

CABINET

Decision Notices and Minutes of a meeting of the Cabinet held on Thursday, 29th January, 2015 at 5.00 p.m. at Addenbrooke House, Ironmasters Way, Telford

PUBLISHED ON WEDNESDAY, 4th FEBRUARY, 2015

(DEADLINE FOR CALL-IN: MONDAY, 9TH FEBRUARY, 2015)

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

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

CB-80 MINUTES

RESOLVED – that the minutes of the meeting held on 8th January 2015 be confirmed and signed by the Chair.

CB-81 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Councillor P.R. Watling

CB-82 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor K.S.Sahota declared a disclosable pecuniary interest in relation to agenda item 5 – Telford Homefinder

Councillor R.A. Overton declared a disclosable pecuniary interest in relation to agenda item 5 – Telford Homefinder

Councillor S. Davies declared a disclosable pecuniary interest in relation to agenda item 9 – Dawley Regeneration and Improvement Works

CB-83 UNLOCKING STALLED HOUSING AND EMPTY FLOORSPACE ABOVE RETAIL PREMISES

Key Decision identified as **Unlocking Stalled Housing Sites** in the Notice of Key Decisions published on 15 August 2014.

Part Recommendations to Full Council in relation to decisions (c) and (d) below not subject to Call-in

Councillor C.F. Smith, Cabinet Member: Housing, Development & Borough Towns, presented the report of the Assistant Director: Development, Business

& Employment, which set out proposals for a pilot scheme to address stalled housing sites in the Borough, and for a scheme to support the conversion of vacant retail space to residential accommodation.

One effect of the economic recession that began in 2008 was that a number of development sites in the Borough had not come forward or remained partially built. These unfinished or unoccupied properties and sites had a significant and detrimental social and economic impact on adjacent communities, as well as representing a financial loss to the Council in terms of income from Council Tax and New Homes Bonus. The Council had successfully managed to broker a way forward for a small number of sites without resorting to financial intervention. However, a number of other 'major' sites (defined as over 10 units) required external funding to overcome issues of viability due to falling land values and lack of access to credit to enable delivery.

To address this issue, it was proposed to launch a pilot scheme which would use income generated from New Homes Bonus and Council Tax to provide gap funding up to a maximum of c£156,000 as well as a loan to address viability issues. The report set out a number of criteria for the operation of the pilot scheme. The funding was seen as a route of last resort, where a site would not be brought back into use in the foreseeable future without intervention. The business case for investment would need to demonstrate that the capital investment, or gap funding, could be repaid in revenue income from the growth in New Homes Bonus. The loan would be charged at a market interest rate and would need to be repaid within five years. Where appropriate, the provision of funding could require commitments from the developer for nomination rights for rental properties, employment of apprentices etc. The scheme would therefore be cost neutral to the Council.

There was currently no capital budget allocation to fund such a scheme, and it was being recommended to Council that approval be given to increase prudential borrowing by £2m. The report also set out details of the proposed loan scheme to support the pilot.

Linked to the above was a proposal to incentivise landlords/owners to bring accommodation above retail premises into use for residential purposes, with a pilot project being focussed on Dawley and Wellington Centres to complement other planned regeneration activity. The pilot would be used to identify the level of interest and the most appropriate package of support needed. There would be eligibility criteria and a business case would be required for each investment. It was proposed to finance the capital funding by using up to the New Homes Bonus allocation(c£6,000) arising when a property was brought into residential use.

Members welcomed the proposals in the report, and the possibility that it could help to "unlock" problem sites in the Borough, such as the Manor Heights flats in Hadley. It was also noted that the pilot would only apply to development on brownfield sites or previously developed land. Councillor A.J. Eade (Conservative Group Leader) referred to the additional borrowing required, and his concern that public money was being given to private

developers. In response, the Cabinet Member stated that the Council had adopted a similar scheme in 2010 to provide assistance for small stalled schemes. There would be stringent safeguards in place, with tightly drawn-up agreements with developers/applicants in relation to the loan scheme.

RESOLVED –

- (a) That authority be delegated to the Assistant Director: Development, Business & Employment, in consultation with the Assistant Director: Finance, Audit & Information Governance and the Cabinet Member: Housing, Development & Borough Towns, to implement the proposals and associated agreements to address stalled housing units, in line with the terms set out in the report;
- (b) That authority be delegated to the Assistant Director: Development, Business & Employment to enter into agreements to incentivise owners of vacant floorspace above retail premises to convert this for residential purposes, in line with the terms set out in the report;
- (c) To RECOMMEND to COUNCIL that approval is given to increase prudential borrowing by £2,000,000 and for the capital programme to be amended as required to support the proposals within the report;
- (d) To RECOMMEND to COUNCIL that approval is given for the investment of New Homes Bonus and Council Tax growth as required to support the proposals within the report;
- (e) That authority be delegated to the Assistant Director: Law, Democracy and People Services to approve and execute all necessary legal documentation in accordance with the Constitution required for the purposes of implementing the recommendations of Cabinet and Council arising out of the report.

CB-84 ELECTION OF CHAIR FOR NEXT ITEM OF BUSINESS

Having declared an interest in the next item of business, Councillors K.S. Sahota and R.A. Overton left the meeting room. As the Chair and Vice-Chair were no longer present, it was necessary to elect a chair to preside over the next item of business.

RESOLVED – that Councillor S. Davies be elected Chair for the duration of the next item of business.

CB-85 TELFORD HOMEFINDER – PROPERTY MANAGEMENT SERVICE

Key Decision identified as **Telford Homefinder** in the Notice of Key Decisions published on 12 November 2014.

Councillor C.F. Smith, Cabinet Member: Housing, Development & Borough Towns, presented the report of the Assistant Director: Development, Business & Employment, which outlined the progress of the Telford Homefinder scheme since its launch in July 2014, and proposals to develop the service to provide a property management service for landlords.

Telford Homefinder, an in-house, on-line letting agency was launched in conjunction with the Telford & Wrekin Landlord Accreditation Scheme which required all landlords and each individual property registered with the scheme to meet the Council's accreditation standard. To date, 51 local landlords had been accredited, more than 45 accredited properties had been advertised through the Telford Homefinder website, 25 clients who otherwise might have ended up in temporary accommodation had found properties through accredited landlords, and over 50 people had requested viewings on properties.

Since the launch, landlords had been consulted on the operation and potential development of the scheme. This had identified a range of additional services that landlords had said would increase take-up and revenue, including a property management service. To meet this demand, it was proposed that Telford Homefinders use spare capacity within their existing resources to carry out market testing and develop a property management service to landlords that would help meet housing need, tackle rogue landlords and raise standards in the private rented sector. It was also proposed to offer some tenant services, but without charging tenants a fee. A business case for the planned expansion of the Telford Homefinder scheme was appended to the report.

RESOLVED –

- (a) that the Phase 2 development of Telford Homefinder and associated Business Case for the provision of a commercial letting agency service for private rented properties, as set out in the report, be approved;**
- (b) that authority be delegated to the Assistant Director: Development, Business & Employment, in consultation with the Cabinet Member: Housing, Development & Borough Towns, to implement the proposals contained within the report, and thereafter refine the Business Case and implement any acceptable service developments that may be recommended by Officers from time-to-time – to be carried out on a cost recovery traded basis only in respect of Telford Homefinders Service and, in particular, the development of a lettings agency service.**

Councillors Sahota and Overton returned to the meeting room, and Councillor Sahota resumed the Chair.

CB-86 DONNINGTON RECREATION GROUND CENTENARY FIELDS

Non-Key Decision

Councillor E.A. Clare, Cabinet Member: Leisure Services & Culture, presented the report of the Assistant Director: Neighbourhood & Leisure Services, which sought approval for the Council to actively engage in the Fields in Trust's National Centenary Field programme, and to nominate Donnington Recreation Ground as a potential National Centenary Field site.

The Council had developed a positive relationship with Fields in Trust, and had in recent years dedicated three sites, including the Town Park Arena, as Fields in Trust under the Queen Elizabeth II Fields Challenge. The Centenary Fields programme had been established to commemorate the centenary of the World War One, and was a national partnership between the Royal British Legion and Fields in Trust. It aimed to protect war memorial parks and playing fields given in memory of those who lost their lives, as well as any other valued green spaces that had some significance to WW1. The report set out the details of the criteria for applications to the programme, and the applications process.

The Council had been approached by Lilleshall, Donnington & Muxton Parish Council to dedicate Donnington Recreation Ground as a Centenary Field. The site included memorial gates located at one of the entrances to the Recreation Ground.

A further three sites – Dawley Park, Hartshill Park and St Georges Recreation Ground – had been identified as potentially meeting the criteria, and it was proposed to enter into consultation with the respective Parish & Town Councils and landowners with a view to nominating them as potential National Centenary Field sites.

Members welcomed the additional protection of green space that this designation would afford, and hoped that other sites could be nominated.

RESOLVED –

- (a) that Donnington Recreation Ground be nominated for protection under the Centenary Fields programme, and that consultation take place on the other identified Parks and Recreation Grounds with a view to further nominations;**
- (b) that authority be delegated to the Assistant Director: Law, Democracy & People Services, in consultation with the Assistant Director: Neighbourhood & Leisure Services, Cabinet Member for Leisure Services & Culture and stakeholders, to execute any Deeds of Dedication should the nomination(s) be accepted.**

**CB-87 REPRESENTATION ON OUTSIDE BODIES 2014/15 –
WREKIN HOUSING TRUST**

Non-Key Decision

Councillor K.S. Sahota presented the report of the Assistant Director: Law, Democracy & People Services, which asked Cabinet to consider the appointment of a replacement representative to the Wrekin Housing Trust for the 2014/15 municipal year.

The Council was a corporate trustee of the Trust, and since 2007 had appointed annually one Elected Member to represent the Council on the Board. Since 2011/12 the appointed representative to the Trust had been Councillor F.R. Picken. Following his resignation as a Councillor at the start of 2015, there was now a vacancy on the Trust Board for the remainder of the 2014/15 municipal year.

Political Group Leaders had been notified, and nominations had been received for Councillor E.C. Carter, Councillor G.M. Green and Councillor C.F. Smith. Cabinet then voted on the nominations, and it was:

RESOLVED – that Councillor C.F. Smith be appointed as the Council’s representative on the Wrekin Housing Trust for the remainder of the 2014/15 municipal year.

CB-88 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.

Having declared an interest in the next item of business, Councillor S. Davies left the meeting room

CB-89 DAWLEY REGENERATION AND IMPROVEMENT WORKS

Non-Key Decision

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

Councillor C.F. Smith, Cabinet Member: Housing, Development & Borough Towns, presented the report of the Assistant Director: Development, Business & Employment, which described a number of initiatives within Dawley focussed on supporting the prosperity of the local centre, and sought approval for the redistribution of capital receipts to support specific regeneration and improvement works.

The report detailed the regeneration proposals and the likely costs, which would be funded from the application of capital receipts identified in the report. The main proposal centred around the former Lord Hill Public House, whose condition had deteriorated considerably, and the adjacent land, which it was now proposed to bring forward for residential development.

Members welcomed the “unlocking” of a stalled site, and the consequent benefits for the local community. The Assistant Director added that there had been a public consultation event last week at which there had been strong support for the proposals.

RESOLVED -

- (a) that authority be delegated to the Assistant Director: Development, Business & Employment, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Housing Development & Borough Towns, to undertake regeneration and improvement works as outlined within the report;**
- (b) That the virement of capital receipts generated from the disposal of the assets as outlined within the report be approved;**
- (c) To RECOMMEND to COUNCIL approval of prudential borrowing, funded from income from New Homes Bonus and Council Tax, to facilitate the virement of capital receipts as set out in the report, and approve the necessary amendments to the Capital programme and revenue budget strategy;**
- (d) That authority be delegated to the Assistant Director: Development, Business & Employment to enter into all necessary contracts for the various regeneration and improvement works as contained within the report;**
- (f) That authority be delegated to the Assistant Director: Law, Democracy and People Services to seal or sign any documents to give effect to the above.**

The meeting ended at 5.41 pm.

Signed for the purposes of the Decision Notices

Jonathan Eatough
Assistant Director: Law, Democracy & People Services
Date: 4 February 2015

Signed:

Date:

CABINET

Decision Notices and Minutes of a meeting of the Cabinet held on Thursday, 8th January, 2015 at 5.00 p.m. at Addenbrooke House, Ironmasters Way, Telford

PUBLISHED ON WEDNESDAY, 14th JANUARY, 2015

(DEADLINE FOR CALL-IN: MONDAY, 19TH JANUARY, 2015)

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

CB-71 MINUTES

RESOLVED – that the minutes of the meeting held on 11th December 2014 be confirmed and signed by the Chair.

CB-72 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

None

CB-73 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None

CB-74 FINANCIAL MONITORING 2014/15

Key Decision identified as **2014/15 Financial Monitoring** in the Notice of Key Decisions published on 8 December 2014.

Part Recommendations to Full Council in relation to decisions (a) to (c) 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, and with a projected underspend of £2.8m. This was a further improvement on the position in October when a net overall overspend of £0.300m was reported. £3m of contingency which had prudently been set aside as part of the budget should also be available at year end.

This was a reflection of the strength of the financial management being exercised by Cabinet Members and officers.

There were a number of variations from the approved budget, including the cost of Children in Care placements (overspend of £1.4m); the cost of Adult Care and Support services (projected overspend of £5.7m relating to care packages); and provision of in-house services to Adults with Learning Disabilities (overspend of £0.3m). Projected variances of over £0.100m for individual service delivery units were detailed in the report. There were benefits from net in-year savings across all services of just over £6m, active treasury management of £1.5m and £1.95m from the implementation of single status which would not now happen in this financial year.

In relation to use of the projected underspend, it was proposed that additional funding for two priorities be made - £0.260m for Community Pride Fund (as previously agreed) and £0.750m for Capacity Fund. This would take the underspend to £1.8m. Together with the unused element of the budget contingency (currently £3m), this would be used to support the 2015/16 budget strategy and the delivery of future savings. The overall position also included full use of both the Safeguarding and Adult Social Services draw down budgets, and assumed that Transforming Telford Ltd was closed this year and released £0.73m of revenue balances.

The capital programme totalled £137m, which included slippage and all approvals since the budget was set. Spend was currently standing at around 38%. The report detailed a number of new approvals, virements and slippage, along with some changes to the funding of the capital programme. It was proposed to make further expenditure of £150,000 to undertake some further ecological and site access works as part of the preparation of the site at Donnington for the MoD fulfilment centre. The expenditure would be recoverable from the successful bidder if Donnington was selected as the location, but might be abortive otherwise. This additional expenditure would be funded from within the existing 2014/15 capital programme.

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

RECOMMENDED TO COUNCIL –

- (a) that the transfer of £0.750m to the Capacity Fund be approved;**
- (b) that the new allocations, virements and slippage detailed in Appendix 3 and the funding changes to the capital programme detailed at paragraph 6.3 of the report be approved;**
- (c) that a further £150,000 of capital expenditure to develop the site at Donnington for use as a MoD fulfilment centre be approved, to be funded from the existing 2014/15 capital programme.**

RESOLVED –

- (d) that it be noted that 2014/15 revenue spending is currently projected to be within budget at year end, and that work continue to sustain this position;
- (e) that the position in relation to capital spend and receipts be noted;
- (f) that the collection rates for NNDR, council tax and sales ledger be noted.

CB-75 SERVICE & FINANCIAL PLANNING 2015/16 – 2017/18

Key Decision identified as **Service & Financial Planning 2015/16 – 2017/18** in the Notice of Key Decisions published on 15 August 2014.

Council decision – not subject to Call-in

Councillor W.A.M. McClements, Cabinet Member: Finance & Enterprise, presented the report of the Managing Director and the Chief Financial Officer, which set out the proposed service and financial planning strategy for the period 2015/16 to 2017/18 with specific budget proposals for 2015/16, and the proposed engagement and consultation activities with the community. He thanked the Chief Financial Officer, his team and officers from across the Council for all their hard work in preparing the draft budget.

The Cabinet Member set out the background and context to the budget round, particularly in relation to the unprecedented cuts in Government grant funding whilst at the same time demand for many services had been increasing. Nearly £70m of savings would have been delivered by April 2015 - equivalent to nearly £1,000 for every household in the Borough. The provisional Local Government Finance Settlement confirmed that councils would continue to face significant spending cuts and financial challenges. For Telford & Wrekin the Revenue Support Grant for 2015/16 would see a reduction in “spending power” of 2.7% against an average reduction across the country of 1.8%. However, this masked a real cut in grant of over 25%. Despite the severe financial challenges the Council faced, the clear priority of the Administration was to attract new jobs and investment and promote growth in the Borough, whilst seeking to protect, as far as possible, front line services – with a commitment to work co-operatively with residents and partners to deliver these priorities. The Council’s business winning agenda was leading to significantly higher than average economic growth in the Borough, adding £350m to the local economy. The Council continued to drive costs down and get increased value for money from its commissioning. .

The report set out the key budget strategy proposals for 2015/16, including the following commitments:

- Freezing Council Tax for the next two years;
- £1m fund to help revitalise and invest in the high streets of borough towns and district centres;

- Further £250,000 investment in “Destination Telford” initiatives and events over the next three years;
- Investing just under £4m over two years to roll out Superfast Broadband to those areas of the Borough without coverage;
- A Borough wide environmental investment programme of £750,000 over two years to tackle key issues raised by residents and to continue investment in Parish Environmental Teams;
- Community Pride Fund of £1m for 2017/18;
- Further support for the regeneration of local centres with £650,000 to refurbish the former youth club building at Gower Street, St Georges;
- A £6m capital investment into road, footpath and other highway improvements over the next three years;
- Free swimming for residents over 50 for four years;
- Tackling youth unemployment - a further £650,000 investment in the Job Box initiatives started in the current year to find more ways for local businesses to take on and employ young people;
- Additional ring-fenced funding to protect and support vulnerable children and adults.

In terms of the base budget position, the Council was facing a projected funding gap of £2.541m for 2015/16, which after the application of savings proposals, additional cost pressures and proposed investments gave a projected net shortfall of £0.833m. This would be funded from the projected underspend at the end of 2014/15. The Council’s grant allocation was still suffering from the effects of grant “damping” and population undercount, which cumulatively amounted to a further £2.8m of grant reduction.

Attached to the report were a number of appendices, including savings proposals, Impact Assessments of the savings proposals, the Capital Investment Programme, details of Reserves and Balances and details of education related Section 106 Agreements. A programme of community engagement and consultation on the budget proposals would be undertaken over the next few weeks. This would also seek views on future Council plans/services, highlight simple ways that residents could help the Council to save money, and communicate key budget messages including the growth agenda. Details of the communication and engagement plan were appended to the report. Final proposals would be considered by the Cabinet on 26 February 2015 for recommendation to full Council on 5 March 2015.

Councillor A.R.H. England, Cabinet Member: Adult Social Care, reported on the implementation of the Cost Improvement Plan for Adult Services which was now achieving results in reducing costs. There were still significant service pressures, but the contingency sum this year had allowed the change programme to be progressed. This did take time, but through driving down supplier costs and re-organising service provision etc services to clients were being protected as far as possible.

Councillor W.L. Tomlinson ((Lib Dem/Independent Group Leader) welcomed the general direction of the budget, and highlighted the unfairness of Government grant funding. Cuts in central government spending were also impacting on the provision of infrastructure and community facilities for new

housing developments, and leading to further problems. Councillor A.J. Eade (Conservative Group Leader) advised that his Group was preparing alternative budget proposals. However, these had been delayed due to delays obtaining some information. In terms of the Administration's budget proposals, there was concern at a further £3m cut in Adult Services at the same time as spending more money on Community Pride initiatives.

Councillor McClements referred to an agreement that Councillor Eade was a party to regarding the submission of budget proposals for Scrutiny. He had not had any requests for information, or been made aware of problems about obtaining that information, from Opposition Members. The Cabinet would ensure that relevant information would be provided, but that it would be up to Scrutiny to decide if they would accept late submission of the Conservative Group's budget proposals. In relation to Adult Care services, there had been no reduction in overall spend through to the end of 2013/14. Nationally, 52% of spending reductions related to adult social care services compared with only 22% in Telford & Wrekin. It was also possible to get better quality services for less cost – eg: less use of costly residential care that did not provide good outcomes for many elderly people.

RESOLVED –

- (a) that the service and financial planning strategy as set out in the report be approved for consultation with the community;**
- (b) that authority be delegated to the Assistant Director: Family, Cohesion & Commissioning, in consultation with the Cabinet Member: Adult Social Care, to enter into appropriate Section 256 and Section 75 Agreements under the NHS Act 2006 (as amended);**
- (c) that the Assistant Director: Law Democracy & People Services be authorised to execute all necessary contract documentation, including the affixing of the common seal of the Council as appropriate to enable the Council to enter into appropriate Section 256 and Section 75 Agreements under the NHS Act 2006.**

CB-76 HOUSING INVESTMENT PROGRAMME – BUSINESS CASE

Key Decision identified as **Housing & Property Investment Phase 2** in the Notice of Key Decisions published on 17 September 2014.

Councillor S. Davies, Cabinet Member: Neighbourhood Services, Employment & Skills and Councillor W.A.M. McClements, Cabinet Member: Finance & Enterprise, presented the report of the Director of Development, Business & Customer Service, which detailed the Business Case to deliver approximately 425 private and affordable rented properties on Council owned land via a proposed Wholly Owned Company (WOC).

In July 2014 Cabinet approved a Housing & Property Investment Programme which would meet a number of the Council's objectives in terms of providing

a significant number of quality private rent and affordable rent homes, creating jobs, stimulating economic growth and delivering income and capital growth for the Council. It had also been agreed to deliver the housing elements of the programme through a special purpose housing company to develop new homes on Council owned land. Appended to the report was the Business Case for the establishment of a WOC. The project team working on the proposals had worked with professional advisors on the key modelling assumptions, and this confirmed that the net returns previously reported remained achievable, and would generate a surplus to the Council over the period of the project. The Council's external auditors had confirmed that they were satisfied that the project would deliver an appreciating asset for the Council. The capital costs and source of funding were detailed in the report, along with the impact on the General Fund. The report also set out the legal position in relation to the WOC, as well as the proposed governance arrangements. Advice had been received that a minimum of three directors would be appropriate, and the Council (as sole shareholder) would have the power to appoint (and remove) directors. The initial directors needed to be identified, and it was proposed that the Managing Director would appoint existing officers. Democratic accountability was key to the project, with the Council (through the Cabinet) retaining a power of decisive influence over the WOC. The Business Case set out a proposed governance structure which split responsibilities between Cabinet, a more formalised Project Board and the WOC Board of Directors.

Councillor A.J. Eade (Conservative Group Leader) referred to the risks attached to this project, including the estimate of contributions to Section 106 Agreements, interest rate changes and assumptions about the amount of income from New Homes Bonus. By using a WOC, the Council would also be exposed to more debt. He believed that the project would be better delivered by the private sector, which would take the risk away from the Council. Councillor W.L. Tomlinson ((Lib Dem/Independent Group Leader) stated that he would like to have seen some social housing provided, and sought clarification on the reporting mechanisms back to Elected Members on the operation of the WOC. In response, the Cabinet Members reported that the financial assumptions in the report were based on conservative estimates, that private sector options would leave the Council 25% worse off, and that there had been little interest from the private sector in developing the sites in this programme. It was regrettable that social housing did not form part of the programme, but the current rules on Right to Buy made it too much of a risk. There would be reports back to Cabinet from time-to-time.

RESOLVED –

- (a) that the Business Case, as attached at Appendix A of the report, be approved;**
- (b) that the revised terms of reference and governance arrangements for the Project Board contained within Appendix A (A2) be approved;**

- (c) that authority be delegated to the Managing Director, in consultation with the Cabinet Members for Neighbourhood Services, Skills & Employment and Finance & Enterprise, to approve any minor amendments to the Business Cases providing the borrowing is in accordance with the Cabinet report of 24th July 2014 and full Council of 11th September 2014;
- (d) that authority be delegated to the Managing Director to establish the Wholly Owned Company (“WOC”) as detailed within the Business Case;
- (e) that authority be delegated to the Managing Director, in consultation with the Cabinet Members for Neighbourhood Services, Skills & Employment and Finance & Enterprise, to approve the Company’s Business Plan providing that it is in line with the Business Case and the borrowing is in line with the Cabinet report of 24th July 2014 and full Council report of 11th September 2014. (It is noted that the business plan will include the Company’s lettings and allocations policy, rent setting policy, tenancy terms and enforcement policy. Governance and monitoring of the Business Plan and Company’s performance will be in accordance with the Business Case and the Project Board’s terms of reference and governance arrangements);
- (f) that authority be delegated to the Managing Director to appoint and replace the directors of the Company on the Council’s behalf.

CB-77 COUNCIL TAX SUPPORT SCHEME 2015/16

Non-Key Decision

Recommendations to Council – not subject to Call-in

Councillor W.A.M. McClements, Cabinet Member: Finance & Enterprise, presented the report of the Assistant Director: Customer Services, which set out the proposed policies for 2015/16 in relation to Council Tax Support and the Hardship Fund.

The Council Tax Support (CTS) Scheme was introduced in April 2013 to award council tax discounts to customers who were on low incomes, based on a series of principles and eligibility criteria. A review of the 2014/15 scheme had taken place, and it was recommended that the same local scheme be retained for 2015/16, except for technical and legislative amendments that were necessitated each year by Government. This reflected the Cabinet’s proposal to freeze Council Tax over the next two years, which meant there would not be any additional pressure on the CTS scheme in 2015/16. It was also anticipated that demand might decrease as the economy improved and unemployment levels fell. As part of the 2013/14 scheme, a one-off hardship fund of £65,000 was set aside to provide additional assistance to Council Tax Support claimants who were genuinely having difficulty paying the additional charges as a result of the reduction in support awarded following the Government’s decision to reduce the funding available by 21%. Unspent

money of around £30,000 was rolled forward to 2014/15 but this was projected to be fully spent by year end. The Hardship scheme had been invaluable in providing additional support to the most vulnerable customers, and it was proposed to fund the Scheme for a further 12 months at a cost of £30,000. The policy for awarding Council Tax hardship would remain unchanged.

The proposed CTS scheme for 2015/16 had been subject to consultation with precepting authorities and with the cross-party joint Co-operative & Communities and Budget & Finance Scrutiny Committees. A full public consultation exercise was not required.

RESOLVED TO RECOMMEND TO COUNCIL

- (a) that the Council Tax Support Scheme Policy for 2015/16, as shown at Appendix A of the report, be approved;**
- (b) that the Council Tax Hardship Policy and fund of £30,000 continues in 2015/16.**

CB-78 ANNUAL PUBLIC HEALTH REPORT 2014

Non-Key Decision

The Director of Public Health presented her statutory Annual Report for 2014, a copy of which was included with the agenda.

This year the Annual Public Health Report had focussed on some of the wider determinants of health and wellbeing and featured the work of a range of Council functions and how they impacted on people's health. The Report had four main sections:

- The best start in life – focussing on healthy infants, schools and pupils;
- Helping people to find good jobs and stay in work;
- Being Active- access to green and open spaces, active travel and role of leisure services
- Strong communities, wellbeing and resilience.

The Report included some key headline local statistics and the current work being undertaken to address these wider determinants of health. There were also a number of case studies which highlighted the impact that this work was having on individuals and families. The new Five Ways Telford blog was also being promoted as a social media mental wellbeing campaign to feel well, be more positive and to get more from life.

The Report contained a number of recommendations for consideration. These sought to strengthen the Council's role in promoting employee health and wellbeing, in improving the emotional wellbeing of children and young people and in tackling health inequalities and lack of exercise.

Councillor R.A Overton, Cabinet Member for Public Health & Public Protection, thanked the Director, and added that the Health & Wellbeing

Board had welcomed the Report and had been very positive about it. He also highlighted a number of initiatives that were being undertaken to address the recommendations made in last year's Report.

RESOLVED – that the Annual Public Health Report 2014 be noted, and that the recommendations contained within it be supported.

CB-79 THE PROVISION OF SECURITY SERVICES (SCHOOLWATCH) - PROVIDING SECURITY PATROLS AND KEYHOLDING SERVICES TO SCHOOLS AND OTHER COUNCIL OWNED BUILDINGS IN THE BOROUGH

Key Decision identified as **Schools Watch Security Services Tender Renewal** in the Notice of Key Decisions published on 8 December 2014.

Councillor W.A.M. McClements, Cabinet Member: Finance & Enterprise, presented the report of the Assistant Director: Customer Services, which sought approval to retender and award a contract for the provision of security services.

The aim of the Schoolwatch contract was to reduce crime and vandalism in and around schools and other Council owned sites in the Borough. It had now run for 14 years and had proved to be a great success, with 95% of schools signing up. The vast majority of Council owned premises had been added to the contract, thus ensuring a more co-ordinated approach to site security arrangements.

The contract was due for renewal in June 2015 to commence on 1 September 2015 for a three year period with an optional 2 year extension. It was therefore proposed to undertake a market engagement and competitive tender process in accordance with the Council's contract procedure rules. The cost of the service in 2014/15 was approximately £220k, although around £150k of this was recouped from schools and other users of the service.

RESOLVED -

- (a) that authority be delegated to the Assistant Director: Customer Services, in consultation with the Cabinet Member: Finance & Enterprise, to retender and award the contract for the provision of security services (patrols and keyholding) to schools and other Council owned buildings within the Borough with effect from 1 September 2015;**
- (b) that the Assistant Director: Law Democracy & People Services be authorised to agree and execute all final contract documentation, including the affixing of the common seal of the Council as appropriate under Article 14 of the Constitution and Section 21 of the Contract Procedure Rules.**

The meeting ended at 6.41 pm.

Signed for the purposes of the Decision Notices

Jonathan Eatough
Assistant Director: Law, Democracy & People Services
Date: 14 January 2015

Signed:

Date:

TELFORD & WREKIN COUNCIL

CABINET - 29 JANUARY 2015

UNLOCKING STALLED HOUSING & EMPTY FLOORSPACE ABOVE RETAIL PREMISES

REPORT OF ASSISTANT DIRECTOR: DEVELOPMENT, BUSINESS & EMPLOYMENT

LEAD CABINET MEMBER: CLLR CHARLES SMITH

PART A – SUMMARY REPORT

1. SUMMARY OF MAIN PROPOSALS

- 1.1 Whilst the Borough has experienced almost continual housing growth for the last 5 years, the effect of the economic recession in 2008/09 has left a legacy of stalled housing units. These unfinished or unoccupied properties and sites:
- Represent a financial loss to the Council in terms of income from Council Tax and latterly New Homes Bonus.
 - Have a significant and detrimental social and environmental impact on adjacent communities.
 - Are a missed opportunity, with the development of these properties often being key to the regeneration of priority areas for the Authority.
 - Are a missed opportunity in terms of our ability to meet housing need.
 - Are a missed opportunity for employment and the potential wider benefits on the supply chain, local community, etc
- 1.2 Many of these sites require external funding to overcome issues of viability due to falling land values, but are often not owned by mainstream developers with a line of credit to enable delivery. The usual lenders have withdrawn from the marketplace, unless the company has a major track record of delivery.
- 1.3 In this context, the report sets out arrangements for a pilot scheme which will be used to test a funding model to address stalled sites that have a detrimental effect on communities and require financial intervention to bring them back into use. The use of additional Council Tax and New Homes Bonus revenue generated from these sites will be used to provide gap funding to make these developments viable but would be cost neutral to the Authority. Where appropriate the provision of funding could, require commitments to be made by the developer, for example, nomination rights for rental properties, employment of apprentices, etc.
- 1.4 The report also sets out proposals for a scheme to support the conversion of vacant retail space to residential accommodation, with a pilot project being focussed on Dawley and Wellington Centres to complement other planned regeneration activity. This initiative is separate to the recently announced High Street funding of £1m and individual projects would not be eligible for both funds.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 That Cabinet delegate authority to the Assistant Director: Development, Business & Employment, in consultation with the Assistant Director: Finance, Audit & Information Governance and the Cabinet Member: Housing, Development & Borough Towns, to implement the proposals and associated agreements to address stalled housing units, in line with the terms set out in this report;
- 2.2 That Cabinet delegate authority to the Assistant Director: Development, Business & Employment to enter into agreements to incentivise owners of vacant floorspace above retail premises to convert this for residential purposes, in line with the terms set out in this report;
- 2.3 That Cabinet recommend to Council that approval is given to increase prudential borrowing by £2,000,000 and for the capital programme to be amended as required to support the proposals within this report;
- 2.4 That Cabinet recommend to Council the investment of New Homes Bonus and Council Tax growth as required to support the proposals within this report;
- 2.5 That Cabinet delegate authority to the Assistant Director: Law, Democracy and People Services to approve and execute all necessary legal documentation in accordance with the Constitution required for the purposes of implementing the recommendations of Cabinet and Council arising out of this report.

3. SUMMARY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

COMMUNITY IMPACT	Do these proposals contribute to specific Co-Operative Council priority objective(s)?	
	Yes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - protect and create jobs as part of a 'Business Supporting, Business Winning Council' - ensure that neighbourhoods are safe, clean and well maintained - regenerate those neighbourhoods in need and work to ensure that local people have access to suitable housing
	Will the proposals impact on specific groups of people?	
	Yes	Communities and neighbours next to stalled sites suffer blight and anti-social behaviour which will improve dramatically when properties are developed and occupied
TARGET COMPLETION/ DELIVERY DATE	Funding for the successful pilot project would be pursued immediately following Cabinet Approval and the appropriate procurement process.	
FINANCIAL/ VALUE FOR MONEY IMPACT	Yes	<p>There are significant financial implications arising from the recommendations within this report and these are detailed throughout the report. In summary, the report requests:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Approval to increase prudential borrowing by £2m in 2015/16. • Approval to a pilot scheme which will offer a grant to the owner of a stalled housing site. Applications for funding as a pilot scheme must demonstrate, via a business case, that the investment will be recovered through New Homes Bonus and additional Council Tax Income over a 6 year period. Due to State Aid regulations the maximum amount that can be allocated as a grant is circa £156,000 based on current exchange rates. The proposal will require short term borrowing to cover the initial cost of the grant.

		<p>This borrowing will be repaid via increased New Homes Bonus and Council tax revenue over a period of years.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Approval to pilot a scheme which will offer a loan to the owner of a stalled housing site. Loans will be funded from prudential borrowing and will be offered at market interest rates for a maximum of 5 years in order to avoid State Aid challenge • Approval to develop a scheme for unlocking empty floorspace above retail premises. This scheme will be piloted in Dawley and Wellington and will include a grant scheme funded from future years New Homes Bonus allocations, a 0% interest loan scheme up to a maximum of £20k per property and a market rate loan scheme up to a further £20k per property. A business case will be required for every application which demonstrates that the increase in Council Tax for the property equals or exceeds the loss of NNDR income and the costs of borrowing for the property. Finance advice will be provided in order to develop this scheme sufficiently before it is made available via the e-portal site. <p>It should be noted that the future of the New Homes Bonus Scheme is uncertain beyond 2015/16 and there is a risk, therefore, that the additional costs of borrowing required to deliver the proposals as detailed within this report will add to current budget pressures. There is also a risk that the Council Tax base will be reset during the period and alter the assumptions within the business cases.</p>
LEGAL ISSUES	Yes	<p>The Council can develop the stalled site schemes as proposed in this report using its various powers to promote or improve economic, social and environmental regeneration, supported by the freedoms and flexibilities afforded by the General Power of Competency under the Localism Act 2011 under which it is able to support sustainable development, incur expenditure and give financial assistance. Advice has been given by the Council's Legal Services in respect of the powers and means by which the Council can promote corporate objectives and outcomes through supporting the development of stalled sites along with the associated risks. Formal funding and loan agreements will be drawn up by Legal Services to ensure that all necessary conditions are in place to minimise the risk to the Council.</p>
OTHER IMPACTS, RISKS & OPPORTUNITIES	Yes	<p>The future of the New Homes Bonus Scheme is uncertain beyond 2015/16 and the Council Tax base may be 'reset', which may alter the business case assumptions for future years.</p>
IMPACT ON SPECIFIC WARDS	Yes	<p>The impact of the scheme will generally be limited to the Wards where the pilot schemes will be delivered.</p>

PART B – ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

4. INFORMATION - UNLOCKING STALLED HOUSING UNITS

- 4.1 The delivery of growth and new homes to meet need is a key priority for the Council and in the Service Delivery Plan for Development, Business & Employment 2014-17 (*'by direct intervention, and as part of our growth strategy, we will deliver more new homes as well as bring empty homes back into use'*). In addition, the generation of Council Tax and New Homes Bonus arising from housing development contributes directly towards the Council's

budget strategy. Whilst the Borough has seen year on year growth in new home completions since 2008 there remain a number of development sites that are not coming forward or remain partially built - often called, 'stalled sites'.

- 4.2 There can be many reasons why these sites are stalled, but the over-riding factors are usually that a planning consent was obtained prior to or during the recession with the development subsequently being deemed unviable, or lenders withdrew from the marketplace leaving the landowner/developer unable to access finance. These sites are usually located in areas that have seen property values reduce substantially since 2008/09 and without intervention they will remain undeveloped.
- 4.3 Although the housing market has improved considerably in the Telford area in the last 18 months, this has largely been due to the volumes of new homes, not a rise in property values. There has been some success with stalled sites, for example, the 52 affordable homes at the former Brindleyford School in Brookside were completed in February 2014 after six years undeveloped. Other sites, such as Dale End Garage in Ironbridge have started after a long vacant period and the former Summercroft nursing home site in Donnington has now been bought from the receivers. In these cases the Council has actively intervened through brokering a way forward with stakeholders, without needing to resort to any financial intervention.
- 4.4 However, there are a number of 'major' sites (defined as over 10 units) in the Borough, which are privately owned, with a planning consent, that remain undeliverable on viability grounds. It is no coincidence that stalled housing units are almost exclusively found on brownfield land mainly in our Borough Towns where intervention is even more vital to bring them forward.

The Pilot Scheme

- 4.5 To address this issue it is proposed that the Council launch a pilot scheme which will use income generated from New Homes Bonus and Council Tax to provide gap funding up to a maximum of approximately £156,000 as well as a loan to address viability issues. The chosen pilot scheme will need to meet the following criteria:
- **Scale** – the Borough has many single or minor sites (less than 10 units) with planning permission but the impact of intervention on these sites would be negligible for the return invested. Concentrating efforts on relatively large sites will see better outputs for a single investment.
 - **Legacy** - Although we may still see sites stall, the legacy of stalled sites was principally borne out of circumstances attributed to unique economic factors. Land for new development is generally acquired based on delivery rather than hope value, which was the case with previous consents. We will focus on those legacy sites where hope value remains an issue.
 - **Regeneration** – the Council uses its various general powers to promote or improve economic, social and environmental regeneration of the Borough. Potential schemes will be evaluated in terms of the improvements they will bring forward, including their contribution to meeting identified housing needs especially the impact of the bedroom tax.
 - **Procurement** – since the Authority is potentially assisting private sector companies there are issues around State-Aid and EU procurement legislation. There will be a need to ensure that the sites to which the pilot is applied have a robust business case for investment and satisfy these tests. This business case is likely to be more compelling on larger sites.

- **Speed of Delivery** – As New Homes Bonus is secure as an income stream for 2015/16, preference will be given to those scheme which show full or partial delivery in 2015/16 as these represent a lower financial risk for the Council.

- 4.6 The funding is proposed as a route of last resort, where a site would not be brought back into use for the foreseeable future without intervention. As part of the due diligence test for applicants, evidence of reasonable endeavours to secure alternative finance will be required with all options considered including opportunities to access HCA, Business Innovation & Skills and the Marches Local Enterprise Partnership funding as well as local grants/loans, before Council support is sought.
- 4.7 As stated above, the concept is based on stalled homes being brought into occupation and generating New Homes Bonus and Council Tax income for the Authority. The business case for investment will need to demonstrate that the capital investment can be repaid by revenue income from the growth in New Homes Bonus. It is important to note that the ongoing availability of the New Homes Bonus schemes cannot be guaranteed, and the Council Tax base may be 'reset', which may alter the business case assumptions for future years.
- 4.8 The proposal is to offer two options under the pilot, capital funding or a loan. Both will be based on pre-determined eligibility criteria including;
- 10 (ten) units minimum but preference for larger scheme
 - Extant Planning Consent granted before 1 January 2014
 - Brownfield site or PDL (previously developed land)
 - Stalled housing units either part built or requiring refurbishment located in the urban area of Telford
 - The scheme and the applicant are considered financially viable
 - Excludes sites where other funding from the Local Authority or any Government agencies has been offered.
 - Meets regeneration and housing priorities within the Borough

Capital funding/loan will be awarded to the pilot project which meets the above criteria and delivers the best return on investment for the council both financially and in terms of unit numbers delivered.

The Capital Funding Scheme

- 4.9 Council approval is sought for capital funding towards the successful pilot scheme up to the EU de minimis threshold circa. £156,000 at current exchange rates but amount will change on a daily basis in order to comply with State Aid regulations.
- 4.10 There is currently no capital budget allocation to fund such a scheme and this will, therefore, require an increase in the capital programme and associated short term borrowing. Income from New Homes Bonus and Council Tax from the completed development will be used to cover the cost of short term borrowing (£33,000 pa for 6 years) and to ultimately repay the borrowing. As a result of this funding intervention, the Council will not only meet key regeneration and/or housing priorities but will also continue to receive additional New Homes Bonus and Council Tax revenues, once the capital funding is repaid. It is important that any scheme identified as a Pilot is not currently included in projections for Council Tax and New Homes Bonus so revenue can legitimately be used to support borrowing/repayment of funding without any impact on existing income targets. Eligibility, evaluation and monitoring arrangements, including legal and financial details of the capital funding scheme will be worked up following approval to proceed to the next stage, with implementation being subject to the approval of the Assistant Director: Development,

Business & Employment , in consultation with the Assistant Director: Finance, Audit & Information Governance and the Cabinet Lead for Housing, Regeneration & Economic Development. From a procurement perspective, capital funding will be issued via a contract route rather than a grant.

- 4.11 Where capital funding is approved as part of the pilot, the business case will need to demonstrate that the investment will be recovered through New Homes Bonus (within no more than 6 years) and the additional Council Tax income (within no more than 5 years) which without intervention through the proposed scheme would not be forthcoming in the near future or at all. A scheme of 20 units which received capital funding at the EU de minimis threshold (approximately £156,000) would take under 5 years to be repaid assuming occupation immediately upon completion, and less if the units were affordable, due to the enhanced New Homes Bonus premium.

The Loan Scheme

- 4.12 Council Approval is also sought for a loan scheme to support the pilot. The grant of a loan to the pilot project will be dependent upon the agreement of a financially viable business case in each instance.
- 4.13 Any loan agreement will be subject to close scrutiny in terms of state-aid, procurement and financial due diligence. The Council will borrow from the PWLB in order to provide the loan. In order to satisfy State Aid requirements and to compensate the Council for the financial risk which they will be taking, it will be necessary for the loan to be offered at market interest rates. There will, therefore, be a premium received by the Council from the uplift in interest rates. This can be used to offset Council revenue pressures, or it may be that this premium can be set aside to provide a revolving funding source if a wider roll out of the scheme is approved subject to the successful delivery of the pilot project.
- 4.14 Any loan facility given will be subject to a formal Loan Agreement between the Council and the developer setting out the terms and conditions associated with the provision of the funding. This will typically include drawdown method, conditions precedent, costs, repayment/payment, covenants and default scenarios. This must include a Legal Charge being granted to the Council or some other form of acceptable security being provided by the developer for the full amount of the loan facility given. In the event that no first charge is available, the Council would seek other forms of suitable security. Loan lengths are to be a maximum of 5 years with most schemes re-financing after build completion to enable an earlier payback.
- 4.15 The granting of capital and/or loan funding under the pilot will be considered to be part of a deal with the chosen developer and as such there will be an expectation that the landowner/developer will also contribute beyond their own finance/borrowing. These elements will be negotiated with the successful pilot but may include:
- Letting of rental units via Telford Homefinder
 - Securing discounted prices ongoing using a resale covenant on open market sales to maintain affordability
 - Nomination rights for the Council for a percentage of rental properties
 - Potential equity stake for the Council
 - Use of local labour/apprentices in delivering schemes on the ground
- 4.16 The terms of the pilot scheme will include requiring adequate security in the form of land and/or property charges together with a viable build and sales programme to ensure delivery within an agreed timescale.

- 4.17 The council has experience of facilitating a similar scheme, providing assistance in the form of grants under the Market Intervention Fund for small stalled schemes. This has enabled 66 new homes to be delivered across seven sites funded from Government grant, provided in 2010 as part of the Council's Growth Point status. The scheme was targeted at the small builder/developer sector following the recession and enabled delivery without issue, following a rigorous due diligence process.
- 4.18 The Council's Development Delivery Group Specialist will lead on establishing any pilot project in relation to successful bids, working with officers from finance, legal and procurement.

Securing the Pilot Project

- 4.19 The pilot will be advertised via TWC's e-tendering portal for bidders to propose schemes that will meet the eligibility criteria in 4.8 above. The evaluation process will mirror that used for the 'Deal for Business' with a business case based upon the developer's bid submission prepared by the lead officer. Bids received will be evaluated against agreed criteria to ensure that the capital funding available is allocated to deliver the greatest possible benefits to the Council and the community and, therefore, demonstrates value for money.
- 4.20 The preferred bid and therefore the pilot project will need to be approved by the Assistant Director for Development, Business & Employment and Assistant Director for Finance Audit & Information Governance in consultation with the Cabinet Members for Housing, Regeneration & Economic Development and Finance & Enterprise.
- 4.21 A legal agreement will be put in place with the pilot developer and the Development Delivery Group Specialist will monitor the terms in consultation with finance/legal officers and subsequent delivery on site.
- 4.22 The pilot project could be awarded to a private developers, builders or Registered Provider, provided their bid meets the eligibility criteria.

INFORMATION - UNLOCKING EMPTY FLOORSPACE ABOVE RETAIL PREMISES

- 4.23 In addition to unlocking stalled sites, it is proposed to develop a similar scheme for incentivising landlords/owners to bring accommodation above retail premises into use for residential purposes. Such a scheme has the potential to:
- Meet housing need, especially for one and two bedroom units arising out of changes to the bedroom tax.
 - Help to discharge its duties around homelessness through the private rented sector.
 - Support regeneration objectives by revitalising high streets in our local centres and borough towns by bringing empty properties back into use.
- This initiative is separate to the recently announced High Street funding of £1m and individual projects would not be eligible for both funds.
- 4.24 It is proposed that the scheme, which will comprise of a capital and/or a loan element, is initially piloted within Dawley and Wellington High Street on the basis of forthcoming regeneration proposals for these areas. The pilot will be used to identify the level of interest from owners/landlords, the most appropriate package of support needed to convert retail premises into residential properties and sustainable management resources. Based upon the results of the pilot the scheme may then be rolled out to Hadley, Oakengates, Donnington, Newport and Ironbridge. Eligibility criteria for funding will be used to ensure that the commercial properties are suitable for conversion to residential, ensuring new homes are viable and do not create other problems. Although the reference is made to

premises above retail, ground floor accommodation could be included if deemed suitable and not detrimental to High Street vitality.

- 4.25 As with the proposals for stalled sites, the availability of funding will be advertised and bids invited which meet the council's eligibility criteria. Each application will be evaluated against agreed criteria to ensure that the funding available is allocated to schemes which deliver the greatest possible benefits to the council and the community and, therefore, demonstrates value for money.
- 4.26 A business case will be required for each investment which demonstrates that the revenue costs to the Council of the loan/capital investment is at least offset by the revenue income from loan interest, council tax and New Homes Bonus over the loan period.
- 4.27 **Capital Funding:** It is proposed to use up to the New Homes Bonus allocation (circ £6,000) arising when a property is brought into residential use to finance the capital funding scheme. This element will not be repayable by the property owner and therefore represents a loss of potential un-ringfenced income to the Council. However the proposals will bring in future council tax contributions that would otherwise not have been realised. We will also seek to secure match funding from the Town or Parish Council to provide an additional grant element. Preference will be given to those applications where the owner will provide match funding to bring the property into residential use.
- 4.28 **Loan:** Where more significant works are required we will consider using the existing empty property loan which offers 0% finance up to £20,000 for a maximum of 3 years or additional borrowing up to a cap of £20,000 which will be charged at the market interest rate. Where loans are approved, a charge will be placed on the property so as to protect the investment.
- 4.29 This scheme will be managed by the Homefinder Team who also operate the current empty homes programme. This will ensure that a comprehensive landlord support package is available to complement the conversion to residential letting. Properties that are converted under this scheme for rent must be accredited and advertised via Telford Homefinder and landlords must join the TWC Landlord Accreditation scheme. Nomination rights will also be used to allow homeless applications to take priority for relevant properties. In this instance consideration will be given to the vulnerability of clients and their suitability to accommodation above a retail premises.
- 4.30 There are a number of challenges to converting space above the commercial premises into residential including; the difficulty of identifying and engaging with the owners, many of which are distant landlords, the cost of conversion to residential, access to the property, as well as environmental health and health & safety considerations arising out of conversion, including compliance with the Housing, Health & Safety Rating scheme. The pilot phase will help to establish the true scale of this opportunity and the resources required to manage the scheme on a Borough-wide basis. Opportunities for engaging with other Council Services (e.g. Homefix) to carry out any renovation work required in the conversion of the property will be maximised.

5. IMPACT ASSESSMENT – ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

LEGAL

- 5.1 By inviting housing providers/developers to bid for financial assistance, there is a requirement that a robust, open, fair and transparent process (compliant with the Council's Contract Procedure Rules) is in place so that the Council's decision making processes can be defended if challenged.

- 5.2 The allocation of funds to successful applicants also needs to be compliant with State Aid rules. Applicants will be expected to confirm that their bids are State Aid compliant. In order to avoid the implications of unlawful State Aid, it is necessary to ensure that the allocations are within the provisions of the de minimis State Aid block exemption, which has a limit of circa. £156,000..
- 5.3 A loan could be offered above this value if it were to be made at a commercial interest s compliant with State Aid guidelines. As part of the regulations it is necessary for the company to complete a declaration stating that they have not received other de minimis State Aid over the last 3 fiscal years, which in aggregate would push the overall aid as a company beyond the threshold. However, if a company has received de minimis State Aid over the last 3 fiscal years, it will still be possible to offer a grant/loan if they are proposing a social housing scheme as this can be provided on the basis of Article 2.1(b) of the European Commission’s 2005 “block exemption” decision in respect of services of general economic interest or “SEGI”.
- 5.4 The Council will need to enter into contractual agreements with selected partners which may include taking a legal charge over the land being developed. There are ongoing legal implications for this process and Legal Services will be involved at each stage.

6. PREVIOUS MINUTES

6.1 None

7. BACKGROUND PAPERS

7.1 None

Report prepared by Phil Edwards, Development Delivery Group Specialist, Telephone: 01952 384022

TELFORD & WREKIN COUNCIL

CABINET - 29 JANUARY 2015

TELFORD HOMEFINDER – PROPERTY MANAGEMENT SERVICE

REPORT OF ASSISTANT DIRECTOR: DEVELOPMENT, BUSINESS & EMPLOYMENT

LEAD CABINET MEMBER: CLLR CHARLES SMITH

1 SUMMARY OF MAIN PROPOSALS

Telford & Wrekin Council launched Telford HomeFinder, an in house, on-line letting agency on 7 July 2014 in part to respond to changes to the allocation of social housing in the Borough. The intention of the agency is to offer high quality, accredited landlord accommodation to anyone looking for a property in the Borough including offering, viable, housing options for those in housing need. Telford HomeFinder was launched in conjunction with the Telford & Wrekin Landlord Accreditation Scheme which requires all landlords and each individual property registered with the scheme to meet the Council's accreditation standard.

Since the launch of the accreditation scheme;

- 51 local landlords have been accredited
- More than 45 accredited properties have been advertised through the Telford HomeFinder website
- Over 25 properties have been leased to Telford HomeFinder clients
- Over 50 people requested have requested viewings on properties.

Since the launch, landlords have been consulted on the operation and potential development of the scheme. This has identified a range of additional services that landlords have said would increase take up and revenue, including the provision of a property management service.

This report sets out how the Council proposes to develop the services provided by Telford HomeFinder to provide a property management service for landlords that will help us to meet housing need, tackle rogue landlords and raise the standards in the private rented sector.

2 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 That Cabinet approve the Phase 2 development of Telford HomeFinder and associated Business Case for the provision of a commercial letting agency service for private rented properties, as set out in this report;**
- 2.2 That Cabinet grant delegated authority to the Assistant Director for Development, Business & Employment, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Housing Development & Borough Towns, to implement the proposals contained within this report and thereafter refine the Business Case and implement any acceptable proposed service developments that may be recommended by Officers from time to time to be carried out on a cost recovery traded basis only in respect of the Telford HomeFinders Service and, in particular, the development of a lettings agency service.**

3 SUMMARY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

COMMUNITY IMPACT	Do these proposals contribute to specific Priority Plan objective(s)?	
	Yes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regenerating those neighbourhoods in need and working to ensure that local people have access to suitable housing • Ensuring neighbourhoods are safe, clean and well maintained through improving the private rented accommodation in the borough and promoting good landlords
	Will the proposals impact on specific groups of people?	
	Yes	Residents in the borough in need of housing and communities affected by poor housing
TARGET COMPLETION/ DELIVERY DATE	Development of Telford Homefinder will commence in February 2015, subject to Cabinet approval.	
FINANCIAL/ VALUE FOR MONEY IMPACT	Yes	<p>The proposal to expand the Telford Homefinder service is detailed within the Business Case attached as Appendix B to this report. The business case has been developed with finance officer support and details the projected cost and income of the service based upon assumed take up. The business case demonstrates that the service will cover its costs by the third year of trading. It is important to note that all of the costs associated with the Phase 2 development of the HomeFinder Service will be met from spare capacity within existing Home Improvement Agency resources and base budgets. Therefore, based upon the assumed take up within the business case, the proposals will generate a net budget saving to the Council as demonstrated in the table at paragraph 8.1</p> <p>The actual performance of the service against the business case will be monitored and variances against budgets reported as necessary via Service and Financial Planning reports.</p> <p>JAC221214</p>
LEGAL ISSUES	Yes	<p>The provision of Letting Agency services is not a function for which the Council has any powers to provide. However the Council can rely on subsidiary powers under section 111 of the Local Government Act 1972, supported by the freedoms and flexibilities afforded by the General Power of Competency under the Localism Act 2011, to authorise the provision of the proposed services as they facilitate the discharge of specific functions, namely homelessness and homelessness prevention, along with providing access to good quality, affordable accommodation within the private rented sector to people in housing need or on low incomes.</p> <p>The provision of Letting Agency Services will be seen as the provision of commercial services within the 'private sector'. The intention is to charge for the services provided on a cost recovery only basis, i.e. not for profit. The statutory provisions relating to local authorities charging for services require the calculation of any charges to include all expenditure attributable to the service. A corporate charging model has been developed for this purpose and has been followed in the calculation of the proposed charges.</p> <p>Prior to a local authority exercising charging and trading powers a Business Case should be produced and approved by Cabinet.</p>

		<p>The business case for the proposed project is attached to this report at Appendix B and has been produced in accordance with Government guidance.</p> <p>The Letting Agency will be handling client and third party monies, this being the case appropriate policies and procedures should be drawn up in conjunction with Finance Officers to ensure the safe handling and keeping of such monies.</p> <p>The provision of Letting Agency Services may at various times give rise to Conflict of Interest in respect of other statutory and enforcement services provided by the Council and other public authorities/agencies, namely benefits, environmental health, trading standards, DWP. The Council will have to be alive to this potential conflict and make this conflict known to all landlords and tenants entering into and using the services of the Letting Agency.</p>
OTHER IMPACTS, RISKS & OPPORTUNITIES	Yes	The proposals offer the opportunity to raise the quality of private rented accommodation and landlord practices through incentivising accreditation.
IMPACT ON SPECIFIC WARDS	No	

4 INFORMATION

4.1 Background

The Council launched Telford HomeFinders on the 7 July 2014. Telford HomeFinders is a web based Lettings Agency managed by T&W Council advertising private rented accommodation to anyone looking for accommodation in the Borough. Telford HomeFinders has a standalone lettings agency website www.telfordhomefinder.co.uk and is also accessible via a link from the Housing Options online assessment tool offering a viable, private sector accommodation option to those in housing need. All landlords and their associated properties advertised through Telford HomeFinders must be accredited through the T&W Landlord Accreditation Scheme to ensure they achieve an appropriate standard as set out in the landlord accreditation (see www.telfordhomefinder.co.uk/landlords).

The Landlord Accreditation Scheme has a £50 annual fee and as part of achieving accreditation, landlords must either attend a training course covering their legal responsibilities as a landlord or must complete a questionnaire following which training materials are provided ensuring all landlords have all relevant documentation to operate legally and within their landlord responsibilities. The first training session was held in October 2014 and 22 landlords/letting agency staff were trained. Each session covers:

- Tenancy Regulations
- Landlord Accreditation
- Trading Standards: Landlord and Letting Agents responsibilities
- Environmental Health: Repairs and Housing in Multiple Occupation regulations
- Green Deal
- Fire Service
- Empty Properties
- Housing Benefits

Positive feedback was received from landlords on the diverse training delivered by various agencies, comments included: “very informative”, “filled in gaps in knowledge”, “clear and concise information”, “lots of useful information”.

To incentivise landlords to join Telford HomeFinder, landlords have been able to advertise their properties free of charge for the first six months until January 2015. At this point a fee of £100 to find a tenant is proposed to include advertisement on the Telford HomeFinder website, a draft tenancy agreement and, if required, a credit check. In addition the landlord will be able to access advice from the Council’s Tenancy Relations Officers including support where difficulties with tenants arise. The tenant finder fee was based on market testing of existing letting agencies in the borough. While fees differ between letting agencies, these figures are competitive with other agencies including those providing accommodation to clients in receipt of housing benefit.

Telford HomeFinder is also a key element of the Council’s new approach to meeting locally arising housing need through the private rented sector. Where landlords have properties that would enable us to meet housing need stemming from the discharge of the Council’s housing duty, and they are willing to hold properties vacant for a homeless client the Council may waive up to two weeks council tax. In addition, Telford HomeFinder and the associated landlord accreditation scheme will raise the standard of private sector housing within the Borough through the criteria of becoming an accredited landlord and accrediting properties.

4.2 Achievements to Date

Since the launch of Telford HomeFinder and the landlord accreditation scheme:

- 51 landlords/letting agencies have been accredited
- 22 landlords/letting agencies representatives have attended training
- 50 viewings have been arranged for accredited properties
- 25 tenants have found tenancies because of Telford HomeFinder.

Currently an average of five new properties is being advertised each week on Telford HomeFinder. We have prevented 25 clients from accessing temporary accommodation by finding properties through accredited landlords. Telford HomeFinder has also assisted in bringing empty properties back into use with the owner of a long term empty property in Sutton Hill accessing the empty homes loan to bring the property into a good condition and back into use. The owner of the property then became an accredited landlord with the property being advertised and then leased through Telford HomeFinder.

4.3 Landlord Feedback

As part of developing the concept of Telford HomeFinder the Wrekin Landlords Association and a number of landlords who have previously worked with the Council were consulted. This engagement has continued since the launch with officers attending Association meetings and the recent Annual Wrekin Landlord’s Conference. The feedback from landlords and lettings agencies joining the scheme has been overwhelmingly positive with a number of landlords commenting on the value of the training and the ongoing support available through the Tenant Relations Officers.

In terms of the development of the scheme a number of landlords have suggested that if Telford HomeFinders offered a full property management service they would be encouraged to join the accreditation scheme and advertise through HomeFinders.

Some landlords have also expressed caution over accepting tenants who have been referred, due to homelessness, through the Council’s Housing Options service. However were Homefinder to manage the property and support were provided to the tenant through Family Cohesion they would be more inclined to accept homeless clients or those threatened with homelessness. We have already developed positive relationships with partners including

Maninplace and KIP to assist us in discharging our duties around homelessness but by linking into the private sector we will be able to identify more accommodation and also successfully move clients on from temporary accommodation.

4.4 Telford HomeFinders - Phase 2 Development

On the basis of feedback from landlords and assessment of the competitive service offered by other letting agencies, it is proposed that Telford HomeFinders use spare capacity within their existing resources to carry out market testing and develop a property management service to landlords that will help us to meet housing need, tackle rogue landlords and raise the standards in the private rented sector. This could include:

- To Let sign boards for advertising accredited properties,
- Carrying out tenant viewings,
- Tenancy sign ups,
- Receipt of deposits and lodging them through the Tenancy Deposit Scheme,
- Receipt of rent,
- Managing the properties over the tenancy period including acting as contact for the tenant, arranging for any repairs and where necessary assisting the landlord with any evictions.

In addition to these landlord services we propose to offer some tenant services. The majority of letting agencies currently charge prospective fees to tenants to cover costs such as credit checks and the administration work involved in obtaining references. However the national housing charity, Shelter, are lobbying to stop letting agencies charging such fees and Telford HomeFinders do not propose to charge tenant fees, minimising the costs for tenants before they have moved into a property. Telford HomeFinder will provide a different service to other agencies by only advertising accredited landlords and accredited inspected properties. The schemes aim is to raise the standard of the private rented sector and to effectively publicise the good landlords and their properties within the Borough.

To help manage these services, the Telford HomeFinders website is being developed to offer both a landlord and tenant logging in section which will allow them to monitor and manage their tenancies thus bringing their practicing methods to a higher standard. A draft business case and associated business case is included at Appendix B of this report.

5 CHARGES

Local letting agents charge landlords a fee varying from 7% up to 12% of the monthly rent fees. Tenant finding fees vary from £100 to £250 between agencies. On this basis and to ensure that Telford HomeFinders offers a competitive service – it is proposed to levy the following charges:

- Monthly Management Fee (tenant finding fee £100 applies) 10% of monthly rent + vat

These charges will be kept under review as the service develops to ensure that the service is covering its costs and remains financially viable.

6 MARKETING OF TELFORD HOMEFINDERS

To date, marketing of Telford HomeFinders has been through direct contact with landlords, through the Housing Options on line webtool: www.telfordhousingoptions.co.uk and through the Telford HomeFinders Twitter page. Future marketing development of Telford HomeFinders will be via an on line blog site which promotes properties and landlords and has video links within the blog. Direct marketing to landlords through the Landlord Accreditation Scheme, on TWC web pages and the Telford HomeFinders website will promote the additional services on offer. Promotion through the landlord newsletter that is sent out twice yearly from housing benefits and

through the Wrekin Landlord Association will also be carried out. The marketing and promotional material will be clear that this is a letting agency managing private landlord properties through Telford Homefinder.

Planned marketing activities are as follows:

	Feb-15			March-15			
	w/c 2nd	w/c 9 th	wc16	w/c 2 nd	w/c 19th	w/c 16 ² th	w/c 23rd
Internal channels							
Intranet pop up							
Staff News item							
Copy to Members, Parish & Town Councils.							
External channels							
Press release to media							
Slider on T&W web site							
Video story on blog							
Social media messages							
GovDelivery email							
Landlords newsletter							
Window decals							

Appendix A shows the branding that has been put in place for Telford HomeFinders and is now being used throughout the scheme. The first “To Let” boards, similarly branded have recently been produced.

7 Housing Investment Programme

The development of Telford HomeFinders could be used as a platform to market and provide the tenancy and property management for the properties to be delivered as part of the Housing Investment Programme including; tenant finding, credit checks, budget planning, tenancy viewing, property inventories, registering deposits, tenancy sign up and tenancy agreements, tenancy management, arrangement of repairs, preparation of notices to quit tenancies, tenancy exit inspections and links within the benefits team. The development of Telford HomeFinders now, to include a property management function, will act as a valuable pilot project prior to the completion of the first suite of Housing Investment Programme properties.

8 Resources

The development of Phase 2 of Telford HomeFinders will be managed within existing capacity in current staff resources. It is difficult to accurately project the take up of the management service and growth in the agencies landlords/properties but as part of this development and market testing it will allow us to gather information and monitor the interest from landlords in their requirements and uptake. This will allow the continued development of a robust business case for this proposal. If demand should start to outweigh available staff resources, consideration will be given to using income to increase capacity on the basis of a financially viable business case. The business case will be continually reviewed to identify capacity and growth, specifically planning for the Housing Investment Properties to be developed.

9 Risks and Issues

9.1 Financial

The proposal to expand and develop Phase 2 of the Telford HomeFinders service is detailed within the Business Case attached as Appendix B to this report.

The business case has been prepared with input from finance officers and demonstrates that the Phase 2 services will recovery its costs by the third year of trading. It is important to note that the total costs of the Phase 2 services will be met from spare capacity within the existing Home Improvement Agency team which are funded from base budgets. Therefore, any income generated by Phase 2 development will represent a net budget saving to the Council. This is demonstrated in Table 8.1 below which summarises the figures shown in the business case, and shows the impact of the costs and income on the budgeted position of the Council.

Table 9.1 Phase 2 Development only	Year 1 (35 properties)	Year 2 (50 properties)	Year 3 70 properties)
Expenditure			
Total costs of Phase 2	34,515	35,121	35,855
Budget available (note 1)	34,515	35,121	35,855
Increased costs to TWC	0	0	0
Income			
Total income Phase 2	(21,000)	(30,000)	(42,000)
Net budget savings	(21,000)	(30,000)	(42,000)

Note 1: The costs of the Phase 2 development will be met from spare capacity within the existing Phase 1 resources and base budgets. Hence there will no additional (non budgeted) costs of the Phase 2 development.

The proposal is to run the extended Phase 2 service as a pilot in the first instance with the intention of growing the service in order to meet the property management requirements of the planned Housing Investment Programme.

Finance support will be provided to monitor the performance of the Homefinder service against the business case model and to support the further development of the service as appropriate.

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9.2 Legal

Statutory powers exist, as identified in this report, to allow the Council to implement the above proposals in relation to the Telford HomeFinders Service.

Income generated from charging for the costs of supplying discretionary services can help the council's financial position. By entering into the market with the delivery of discretionary services, charged for on a cost-recovery basis, a local authority can also moderate prices for essential services that would otherwise be too expensive for local people to afford.

Income generated through trading activities can be used to off-set budgets and therefore help hold down council tax and/or can be directed into frontline services.

The Letting Agency Service will be considered to be the provision of commercial services within the 'private sector'. The statutory powers under section 93 of the Local Government Act 2003 which allow a local authority to charge for the provision of discretionary services provide for a general duty to secure that, from one financial year to the next, the income from charges for each separate services does not exceed the costs of provision. This approach allows a local authority greater flexibility to balance their accounts over a period of time and recognises the practical difficulties for a local authority in estimating the charges for a discretionary service at the outset.

A local authority must however offset any surplus or deficit in income as a result of any over or under recovery of charges when setting future charges for the discretionary service. This ensures that over time the income generated by the discretionary service equates to the cost of providing the service.

However in providing the Service the Council should not provide a subsidised service which would lead to potential legal challenge for breach of anti-competition laws and/or State Aid Rules. These issues have been identified and steps have been taken to address them, along with other identified risks, during development of the Business Case.

In the initial years (years 1 & 2) of charging there will be a small and reducing subsidy to the lettings agency with a projected 'break even' by year 3. This is in line with any business 'start-up' and the local authority rules for the recovery of charges in terms of balancing its accounts over a [reasonable] period of time.

Following a recent Government consultation on the regulation of private sector letting and managing agents it was decided not to introduce direct regulation but to expand and rely upon existing consumer protection legislation. In addition the industry and Government have come together to develop good practice guidance and as such the following should be applied and/or followed as far as possible:

- The Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors Private Rented Sector Code of Practice (likely to be made statutory)
- The Department for Communities and Local Government Model Agreement for an Assured Shorthold Tenancy
- The Department for Communities and Local Government Code for Local Authorities: Dealing With Rogue Landlords

In order to continue to minimise any risks into the future the Telford HomeFinders Service should develop an annual Business Case which will assist in defining long-term objectives, set goals and measure progress, along with ensuring continued compliance with the various trading and state aid restrictions placed upon the Council.

10 Previous Minutes

A New Approach in Supporting Housing Options – June 2014

11 Background Papers

None

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Appendix A - Telford Homefinder Brand



TELFORD
HOMEFINDER



Appendix B

Business Case Telford & Wrekin Council Commercial Development Expansion of Telford HomeFinder – Phase 2

1.0 The Proposition

1.1 Vision

To expand the services of Telford HomeFinder to provide a full letting agency management service to accredited landlords. This responds to feedback from local landlords that this would encourage them to sign up to the scheme and to house clients coming through the Council's Housing Options Team. This will also enable us to create, maintain and develop an in-house letting agency that will be:

1. Accessible to all accredited landlords and prospective tenants
2. Professional and based on best practice principles
3. Legally compliant
4. Customer focused
5. Fostering an ethos of continuous training/development and up to date practice
6. Targeted to meet demand, whilst remaining attractive to the wider market
7. A business operating efficiently and adopting market focussed approaches
8. Drawing upon the benefits of being Telford & Wrekin council whilst continuing to meet the needs of the wider market.

1.2 Outline Business Proposition

- To extend the existing services provided by Telford HomeFinder to offer:
 - Tenant finding only,
 - Tenant finding and rent collection,
 - Full property management service.
- To encourage landlords to become accredited through offering an attractive service.
- To improve private rented sector property standards through landlord accreditation
- To discharge our housing duty through the private rented sector
- To advertise accredited landlords and accredited properties through the Telford Homefinder website
- To increase the length of tenancies as well as reduce property turnover by improving housing condition

1.3 Market

Since 2001, the proportion of privately rented households in Telford & Wrekin has doubled from 7.1% to 14.9%, with the proportion in social rented properties falling slightly to 11.6%. Recent Welfare Benefit reforms mean that 2,613 residents will lose a proportion of their benefits where they are considered to be occupying a social housing property with more bedrooms than they are considered under the reforms to need. There is not enough existing or planned social housing stock to provide one or two bedroom properties so many residents have to rent through private landlords. The majority of landlords are able to rent their properties, however to raise the standards of the private rented sector, we want to encourage landlords to become accredited landlords and to join the Telford HomeFinder letting agency. Feedback from landlords has shown that to do this effectively we need to offer additional services.

The Landlord Accreditation Scheme and Telford Home Finder not only accredits the landlord but also inspects any property that is advertised on the website.

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

1.4 Operation

The service will be provided through the existing Telford HomeFinder letting agency which also accredits the landlord and provides tenancy relations advice.

1.5 Operational

This would be managed by existing staff in the Telford HomeFinder team and would link in with the landlord accreditation scheme.

1.6 Marketing

The marketing will be through the Telford HomeFinder scheme and this service is being promoted directly to landlords, through events and social media. There is also a marketing plan which is being managed with corporate communications:

	Feb 2015			March 2015			
	w/c 2 nd	w/c 9 th	w/c 16 th	w/c 2 nd	w/c 9 th	w/c 16 th	w/c 23 rd
Internal channels							
Intranet pop up							
Staff News item							
Copy to Members, Parish & Town Councils							
External channels							
Press release to media							
Slider on T&W web site							
Video story on blog							
Social media messages							
GovDelivery email							
Landlords letter							
Window decals							

2.0 Costs and Revenue

Telford Homefinder – Phase 2			
	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3
Staff Cost	14,804	14,952	15,101
Management Cost	2,826	2,855	2,883
Direct Cost	11,382	11,757	12,257
Overheads (including Central Admin Costs)	5,503	5,558	5,613
Total Cost	<u>34,515</u>	<u>35,121</u>	<u>35,855</u>

Income

	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3
Management Fee			
No.of properties	35	50	70
Average Monthly Rent	500	500	500
Total Annual Income	210,000	300,000	420,000
Management Fee Retained (10%)	21,000	30,000	42,000
Total Income	<u>21,000</u>	<u>30,000</u>	<u>42,000</u>
(Surplus)/Loss Generated	13,515	5,121	(6,145)

Expenditure costs are built in to existing staffing and revenue budgets as it is proposed the service will be run using spare capacity within the existing Homefinder Team and base budgets

Any costs relating to repairs would be paid by the landlord either directly or from the rental income received by Telford Homefinder. All costs relating to the property would be the responsibility of the landlords including any loss in rent.

3.0 Co-operative Council

This venture fits in with the co-operative council values

Ownership

- The service will be accountable for the actions it carries out and we will be empowering clients to take action and responsibility for themselves and to help them maintain good relationship with their landlords and to maintain their tenancies for as long as necessary.

Openness and Honesty

- The service has clear pricing structures and the scheme will have clear processes that both the landlord and tenants understand. The service will outline any charges on the website that is relevant to both the landlord and tenant. It will be simple and transparent so that customers feel confident that there will be no hidden and extra costs

Fairness and Respect

- The service is responding to residents needs by developing Telford HomeFinder to provide a full management service. This is evident where any properties let by Telford HomeFinder will not charge any administration fees to tenants in line with tenant feedback and the campaign linked with Shelter.

Involvement

- Through ongoing communication with landlords they have raised requests regarding Telford HomeFinder providing a full management service. This dialogue will continue and support the development of the Homefinder agency model

4.0 Stakeholder Impacts

These proposals have a range of stakeholder impacts:-

- Residents: positive impact as these proposals will raise the standard of the private rented sector
- Businesses: Positive impacts as landlords (who are businesses) have requested that we offer this service and in providing it, it shows we have listened to their views. It could however have an adverse business impact on some landlords/letting agents if they are not willing to become an accredited landlord or letting agent balanced by the positive impact on the resident community of being able to access reputable landlords/accommodation.
- Our existing service provision: positive as this will add a valued incentive to encourage landlords to join the accreditation scheme which will enable us to monitor private landlords and their property conditions. This will also increase our access to the private rented stock and help us discharge our homeless duty.
- Other Local Authorities: none, our neighbouring local authorities do not provide any similar services.
- Council employees in the area of operation: There will be additional work to manage the properties; however the initial monitoring of this scheme will allow us to manage the clients and property effectively within current resources and to identify if we need to expand.

5.0 Risks & Mitigation

<p>1. Challenge from private sector providers/industry association</p>	<p>1. We will be transparent in the provision of our service providing a clear vision, objectives and operating arrangements to all other private sectors operators. The service will be calculated on a cost basis and will require a Council subsidy in the first three years. If the service does begin to make surplus income the service would develop into a commercial model.</p>
<p>2. Conflict a. Property conditions fall below minimum standards after initial rental agreement b. Other 'enforcement/breach of law' information comes to the attention of the Lettings Agency c. Legal dispute in relation to tenancy agreement</p>	<p>2a. As all the properties will be inspected to ensure they meet the standards as set out in the accreditation scheme, this will ensure no properties fall below the standard. For any properties that fall into disrepair whilst in the tenancy, Telford HomeFinder will be the point of contact for the tenant and will liaise with the landlord to ensure repairs are carried out. Contracts will be set up between the landlord and Telford HomeFinder to ensure that they carry out their responsibilities. Links will be made with environmental health to ensure that standards are adhered to.</p>

	<p>2b. We would manage all complaints and ensure that we link with other regulatory services and legal to ensure that all details are handled appropriately and in line with Council powers. Contracts will be in place to ensure that liability is handled correctly.</p> <p>2c. The tenancy agreement we will be using is the Government recommended agreement so this will ensure the tenancies are correct. Also the Tenancy Relations officers offer support on any tenancy issues.</p>
<p>3. Council drawn into actions in respects to eviction if the tenant does not adhere to tenancy agreement even after support which could lead to homelessness.</p>	<p>3. If the tenant does not adhere to the tenancy agreement and the last option is eviction, we would liaise with Family and Cohesion to ensure they offer a housing options interview and provide the relevant support.</p>

6.0 Initiation

Subject to Cabinet approval of the cabinet report and associated Business Case

Appendix 1 - Telford HomeFinder Business Plan

1. Background/Introduction

Due to a lack of affordable private rented accommodation and limited turnover of social housing along with an increasing number of clients presenting as homeless, there is a need for a co-ordinated approach in sourcing decent accommodation through reputable and accredited landlords in the Borough. The private rented sector has doubled in Telford and Wrekin over the last few years and now makes up 14% (approx 9,600 properties) of the housing stock in the Borough. As such it provides the housing of choice as well as the only available option, for many households, including those who have previously lived in the social sector.

The Government freed councils, through the Localism Act, to look differently at how it can solve problems it faces. The Localism Act 2011 provides a new power that allows suitable 'Private Sector Offers' to be used to end the main homeless duty, without requiring the applicant's agreement. This applies to new homeless applicants applying as homeless from the 9th November 2012. These changes are part of the Government's wider social housing reforms. They seek to give greater freedoms to local authorities to make better use of good quality private sector accommodation that can provide suitable accommodation for households accepted as homeless.

The changes to Local Housing Allowance (LHA) and housing benefits has reduced the benefits received by almost all LHA claimants by using a measure based on the 30th percentile of rents rather than the median and capping LHA payments. These changes and further predicted changes of Welfare Reform are having a severe impact on private renting families' ability to find decent affordable homes.

2. Current Position

People who experience homelessness need somewhere suitable to live. Councils have a duty to house people that are eligible, in priority need and unintentionally homeless.

Prior to the Localism Act, people who became homeless were able to refuse offers of accommodation in the private rented sector, and insist that they should be housed in temporary accommodation, at significant cost to the LA, until a long term social home became available. This meant that in some circumstances people in acute, but short-term housing need, acquired a social home for life, although they may not need one, while other people who do need a social home in the longer term are left waiting.

The Localism Act has addressed this so that local authorities can meet their homelessness duties by providing good quality private rented properties homes.

Telford & Wrekin Council currently use and access the private rented sector in a number of different ways including the Landlord Accreditation Scheme, Prevention Scheme and Temporary Accommodation.

Accredited landlords/letting agencies properties are advertised on the Telford Homefinder website. These properties have been inspected and meet the minimum standard as set out in the landlord accreditation scheme. These properties are advertised to anyone looking for good quality private rented property.

3. Vision

To expand the services of Telford HomeFinder to provide a full letting agency management service to accredited landlords. This will enable us to create, maintain and develop an in-house letting agency that will be:

1. Accessible to all accredited landlords and prospective tenants
2. Professionally adopting best practice principles
3. Legally compliant

4. Customer/people focused
5. Engaging in an ethos of training and up to date practice
6. Targeted to meet demand, whilst remaining attractive to the wider market
7. A business operating efficiently and adopting market focussed approaches
8. Drawing upon the benefits of being Telford & Wrekin council whilst continuing to meet the needs of the wider market.
7. A business operating efficiently and adopting market focussed approaches
8. Drawing upon the benefits of being Telford & Wrekin council whilst continuing to meet the needs of the wider market.

4. Purpose

To help people that are in need of housing to find affordable, decent homes by providing a professional letting and management service to landlords and maintaining effective working links with other agencies supporting those in housing need. Telford homefinder will all help address many of the obstacles locally in moving into the private rented sector by linking it with the landlord accreditation scheme that promotes good landlord and letting practices.

5. Expanding Telford HomeFinder

Telford & Wrekin Council propose to expand the Telford HomeFinder Letting Agency function to operate as a full management service and to build on its current success in the housing market by providing a professional, accessible letting and property management business. With the Council's support and expertise, the agency will provide an excellent customer focused service. It will be staffed by the existing team of housing and business professionals who know the market locally and have many years experience working with both tenants and landlords. The business will operate like a regular letting agency but will also link closely with the homelessness team to target individuals and groups who may not normally consider the private rented sector.

The development of Telford HomeFinder will also be the platform to market and provide tenancy and property management for the properties to be delivered as part of the Housing Investment Programme. We will review the business plan throughout the first year and will encompass the properties that are being built within the Housing Investment Programme to project the number of properties to be managed and the expected income and resources.

6. Products and Services

Overview

The business will offer a menu of services that will be attractive to its potential customers across Telford & Wrekin. It will be simple and transparent so that customers feel confident that there will be no hidden or extra costs. The list of services below follows a template and this is necessary in the start up months. As the business becomes more established the services will be reviewed to reflect demand. Prices and charges will also be reviewed on the basis of the learning in the start up period.

Services

The business will provide a comprehensive letting and management service for residential properties primarily in Telford & Wrekin but other surrounding areas will also be considered for those clients who have a need to move out of the Borough. This will include a range of options including tenant finding service only, a tenant finding and rent collection service and a comprehensive property management service. Associated services such as a property inventory, tenancy agreements and To Let boards and credit checks will also be provided.

7. Additional Services supporting Telford HomeFinder priorities

The landlord accreditation scheme will provide advice and support to landlords to ensure their properties meet minimum standards and their practices as a landlord are ethical. This will also include any incentives or schemes that are available to accredited landlords. Where relevant, housing benefit safeguarding forms will be filled in to ensure that landlords receive direct

payment on any vulnerable. Support provided through Family and Cohesion services where homeless clients are housed within a property.

Innovative marketing of properties will be provided and linked into various social media sites. Telford HomeFinders will also work in co-operation with Family Cohesion to ensure any support needs are provided to those clients which may be required, thus providing reassurance to landlords.

The business will use the Telford HomeFinder website to register interest from clients on the individual properties and this website will be stand alone but links are made through the interactive housing options web tool: www.telfordhousingoptions.co.uk.

The approach of the business will be client focused and the service will offer an advice service to tenants and accredited landlords. The intention is to help more people find a longer term home through good landlords and decent properties in the private rented sector.

8. Target Market

Landlord/Letting Agents

The service will be targeted, in the following priority:

1. Existing landlords with whom Telford & Wrekin Council already has a good track record and relationship and are already accredited landlords/letting agents.
2. Individual landlords and letting agents within Telford & Wrekin who are becoming accredited.
3. Individual landlords and letting agents within the surrounding areas that are becoming accredited.

Tenants

The service will be targeted to the following clients:

1. People who are facing homelessness
2. Those who cannot afford to buy a home in the Borough
3. The general market who are looking to rent a good quality, private property from an accredited landlord.

9. Competitors

Telford has a range of traditional letting agencies; these consist of smaller propriety led businesses, branches of national companies and multi disciplinary practices, some of which are part of older established firms. Most offer private lets in the general market and a few specialise in high end value properties. Some agencies offer properties to tenants on benefits, but few advertise that fact and few have a fee free offer to tenants.

There is a sizable portion of landlords who let and manage their own properties and who may to some extent rely on local agents to find tenants. Telford & Wrekin Council has worked proactively with many private landlords over the last few years and has successfully housed many clients. There is a gap in the market that this business plan provides which is advertising accredited landlords and accredited properties to ensure housing needs are met with the reassurance of the property management to protect and support both the tenant and landlord maximising the chances of a sustained, long term tenancy.

10. Pricing

The suggested fee structure below sits competitively with the local market currently. It will need review and adjustment as the expansion of the business occurs in later months/years.

Property Management Fee 10% + vat

11. Opportunities

- Build on established relationships with landlords
- Government policy is shifting tenants towards the private sector

- Security of tenure in social housing is reducing thus making it more attractive to tenants
- To expand into the wider geographical area if it can be demonstrated that the model works
- Strong partnerships give the business a strong platform.
- To be the platform for the Housing Investment Programme

12. Challenges

- Landlords may be reluctant to engage for fear of any enforcement role
- Competitors may react by stigmatising the business as only housing homeless clients
- Some landlords have a negative experience of housing clients through the local authority
- Competition with other letting agents

13. Responding to Market Needs

1. Landlord Fees: fears around hidden charges and expensive property maintenance are a disincentive for some landlords in choosing an agency to manage a property. This business will have a transparent fee structure and will have clear parameters established with landlords e.g. around what can be spent on maintenance before additional agreement is sought.
2. Tenant Fees: There will be transparency with prospective tenants about application fees. Any properties managed by Telford HomeFinder will not incur any fees to the tenants to apply for a property. The tenancy agreement will clearly specify default charges that may be applied and expectations of tenants.
3. Financial: Security for landlords around income is crucial. This business will offer a fast turnaround working proactively to minimise void periods.
4. The Law: The private rented sector is increasingly complex and this business will demonstrate that it is adopting latest practice and working to the highest professional standards. This is crucial in an industry that has bad press around poor property management practices.
5. Accessibility: This business will be sensitive to the needs of landlords and tenants; it will comply with best practice around equal opportunities.
6. Property Standards: The business will work proactively with landlords to raise the standard of housing to make it attractive and safe for the market.

14. Financial

Expenditure costs are built in to existing staffing and revenue budgets as it is proposed the service will be run by the existing Homefinder Team.

The following is the expected expenditure and income in the first 3 years; however the business plan will be reviewed over the first year and amendments to encompass additional properties that will be managed as part of the Housing Investment Programme.

Telford Homefinder	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3
Staff Cost	14,804	14,952	15,101
Management Cost	2,826	2,855	2,883
Direct Cost	11,382	11,757	12,257

Overheads (including Central Admin Costs)	5,503	5,558	5,613
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Total Cost	34,515	35,121	35,855
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Income

Management Fee	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3
No.of properties	35	50	70
Average Monthly Rent	500	500	500
Total Annual Income	210,000	300,000	420,000
Management Fee Retained (10%)	21,000	30,000	42,000
Total Income	<u>21,000</u>	<u>30,000</u>	<u>42,000</u>
(Surplus)/Loss Generated	13,515	5,121	(6,145)

Any costs relating to repairs would be paid by the landlord directly from the rental income. All costs relating to the property would be the responsibility of the landlords including any loss in rent. If we start to make a profit we would look at making Telford Homefinder into a commercial operation.

TELFORD & WREKIN COUNCIL

CABINET - 29TH JANUARY 2015

DONNINGTON RECREATION GROUND CENTENARY FIELDS

REPORT OF: ASSISTANT DIRECTOR OF NEIGHBOURHOOD AND LEISURE SERVICES

LEAD CABINET MEMBER: Cllr LIZ CLARE

PART A) – SUMMARY REPORT

1. SUMMARY OF MAIN PROPOSALS

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to seek approval for the Council to actively engage in The Fields in Trust's National Centenary Field programme and to nominate Donnington Recreation Ground (Appendix 1) as a potential National Centenary Field site.
- 1.2 The Council has developed a positive relationship with Fields in Trust and has in recent years dedicated three sites, Telford Town Park Arena, Stirchley Playing Fields and Malinslee Playing Fields as Fields in Trust under the Queen Elizabeth II Fields Challenge.
- 1.3 The Centenary Fields programme has been established to commemorate the centenary of World War 1 and is a national partnership between Royal British Legion and Fields in Trust. Telford & Wrekin Council has been approached by Lilleshall, Donnington and Muxton Parish Council to dedicate Donnington Recreation Ground as a Centenary Field.
- 1.4 A further three potential sites have also been identified that potentially meet the criteria namely, Dawley Park, Hartshill Park and St Georges Recreation Ground. It is proposed to enter into consultation with the respective Town and Parish Councils and landowners with a view to nominating these as potential National Centenary Field sites.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 **To nominate Donnington Recreation Ground for protection under the Centenary Fields programme and to consult on the other identified Parks and Recreation Grounds with the view of further nominations.**
- 2.2 **To delegate authority to the Assistant Director Law Democracy and People Services following consultation with the Assistant Director Neighbourhood and Leisure Services, Cabinet Member for Leisure and Culture and stakeholders, to execute any Deeds of Dedication should the nomination(s) be accepted.**

3. SUMMARY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

COMMUNITY IMPACT	Do these proposals contribute to specific Co-Operative Council priority objective(s)?	
	Yes	Ensuring neighbourhoods are safe, clean and well maintained. Improving the health and wellbeing of our communities and addressing health inequalities.
	Will the proposals impact on specific groups of people?	
	No	The facility would remain an accessible community resource providing opportunities for the whole community, contributing to local wellbeing and community cohesion. Dedication as a Centenary Field may also provide opportunities to further build on the strong local military links.
TARGET COMPLETION/DELIVERY DATE	Assuming any nomination is approved by Fields in Trust then it is required that a Deed of Dedication be completed within six months.	
FINANCIAL/VALUE FOR MONEY IMPACT		Designation of Donnington Recreation Ground as Centenary Field should not impose any additional financial liabilities on the Council. Once designated the Centenary Field will be protected for use as a recreational area in perpetuity which may impede or frustrate future developments in the Designated area. JAC 221214
LEGAL ISSUES	Yes	As set out in the body of this report Centenary Fields is a National initiative which aims to protect war memorial fields, parks and green spaces created in memory of those who lost their lives during World War 1. If members agree nomination and this is accepted then an appropriate deed will be drawn up and the title deeds and charitable trust deeds will need to be checked to ensure compatibility.
EQUALITY & DIVERSITY	No	
IMPACT ON SPECIFIC WARDSY	Yes	Donnington
OTHER IMPACTS, RISKS & OPPORTUNITIES	No	

PART B) – ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

4. INFORMATION

- 4.1 The Royal British Legion and Fields in Trust are leading a nationwide initiative aimed at securing recreational spaces in perpetuity in honour of the memory of the millions of people who lost their lives in World War 1.
- 4.2 The modest objective of this new programme is to encourage every local authority in the UK to nominate at least one recreational space to be dedicated as a Centenary Field to commemorate this significant milestone in our history and to create a tangible local legacy that will be valued by the local community for generations to come.
- 4.3 The Centenary Fields programme aims to protect the war memorial parks and playing fields given in memory of those who lost their lives, or other green spaces that local authorities may want to dedicate.
- 4.4 Fields in Trust want the network of protected fields to be established by November 2018, with all deeds of dedication signed by this time. Any sites where the deed is not signed by this time will not become Centenary Fields.
- 4.5 A site could be a war memorial park or recreation ground, memorial garden, park or recreation ground that contains a war memorial or other valued green spaces. If there isn't a war memorial on the site then it must have some significance to WW1, for example it could be playing a key role in the local WW1 commemorations. As time goes on there will undoubtedly be some good examples of how sites are connected with WW1, and these will be promoted as applicable.
- 4.6 Each application will be assessed through a site visit but as a minimum, the following criteria must be met:
- The Landowner of the site must complete the application form,
 - Evidence of ownership, and where relevant freehold interest must be produced for this particular site this will involve establishing and confirming the extent and remit of the Duke of Sutherland's Trust.
 - The principal use should be outdoor recreation, sport or play. However, sites can also include facilities such as pavilions, village halls, indoor leisure or heritage facilities that are established for community recreational purposes
 - Sites must have public access
 - Sites should be accessible in terms of location and affordability for the local community

- Sites should have local managers who are responsible for the quality of the facilities, maintenance and development, improving participation and financial and operational sustainability
- The Landowner must be able to sign the agreed Deed of Dedication within six months of submitting an application

4.7 The first stage in the process is for the landowner to complete an application form and this will be followed by a site visit, after which the landowner will be told whether the site is acceptable as a Centenary Field or not. If the site is accepted the legal process then starts and sites will be protected in England via a Deed of Dedication. Fields in Trust will draw up the draft deed and then the landowner has a chance to make amendments. When all parties are satisfied with the deed it will be signed and then registered with the Land Registry. The site is then able to order a Centenary Fields commemorative plaque and can organise an unveiling event.

The costs are as follows:

- Any legal costs associated with agreeing the deed
- The cost of installing the commemorative plaque – which will be provided free of charge
- The cost of registering the resulting restrictions with the Land Registry – currently £80 for up to three titles

It is not necessary for the sites involved in the programme to change their names

4.8 Fields in Trust does accept that on rare occasions communities change and land use changes accordingly. Parts of sites, or very rarely, whole sites can therefore be disposed of provided the disposal is of clear advantage to, and in the best interests of, the community from a recreational perspective. The criteria which Fields in Trust applies to replacement facilities are that they should be of:

- At least equal size
- Better quality
- Serving the same community in terms of catchment area

Additionally, and very importantly, the entire proceeds of any disposal should normally be re-applied to new sport, recreation and/or play facilities, with priority given to outdoor before indoor facilities.

4.9 Donnington Wood Recreation Ground was established on 21st December 1925 after the Duke of Sutherland sold the site to a group of Lilleshall miners. In 1957 Wellington Rural District Council was appointed Trustee. Donnington Recreational Ground is approximately

1.04ha in size comprises 2 football pitches, a junior play area, a ball court, a skatepark, allotments, bowling green and tennis courts.

- 4.10 There are memorial gates located at one of the entrances to the Recreation Ground, either side of the gates are lists of names of Donnington people who lost their lives fighting for their country in World Wars 1 and 2. (See Appendix 2).
- 4.11 Part of the land is still in Trust to the Duke of Sutherland's Estate and is in charitable status. The Borough of Telford & Wrekin acts as Corporate Trustee of the Donnington Recreation Ground.

5. IMPACT ASSESSMENT – ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

- 5.1 The dedication of the site would secure its future use for recreational purposes with public access and protect a valuable community open space in perpetuity.
- 5.2 Parks and open spaces provide opportunities for both formal and informal recreation and contribute significantly to local wellbeing, community cohesion and general quality of life for all generations.

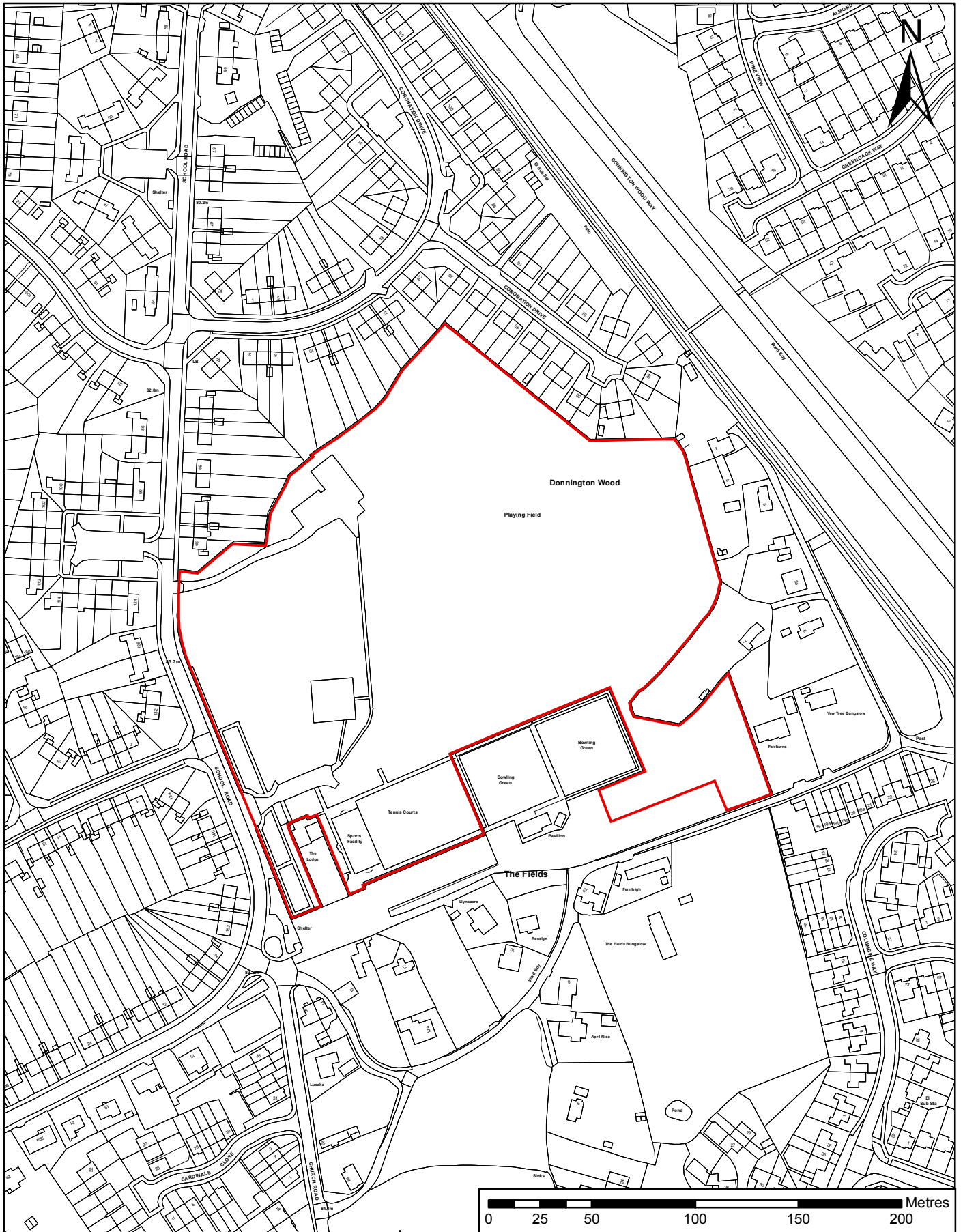
6. PREVIOUS MINUTES

- 6.1 None

7. BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 7.1 None

**Report prepared by: Becky Eade Parks & Open Spaces Manager
384714 and Stuart Davidson Leisure Services Deliver Manager 382601.**



Title
 Donnington Rec
 School Road
 Donnington
 Telford

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



Scale:
 1:2,500 @A4

Drawn by:
 Arc/JB

Date:
 19/01/2015

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Appendix 2 – Memorial gates Donnington Recreation Ground



TELFORD & WREKIN COUNCIL

CABINET – 29 JANUARY 2015

REPRESENTATION ON OUTSIDE BODIES 2014/15 – WREKIN HOUSING TRUST

REPORT OF THE ASSISTANT DIRECTOR: LAW, DEMOCRACY & PEOPLE SERVICES

LEAD CABINET MEMBER – COUNCILLOR KULDIP SAHOTA

PART A) – SUMMARY REPORT

1. SUMMARY OF MAIN PROPOSALS

- 1.1 To consider the appointment of a replacement representative to the Wrekin Housing Trust for the 2014/15 municipal year.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 That a replacement representative be appointed to the Wrekin Housing Trust for the remainder of the 2014/15 municipal year.

3. SUMMARY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

COMMUNITY IMPACT	Do these proposals contribute to specific Co-Operative Council priority objective(s)?	
	Yes	Wrekin Housing Trust is a key local partner in promoting the health and wellbeing of our communities, and in ensuring that local people have access to suitable housing.
	Will the proposals impact on specific groups of people?	
	No	Not applicable.
TARGET COMPLETION/DELIVERY DATE	<i>Not applicable</i>	
FINANCIAL/VALUE FOR MONEY IMPACT	No	Not applicable.
LEGAL ISSUES	No	The Council is a corporate trustee of the WHT, and its appointed representative takes on the role and legal responsibilities of a director of the company.

OTHER IMPACTS, RISKS & OPPORTUNITIES	No	Not applicable.
IMPACT ON SPECIFIC WARDS	No	Not applicable.

PART B) – ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

4. INFORMATION

- 4.1 Wrekin Housing Trust is a registered social landlord whose principal activities are the development and management of social housing. The Trust rents out over 11,000 properties and is the largest social landlord in Telford & Wrekin.
- 4.2 Like all housing associations, the Trust is run by a Board of Management. The Board has eleven members whose role it is to ensure the Trust is run to the highest standards and meets all regulatory, legal and financial requirements. In addition, the Board is responsible for setting and monitoring the strategic direction of the company. The members of the Board are registered at Companies House as directors of the company and are also Charitable Trustees.
- 4.3 Telford & Wrekin Council is a corporate trustee of the Trust, and since 2007 has appointed annually one Elected Member to represent the Council on the Board. Since 2011/12 the appointed representative to the Trust has been Councillor Roy Picken. Following his resignation as a Councillor at the start of this year, there is now a vacancy on the Trust Board for the remainder of the 2014/15 municipal year.
- 4.4 The political Groups have been asked to submit nominations, and these will be reported at the meeting.

5. PREVIOUS MINUTES

Cabinet – 28 June 2014 (Minute Number CB-11).

6. BACKGROUND PAPERS

None.

Report prepared by Phil Smith, Democratic Services Team Leader – (01952 383211)