to over £2.5m. Due to the significant response and the quality of the applications received, it was proposed to increase the budget for the Fund to £1.260m. The additional money would be found from in-year savings, and would enable a greater number of projects to be funded.

The report detailed how the applications were evaluated and then scored against agreed criteria by the Community Pride Fund Advisory Panel. Thanks were extended to all those who sat on the Panel, which had cross-party Member representation as well as volunteers from the Co-operative Commission. It had been a robust process with the Panel carrying out qualitative evaluations of all the applications in order to prioritise the projects to be recommended for funding. Appended to the report was a list of the 37 projects, with a total value of £1.257m, that it was proposed to be funded through the Fund. It was noted that all areas of the Borough would benefit from the allocation of funding to these projects.

The Advisory Panel had recommended that plans be put in place to re-allocate funding should any of the prioritised projects not be able to deliver their scheme and spend the grant within the agreed timescales. The progress of the successful projects would be tracked through ongoing monitoring, with applicants being required to submit regular updates and encouraged to contribute to the Community Pride Fund 'blog'.

Members welcomed the success of the Community Pride Fund, which was a good example of co-operative working to help local communities help themselves. It would also open up other funding opportunities to these community groups and organisations. Thanks were extended to Rachael Jones and her team for the administration of the Fund and allocation process.

RESOLVED –

- (a) that the budget for the Community Pride Fund be increased to £1,260,000 to enable a greater number of projects that contributed to the Council's priorities to be supported;**
- (b) that the projects that have been prioritised using the Funding Advisory Panel evaluations, as shown in Appendix 1 of the report, be approved for funding from the Community Pride Fund;**
- (c) that authority be delegated to the Managing Director, in consultation with the Cabinet Member: Neighbourhood Services, Employment & Skills, to re-allocate any grant funding that has not been spent within the timescales for an approved scheme, based on the principle that the money is allocated to the next highest prioritised project on the list from the appropriate funding pot;**
- (d) To RECOMMEND to COUNCIL that the transfer of £0.260m into the Community Pride Fund, to be funded from the delivery of additional in-year savings in 2014/15, be approved.**

**CB-56 LOCAL CRISIS AND LOCAL RESETTLEMENT ASSISTANCE
POLICY**

Non-Key Decision

Councillor W.A.M. McClements, Cabinet Member: Finance & Enterprise, presented the report of the Assistant Director: Customer Services, which sought approval for a revised policy for Emergency Welfare Assistance which would be funded directly by the Council.

Cabinet approved the Council's Crisis Assistance and Resettlement Assistance Policy in March 2013 in order to manage the Local Welfare Provision funding allocated to local authorities by Government as a replacement for the centrally run Social Fund. The basic principle of Telford & Wrekin's scheme was that the assistance would be via the provision of goods and services rather than cash payments. In January 2014, the Government announced that it would not be providing any funding for Local Welfare Provision after 2014/15. It would be for each local authority to determine whether it wished to continue to provide support from its own budgets.

The number of applications for assistance under the existing Policy had been significantly fewer than expected. The report detailed the key criteria for receiving assistance and the main types of assistance provided. These had provided local residents with an invaluable safety net to meet essential needs in the event of a personal or financial crisis. In light of the experience gained in operating the scheme, the Policy had been reviewed. The core principles had not been changed, but the document had been simplified and re-named as the Emergency Welfare Assistance Policy in order to avoid confusion with the Telford Crisis Network which operated the food bank scheme. A copy of the revised Policy document was appended to the report.

In terms of financing the scheme for 2015/16, it was proposed that £138,000 be allocated – to be funded from rolling forward a projected underspend of £104,000 of 2014/15 grant money with a top-up of £34,000 from Council resources in order to meet the forecasted costs of operating the scheme next year.

Members expressed concern that the Government had decided to cease funding a scheme that was designed to provide emergency support to the most vulnerable. Even many people in work were reaching crisis point, and it was important that the scheme should continue alongside the valuable work of the voluntary sector in providing Food Banks etc.

RESOLVED –

- (a) that the change of name for the scheme to Emergency Welfare Assistance be approved;**
- (b) that the Emergency Welfare Assistance Policy, as shown at Appendix A of the report, be approved;**

- (c) that budgetary provision of £138,000 be allocated for 2015/16 to fund the administration and awards of assistance under the Policy.

CB-57 GRANT FOR PROVISION OF SHORT-TERM COMMUNITY LOANS

Non-Key Decision

Councillor W.A.M. McClements, Cabinet Member: Finance & Enterprise, presented the report of the Assistant Director: Customer Services, which proposed the making of a grant to enable a local credit union to provide an ethical, short-term loans scheme to support some of the most vulnerable people in the community.

There was an increasing problem with people getting into debt as a result of taking out payday or other short term loans to meet everyday needs. The interest rates charged by the lending companies tended to be very high (up to 7000% APR). Credit unions offered lower-cost loans but, unlike payday lenders, they tended not to offer loans for shorter time periods. However, some credit unions were now starting to offer affordable alternatives to payday loans, and an officer/member working group had been working with colleagues from the Citizens Advice Bureau to investigate the viability of working with a local credit union to create a low-cost ethical loans scheme. A specification for such a scheme was drawn-up, with assistance from the Co-operative & Communities and Budget & Finance Scrutiny Committees. It was proposed that the Council provide a grant of up to £100,000 to cover any set-up and administration costs for the life of the project and to fund the capital pot to be used for the awarding of loans. In July 2014, invitations were issued to three local credit unions asking them to submit bids for the funding. One bid, from Just Credit Union Ltd, was received, and details of their operation were provided in the report. They had estimated that the £100k grant would enable them to make loans to the value of £272k.

The proposed £100k payment to Just Credit Union would be funded from an amount rolled forward from the Crisis Assistance funds allocated for 2013/14. The Council would support Just Credit by raising awareness of the loan scheme.

Reference was made to the motion that had been passed by Council in March 2013 regarding the proliferation of legal loan sharking, and that this was a practical and pro-active means for local people to be offered a low-cost alternative to unaffordable payday loans. The involvement of a local credit union was welcomed. All Councillors were urged to help get the message out to residents about the availability of this scheme, and reference was made to how people using other Council services could be signposted to the scheme if they were in need of short term financial assistance.

RESOLVED –

- (a) that £100,000 of funding from the 2013/14 Crisis Assistance allocation be ring-fenced to fund a grant to enable a local credit union to provide an ethical short-term loans scheme (that mirrors some of the benefits of the payday loans concept at significantly reduced charges) to local residents who would otherwise be unable to access low interest rate credit;
- (b) that the grant be allocated to Just Credit Union Ltd, who had successfully bid through a competitive process;
- (c) that authority be delegated to the Assistant Director: Customer Services, in consultation with the Cabinet Member: Finance & Enterprise, to approve the detail of an ethical short-term loans scheme and oversee its implementation;
- (d) that authority be delegated to the Assistant Director: Law, Democracy & People Services to approve and execute all necessary contractual documentation in accordance with the Constitution.

CB-58 EXCLUSION OF PUBLIC AND PRESS

RESOLVED – that the public and press be excluded from the meeting for the following item of business on the grounds that it may involve the disclosure of exempt 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-59 DISPOSAL OF LAND AT ALLSCOTT

Key Decision identified as **Land at Allscott** in the Notice of Key Decisions published on 15 August 2014.

Councillor W.A.M. McClements, Cabinet Member: Finance & Enterprise, presented the report of the Assistant Director: Development, Business & Employment, which sought approval for the disposal of a surplus land asset at Allscott.

A 2.1 acre site in the village of Allscott was held within the Council's Property Investment Portfolio (PIP), and was currently occupied by way of an annual grazing licence. A recent review of assets within the PIP had identified this site as a possible opportunity for residential development. If approved for disposal, an outline planning application for residential use would be submitted and, if granted, the site would be brought forward for open market disposal to achieve best consideration.

The report detailed the value of the land based on its current use and the potential value should it achieve residential planning consent. A significant

proportion of the land sale would be used as part of the corporate capital receipts programme.

RESOLVED –

- (a) that authority be delegated to the Assistant Director: Development, Business & Employment, in consultation with the Cabinet Member: Finance & Enterprise, to
 - promote a planning application on the site identified on the plans appended to the report;
 - market and dispose of the freehold interest as outlined in the report;
 - apply the capital receipt as detailed in the report, and update the capital programme as necessary.

- (b) that authority be delegated to the Assistant Director: Law, Democracy & People Services to seal or sign any documents required to give effect to the recommendation above.

The meeting ended at 5.50 pm.

Signed for the purposes of the Decision Notices

Jonathan Eatough
Assistant Director: Law, Democracy & People Services
Date: 19 November 2014

Signed:

Date: