



Telford & Wrekin
COUNCIL

Addenbrooke House, Ironmasters Way, TELFORD TF3 4NT

CABINET

Thursday, 19 March 2015

5.00pm

**Meeting Room G3/G4, Addenbrooke House,
Ironmasters Way, Telford TF3 4NT**

Lead Officer

**Richard Partington
Managing Director**

(01952) 380102

**Democratic Services
Officer**

Phil Smith

(01952) 383211

Media Enquiries

**Corporate
Communications
Manager**

(01952) 382403

CABINET MEMBERS

Councillor K.S. Sahota	Leader of the Council
Councillor R.A. Overton	Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Public Health & Public Protection
Councillor E.A. Clare	Leisure Services & Culture
Councillor S. Davies	Neighbourhood Services, Employment & Skills
Councillor A.R.H. England	Adult Social Care
Councillor W.A.M. McClements	Finance & Enterprise
Councillor H. Rhodes	Customer Services, Libraries & Transport
Councillor C.F. Smith	Housing, Development & Borough Towns
Councillor P.R. Watling	Children, Young People & Families

Invitees*

Councillor A.J. Eade

(Conservative)

Councillor W.L. Tomlinson

(Liberal Democrat/Independent)

Terms of Reference

The Local Government Act 2000 provides that all the functions of the Authority shall be functions of the Cabinet, except where they are reserved to the Full Council by the Act, by regulations made under the Act or by legislation. The Local Authorities (Functions and Responsibilities) (England) Regulations 2000 sets out those functions:

- (a) which **must not** be discharged by Cabinet, for example determination of planning applications; licensing and registration.
- (b) which **may be** the responsibility of the Cabinet, for example service of abatement notice for a statutory nuisance; functions relating to contaminated land.
- (c) which may not be the sole responsibility of the Cabinet, for example the Council Plan, Children & Young People's Plan and the Local Development Framework
- (d) Notwithstanding a), b) and c) above decisions of the Cabinet must fall within the overall Policy and Budgetary Framework agreed by Council.

Additional Information

Members of the public are welcome to attend and observe the proceedings of the meeting whilst in open session. The filming, recording or taking of photographs of proceedings is allowed, as well as the use of social networking and micro-blogging to communicate with people about what is happening at the meeting. These activities are subject to a protocol, which can be accessed from the following link http://www.telford.gov.uk/info/354/council-minutes_agendas_and_reports/1596/filming_photography_recording_and_use_of_social_networking_at_meetings

A copy of the Agenda and papers are available from Addenbrooke House in Telford Town Centre or from the Council's Website www.telford.gov.uk.

CABINET

Meeting to be held on Thursday, 19th March 2015 at 5.00pm
in Meeting Room G3/G4, Ground Floor, Addenbrooke House, Ironmasters
Way, Telford

AGENDA

		Cabinet Member	Appendix	Page
	1. Minutes of the meeting of the Cabinet held on 26th February 2015		Appendix A	1
	2. Apologies for Absence			
	3. Declarations of Interest			
K	4. Scrutiny Review of Access to Affordable Housing			
	a) Councillor Derek White will present the report of the Scrutiny Management Board		Appendix B1	15
	b) Cabinet Response to Scrutiny report	Cllr C Smith	Appendix B2	19
K	5. Scrutiny Review of Benefit Sanctions			
	a) Councillor Angela McClements will present the report of the Co-operative & Communities Scrutiny Committee		Appendix C1	27
	b) Cabinet Response to Scrutiny report	Cllr H Rhodes	Appendix C2	49
NK	6. Pride in Your Community Programme – Investing in Our Infrastructure and Communities	Cllr S Davies	Appendix D	63
NK	7. Regeneration of Brookside Local Centre - Update	Cllr S Davies	Appendix E	83
NK	8. Regeneration of Hollinswood Local Centre - Update	Cllr S Davies	Appendix F	93
NK	9. The Gower, Gower Street, St Georges Update	Cllr S Davies	Appendix G	97
K	10. Pride in Your High Street and Local Centres	Cllr S Davies	Appendix H	103
K	11. Madeley Neighbourhood Development Plan – Proceed to Making	Cllr C Smith	Appendix I	113
K	12. Update on Superfast Telford Broadband Programme	Cllr C Smith	Appendix J	117
K	13. AFC Telford Utd Development Report	Cllr S Davies	Appendix K	127

NK	14. Discretionary Housing Payment and Council Tax Support Hardship Assistance	Cllr W McClements	Appendix L	133
NK	15. Tackling Youth Unemployment One Year On – The Second Year Challenges	Cllr S Davies	Appendix M	163
	16. Exclusion of Public and Press It is recommended that the public and press be excluded from the meeting for the following item of business on the grounds that it may involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraph 3 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972.			
K	17. Southwater Phase 2 – Development Options	Cllr S Davies Cllr W McClements	Appendix N	177

Key	
C	Items reserved for Council
K	Key Decision
NK	Non-Key Decision
Orange	Exempt items

CABINET

Decision Notices and Minutes of a meeting of the Cabinet held on Thursday, 19th March, 2015 at 5.00 p.m. at Addenbrooke House, Ironmasters Way, Telford

PUBLISHED ON WEDNESDAY, 25th MARCH, 2015

(DEADLINE FOR CALL-IN: MONDAY, 30TH MARCH, 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: Councillor E.J. Carter (substitute for Conservative Group Leader)

CB-100 MINUTES

RESOLVED – that the minutes of the meeting held on 26th February 2015 be confirmed and signed by the Chair.

CB-101 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

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

CB-102 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor A.R.H. England declared a personal interest in Agenda item 13 – AFC Telford Utd Development Report – as a season ticket holder (and hence Trustee of the Football Club)

CB-103 SCRUTINY REVIEW OF ACCESS TO AFFORDABLE HOUSING

Key Decision identified as **Scrutiny Report on Access to Affordable Accommodation** in the Notice of Key Decisions published on 18 February 2015.

Councillor D.R.W. White, Chair of the Scrutiny Management Board, presented the Board's report on Access to Affordable Housing in the Borough.

The Board had decided to look at this issue following a meeting with the four main Registered Social Landlords (RSLs) in Telford & Wrekin on the Telford Housing Options scheme. This led to concerns that there was a lack of communication between housing providers and the Council, and that three of the main RSLs in the Borough were saying they had difficulties in letting

properties to eligible local people. Some properties were being let to people from outside the Borough, and none were let to people who were statutorily homeless. The Chair had subsequently met with representatives from Maninplace and the KIP Project who provided support and accommodation to the vulnerable and homeless. This revealed increasing demand for accommodation, with both services finding it very difficult to access social housing for their clients. In particular, there was a large gap in the service and accommodation available for people with mental health issues.

The Board had put forward a number of recommendations to Cabinet and partners which were set out in detail in the report. These were intended to improve communication and co-operative working between housing providers and other agencies in order to address the identified problems and some of their underlying causes.

Councillor C.F. Smith, Cabinet Member: Housing, Development & Borough Towns responded to the report on behalf of the Cabinet. He thanked the Board for the work they had done. The detailed response to each of the Scrutiny Management Board's recommendations was appended to the report attached to the agenda. Eight of the nine recommendations had been wholly accepted, and had been, or were in the process of being, implemented. Considerable progress had been made over the past three months to assist homeless people. It was recognised that some clients would struggle to meet eligibility criteria put in place by registered providers, particularly regarding accumulated debt and anti-social behaviour. The implementation of the "bedroom tax" by the Government was also a contributory factor in the availability of one or two bed accommodation. The Allocation Policy would start to address eligibility issues by setting out clear criteria for the allocation of social housing as well as nomination rights for homeless clients. The new on-line Housing Options Tool was helping in assessing client's needs and signposting them to the most suitable accommodation. The recommendation for the Council to consider extending the existing Bond Scheme to cover the initial cost of up to £70 made by private sector landlords was not accepted for the technical reasons set out in the report.

Members welcomed the Scrutiny report, and reference was made to tackling some of the underlying causes of homelessness, such as mental health and drink/drugs issues.

RESOLVED – that the recommendations made by the Scrutiny Management Board be noted, and the response set out at Appendix 1 of the report be approved.

CB-104 SCRUTINY REVIEW OF BENEFIT SANCTIONS

Key Decision identified as **Scrutiny Report on Benefit Sanctions** in the Notice of Key Decisions published on 18 February 2015.

Councillor A.D. McClements, Chair of the Co-operative & Communities Scrutiny Committee, presented the Committee's report looking at the support for people having their benefit sanctioned.

Through its work in scrutinising the welfare benefits reforms and their impact, the Committee had become increasingly aware of the increasing use of benefit sanctions by the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP). The review was established to look at the impact this was having in Telford & Wrekin on both local people and partner organisations. The Committee had sought to understand the national context by looking at the independent review of the operation of Job Seekers Allowance sanctions carried out last year, and the Government's response to their recommendations. In seeking to understand the local picture, Members had met with representatives from the Citizens Advice Bureau, and a summary of the issues discussed was set out in the report. Views were also sought from the Partnership Manager at the DWP Jobcentre Plus for Telford, and from Council officers.

Based on both the national and local evidence, the Committee had concluded that there was a significant negative impact resulting from benefit sanctions that needed to be addressed. In particular, Members were extremely concerned about the effect on vulnerable people and the hardship caused for individuals and their families – resulting in an increased demand on other local services. The Committee commended the work of the Council's Benefits Team in supporting vulnerable people through the discretionary hardship fund etc. The Committee had put forward five recommendations to Cabinet and partners which were set out in detail in the report. It was recognised that the implementation of Universal Credit would be a further challenge, and it was hoped that the Council could work with the DWP locally to minimise any problems of hardship for local people.

Councillor H. Rhodes, Cabinet Member: Customer Services, Libraries & Transport, responded to the report on behalf of the Cabinet. She thanked the Committee for the work they had done. The detailed response to each of the Scrutiny Committee's recommendations was appended to the report attached to the agenda. All of the five recommendations had been wholly or partly accepted. It was recognised that that sanctions regime that had been implemented by the local Job Centres was as a result of national DWP policy and there was very limited local discretion as to how these policies were applied locally. Reference was also made to the implementation of Universal Credit in Telford & Wrekin from 1 June 2015, which would bring further changes to the sanctions regime. The introduction of Universal Credit did provide an opportunity for the Councils, Job Centres and third sector organisations to work together to provide a range of joint support services to claimants.

Members welcomed the Scrutiny report, and expressed concern that sanctions would continue under the Universal Credit regime, including for people claiming in-work benefits. In response to a question, the Assistant Director: Neighbourhood & Customer Services confirmed that the Local Support Framework would be the Council's responsibility following the introduction of Universal Credit. It was understood that Universal Credit in Telford & Wrekin would only initially apply to single people, which represented about 300 individuals.

RESOLVED – that the recommendations made by the Co-operative & Communities Scrutiny Committee be noted, and the response set out at Appendix 1 of the report be approved.

**CB-105 PRIDE IN YOUR COMMUNITY PROGRAMME – INVESTING
IN OUR INFRASTRUCTURE AND COMMUNITIES**

Non-Key Decision

Councillor S. Davies, Cabinet Member: Neighbourhood Services, Employment & Skills, presented the report of the Assistant Director: Neighbourhood & Customer Services, which provided an update on the delivery of the Pride in Your Community Programme Pledges and the positive impact it was providing to regenerate communities.

The Pride in Your Community Programme was introduced on 1 April 2014, with delivery across the Borough over the following two years. It had involved working jointly with residents, ward members and partner agencies to bring together social and physical improvements to the appearance of neighbourhoods. 37 applications for funding from the Community Pride Fund had now been approved, which would deliver improvements to community buildings and provide sports facilities and equipment. A further £20,000 of community funding had been secured for 2015/16 through the Waste Contract with Veolia.

Among the impacts that the Programme had achieved were:

- 7,200 volunteer hours through the community pay back programme
- 165 Street Champions within communities
- 159 Snow Wardens
- 9 Parish Environmental Teams and 6 Environmental Estate Response Teams with 12 people currently undertaking apprenticeships;
- Employment and training opportunities in Cuckoo Oak ward
- 46 roads received major surface dressing treatment;
- 1.867 residents using the 'Everyday Telford' app;
- 300 new litter bins purchased
- 94% resident satisfaction with recycling collection services
- Up until the end of December 2014, there had been a 47% reduction in the number of complaints received by Neighbourhood Services.

Further key facts and figures about the Programme, and a summary of the Borough wide progress against the Programme Pledges, were appended to the report. A further appendix illustrated some of the communications and engagement that had taken place.

RESOLVED – that the progress made to date against the Pride Programme Pledges approved by Cabinet on 9 January 2014 be noted.

**CB-106 REGENERATION OF BROOKSIDE LOCAL CENTRE -
UPDATE**

Non-Key Decision

Councillor S. Davies, Cabinet Member: Neighbourhood Services, Employment & Skills, presented the joint report of the Assistant Director: Development, Business & Employment and the Assistant Director: Neighbourhood & Customer Services, which provided updates on the scheme to regenerate Brookside Local Centre, ongoing engagement of the community, and on environmental improvements being undertaken across Brookside as part of the Pride in Your Community Programme.

Following extensive consultation and engagement with local residents, a Masterplan for the redevelopment of Brookside Local Centre was drawn up in 2012, with capital funding of £6.123m subsequently being allocated to the scheme. By September 2013 all flats were vacant and were demolished alongside the old youth centre. The project architects worked closely with the owners of the shops to design new premises that would meet the needs of their businesses. In June 2014, over 800sqm of new shop space was handed over to the shop owners, and local feedback indicated that these units were attracting significant footfall into the Centre. Two new flats above the supermarket were now occupied. Work was rapidly coming to a conclusion on the refurbished and extended community centre, with handover scheduled to take place by the end of the month. This would be a first class facility for the local community. Work was also underway on the new nursery play area, community garden and other areas of public realm. The development of 18 new bungalows by Wrekin Housing Trust was underway, with an anticipated completion by Autumn/Winter 2015.

Residents were still closely engaged with the scheme and consultation started in December 2014 about the setting-up of a 'Friends of the Community Centre' group. Residents would also be running the new community centre café, supported by the Council. Environmental improvements were taking place across the wider estate, and these were detailed in the report. Funding had been approved for 2015/16 to improve the 'spinal path' through the centre of the estate.

Councillor A.R.H. England, Ward Member for Brookside, welcomed the much needed investment in the estate and the Local Centre, which would also kick-start social regeneration. There had been a very good consultation process with residents, along with strong community participation in the improvement work.

RESOLVED –

- (a) that the progress made in the delivery of the Brookside Local Centre project, and its success as an example of co-operative working and of comprehensive physical and social regeneration, be noted;**

- (b) that the actions being taken as part of the Pride programme and on-going community collaboration be endorsed.

CB-107 REGENERATION OF HOLLINSWOOD LOCAL CENTRE - UPDATE

Non-Key Decision

Councillor S. Davies, Cabinet Member: Neighbourhood Services, Employment & Skills, presented the joint report of the Assistant Director: Development, Business & Employment and the Assistant Director: Neighbourhood & Customer Services, which provided an update on the scheme to redevelop Hollinswood Local Centre.

Following a feasibility study and extensive public consultation and engagement, a redevelopment plan for the Local Centre was drawn up. Approval was given in September 2014, with £1m of 'Pride in Your Community' funding allocated to the scheme, combined with re-prioritisation of other capital programme monies and receipts. Enabling works commenced in September 2014 with the acquisition of the Woodcutter Public House, which had now been demolished to create space for the new shops. The tenants of the existing shops had all agreed to relocate to the new shops and surrender their existing leases. Negotiations were continuing with the Parish Council on the refurbishment of the community centre they leased from the Council. A contract for the main building works had been awarded, with site set-up due to commence on 23 March 2015.

Councillor A.R.H England, Cabinet Member: Adult Social Care, referred to the Activity Hub for Adults with Learning Difficulties which was being sited in Hollinswood. As well as enhancing that service, the Hub would also generate increased footfall to the Local Centre. In response to a question about the underpass which linked to the nearby school, the Waste & Neighbourhood Performance Management Service Delivery Manager reported that the community did not want it closed, so instead Pride monies would be used to remove graffiti, improve the lighting and landscape the entrances.

RESOLVED –

- (a) that the progress made in the delivery of the Hollinswood Local Centre project be noted;
- (b) that the actions being taken as part of the Pride programme and ongoing community collaboration be endorsed.

CB-108 THE GOWER, GOWER STREET, ST GEORGES - UPDATE

Non-Key Decision

Councillor S. Davies, Cabinet Member: Neighbourhood Services, Employment & Skills, presented the report of the Assistant Director: Development, Business & Employment, which provided an update on the scheme to

refurbish The Gower – a former youth building owned by the Council which had been closed for many years.

The Gower was a Victorian brick built building which was of historic and heritage value to the St Georges area. In recent years it had been subject to repeated vandalism and was in poor condition. A range of uses had been considered, and a Gower St Heritage & Enterprise Group had been formed in April 2014. Working with the Council, a number of on-site clean-up and consultation events had been held. The longer term aim of the Group was to bring the building back into community use following consultation with local people on potential uses.

The 2015/16 budget included capital provision of £650,000 to facilitate and contribute to the refurbishment of the building to benefit local residents and various clubs and organisations. In addition, improvement works were planned in St Georges as part of the Pride in Your Community programme.

Councillor R.A. Overton, Ward member for St Georges, reported that Councillor J.C. Minor (the other Ward member) and himself had been closely involved in this Scheme, and commended the level of community involvement and Co-operative working in finding ways to bring The Gower back into use.

RESOLVED –

- (a) that the approach being taken to the refurbishment of the former Gower Street Youth Club be noted;**
- (b) that authority be delegated to the Assistant Director: Development, Business & Employment, in consultation with the Cabinet Member: Neighbourhood, Employment & Skills, to review and, if acceptable, approve the final business plan;**
- (c) that authority be delegated to the Assistant Director: Development, Business & Employment, in consultation with the Cabinet Member: Neighbourhood, Employment & Skills, to implement a programme of refurbishment and governance structure when an appropriate business plan is developed and agreed.**

CB-109 PRIDE IN YOUR HIGH STREETS AND LOCAL CENTRES

Key Decision identified as **£1m High Street Fund Proposals** in the Notice of Key Decisions published on 18 February 2015.

Councillor K.S. Sahota declared that his wife had a business in Wellington Town Centre.

Councillor S. Davies, Cabinet Member: Neighbourhood Services, Employment & Skills, presented the report of the Assistant Director: Development, Business & Employment, which outlined the establishment of a Pride in Our High Streets and Local Centres Fund totalling £1m.

The initiative would complement the Pride in Your Community Programme, and provide a grant scheme to fund projects that were of community or strategic importance in terms of high street and local centre regeneration and that had potential to support or create local employment opportunities. The Fund would comprise two parts:

- A Bidding Fund of around £800k which would be made available for bids meeting the criteria shown in the report;
- An Innovation Fund of around £200k to be used by the Council to invest in promotions and activities to attract people to visit and use the local high streets and centres.

The Bidding Fund would seek to make an equitable distribution of grants across the different High Streets and Local Centres in the Borough. No one High Street or Local Centre would be able to benefit from more than £100,000 of grants in total. Applications for funding would be considered against the grant criteria by an Initial Assessment Panel comprising business sector representatives and Council Officers. This Panel would make recommendations to Cabinet for which projects should be taken forward and allocated funding. Support for applicants would be provided, including workshops/seminars where organisations could meet with Council Officers for advice and help. These would initially be held in Dawley and Oakengates.

The Innovation Fund would be used to provide additional activity and animation in the high streets in which to celebrate the unique character and appeal of distinctive public spaces. Activities would be drawn up in partnership with the community, and would complement the existing Arts and Culture Events programme and other recognised events.

Members supported the proposals and aims for the Programme. In respect of the seminars for potential applicants, it was suggested that a further seminar could be held in the north of the Borough. The Cabinet Member added that other events could be arranged, and the Programme would be fully publicised.

RESOLVED –

- (a) that the process for allocating the Bidding Fund, including the criteria for the Fund outlined at paragraph 5.1.7 of the report, be approved;**
- (b) that the process for assessing applications, including the establishment of an Assessment Panel who will evaluate applications and make recommendations on grant allocations to Cabinet for a decision;**
- (c) that authority be delegated to the Assistant Director: Development, Business & Employment to oversee the administration and implementation of the Fund;**
- (d) that authority be delegated to the Assistant Director: Leisure, Culture & Facilities Management, in consultation with the Cabinet**

Member: Neighbourhood, Employment & Skills and Assistant Director: Development, Business & Employment, to oversee the investment of the £200k Innovation Fund in line with the proposals in the report.

**CB-110 MADELEY NEIGHBOURHOOD DEVELOPMENT PLAN:
PROCEED TO MAKING**

Key Decision identified as **Madeley Neighbourhood Plan – Formal Making** in the Notice of Key Decisions published on 18 February 2015.

Councillor C.F. Smith, Cabinet Member: Housing, Development & Borough Towns, presented the report of the Assistant Director: Planning Specialist, which sought Cabinet approval for the ‘making’ of the Madeley Neighbourhood Development Plan (NDP) following the completion of all the necessary procedures and requirements. Copies of the Plan had been available for inspection in the Members Room and online.

Cabinet on 16 October 2014 considered the Independent Examiner’s report which recommended that the NDP proceed to Referendum, subject to a number of modifications. Those modifications were applied to the NDP, and Cabinet agreed to proceed to a formal Referendum. This was held on 29 January 2015, with a majority ‘yes’ vote of 94% in favour of the Plan. Overall turnout was 16.57%. It was not considered that the NDP breached any EU obligations or any Convention Rights and could therefore be ‘made’. This would allow the Madeley NDP to be given full weight in the determination of planning applications within the Parish of Madeley alongside national and Borough wide adopted policy.

The Assistant Director: Planning Specialist added that this was the first NDP in Telford & Wrekin to reach the end of the process and become part of the Development Plan. It was one out of only 74 NDPs nationally to reach this stage.

Councillor P.R. Watling, Ward member for Madeley, highlighted the partnership working with Madeley Town Council, and the amount of work that had gone into producing the NDP. There was clear support from local people.

RESOLVED – that the **Madeley Neighbourhood Development Plan** be ‘made’

**CB-111 UPDATE ON SUPERFAST TELFORD BROADBAND
PROGRAMME**

Key Decision identified as **Update on the Telford Superfast Broadband Programme** in the Notice of Key Decisions published on 18 February 2015.

Councillor C.F. Smith, Cabinet Member: Housing, Development & Borough Towns, presented the report of the Assistant Director: Development, Business & Employment, which provided an update on the Superfast Telford broadband

programme which aimed to provide Superfast Broadband to at least 96% of residential and business premises across the Borough.

In July 2014, Cabinet approved funding for the programme as part of the Broadband Delivery UK (BDUK) Phase 2 Superfast Extension Programme, and gave authority to procure a supplier using the BDUK Call Off framework. An Open Market Review was undertaken to establish existing and planned broadband services in the Borough. Data from the Review was used to identify those areas that would be eligible for intervention for both Basic and Superfast Broadband – and these were appended to the report in map form. Following public consultation, a tender exercise was carried out. The delivery contract was due to be signed in the next week with the successful supplier. Following a 6 month mobilisation period, the delivery of the programme would start in September 2015 with completion due in June 2017. A Delivery Plan had been developed, partly based on feedback from the consultation, with preferred areas for early implementation identified. A robust marketing and communications plan would be put in place in order to raise awareness of the programme, communicate the Delivery Plan and encourage take up of superfast broadband. As part of this plan, a website would be set up.

During the ensuing discussion, Councillor Carter referred to the number of micro-businesses in the rural areas of the Borough that needed superfast broadband. The Cabinet Member added that pressure would need to be kept on the supplier to meet the programme target.

RESOLVED –

- (a) that the programme delivery dates, scope of intervention and the process for establishing a delivery plan for eligible areas be noted;**
- (b) that authority be delegated to the Assistant Director: Development, Business & Employment to take all actions necessary to finalise the funding package required to deliver the programme;**
- (d) that authority be delegated to the Assistant Director: Development, Business & Employment, to sign and execute any documentation necessary, including, but not limited to, awarding the contract to the preferred bidder.**

CB-112 AFC TELFORD UTD DEVELOPMENT REPORT

Key Decision identified as **AFC Telford Update** in the Notice of Key Decisions published on 18 February 2015.

Councillor S. Davies, Cabinet Member: Neighbourhood Services, Employment & Skills, presented the joint report of the Assistant Director: Leisure, Culture & Facilities Management and the Assistant Director: Development, Business & Employment, which updated Members on the current partnership work with AFC Telford as well as potential future opportunities for collaborative working.

Following work with consultants to look at opportunities to support their long term sustainability, AFC Telford was seeking a formal commitment from the Council to be part of a project team to:

- develop plans for the extension of the AFC Telford Learning Centre to better accommodate existing users, create capacity for new community activities and provide changing rooms for the 5-a-side pitches;
- explore other leisure related development opportunities, such as the provision of squash courts, on the AFC Telford site.
- in addition, the opportunity exists to further explore the development of a South Telford Football Hub, potentially on land adjacent to Telford Ski Centre at Madeley. This would provide sporting, education and social facilities, improve the long term sustainability of the Ski Centre, and help the Club extend its outreach work into south Telford;

The Club had requested that the capital receipt from the sale of the Bucks Head Pub was made available to the project team, and that this be used as match funding to lever in additional external funding. It was considered that working collaboratively would bring about maximum benefit by ensuring that any new provision would complement the existing Borough facility mix.

RESOLVED –

- (a) that the development of a joint project group, comprising of representatives from AFC Telford Utd and the Council, to further develop plans, business cases and external funding bids to enhance community and club sport, leisure and learning facilities be supported;**
- (b) that, subject to resolution (c) below, authority be delegated to the Assistant Director: Development, Business & Employment, in consultation with the Assistant Director: Leisure, Culture & Facilities and the Cabinet Members for Neighbourhood, Employment & Skills and Finance & Enterprise, to commit capital expenditure of up to £279k to support projects in line with those referred to in the report upon agreement of an acceptable business plan;**
- (c) TO RECOMMEND to COUNCIL that the necessary changes to the approved capital programme and revenue budget be approved once arrangements have been finalised to reflect the capital and revenue implications outlined in the report.**

(NB: Councillor A.R.H. England did not vote on the above resolutions)

CB-113 DISCRETIONARY HOUSING PAYMENT AND COUNCIL TAX SUPPORT HARSHIP ASSISTANCE

Non-Key Decision

Councillor W.A.M McClements, Cabinet Member: Finance & Enterprise, presented the report of the Assistant Director: Neighbourhood & Customer Services, which sought approval of a revised Discretionary Housing Payment and Council Tax Support Hardship Assistance Policy.

The current Policy took effect from April 2013 and had been refreshed to include best practice based on the experience the Benefit Service had gained since the Government welfare reforms were introduced. A copy of the Policy was appended to the report. As with the previous policy, the basic overriding principle of the scheme was that if a customer had sufficient income to cover their rent after all essential expenditure had been taken into account they would not be awarded a Discretionary Housing Payment (DHP). The Benefit Service had worked closely with housing providers and other partners to find innovative uses of the DHP fund that maximised residents' choices regarding housing mobility and enabled them to move to more appropriate accommodation. This included assistance with paying a deposit to secure a tenancy and the payment of removal costs in certain circumstances. However, it remained the intention not to provide help to pay rent in advance, except in very exceptional circumstances.

The report detailed funding allocations from the Department for Work and Pension for DHP, and it was forecast that the current year's allocation of £465k would be awarded by the end of the financial year. The report also provided information on the operation of the Council Tax Support Scheme, for which 224 awards had been made in the first 9 months of 2014/15.

RESOLVED – that the revised Discretionary Housing Payment and Council Tax Support Hardship Assistance Policy, as shown at Appendix A of the report, be approved.

CB-114 TACKLING YOUTH UNEMPLOYMENT ONE YEAR ON – THE SECOND YEAR CHALLENGE

Non-Key Decision

Councillor S. Davies, Cabinet Member: Neighbourhood Services, Employment & Skills, presented the report of the Assistant Director: Development, Business & Employment, which provided an update on progress to date in tackling youth unemployment in the Borough and information on the further work still to be done.

In January 2014, Cabinet approved a series of pledges with a view to ensuring that every 16-24 year old seeking employment or training was fully supported. Within one year, the programme had exceeded its expectations by helping to bring youth unemployment in Telford & Wrekin below national levels. It currently stood at 15.7% compared to the national rate of 17.3%. The report set out in detail the progress to date against each pledge. Among the successes had been a target of 150 apprenticeships in the Council being exceeded, 120 young people supported into work through the Job Box Mentor programme, and twice the number of users at Job Junctions in 2014 compared to 2013. The Cabinet Member also referred to the Jobs Fair and

Skills Festival that had taken place this week at the International Centre, with over 4,000 people attending over the two days.

It was also announced that the Council had secured an £80,000 Government grant to tackle unemployment for those people with mental health issues. Telford & Wrekin was one of only five authorities nationally to receive this funding. Schools were also being supported through the 'Life Ready, Work Ready' programme which was due to go on trial over the summer term.

Members welcomed the progress that had been made in reducing youth unemployment in the Borough, and the continuing work to support young people in finding work or training.

RESOLVED – that the progress made to date against the pledges to tackle high levels of youth unemployment be noted.

CB-115 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.

(Councillor R.A. Overton left the meeting at 6.40pm)

CB-116 SOUTHWATER PHASE TWO – DEVELOPMENT OPTIONS

Key Decision identified as **Southwater Hotel Investment – Commercial Details** in the Notice of Key Decisions published on 18 February 2015.

Councillor S. Davies, Cabinet Member: Neighbourhood Services, Employment & Skills, presented the report of the Assistant Director: Development, Business & Employment, which set out proposals for the delivery of a hotel and associated car parking as part of the ongoing development of Southwater, together with options for the delivery of parking to support the development of apartments in Southwater as part of the Housing Investment Programme.

The report set out two possible delivery options that had emerged from discussions with two possible private sector developers. These were still indicative as there were a number of factors still under discussion and further appraisal work to be undertaken. A full feasibility appraisal of both options, as well as any further options which became apparent, would be prepared and authority was sought to delegate authority to the Assistant Director to conclude any negotiations in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Finance & Enterprise.

RESOLVED –

- (a) that authority be delegated to the Assistant Director: Development, Business & Employment to conclude an options appraisal for the provision of a hotel and associated car parking development on land at Southwater and car parking facilities to support the development of apartments at Southwater as part of the Housing & Property Investment Programme and, following consultation with the Cabinet member for Finance & Enterprise, to proceed with the implementation of the preferred option;**
- (b) That authority be delegated to the Assistant Director; Development, Business & Employment, in consultation with the Cabinet member for Finance & Enterprise, to conclude negotiations with private sector partners to facilitate delivery including entering into any agreements necessary for the disposal of or acquisition of land required to give effect to the recommendations within the report;**
- (c) that authority be delegated to the Assistant Director: Development, Business & Employment, in consultation with the Cabinet member for Finance & Enterprise, to enter into any agreements necessary to secure the design and construction of the car parking facilities;**
- (d) that, if it became necessary in order to progress the favoured option, approval be given to waive the requirements within the Council’s Contract Procedure Rules to seek competitive quotes and/or tenders for the design and construction of the car parking facilities detailed at resolution (a) above.**

The meeting ended at 6.44 pm.

Signed for the purposes of the Decision Notices

**Jonathan Eatough
Assistant Director: Law, Democracy & People Services
Date: 25 March 2015**

Signed:

Date:

CABINET

Decision Notices and Minutes of a meeting of the Cabinet held on Thursday, 26th February, 2015 at 5.00 p.m. at Addenbrooke House, Ironmasters Way, Telford

PUBLISHED ON WEDNESDAY, 4th MARCH, 2015

(DEADLINE FOR CALL-IN: MONDAY, 9TH MARCH, 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: Councillor A.J. Eade (Conservative Group Leader)

CB-90 MINUTES

RESOLVED – that the minutes of the meeting held on 29th January 2015 be confirmed and signed by the Chair.

CB-91 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

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

CB-92 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None

CB-93 FINANCIAL MONITORING 2014/15

Key Decision identified as **2014/15 Financial Monitoring** 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: Finance, Audit & Information Governance, which provided Members with the latest financial monitoring information for 2014/15.

The expected net outturn position for the General Fund revenue budget was currently projected to be £2.7m under budget, which together with the unused element of the budget contingency (currently £3m) provided £5.7m one-off resources to support the 2015/16 budget strategy and the delivery of future savings. This was an improvement of £0.9m on the previously reported position, which reflected the continuing strong financial management by senior managers and Cabinet Members. This was a very positive position to be in, and gave a sound platform for the further budgetary challenges ahead.

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 £5.5m 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.

The overall position 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 £140m, which included slippage and all approvals since the budget was set. Spend was currently standing at around 53%, with projected spend being 95%.

Collection levels for Business Rates were on target, whilst Council Tax and Sales Ledger debt were all slightly behind the targets set for the year.

Councillor A.R.H. England, Cabinet Member: Adult Social Care, commented on the improvement of £0.2m in the over-spend on care packages since the last report, and the work that was going on to reduce costs and work in different ways.

RESOLVED –

- (a) that it be noted that the 2014/15 revenue spending is currently projected to be within budget;
- (b) that the position in relation to capital spend and receipts be noted;
- (c) that the collection rates for NNDR, council tax and sales ledger be noted.

CB-94 SERVICE & FINANCIAL PLANNING 2015/16 - 2017/18

Key Decision identified as **Service & Financial Planning Strategy 2015/16 – 2017/18** in the Notice of Key Decisions published on 26 January 2015.

Recommendation to Council- not subject to Call-In

Councillor W.A.M. McClements, Cabinet Member: Finance & Enterprise, presented a series of reports of the Managing Director, the Assistant Director: Finance, Audit & Information Governance (Chief Financial Officer), the Assistant Director for Development, Business & Housing and the Director: Neighbourhood, Customer & Cultural Services. The reports, detailing the Revenue Budget, Capital Programme, the Treasury Management Strategy and Prudential Indicators, formed the Council's overall Medium Term Service

& Financial Planning framework, and identified the service priorities and budget for 2015/16 as well as savings proposals to be delivered over the next two years, and a medium term capital programme. He thanked Officers and Cabinet Members for preparing the budget against a backdrop of such financial constraint, and thanked all the team who had helped deliver the MoD Fulfilment Centre at Donnington.

The Overview and Revenue Budget report set out the pressures facing the Council, including cuts in Government funding of over £70m per annum, which equated to a cut in spend of over £950 for each household in the Borough. The Council had significantly reduced its numbers of senior officers and back-office costs while protecting front-line services as far as possible. However, despite the financial challenges, the Council was continuing to invest to create jobs and safeguard the future prosperity of the Borough and its residents, in line with the Administration's key priorities. The report highlighted a number of investments that were delivering growth, jobs and regeneration in the Borough.

Following the publication of its draft budget proposals in early January, and a one month consultation period, Cabinet had confirmed its key budget strategy proposals for 2015/16 as:

- Freezing Council Tax for the next two years;
- Continuing to deliver jobs and investment, including a £1m fund to support high streets in the Borough Towns and district centres, and £4m to roll-out superfast broadband to those parts of the Borough without coverage;
- Minimising cuts to priority services for vulnerable adults and children as far as possible, against a backdrop of unprecedented cuts in government funding, through good financial management and making one-off additional ring-fenced funding available to support services;
- Investing in communities – creating a £1m (capital) Community Pride Fund for 2017/18, with a borough-wide environmental investment programme of £750k over the next two years in addition to the existing Pride in Your Community programme. There would also be continuing support to regenerate local centres with £650k (capital) investment to refurbish the Gower St Youth Club in St Georges.
- Investing in roads – a commitment to a programme of £2m per annum to invest in road, footpath and other highway improvements for the next 3 years over and above the funding allocated by Government for this purpose;
- Improving local people's prospects through education and skills training – including continuation of the £187m investment in school infrastructure, and a further £650k to fund a second year of investment in youth unemployment Job Box initiatives
- Improving the health and wellbeing of communities and addressing health inequalities – it was proposed to provide free swimming for residents over 50 for four years.

Attached to the report were a number of appendices, including savings proposals, Impact Assessments of the savings proposals, the Pay Policy

Statement 2015/16, analysis of base budget movements, 9 month performance monitoring update and details of Reserves and Balances.

Following publication of the Cabinet's budget proposals in January 2015, there had been extensive consultation via a wide range of media and settings to involve local people and groups such as the Business Forum. This included an interactive "pop-up" road show around the Borough, allowing local people the opportunity to have conversations with Cabinet Members and senior managers. In total, 2,594 contacts were made during the consultation programme, and the full findings/responses were appended to the report. Among the key results, were broad support for the Council's investment proposals and responses that were given to three key questions seeking people's views about the Borough and its future.

Since the draft budget proposals were approved for consultation, the Government had issued the final settlement for 2015/16. The net impact resulted in a gain of £0.276m revenue support grant for the Council. Updated projections for estimated income from business rates showed a further benefit of £1.185m arising from strong growth in the local economy. This would be used to make three key changes to the original proposals, in response to the consultation. An additional £1.25m one-off funding had been set aside for Adult Social Services in 2015/16, the saving relating to changes to remissions policy for fees for Arthog Outdoor Centre and the Music Service had been deleted, and a proposed saving from rationalisation of budgets at Arthog of £50k had been reduced to £17k.

An equality impact analysis of the overall impact of the budget was appended to the report, along with environmental and economic impact assessments.

The Council's Chief Financial Officer was required to give a view on the robustness of the Council's financial strategy, including the use of balances, and this was appended to the report. This had concluded that the Council was pursuing a sound financial strategy in the context of the most difficult financial position it had ever faced due to the combined effect of Government cuts and increased service pressures.

The report on the Capital Programme presented the Council's Capital Strategy for 2014/15 – 2017/18 and later years and a capital programme of £293.560m that included the proposed investments contained in the overall budget strategy. It also set out the Council's Asset Management Plan and planned building maintenance programme, particularly focusing on 2015/16, and the three year Highways and Transport capital investment programme.

The report on the Treasury Management Strategy detailed the Treasury Strategy to be adopted for 2015/16. The Strategy was set within the parameters of the latest guidance and accounting standards. It was expected the Council would borrow up to £55.4m in 2015/16 based on the current capital programme plans, and would adopt a flexible approach to borrowing. The borrowing might increase if the Council proceeded with planned large commercial projects such as MoD Donnington. The report also provided an update on the treasury management activities during 2014/15. The weighted

average return on internal investments at the end of December 2014 was 0.98% compared to a benchmark return for the period of 0.43%. The report also included the Council's Minimum Revenue Provision Statement, which was now being calculated on an annuity basis, which would provide savings over a number of years following the backdating of adjustments.

The report on Prudential Indicators sought approval of the prudential indicators for 2015/16 to 2017/18 required under the Prudential Code of Capital Finance in Local Authorities.

Recommendations by Cabinet would be considered at full Council on 5th March 2015 as full Council was responsible for setting the overall revenue and capital budget framework. At that meeting full Council would also set the Council Tax for 2015/16.

The Chairman of the Budget & Finance Scrutiny Committee, Cllr S.A.W. Reynolds, presented the comments of the Committee on the budget proposals. The main focus of the Committee's work had been on the adult social care budget, as the potential impact of funding reductions on vulnerable adults made this a key risk. The additional one-off money that was being proposed for 2015/16 was welcomed, and the Committee was assured that safeguards would be put in place to ensure that contracts with adult social care providers would be rigorously monitored to ensure the quality of the services. Adult Services would be an area that Scrutiny would retain a close overview of in its work programme for 2015/16. The Committee welcomed a number of the proposals within the budget strategy, including the freeze in council tax, the continued work on the Skills agenda, the approach to income generation and the proposed introduction of free swimming for over-50s. It was pleasing that the Committee's concerns about Arthog Centre and the Music Service had been addressed. The Committee commended the budget consultation exercise.

Councillor A.R.H. England, Cabinet Member: Adult Care & Support, reminded Members that the focus of the savings was on driving down provider costs, efficiencies and service re-design. This approach had been successful in avoiding any dramatic closures or reductions in services, enabling care for the most vulnerable people in the community to be protected. Other Cabinet members referred to the success of the consultation process, and that views had been listened to and amendments made to the budget proposals.

Cllr A.J. Eade, Conservative Group Leader, was invited to comment on the Cabinet's budget proposals. He expressed reservations about the way the Council's budget consultation questions had been worded, which he said made the process flawed. He did not think the savings in Adult Social Care budgets could be achieved without affecting elderly and vulnerable people. The additional contingency that had been announced was welcome, but was not enough. While welcoming the investment for the new Fulfilment Centre at MoD Donnington, there were concerns at the levels of borrowing and the long-term cost of that.

During the ensuing debate, the Cabinet Member for Finance & Enterprise advised that the proportion of cuts to adult services in Telford & Wrekin was well below the national average, and the cuts that had been made had been achieved in ways that protected vulnerable adults. In relation to borrowing, debt repayments in 2014/15 accounted for 7.5% of the net revenue budget which was well below the Unitary Authority average of 9.92%.

RESOLVED – to RECOMMEND to COUNCIL on 5th March 2015:

(i) Overview and Revenue Budget 2015/16 – 2017/18

- (a) that the feedback from the consultation summarised in Appendix 17 and from Scrutiny in Appendix 16 of the report be considered;**
- (b) that the base budget summarised by Service Area in Appendix 9A be approved;**
- (c) that the freezing of council tax levels in 2015/16 and the commitment to freezing council tax again in 2016/17 be approved;**
- (d) that the savings package detailed in Appendix 2 of the report and the additional saving from the Housing Investment Programme be approved;**
- (e) that the revenue pressures detailed in Appendix 2C of the report including the allocation of £2.5m one-off funding for Adult Social Services in 2015/16, the allocation of £0.75m one-off funding for Children’s safeguarding in 2015/16 and the allocation of £0.25m over 3 years for Destination Telford initiatives be approved;**
- (f) that the revenue investment of £1m to revitalise High Streets of Borough Towns and District Centres be approved;**
- (g) that the revenue investment of £0.75m over 2 years for a Borough wide Environmental Investment Programme be approved;**
- (h) that the revenue investment of £0.2m over four years to provide free swimming for all residents over 50 be approved;**
- (i) that the revenue investment of £33,000 to continue funding for the Food Bank during 2015/16 be approved;**
- (j) that the policy framework for Reserves and Balances outlined in Appendix 10 of the report be approved;**
- (k) that the revenue implications of the medium term capital programme for the period 2014/15 - 2017/18 set out in the Capital Programme report be noted, including new commitments of £6m Council funding for Roads and Highways over the next 3 years, £1m to re-run the Community Pride Fund in 2017/18, £0.65m for**

regeneration works in St. Georges and £0.4m for regeneration works in Dawley;

- (l) that the Impact Assessments contained in Appendices 3A, 3B and 4 of the report be noted;
- (m) that the creation of provisions during 2014/15 to fund those investments funded from the projected revenue budget underspend in 2014/15, together with the remaining budget gap of £0.858m; and with any remaining underspend at year end to be transferred to either the severance fund or invest to save/capacity funds to support the delivery of further savings in future years be approved;
- (n) that the Pay Policy contained at Appendix 5 of the report be approved;
- (o) that the CFO's Robustness Statement contained at Appendix 15 of the report be noted;
- (p) that the Corporate Debt Recovery Policy contained at Appendix 13 of the report be approved;
- (q) that the 9 month Performance Update contained at Appendix 14 of the report be noted.

(ii) Capital Programme

- (a) that the Capital Programme and associated capital estimates for 2014/15 and 2015/16 – 2017/18, which incorporate the Capital Strategy, the Planned Building Maintenance Programme, the Asset Management Plan and the three year Highways & Transport capital investment programme, be approved;
- (b) that authority be delegated to the Assistant Director: Development, Business & Employment to deliver the planned programme of works within the Asset Management Plan, and to the Director: Neighbourhood, Customer & Cultural Services to deliver the Highways and Transport capital investment programme, in line with the approved budgets and to make any changes or variations to schemes in these programmes that remain within overall approved budgets, in consultation with the appropriate Cabinet members;

(iii) 2015/16 Treasury Strategy and Treasury Update

- (a) that the treasury management activities for the first half year be noted;
- (b) that the Treasury Management Policy Statement, as shown at Appendix A of the report, be noted;

- (c) that the Treasury Strategy, including the Annual Investment Strategy for 2015/16, together with the associated Treasury Prudential Indicators and the Minimum Revenue Provision Statement, be approved.
- (iv) Prudential Indicators
- (a) that the prudential indicators for 2015/16 to 2017/18, as set out in the report, be approved.

CB-95 PLANNING OF SCHOOL PLACES: SCHOOLS CHANGING THEIR STATUS AND ASSOCIATED TRANSFER OF LAND AND ASSETS

Non-Key Decision

Councillor P.R. Watling, Cabinet Member: Children, Young People & Families, presented the report of the Assistant Director: Education & Corporate Parenting, which set out the implications arising from a number of schools within the Authority either having changed their status or planning to do so within the next few months.

The report outlined those schools that had opted for trust status as part of a Co-operative Learning Trust, with the consequent transfer of land and staff to the trusts. Existing academies in the Telford Co-operative Multi-Academy Trust were in discussion with the Office of the Regional Commissioner about alternative arrangements in which they would become part of larger groups of sponsored academies. As these schools were already independent of the Council, the Authority would have no formal part in any new arrangements put into place. There were three further schools that might become academies – Dawley CE (Aided) Primary School, KickStart Pupil Referral Unit and Mount Gilbert Special School. In the case of the latter, the land was owned by the Council and would be leased to an appropriate sponsor with all the staff, land and assets transferring to the governing body. Finally, the land and buildings of the new Lawley Village Academy, due to open in September 2015, would be transferred to the sponsoring trust on completion of the build.

RESOLVED –

- (a) that the information relating to schools' change of status contained within the report be noted;
- (b) that authority be delegated to the Assistant Director: Education & Corporate Parenting, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Children, Young People & Families, to take all required actions and exercise all the Council's relevant powers to enable the changes of status to Trust Schools or Academies and associated transfers of land and assets to take place in respect of any school in the Borough.

CB-96 SUBMISSION OF WATERS UPTON NEIGHBOURHOOD DEVELOPMENT PLAN

Non-Key Decision

Councillor C.F. Smith, Cabinet Member: Housing, Development & Borough Towns, presented the report of the Assistant Director: Development, Business & Employment, regarding the submission of a Neighbourhood Development Plan (NDP) by Waters Upton Parish Council, and the steps that now needed to be taken.

Following designation of the Neighbourhood Plan Area in November 2013, the Parish Council had worked with the local community to produce a NDP which had been subject to the required period of consultation. The final Plan and supporting documents were submitted to Telford & Wrekin Council on 15 December 2014. In response, and in accordance with statutory requirements, the Council had completed a number of checks to ensure that all the procedural and other requirements had been met. These had concluded that the submission was compliant. In terms of 'general conformity' with the strategic policies of the adopted Development Plan for the local area, there were a number of important differences of opinion between the Parish Council and Local Planning Authority Officers, and these would be raised at the Independent Examination stage.

The NDP was currently subject to a 6 week publication period, which had been extended by agreement by one week to 6th March 2015. Any representations received would be forwarded to an Independent Examiner (IE). The IE would be appointed by the Council in agreement with Waters Upton Parish Council, and would check the contents of the Plan, supporting documents and written representations. The Examiner would then submit a report to Cabinet with a recommendation as to whether the NDP should be progressed to a referendum of electors in the Neighbourhood Plan area.

It was also proposed to give Officers delegated powers to exercise all the Council's powers regarding the process for future NDPs up to the point where the Council needs to consider the recommendations of the Independent Examiner and decide whether the Neighbourhood Development Plan can proceed to referendum.

RESOLVED –

- (a) that authority be delegated to the Assistant Director: Planning Specialist to exercise all the Council's relevant powers under the Town & Country Planning Act 1990, the Planning & Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012 and all other enabling legislation, to take all necessary actions for the Waters Upton Neighbourhood Plan to be processed in accordance with the relevant legislation to and through the Independent Examination stage;**

- (b) that authority be delegated to the Assistant Director: Planning Specialist to exercise all the Council's relevant powers under the Town & Country Planning Act 1990, the Planning & Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations, and all other enabling legislation, regarding the neighbourhood planning process for future NDPs in the Borough up to but not including the stage where the Council needs to consider the recommendations of the Independent Examiner and decide whether the NDP can proceed to referendum.

CB-97 DECLARATION OF THE EXTENSION TO THE LOCAL NATURE RESERVE AT TELFORD TOWN PARK

Key Decision identified as **Declaration of the Extension to Telford Town Park Local Nature Reserve** in the Notice of Key Decisions published on 26 February 2015.

Councillor E.A. Clare, Cabinet Member: Leisure Services & Culture, presented the report of the Director of Neighbourhood, Customer & Cultural Services, which sought approval for the declaration of additional areas within Telford Town Park as a Local Nature Reserve (LNR).

The importance of protecting and maintaining high quality green spaces was central to the Council's commitment to retain and nurture its 'green town' reputation. Declaration of land as a LNR required the Council to manage the land as a nature reserve and to protect it from inappropriate uses or development. A proposal to extend the LNR designation in the Town Park had been developed in liaison with the Friends of Telford Town Park and the Shropshire Wildlife Trust, and would involve volunteers carrying out small scale conservation tasks as part of the management of the site. The proposed extension to the LNR was considered to meet the necessary criteria for selection. Appended to the report was a plan showing the proposed areas of the Town Park for designation as part of the LNR.

Subject to approval, the next stage would be to progress the designation through the formal process with Natural England prior to final declaration.

Members welcomed the proposal. In response to a question about the selection of the areas for inclusion in the LNR, the Assistant Director: Leisure, Culture & Facilities Management advised that any areas for designation had to demonstrate that they had value in terms of their wildlife and natural habitat.

RESOLVED –

- (a) that the declaration of areas, as identified in Appendix 1 of the report, within Telford Town Park as a Local Nature Reserve be approved;
- (b) that authority be delegated to the Assistant Director: Planning Specialist, in consultation with the Cabinet Members for Leisure

**Services & Culture and Housing, Development & Borough Towns,
to complete the declaration process.**

**CB-98 DECLARATION OF MADELEY PITMOUNDS LOCAL NATURE
RESERVE**

Non-Key Decision

Councillor C.F. Smith, Cabinet Member: Housing, Development & Borough Towns, presented the report of the Assistant Director: Planning Specialist, which sought approval for the declaration of a new Local Nature Reserve in Madeley, South Telford – approximately 44 hectares of distinctive wooded pitmounds which were linked historically and archaeologically, and which were an important part of the local landscape.

The areas proposed for designation were shown on a plan appended to the report, and comprised of five pitmounds. It was considered to fulfil the requirements of becoming a formal designated site as it included two county wildlife sites (Madeley Court and Tweedale Woods), was not allocated for development, had an up-to-date management plan, and had a strong level of community involvement and support. The proposal had been developed by Madeley Town Council in liaison with a local community group, and would involve volunteers carrying out small-scale conservation tasks as part of the management of the site. The site was already used for health and educational purposes supported by South Telford Rights of Way Partnership and Telford & Wrekin Green Gym.

Subject to approval, the next stage would be to progress the designation through the formal process with Natural England prior to final declaration.

Councillor P.R. Watling, Madeley Ward Member, welcomed the proposed designation and the importance of these sites for industrial heritage and future recreational use.

RESOLVED –

- (a) that the declaration of the Madeley Pitmounds Local Nature Reserve, as shown in Appendix 1 of the report, be approved;**
- (b) that authority be delegated to the Assistant Director: Planning Specialist, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Housing, Development & Borough Towns, to make any minor amendments to the boundaries of the Madeley Pitmounds Local Nature Reserve if required, and to complete the declaration process.**

CB-99 PROCUREMENT UPDATE

Key Decision identified as **Procurement Update** in the Notice of Key Decisions published on 26 February 2015.

In accordance with the Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Meetings and Access to Information) (England) Regulations 2012, the relevant Scrutiny Chair had been informed of the reasons why compliance with regulation 10 (more than 5 clear days notice of a key decision) was impracticable and had agreed to the decision being taken with less than the required notice as the decision was urgent and could not be reasonably deferred.

Councillor W.A.M. McClements, Cabinet Member: Finance & Enterprise, presented the report of the Assistant Director: Law, Democracy & People Services, which updated Members on the Council's Procurement Intentions and general progress with effective procurement.

An extract of the latest procurement intentions document was appended to the report, and detailed the anticipated procurement activity for the next 6-12 months. Some projects were still ongoing from the last update in July 2014, and progress was detailed in the appendix. The main activity for noting related to the commissioning and tendering process for substance misuse services, review of the Revenue and Benefits System contract, and the letting of two 2 year contracts related to Stop Smoking services, with the option to extend for up to a further 2 years subject to satisfactory performance and funding.

The Council continued to be proactive in the way it procured services and goods. This included promoting opportunities in local market sectors, and organising supplier and user market engagement sessions for Public Health & Care and Support Services.

RESOLVED -

- (a) that the procurement updates in the report be noted;**
- (b) that the Procurement Intentions Document, as shown at Appendix A of the report, be noted; and, where appropriate, the delegation to the appropriate officers (as per the Contract Procedure Rules) to progress new procurements through the tender process to contract award be approved.**

The meeting ended at 6.14 pm.

Signed for the purposes of the Decision Notices

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

Signed:

Date:

Scrutiny Management Board Report and Recommendations on Access to Affordable Housing

At the Scrutiny Management Board meeting on the 14th November 2014 the Committee received information on the implementation of the Choose Your Home Scheme and heard from the 4 main Registered Social Landlords in Telford and Wrekin. The Board were concerned that, while it was reported that the Choose Your Home scheme start up phase had worked well, there is a lack of communication between the different housing providers and the Council – a significant concern was that 3 of the Housing Providers reported difficulties in letting properties to eligible local people. It was reported that of the 363 properties let by these 3 RSLs none were let to people from Telford and Wrekin who were statutorily homeless and being supported by the Council and some properties were let to residents from outside Telford and Wrekin. The Board was also informed that in October 2014 the Council's Telford Housing Options number had received 1247 call of which 847 were handled and that 2 agency staff were being recruited to increase the capacity of this team to manage the calls.

Following the Committee Meeting on the 14th November the Chair of Scrutiny Management Board met with senior staff from Maninplace and the KIP Project that provide support and accommodation to the vulnerable and homeless. The Key points from this discussion were:

The demand for the services provided by Maninplace and KIP have increased significantly. The examples given were that from November to mid January the demand for the Bleak Midwinter Service was 68% higher than the previous year. It was also highlighted that of the 92 accommodation units that Maninplace manage 50% are taken by long term tenants. A high proportion of the people seeking accommodation are through Maninplace are aged 18-25 years. 45% of the clients between April and December 2014 were from this age group. The number of women seeking support has also increased and now account for 1 in 3 clients.

Both services find it very difficult to access social housing for their clients. In many cases the reason the individuals seek support is because they have drug or alcohol issues, chaotic lifestyles, have previous criminal convictions, mental health issues and financial difficulty / debt and therefore do not meet the criteria for social housing. If Maninplace is not able to provide its intensive housing managed accommodation directly the only option for their clients is to find accommodation in the private rented sector in houses of multiple occupation.

Mental health is a significant issue for people finding accommodation through Maninplace and KIP. The monitoring data showed that it was the most frequent secondary reason for someone becoming homeless. This would indicate that mental health issues are in many cases the underlying reason behind the primary issues such as family break down or financial problems. It was identified that there is a large gap in the service and accommodation for this client group.

The 100 hours of floating support that Maninplace has and is provided through the Thrive Partnership has enabled people to maintain tenancies albeit temporary accommodation.

The Board therefore agreed a number of recommendations to Cabinet and partners that will address this problem and some of the underlying causes:

- 1) A forum for the 4 major RSLs, Maninplace and similar providers, should be urgently established by the Council to oversee and co-ordinate demand and housing supply issues. The forum should ensure that the Council, RSLs and organisations such as Maninplace are communicating effectively to ensure the Council can discharge its statutory homelessness duty effectively and that local people in the most need are housed in the Borough. This will also be an opportunity to clarify roles and responsibilities of the different organisations to ensure that tenants / prospective tenants are able to register and that their progress through the system is monitored.
- 2) That the Council brokers discussions with the RSLs and Maninplace regarding the management of hard to let properties. This should include the option for the RSLs to lease hard to let properties to Maninplace who would manage this on a long term basis. The discussions about the working relationship between Maninplace and the RSLs should also consider extending the floating support provided through the Thrive Partnership to vulnerable tenants with the RLS.
- 3) The Council works with partner organisations to identify other suitable accommodation that can be let to and managed by Maninplace to extend the provision of accommodation to vulnerable people in the Borough.
- 4) That in line with co-operative values, the Council works with relevant organisations to ensure that local people have the skills to access online services to register their housing need and bid for properties. The Board recommends that information is easily available to the public on the Council's website and other channels that set out where there is:
 - unsupported on line access (including opening times)
 - supported on line access where staff / volunteers can support someone to complete the on line registration for housing (including opening times)
 - access to training to enable people to register and bid independently. (it was suggested that this could be linked to the ASL funding that the Council currently disperses)

The list of potential services and partner organisations identified were:

- Wrekin Housing Trust
- Sanctuary Housing
- Bournville Village Trust
- Bromford Housing
- First Point
- Libraries
- Community Centres

- Job Junctions
 - TCAT
 - CAB
 - Donnington Life Long Learning Centre
 - Maninplace
 - The Salvation Army KiP Project
-
- 5) Where online services can be currently accessed through mobile devices this should be publicised to tenants / prospective tenants. The Local Authority and Registered Housing Associations should work together to ensure where possible all services should be easily accessible via mobile devices.
 - 6) That systems are in place to ensure that anyone in housing need is not deterred from registering and finding accommodation due to difficulty in providing the information required by the online registration systems.
 - 7) That the capacity of the Homelessness Service is monitored to ensure that the response rate for calls improves without resulting in resources being diverted from other homelessness services.
 - 8) That the Council negotiates access to the Homes Direct and the Wrekin Housing Trust system so that proxy bids can be made on behalf of people who are statutorily homeless or in unsuitable accommodation.
 - 9) The Council should consider extending the existing Bond Scheme to cover the initial cost of up to £70 made by private sector landlords. This facility should be available to individuals at short notice working through a third party who would otherwise be unable to find accommodation.

TELFORD & WREKIN COUNCIL**CABINET - 19TH MARCH 2015****RESPONSE TO SCRUTINY MANAGEMENT BOARD REPORT: ACCESS TO AFFORDABLE HOUSING****REPORT OF ASSISTANT DIRECTORS: FAMILY, COHESION & COMMISSIONING AND DEVELOPMENT, BUSINESS AND EMPLOYMENT****LEAD CABINET MEMBER: CLLR CHARLES SMITH****PART A – SUMMARY REPORT****1 SUMMARY OF MAIN PROPOSALS**

This report provides a response to a series of recommendations made by the Scrutiny Management Board in relation to dealing with homeless issues within the Borough. In summary, eight of the nine recommendations have been wholly accepted with one recommendation rejected for the reasons set out in Appendix 1 of this report.

2 RECOMMENDATIONS

That Cabinet note the recommendations made by the Scrutiny Management Board and the responses included at Appendix 1 of this report.

3 SUMMARY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

COMMUNITY IMPACT	Do these proposals contribute to specific Priority Plan objective(s)?	
	Yes	Proposals within this report directly contribute towards the Council priority of regenerating those neighbourhoods in need and working to ensure that local people have access to suitable housing.
	Will the proposals impact on specific groups of people?	
	Yes	Residents in the borough in need of housing options advice and information and communities affected by homeless issues.
TARGET COMPLETION/ DELIVERY DATE	Initiatives will commence immediately following and subject to Cabinet Approval.	
FINANCIAL/ VALUE FOR MONEY IMPACT	Yes	<p>The responses to the Board's recommendations which are detailed in Appendix 1, if accepted in 8 of the 9 cases will not have an impact on the current budget strategy. The resources within the 2014/15 budget and ongoing take account of the proposals which are accepted and therefore these actions can be met from within existing resources.</p> <p>The current service is dependant on an additional temporary member of staff funded from one off funding, a post recruited until around December 2016, therefore consideration needs to be given to the maintenance of existing service levels when this</p>

		funding is exhausted. RP-11.2.15
LEGAL ISSUES	Yes	<p>Homelessness legislation places a general duty on local authorities to ensure that advice and information about homelessness, and preventing homelessness, is available to everyone in their district free of charge. The legislation also requires authorities to assist individuals and families who are homeless or threatened with homelessness and apply for help.</p> <p>In 2002 amendments to the homelessness legislation through the Homelessness Act 2002 and the Homelessness (Priority Need for Accommodation) (England) Order 2002 strengthened the assistance available to people who are homeless or threatened with homelessness by extending the priority need categories. The legislation also imposed an obligation upon local authorities to carry out Homelessness Reviews and thereafter develop strategies to prevent homelessness from occurring emphasising the need for joint working between local housing authorities, social services and other statutory, voluntary and private sector partners in tackling homelessness more effectively.</p> <p>The current collection of homelessness legislation places duties on the local authority, and gives it the necessary powers, to meet the aims outlined in the recommendations of the Scrutiny Management Board. PM – 10/02/2015</p>
OTHER IMPACTS, RISKS & OPPORTUNITIES	Yes	Up to July 2014 the Choose Your Home Scheme offered limited affordable accommodation and created an unrealistic waiting list. The new Telford Housing Options Tool enables residents to assess their own housing needs and offers suitable and affordable accommodation based on their needs.
IMPACT ON SPECIFIC WARDS	Yes	Borough wide impact, with a process that now offers a more positive choice for people to live.

4.0 INFORMATION

4.1 **Background**

Scrutiny has been involved in the issue of housing and homelessness for a number of years. In 2010 the Scrutiny Review on Housing and Homelessness made a number of recommendations and subsequently the Scrutiny Management Board considered the draft homelessness strategy in November 2013. More recently the Management Board received an update report on the implementation of Telford Housing Options and held a discussion with the four Registered Social Landlords about access to affordable housing. The Chair of the Scrutiny Management Board then met with representatives of two local voluntary organisations that support vulnerable homeless people. The scrutiny recommendations respond to the issues raised at these meetings.

4.2 **Response to Recommendations of the Scrutiny Report**

Members of the Scrutiny Committee agreed a number of recommendations which are summarised in Appendix 1. The majority of recommendations have

been or are in the process of implementation. Considerable progress has been made over the past three months to assist homeless people within the Borough.

Since April 2014 we have advised 278 clients, out of these we received 134 homeless applications, 158 homeless presentations were prevented from becoming homeless through advice or financial assistance through Discretionary Housing Payments or through DCLG Prevention Funding. Out of the 134 homeless applications 34 were withdrawn through various reasons from the client, 6 were found to be intentionally homeless, 2 were not found to be in priority need, 4 were not found to be eligible for housing and 18 were found not to be homeless. 62 of these were of priority need and a duty was accepted where support was provided to these clients to assist them to find further accommodation.

Based on an appraisal of statutory homeless clients and the available housing stock held by registered providers, we are aware that over half would be unable to find suitable accommodation that met their needs. This is mainly due to the number of bedrooms funded under Housing Benefit Regulations. Some clients will struggle to meet eligibility criteria put in place by the registered providers, particularly regards accumulated debt and past anti social behaviour. The Allocation Policy will start to address some issues regards eligibility by setting out clear criteria for the allocation of social housing as well as nomination rights for homeless clients.

Up to July 2014 the Choose Your Home Scheme offered limited affordable accommodation and created an unrealistic waiting list with over 16,000 clients. The new Telford Housing Options Tool enables residents to assess their own housing needs and signposts clients to more appropriate and affordable accommodation. Since the launch of the on line Telford Housing Options Tool over 2,200 clients have accessed the housing options tool, out of which over 1,400 were needing homeless advice and information.

With considerable positive action completed and underway, the Scrutiny Committee recommendations provide some valuable new ideas and advice on which to develop the service further. Each of the recommendations made has been responded to in detail in Appendix 1.

5. PREVIOUS MINUTES

Cabinet Report, Homelessness Strategy November 2013.

Cabinet Report, A new approach to Choice Based Housing Options 12th June 2014

Cabinet Report, Approval of the Homelessness Strategy 13th November 2014.

6. BACKGROUND PAPERS

Scrutiny Report

Report prepared by Toni Kever, Home Improvement Team Leader, 01952 381860 and Jas Bedesha, Service Delivery Manager- Cohesion, 01952 382101.

Appendix 1

Cabinet Response to Scrutiny Report

Scrutiny Committee: Scrutiny Management Board		Cabinet Member: Cllr. Charles Smith	
Report:		Response prepared by: Toni Keever (Telford HomeFinder Team Leader)	
Lead Scrutiny Member: Cllr. Derek White Lead Scrutiny Officer: Fiona Bottrill		Date of Cabinet meeting: 19 March 2015	
Scrutiny Recommendation	Response and summary of action being taken to implement, or reason for rejection	Date by which action will be taken	Person responsible for action (name and title)
1) A forum for the 4 major RSLs, Maninplace and the Council should be urgently established to oversee and co-ordinate demand and housing supply issues. The forum should ensure that the Council, RSLs and Maninplace are communicating effectively to ensure the Council can discharge its statutory homelessness duty effectively and that local people in the most need are housed in the Borough. This will also be an opportunity to clarify roles and responsibilities of the different organisations to ensure that tenants / prospective tenants are able to register and that their progress through the system is monitored.	Wholly Accepted – A forum called the Homelessness Partnership with RSL’s, Maninplace, KIP and a cross section of council services is in place to discuss in detail the issues raised. It has been agreed that at the next meeting some time will be spent understanding where referrals are arising and what pathways we should have in place. In addition to this, work is underway through the Homelessness Partnership to mitigate the risks of sustaining a tenancy and ensure appropriate accommodation is sourced.	February 2015 and ongoing	Jas Bedesha – Service Delivery Manager Family & Cohesion
2) That the Council brokers discussions with the RSLs and Maninplace regarding the management of hard to let properties. This should include the option for the RSLs to lease hard to let properties to Maninplace who would manage this on a long term basis. The discussions about the working relationship between Maninplace and the RSLs should also consider extending the floating support provided through the Thrive Partnership to vulnerable tenants with the RLS.	Wholly Accepted – Discussions will be held at the Homelessness Partnership Meeting to determine any hard to let properties that may be acceptable for Maninplace. Links have also been made with Thrive to provide floating support to vulnerable tenants. The Council, working with Maninplace and Stay, are looking to develop a pooled approach to property management allowing each organisation to accommodate homelessness tenants in properties owned by partner organisation to alleviate pressures and reduce voids.	February 2015 and ongoing	Jas Bedesha Service Delivery Manager Family & Cohesion.
3) The Council works with partner organisations to identify other suitable accommodation that can be let to and managed by Maninplace to extend the provision of accommodation to vulnerable people in the Borough.	Wholly Accepted – Discussions will be held with accredited private landlords to determine any properties that could be leased to Maninplace.	July 2015	Toni Keever, Telford HomeFinder Team Leader.

<p>4) That in line with co-operative values, the Council works with relevant organisations to ensure that local people have the skills to access online services to register their housing need and bid for properties. The Board recommends that information is easily available to the public on the Council's website and other channels that set out where there is:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • unsupported online access (including opening times) • supported on line access where staff / volunteers can support someone to complete the on line registration for housing (including opening times) • access to training to enable people to register and bid independently. (it was suggested that this could be linked to the ASL funding that the Council currently disperses) 	<p>Wholly Accepted – We will work with the Corporate Communications Team to develop an Awareness Raising Campaign about access to Homelessness Advice and promote links to unsupported online access and to Southwater One Housing Options Officer to enable supported on line access. Presentations are also being carried out to voluntary organisations, internal services and partner agencies to inform key workers on the new housing process and the assistance available.</p>	<p>April 2015</p>	<p>Jas Bedesha Service Delivery Manager Family & Cohesion.</p>
<p>5) Where online services can be currently accessed through mobile devices this should be publicised to tenants / prospective tenants. The Local Authority and Registered Housing Associations should work together to ensure where possible all services should be easily accessible via mobile devices.</p>	<p>Wholly Accepted - All the websites through Telford & Wrekin Council are accessible through mobile devices, this includes: www.telfordhousingoptions.co.uk and www.telfordhomefinder.co.uk . Homes Direct and the Wrekin Housing Trust websites are also accessible via mobile devices</p>	<p>February 2015</p>	<p>Toni Keever, Telford HomeFinder Team Leader.</p>
<p>6) That systems are in place to ensure that anyone in housing need is not deterred from registering and finding accommodation due to difficulty in providing the information required by the online registration systems.</p>	<p>Wholly Accepted - Application forms on websites hosted by Wrekin Housing Trust and Homes Direct only ask for information relevant to the person and will not ask for information that clients cannot find. Homes Direct has a helpline number if a client needs assistance and the Wrekin Housing Trust has several shops located across the Borough</p>	<p>February 2015</p>	<p>Jas Bedesha Service Delivery Manager Family & Cohesion.</p>
<p>7) That the capacity of the Homelessness Service is monitored to ensure that the response rate for calls improves without resulting in resources being diverted from other homelessness services.</p>	<p>Wholly Accepted – A task and finish group has been in place which has monitored the call response rate over the last 3 months. This identified that the main reason for poor call statistics was a combination of poor use of the call centre telephone system and a lack of an appropriate message for members of the public calling in. As a result of changing the message and a new staffing rota to answer the calls the number of unanswered calls, abandoned calls and length of waiting has reduced considerably.</p>	<p>Feb 2015</p>	<p>Jas Bedesha Service Delivery Manager Family & Cohesion.</p>

<p>8) That the Council negotiates access to the Homes Direct and the Wrekin Housing Trust system so that proxy bids can be made on behalf of people who are statutorily homeless or in unsuitable accommodation.</p>	<p>Wholly Accepted – We have already negotiated access to the Homes Direct system to enable housing officers to actively ensure that homeless clients are registered and bidding. Training is being carried out on the system throughout February</p>	<p>March 2015</p>	<p>Toni Keever, Telford HomeFinder Team Leader</p>
<p>9) The Council should consider extending the existing Bond Scheme to cover the initial cost of up to £70 made by private sector landlords. This facility should be available to individuals at short notice who would otherwise be unable to find accommodation.</p>	<p>Rejected – The Bond scheme is in place to provide a security paper deposit for landlords to take vulnerable tenants. The Discretionary Housing Benefit now provides deposits for vulnerable clients which is a preferred option to landlords and tenants. This deposit is refundable to the client as long as there are no rent arrears or damage to the property which allows the client to move to another property with a deposit. The £70 fee would be for letting agency administration fees which are non refundable and cannot be covered by public funds and if the client is already known to council services as being vulnerable and would potentially fail any credit checks, we would look to support them through the Bond scheme.</p>		

Co-operative & Communities Scrutiny Committee Report

Review of support for people having their benefit sanctioned

March 2015

Contents

1. Introduction
2. Summary of the review
3. Summary of the issues raised by CAB and responses of Jobcentre Plus and the Council
4. Conclusions and recommendations
5. Acknowledgements

1. Introduction

The Co-operative & Communities Scrutiny Committee has taken a lead role in scrutiny of the welfare benefits reforms and their impact. Over a period of time the committee became increasingly aware of issues relating to the impact of benefit sanctions:

- a) The Crisis Network Co-ordinator brought to the Chair's attention that fact that the Telford Citizens' Advice Bureau (CAB) were seeing an increasing number of people looking for help because of benefit sanctions and, of particular concern, an increase in the number of adults with learning disabilities having their benefit sanctioned because of failures of communication or lack of support.
- b) In May 2014, members heard from Council officers that the CAB had reported the number one reason for people seeking help was benefit sanctions. They were also seeing an increase in the length of sanction from 4 weeks to 3 months, hearing that from the customers' point of view the reasons for the sanctions appeared unfair and that 70% of cases had reconsiderations/appeals outstanding.
- c) Nationally, benefit sanctions had received significant media attention and in September 2013 the government announced the appointment of Matthew Oakley to lead an independent review of the operation of Jobseeker's Allowances sanctions.

The committee agreed this was a matter of concern and decided to carry out a review to explore the issues in more detail.

2. Summary of the review

The objectives of the review were:

- to establish the extent, nature and impact of benefit sanctions in Telford and Wrekin;
- to explore how partners are working together to support people who have had their benefit sanctioned and to help prevent initial or repeat sanctions; and
- to make recommendations to the relevant organisations aimed at addressing issues identified.

The review had three key stages:

1) Understanding the national context

To understand the national context members turned to the key documents related to the independent review of the operation of JSA sanctions led by Matthew Oakley.

a) **Response to the call for information for the Independent Review of Jobseeker's Allowance Sanctions** (Citizens' Advice, January 2014)

The submission sets out evidence of communication failures seen by the CAB in three core areas which had led to the inappropriate application of sanctions. The report makes a series of recommendations aimed at remedying the failures identified, and includes a number of case studies which highlight the impact of communication failures on individuals.

Examples of communications failures seen by the CAB included:

- poor communication of the mandatory nature of activities and the consequences of non-attendance / non-compliance with activities (use of jargon, language unclear, poor timing of letters, reliance on letters, lack of reminders or other methods of communication such as text)
- notifications incorrectly addressed or with incorrect details of the appointment such as wrong date, time or location
- claimants unaware that they needed to look for work, sign-on or go to appointments at JCP at the same time as attending the back to work scheme
- lack of understanding about requirements and implications of notifying absence
- poor communication of the reasons for a sanction
- sanctions applied before notices are received
- inadvertent termination of other non-sanctioned benefits
- lack of information about other financial support available
- failure to flag up the reconsideration and appeals processes

It is suggested that the submission is read in conjunction with this scrutiny report as background information and in particular the case studies which illustrate the types of failures of communication and their impact on people. The report can be found at: http://www.citizensadvice.org.uk/index/policy/policy_publications/er_benefitsandtaxcredits/cr_benefitsandtaxcredits/review_jsa.htm

b) Independent review of the operation of Jobseeker's Allowance sanctions validated by the Jobseekers Act 2013 (Matthew Oakley, July 2014)

The report reflects previous reviews which established the importance of effective communication around the sanction system - good communication helps prevent compliance failures and sanctions - and acknowledges the steps taken by DWP to address issues raised in previous reports to improve clarity for claimants. The review found that the system is not fundamentally "broken" but that there are key problems around clients' understanding of the sanction system and in particular **for more vulnerable groups and claimants with specific barriers to work.**

The review outlines 17 recommendations for improving communication surrounding the benefit sanctions system to ensure claimants are more fully aware of: the requirements being placed on them when they are referred to a mandatory back to work scheme; the processes surrounding the system of sanctions, reconsiderations and appeals while they are on that scheme; and how they can claim hardship payments where appropriate. The review also states "the scale of the challenge the Department faces in ensuring full claimant understanding should not be underestimated. That means that these reforms are unlikely to prove to be a silver bullet and that this Review should not be seen as the final word on this subject." The report of the review can be found at: https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/335144/jsa-sanctions-independent-review.pdf

c) Government's response to the Independent review of the operation of Jobseeker's Allowance sanctions validated by the Jobseekers Act 2013 (July 2014)

This sets out the background and context for the independent inquiry and the government's response to the review's recommendations. Section 1 sets out the government's position and key information about sanctions:

- In return for benefit payments claimants must meet specific mandatory requirements set by their adviser that are designed to help them into work. If they do not – and they do not have a good reason for doing so – their benefit payments will be 'sanctioned' i.e. stopped completely or reduced for a period of time.
- The Government strongly believes that this system is right and that sanctions are an essential part of JSA (and have been since the introduction of the benefit in 1996). Sanctions aim to motivate claimants to take the necessary action to find work, and to ensure the system is fair to the taxpayer.
- From the end of October 2012 a new structure for sanctions was introduced. The new system aims to provide a better incentive for claimants to comply by providing clearer and tougher consequences (in particular for claimants who repeatedly fail to meet their responsibilities, and for the most important requirements such as failing to accept a suitable job offer).
- Since early 2010, the volume of sanctions has been increasing, as have sanctions as a proportion of the JSA caseload. It remains the case, however, that the vast majority of JSA claimants do not receive a sanction (in 2013, on average, five per cent of JSA claims resulted in a sanction in any month). It is clear that the increases have been driven by a rise in sanctions on claimants who have failed to take all reasonable steps to find work and those who have failed to participate in the Work Programme – claimants who largely require more support and encouragement to move into work.
- A range of safeguards are in place to help ensure that sanctions are only applied where appropriate.
- Claimants may apply for hardship payments if they are facing hardship as a consequence of a sanction.
- The Government believes the vast majority of JSA sanction decisions are correct and have followed a process that reflects these safeguards. In 2013 our decision makers considered nearly two million cases, out of which they imposed 871,000 sanctions or disentitlements. Only around 13 per cent of the decisions were changed on reconsideration or appeal, and often that was because the claimant brought forward new evidence.
- The Government is committed to continually improving this system, in particular to ensure safeguards are applied as intended.

All 17 of the Oakley recommendations are “accepted”, or “accepted and already underway” or “accepted in principle”. This report does not intend to duplicate the information here but it is recommended that the response is read in conjunction with this report as key background information. The response can be found at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/jobseekers-allowance-sanctions-independent-review-government-response>

2) Understanding the local picture and issues

Members met officers from the CAB to explore the scale and nature of the issue as seen locally by Telford CAB, the action being taken by partners to address issues and to seek their views on what more could be done. A summary of the issues discussed is included in the next section of this report.

Members also downloaded statistics from the DWP website on the number of Jobseekers' Allowance Sanction decisions for claimants signing on in the Telford, Madeley, Wellington (and for comparison Shrewsbury) Jobcentres from October 2012 – March 2014 which is attached as Appendix 1.

3) Hearing the views of other key agencies

Once the committee had established key local issues with CAB, members met the Partnership Manager from DWP Jobcentre Plus to discuss the issues raised and then Council officers to hear the Council's point of view. A summary of the issues discussed with Jobcentre Plus and the Council is included in the next section of this report.

4. Summary of issues raised by the CAB and the responses of Jobcentre Plus and the Council

Issues raised by the CAB	Jobcentre Plus response	Comments from Local Authority
<p>The benefit sanction and appeals process (issues that are being addressed nationally through DWPs response to the Oakley review recommendations are marked in brackets):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clients are presenting because of benefit sanctions applied inappropriately for the type of reasons highlighted in the national CAB submission to the Oakley Inquiry and in the Oakley Report. (Oakley recommendations 1-17) • Clients not aware that their benefit had been sanctioned until they were refused funds by their bank. (Oakley recommendations 1,2,4,5,7,17) • Adults with learning disabilities or people with literacy issues had their benefit sanctioned because they could not read or understand the implication of letters sent by Jobcentre Plus. (Oakley recommendations 5,6) • No time limit on length of sanction – sanctions normally last for a fixed period of 4, 13, 26, or 156 weeks. The length of sanction depends on the type of non-compliance. • The Mandatory Reconsideration process and Mandatory Decision Makers for appeals mean clients cannot contact decision makers directly and the CAB cannot advocate on the client's behalf with a decision maker. 	<p>General points and background information:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The CAB leaflet about benefit sanctions should be cross-referenced with DWP's How to Keep Your Benefit Payment. • Decisions about sanctions are not made by local Jobcentre advisors. The central team in Telford do an initial interview but information is sent to remote decision makers who contact the claimant to notify them when a sanction has been applied. The decision is communicated in a letter or by telephone. The decision is flagged up on the computer system so staff in Jobcentre offices know a sanction has been applied and they may make sure the claimant is aware of the decision at their next interview depending on the circumstances and individual, but DWP policy is not to break "bad news" face-to-face for staff safety reasons. The proper process is that decisions are made and communicated remotely. Decisions are communicated and it should not be a surprise to the claimant but some people may not open a letter and that is why JCP want to bring in the Local Support Services Framework (LSSF). The LSSF is being piloted in advance of the introduction of Universal Credit to help people who may not otherwise be able to engage with Universal Credit. It would be good to start a LSSF pilot 	<p>It was recognised that sanctions have been part of the benefits system for many years but the use of sanctions has increased at a time when the responsibility for crisis assistance transferred from the Department for Work and Pensions to the Local Authority.</p> <p>The local authority recognised the issues identified the Oakley Review. It was reported that the benefits team deal with people on a daily basis who have had their benefits sanctioned and have no money.</p> <p>It was also recognised that there is no flexibility within the DWP guidance to allow local discretion with regard to JSA sanctions.</p> <p>Council officers had seen cases where, from the information received, it seemed that the person had tried hard to do everything that is required but received a sanction. E.g. a client had an interview for a job that he had secured outside the JCP process. This coincided with a JCP appointment and the client was sanctioned. The client can appeal but this takes a long time and the decision maker is not local.</p> <p>Every time there is a change in circumstance e.g.</p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mandatory decision / Appeals process is slow and there is no time limit - sometimes the sanction ends before the appeal decision is made. (Oakley recommendation 16) • Claimant Commitment documentation is very long and advisors do not seem to spend enough time explaining it to clients so that they understand the implications of what they are signing or negotiate adjustments. Clients do not have an advocate with them at the meeting unless CAB has identified this as an issue and a meeting can be arranged with JCP. (Oakley recommendation 8,9) 	<p>in Telford because it is about helping vulnerable people interact with Universal Credit but would also address issues with vulnerable people falling foul of sanctions. Partners in Telford and Wrekin work well together but they could be doing more and the LSSF could make a step change.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • People who have their benefit sanctioned are made aware of hardship payments – not everyone applies for a hardship payment when they have been notified about a sanction. Decisions are made out of the office so the next time someone comes in, the JCP member of staff will remind them. It is also important for partners to have information about hardship payments and this is communicated via the Crisis Network. The majority of people under sanction receive some form of hardship payment – typically around 60% of their JSA personal allowance, or perhaps more if there are children involved – but not if benefit has been disallowed. (The hardship payments are administered by JCP and are separate from DHP and Crisis Assistance administered by the LA.) <p>Claimant Commitment - what systems are in place to ensure that clients are signing with informed consent?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • JCP has started training work programme providers on the Claimant Commitment (CC). Training more support workers would help them to understand how the CC works so 	<p>if a partner moves in or starts work the client has to re-apply for housing benefit and this results in a gap which causes problems.</p> <p>When a person has their benefits stopped this can cause on-going financial problems as the benefit when it is restarted is not backdated.</p> <p>The Council has worked with the Crisis Network to produce a leaflet that the JCP will use to provide information about local services available to some one who has been sanctioned.</p> <p>There is an opportunity for the JCP to have staff based at First Point In Southwater. However it was recognised that if the JCP staff worked to the same process the change in location would not make any difference to the outcomes for the client. If JCP staff are to be based at First Point they would have to offer a different service.</p> <p>Funding a JCP post at First Point would have budget implications.</p> <p>The Scrutiny Review in Wolverhampton has identified the work of the City Council’s Welfare Right Team is working with the University and the CAB to enable law students to defend claimants entitlements and maximise entitlement.</p> <p>The work of the Council’s Job Box and Job</p>
---	---	---

	<p>they can advocate for the claimant. We need to look at a local system with partners - including housing officers and RSLs – so that they understand the mechanics of the CC and how it is built up by the customer. This can be taken forward. JCP has resources for training and can offer it to partners tailored to the audience.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• When a customer first signs-on, a basic Claimant Commitment is agreed but a more detailed Claimant Commitment is worked out 2-4 weeks later. If the person is an adult with a learning disability they are seen by one of the Disability Employment Advisors (DEA) who are adept at helping people with disabilities, but not all vulnerable people present with problems (e.g. Aspergers or Autism) and they can be difficult to identify. For this reason vulnerable people who do not present with problems such as mental health issues may not get the support they need. JCP advisors are getting better at identifying vulnerable people. Autism training has been done in Shropshire and is planned for Telford to help staff know what to look out for. Further training will help them recognise people who may be vulnerable so they can be offered help. People with Autism can be very honest which can work against them – for example if the advisor asks what they have done to look for work they say “nothing” when they have done things but need a	<p>Junction scheme to get people into long term employment is part of the solution so that people are not relying on the benefit system.</p>
--	--	--

	<p>prompt and they don't realise the significance of what they are saying.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More training could be done with support workers so they start to understand the whole Claimant Commitment process. For example, a homeless person may have an easement in what they can do in looking for work during the initial period when the priority is finding somewhere to live. The Claimant Commitment will set out what they will do to look for work. The form is quite long with a lot of drop downs but is used to evidence what the claimant is doing to look for work. • When a person signs-on they would not routinely be informed that they can bring someone to the meeting with them. Some come along with the support worker - the Troubled Families Support Advisor – so it happens but is not a matter of routine for everyone. 	
<p>A benefit sanction can lead to a spiral of debt with all the attendant consequences for the individual, their family and can put additional pressure on public services and the public purse. Some specific examples seen by CAB:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mental and physical health issues – puts pressure on NHS or social services • Non-payment of priority bills (Council Tax, TV licences) had led to people being fined, or 		<p>When a client has been sanctioned council staff do not get involved if the individual appeals against a sanction but could make a referral to the Crisis Network or CAB. There are legal requirements regarding the benefits managed by the Council but within these requirement the Benefits Manager has some discretions.</p>

<p>court action or bailiffs (the rate of TV licence evasion is high in Telford)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mobile phones seen as essential by the client and are prioritised over buying food – Food Banks provide a vital service. 		
<p>Some vulnerable clients have repeat sanctions. The Preventative Advice Officer does a lot of preventative work (Autism Hub, financial capability, money buddies etc.) but they cannot do everything. (It was noted there had been a 13.9% decrease in the number of sanction decisions in Telford from January 2013- January 2014 which could be attributed to both the Preventative Advice Officer project and the CAB own campaign to deliver preventative advice/ messages re sanctioning at our main location and within our outreaches.)</p>	<p>How do JCP staff currently work with other organisations to ensure that vulnerable people have the support they need so that they are not inappropriately sanctioned? How can this work be improved? (See also section 1)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • JCP is involved in the Autism Hub once a month which is good but people need a better understanding of different vulnerabilities. • DWP has a Vulnerability Hub which defines vulnerable people as those with “complex needs or requiring additional support to access services” and sets out a list of vulnerabilities. The list is very long and wide e.g. divorce, leaving hospital, people who self-harmer, people in rural isolation, ex-forces, young, old, alcohol misuse etc. Approx 20% of JSA claimants fall into a vulnerable category which equates to around 400 people in Telford and Wrekin. 20% is a national figure identified for people who it is estimated will not be able to interact with Universal Credit without support. • The questions JCP advisors should be asking 	<p>The Council can identify some people who currently receive local authority services who would require support adults with learning disabilities who are supported by the Council who are job seekers. However, there is still an issue regarding vulnerable people who are not currently receiving support and trying to find work. It was recognised that people who do not have a registered disability e.g. dyslexia may also need support. Working with Adult Care Assessment Teams and Local Advocacy Services could help ensure that people understand the requirement of the benefits system may be a way to ensure that more vulnerable people get the support they need.</p>

	<p>at first interview stage are - does this person need extra support to communicate with DWP, does the person have other conditions that may not be obvious such as mental health issues? The Vulnerability Hub helps staff to identify vulnerabilities and we need to keep reminding them it is there and to keep using it – there is a link with DWP’s social justice strategy. The focus for JCP is getting people back to work and off benefits and that is the pressure that staff are under, but this needs to be kept on the agenda locally. Locally JCP can do this internally but also through the Crisis Network by working with partners so they can help people to self-identify as vulnerable. For example partners on the Crisis Network who identify a vulnerable person who has had their benefit sanctioned should always advise them to ask for a reconsideration and to apply for a hardship award and to support them in doing it. People with Aspergers or Autism are totally honest and maybe at risk of repeat sanctions if they are not identified and supported.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• JCP staff need to know where to refer a person to for help. The Partnerships Manager is on the LEP Social Inclusion Group which is looking at helping people who are marginalised and supporting them into work, using European Social Fund which will start to flow from March 2015. Currently JCP has	
--	--	--

	<p>access to an intranet site which has contact details for local support organisations that they can refer people to. The site has been put together locally with partners and is updated centrally in Staffordshire and everyone has access. However, the list is not fully comprehensive and more information is needed about organisations such as the housing associations – for example WHT has a support worker on the Financial Inclusion team. It would be useful to have a list of the support workers in social housing and a list of the addresses that they cover. Bromford Housing has an Opportunities Team which includes skills coaches to support people into work and it would be useful to know which addresses they cover so JCP advisors can match people with the help available.</p> <p>The first question that should be asked is “does this person need support?” and this needs to be built into the process as a trigger for referrals and support. At the moment there are no formal referrals to the Crisis Network – clients are referred for Crisis Assistance and they access the Network through that. It is not in JC+ interest to sanction or have repeat sanctions – it means staff are spending time on this when they could be spending time helping people into work.</p>	
Clients under sanction have had their Housing	How does JC+ communicate the sanction to Local	The Local Authority had received notification of a

<p>Benefit and Council Tax Support suspended or stopped. (Oakley recommendation 4)</p>	<p>Authority? How can communication be improved to ensure that people do not have their Housing Benefit or Council Tax Support stopped inappropriately?</p> <p>JCP notifies the LA if a benefit is sanctioned or disallowed. Benefit is disallowed if the person has been found to have no entitlement. Sanctions are applied when the person is eligible to claim benefit but they have failed to comply with the requirements. If benefit has been disallowed, Housing Benefit will be stopped. If benefit is sanctioned the LA is notified but Housing Benefit should not be stopped.</p>	<p>change in the process through which Council's will be informed that a sanction had been applied. Under the new system the Housing Benefit and Council Tax benefit will continue until the housing Benefit Team have contacted the person to assess what income they have.</p>
<p>Issue with the on-line system for applying for Crisis Assistance and preference for on-line claims rather than telephone claims.</p>		<p>There will be many people who will need support when all benefit claims will be made on line.</p>
<p>Issues will only be addressed by all partners (LA, JCP, CAB etc.) working together in a genuine partnership to share best practice and give the client a good experience. The local Partnership Manager at Jobcentre Plus is willing to engage and has got involved but the culture and lack of capacity within JCP constrains integrated and sustained partnership working at an organisational level. There is an opportunity for Telford and Wrekin to champion positive implementation of the welfare benefit reforms by developing stronger partnership working with Jobcentre Plus.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The lack of capacity and prioritisation of partnership working at JCP would need to be 	<p>Is there scope for JCP to increase capacity for partnership working?</p> <p>The Partnerships Manager covers Shropshire and Telford and Wrekin. Issues concerning JC+ capacity for partnership working would need to be raised internally with managers.</p> <p>JC+ is setting up the Youth Hub with TWC. The DWP secondment to TWC ended – this was to get around data protection to get informed consent from JSA claimants to share their details with TWC. This was a one-off and can't be done for everyone so it has stopped but they whole issue of data sharing is being looked at nationally as part of the LSSF and it would be good to get a</p>	<p>While it was recognised that partnership working can mitigate the effect of benefit sanctions and help ensure that people have the appropriate advice and support so they do not receive inappropriate sanctions the sanctions policy rests with the DWP and the implementation through the Job Centre Plus. A number of suggestions were made regarding the role of the Council:</p> <p>To reduce the number of sanctions - It was recognised that the role of the Council in reducing the number of people who are sanctioned is limited as this process is managed by the DWP. However the Council can ensure that council staff working with vulnerable people are able to</p>

<p>addressed at senior management level</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is room for more innovative ways of service delivery, for example a JCP advisor at First Point, ways to sustain JCP involvement in the Autism Hub. 	<p>pilot in Shropshire because that would help everybody. The local LSSF team are looking at this – currently there is a legal gateway to share information on people up to age 19 and they are looking at the gateway to share after then. There has never been a problem with getting informed consent in terms of people refusing.</p> <p>Would JCP consider an advisor at First Point? There were discussions about having a JC+ advisor at First Point in Southwater – this needs to be clarified.</p> <p>How can JCP support the Autism Hub? JCP is involved in the Autism Hub and an advisor attends monthly.</p>	<p>provide appropriate support regarding the claimants JSA commitments and also working with local advocacy organisations. It was discussed that it would be helpful to discuss the issues identified with a regional DWP representative to understand how the recommendations from the Oakley review are being implemented locally.</p> <p>To ensure people who have been sanctioned have access to the support they need to prevent a crisis situation developing. It was recognised that the Crisis Network is working well – but there will be people who are not aware of the support that is available.</p> <p>Working with other local authorities to share good practice and raise the profile of the issues resulting from benefit sanctions. It was discussed that this work could be taken forward jointly with Scrutiny in Wolverhampton.</p>
<p>Other issues raised:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No local contact for the CAB to the local JCP offices – they have to go through the Call Centre and advisors do not have detailed information about individual circumstances • Job Junctions and Job Box Mentors doing a good job and all agencies need to be aware of them to refer clients in. 	<p>Working with Job Junctions and Job Box Mentors – can a local system be implemented to refer clients directly rather than sign-posting? Job Junctions and Job Box Mentors are promoted by JCP and there has been some talk of JCP advisors attending the Job Junctions. It was noted that CYP Members visiting Job Junctions had met several people who had been referred by JCP.</p>	

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Issues with zero hours contracts. Most agencies employers now offer zero hours contracts which do not specify the number of hours the employee will work. Zero hours contracts have an impact on job seekers if a client is offered a zero hours contract, they may refuse the offer as they are only paid for the time worked and work is not guaranteed. If the client refuses the offer they may be sanctioned. • More funding is needed to support vulnerable groups. The CAB estimate that for every vulnerable person who comes forward for help there are another 2-3 who are hidden (slip through the net) but they have insufficient resources to provide a home service or targeted support to reach these people. • The Food Banks provide an excellent and essential service and must continue to be supported. 	<p>Zero hours contracts Clients are only sanctioned for refusing employment if JCP has referred the client to the job. They would not be sanctioned for turning down a zero hours contract.</p> <p>Funding to support vulnerable groups ESF funding for social inclusion is with the LEP and the call for projects will start in January 2015. Money can be doubled by match funding. The funding will be allocated to projects which remove the barriers to work and move people closer to work.</p> <p>Funding to support Food Banks JCP has some funding for unique projects to help people into work. It could not be used to fund the Food Banks directly but could for example fund the creation of employment opportunities around the food banks such as warehousing.</p> <p>Local Support Services Framework (LSSF) The Partnerships Manager proposed the LSSF and the LSSF Triage system would be a way forward to address issues. These are local authority led support frameworks which are agreed by local partners to prepare for Universal Credit by putting support in place to help people navigate through Universal Credit. Universal Credit is digital by default and is a totally different way of working. Individuals or families will have a UC account which will have everything on it relating to benefit</p>	
---	--	--

payments including appointments, so people will need to access it every day or very regularly.

Under the LSSF there would be a **Triage** system - "Triage is the process to assess customer needs at the initial point of contact and to identify customers requiring additional support at the earliest point in the customer journey. For some this will simply be direction to the nearest digital access point, whereas for others it will be the start of one to one support and signposting to appropriate help."

Triage is where we need to get to - it would be a solution to the issues raised about early identification of need and putting support in at the early stages. This is about preparing for UC but would also address the issues identified in relation to sanctions. It would bring services together as a comprehensive package to help people make a claim, be financially savvy, help with budgeting or debt advice, help into work and provide in-work support.

There is no funding available via DWP for LSSF until UC goes live (although DWP provided some funding to the early pilots). Locally funding could come from the ESF social inclusion funding via the LEP.

5. Conclusions and recommendations

Based on both the local and national evidence the Committee has concluded that there is a significant negative impact resulting from benefit sanctions that needs to be addressed. While many of these issues have also been identified in the Oakley Review and the Government has responded to these recommendations positively – the Committee seek assurance that these actions are being implemented locally. In particular Members were extremely concerned about the effect of the benefit sanction system on vulnerable people and the hardship that sanctions can cause for individuals and their families – which results in increased demand on other local council, health and voluntary services.

The Committee commend the work of the Benefits Team at the Council and recognise the essential service they provide to vulnerable people. The team and management have been instrumental in the effective design and implementation of the discretionary hardship fund and also the work with Just Credit to establish a loan scheme to reduce demands for pay day loans. The Committee would also like to thank the CAB for their contribution to this review.

Recommendations

1) That the Council holds discussions with the DWP at a regional level to:

a) Consider the option of joint working to reduce the negative impact of benefit sanctions including:

- The option of a JCP officer working at First Point in Southwater. It is recognised that for this post to have the desired outcomes the post holder must have flexibility and work to an agreed protocol between the Council and JCP.
- The need to consider the capacity of JCP managers to engage in meaningful partnership working to reduce the number and impact of benefit sanctions.
- Develop a pilot the Local Service Support Framework (LSSF) pilot in Telford and Wrekin which would introduce a triage system at interview stage so vulnerable people can be identified and support put in place. Consideration may be given to linking this pilot with the Family Connect service. The Council should consider applying to the Local Enterprise Inclusion Fund to support this work until DWP funding can be drawn down following the implementation of Universal Credit.

b) To provide a local response on the implementation of the Oakley recommendations to the Council specifically:

- What training has been provided to ensure that JCP staff are able to identify vulnerable people e.g. with learning difficulties and autism
- How has the JCP developed and maintained the intranet list of support organisations so that this provides a comprehensive list of local organisations to which individuals can be referred. This should include the ability for JCP advisors to

identify if a claimant is a RSL tenant and make an appropriate referral to the RSL for support or for other tenants to the Housing officer. It is recommended that this list of support organisations is shared with the Council and partner organisations to avoid duplication of effort in developing this database.

- Ensuring that JCP staff should routinely advise claimants with sanctions of hardship payments and there should be a robust referral system to the Crisis Network. This system needs should be more than sign posting a client to the relevant service or organisation in order to maximise uptake.
- 2) The Council ensures that all staff working with vulnerable adults are aware of the issues regarding benefit sanctions and that claimants will have commitment that they must meet in order to continue to receive JSA. Staff should support clients where appropriate to meet their claimant commitment and where a sanction has been applied ensure that they have access to relevant services and request 'reconsideration'
 - 3) That the Council continues to work with local voluntary and advocacy organisations to ensure that clients and service users are aware of requirement to meet their claimant commitment in order to continue to receive JSA and that when a sanction is applied the individual has support to request 'reconsideration'.
 - 4) That the work of this Scrutiny Review is shared with Scrutiny in other West Midlands Local Authorities to identify any common issues that can be taken forward at a regional or national level and that a copy of this review is send to the Communications Group established following the Oakley Review.
 - 5) That the Council has discussions with Wolverhampton Welfare Rights Team and the Wolverhampton University with a view to extending the support provided law students to defend claimants entitlements and maximise entitlement to the Telford and Wrekin area.

6. Acknowledgements

Members of the Co-operative & Communities Scrutiny Committee

Cllrs. Angela McClements (Chair), Stephen Bentley, Nigel Dugmore, Nathan England, Mike Ion, Jane Pinter, John Thompson, Karen Tomlinson and Co-optee John Ellis.

The committee would like to thank the following people for providing information and supporting this review:

Christine Jones, Advice Services Manager, Telford CAB

Majella O'Dwyer, Preventative Advice Officer, Telford CAB

Kairen Francis, Partnerships Manager, Jobcentre Plus

Phil Wright, Senior External Relations Manager, Staffordshire & Shropshire JobCentre Plus.

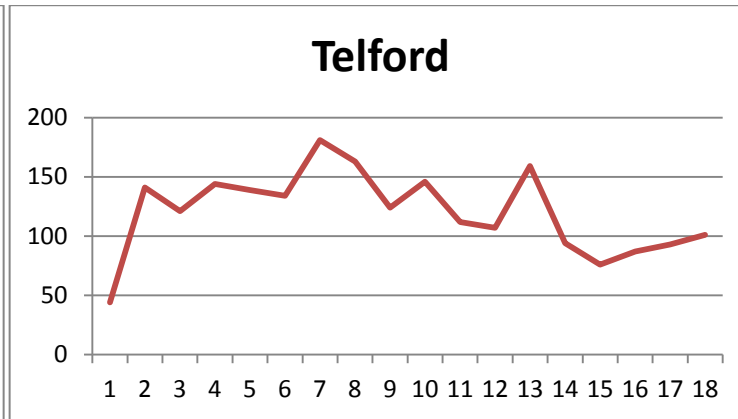
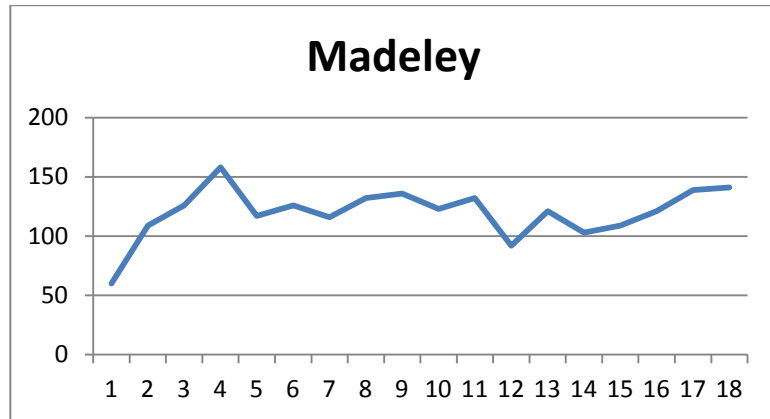
Angie Astley, Assistant Director Customer & People Services, Telford & Wrekin Council

Lee Higgins, Benefits Manager, Telford & Wrekin Council

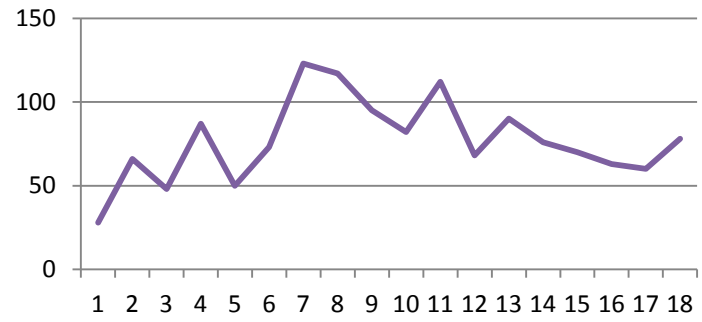
Appendix 1

Jobseekers Allowance Sanctions - Decision to apply a sanction or claim disallowed ('adverse') by Jobcentre Plus Office, District and Group and Month, 22nd October 2012 to 31st March 2014

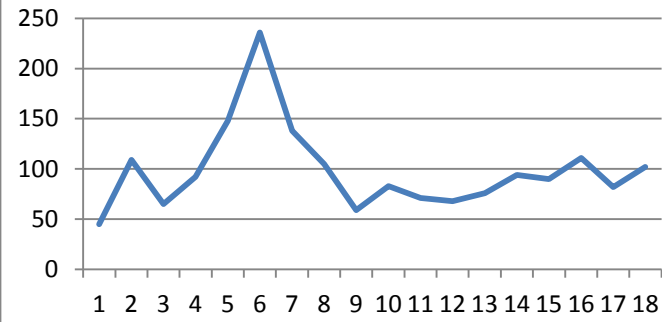
	Oct-12 ³	Nov-12	Dec-12	Jan-13	Feb-13	Mar-13	Apr-13	May-13	Jun-13	Jul-13	Aug-13	Sep-13	Oct-13	Nov-13	Dec-13	Jan-14	Feb-14	Mar-14	Total
	27,475	73,311	57,376	73,549	63,928	68,263	77,142	79,763	71,181	87,313	80,646	79,722	91,639	75,625	58,724	74,347	68,953	73,538	1,282,497
Telford - Telford House	44	141	121	144	139	134	181	163	124	146	112	107	159	94	76	87	93	101	2,165
Madeley - Church Street	60	109	126	158	117	126	116	132	136	123	132	92	121	103	109	121	139	141	2,169
Shrewsbury - Princess House	45	109	65	92	148	236	138	105	59	83	71	68	76	94	90	111	82	102	1,776
Telford - Wellington New Street	28	66	48	87	50	73	123	117	95	82	112	68	90	76	70	63	60	78	1,385



Wellington



Shrewsbury



TELFORD & WREKIN COUNCIL

CABINET - 19th MARCH 2015

CABINET RESPONSE TO SCRUTINY REPORT: REVIEW OF SUPPORT FOR PEOPLE HAVING THEIR BENEFIT SANCTIONED

REPORT OF ASSISTANT DIRECTOR NEIGHBOURHOOD & CUSTOMER SERVICES AND LEAD CABINET MEMBER CLLR HILDA RHODES

PART A) – SUMMARY REPORT

1. SUMMARY OF MAIN PROPOSALS

- 1.1 This report provides a response to a series of recommendations made by the Co-operative and Communities Scrutiny Committee in relation to their review into the impact on people of benefit sanctions and the support that is available.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 That Cabinet note the recommendations made by the Co-operative and Communities Scrutiny Committee along with the responses at Appendix A of this report.

3. SUMMARY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

COMMUNITY IMPACT	Do these proposals contribute to specific Priority Plan objective(s)?
	No
	Will the proposals impact on specific groups of people?
	Yes
The impact of the sanctions regime implemented by the DWP through Job Centres is having a Borough wide affect on many residents who are reliant on unemployment related benefits.	
TARGET COMPLETION/ DELIVERY DATE	The completion date for all the accepted recommendations in the report will largely depend on the roll-out of Universal Credit across the Borough and the outcomes of the “Universal Credit – Delivered Locally” pilots that are in operation across the Country.
FINANCIAL/ VALUE FOR MONEY IMPACT	Yes
The recommendations and responses made to the Scrutiny review of benefit sanctions mainly involve officer time and training which will be provided from within existing budgets. The financial impact of Universal Credit can not be quantified until further details are made available by DWP. MLB 25.02.15	

LEGAL ISSUES	Yes
<p>The new benefits regime in the form of Universal Credit is being introduced in phased stages through the Welfare Reform Act 2012 and associated legislation.</p> <p>Delivery is to be co-ordinated through the Department of Work and Pensions (DWP) however within the Pathfinder areas the DWP have recognised the need to work in partnership with local authorities.</p> <p>The DWP has developed the Local Support Services Framework which provides a structure for collaborating with local authorities to provide localised claimant support delivering services at a local level in a flexible and responsive way, making best use of existing local capacity, infrastructure, partners and supply chains.</p> <p>Collaborative working has been implemented with individual local authorities through Universal Credit Delivery Partnership Agreements under which councils have received funding for delivering support services. It is assumed that any future negotiations in respect of developing a partnership agreement could be used to include where appropriate the matters outlined in the Co-operative and Community Scrutiny Committee.</p> <p>Legal Services should be closely consulted in the negotiation of the contents and form of any partnership agreement developed with the DWP.</p> <p>The Council can rely on existing powers, freedoms and flexibilities in order to enter into a partnership agreement and subsequently develop collaborative working initiatives with the DWP to implement shared objectives under the Local Support Services Framework.</p> <p>PM – 19/02/2015</p>	
OTHER IMPACTS, RISKS & OPPORTUNITIES	No
IMPACT ON SPECIFIC WARDS	Yes
<p>There is a Borough wide impact; however the impact is greater in those wards where there is the highest concentration of unemployment.</p>	

PART B) – ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

4. INFORMATION

4.1 Introduction and Background

- 4.1.1 The Co-operative & Communities and Finance Scrutiny Committees have taken an active role in scrutinising the impact of the Welfare Benefit reforms that have been introduced by the Government over the last 2 years and implemented by Telford & Wrekin Council.

During the scrutiny of the various strands of the welfare reforms, evidence emerged from a number of sources of the increasing detrimental impact on residents across the Borough caused by the Department for Work and Pensions' (DWP) sanctions regime.

As a result, the committee agreed to undertake a review to explore the issues in more detail.

The full report of the findings of the scrutiny committee is included.

4.2 Response to Recommendations of the Scrutiny Report

Cabinet commend the work of the scrutiny committee in exploring the local impact of this important national issue. Cabinet recognise that the sanctions regime that has been implemented by the local Job Centres is as a result of national DWP policy and there is very limited local influence or discretion as to how the policies are applied by Local Job Centres

However it is reassuring to see that there is a substantial amount of work happening locally to support residents who are affected by benefit sanctions; particularly the work of the CAB in assisting residents to challenge and appeal decisions, and the work of the Council's own Crisis Assistance Team and the Telford Crisis Network in ensuring that sanctioned customers receive a basic provision of food and gas/electricity where required

Since the commencement of the scrutiny review into this issue, the landscape has changed somewhat in that the national roll-out of Universal Credit has been brought forward by the DWP, with Telford & Wrekin Council's implementation date being proposed as 1st June 2015.

Universal Credit will in itself bring further changes to the sanctions regime operated through Job Centres. The claimant commitment that will be introduced in Universal Credit will theoretically be more specifically tailored to the circumstances of the individual claimant than the current scheme. There will also be an increased responsibility for Job Centre staff to explain the claimant commitment to benefit claimants to ensure they fully understand their responsibilities and the consequences of non compliance.

Universal Credit will also fundamentally reshape the relationship with between The Council and The Job Centre. The "Universal Credit – Delivered Locally" pilots are currently exploring the opportunities for Councils, Job Centres and third sector organisations to work together to provide a range of joint support services to claimants. The details of this

relationship will start to develop as we work with Job Centre colleagues on the implementation of Universal Credit locally.

Responses to the specific recommendations from the scrutiny report can be found at Appendix A.

5. PREVIOUS MINUTES

5.1 None

6. BACKGROUND PAPERS

Appendix A – Response from Cabinet to specific recommendations within the report

Report prepared by Angie Astley, Assistant Director – Neighbourhood & Customer Services

Telephone: 01952 382400

Appendix A

Cabinet Response: Scrutiny Review of Support for People having their Benefits Sanctioned

Scrutiny Committee:	Co-operative and Community Scrutiny Committee
Report:	Scrutiny Review of Support for People having their Benefits Sanctioned
Lead Scrutiny Member:	Cllr. A. McClements
Lead Scrutiny Officer:	F. Bottrill, Scrutiny Group Specialist
Date reported to Cabinet:	19th March 2015
Cabinet member:	Cllr. H. Rhodes
Lead officer:	Angie Astley, Assistant Director Telford & Wrekin Council & Mr. Phil Wright, DWP

Recommendation	Agreed Yes / No	Cabinet response including proposed action or reason for rejection	Responsible Cabinet Member	Responsible Officer	Action by date
<p>1) That the Council holds discussions with the DWP at a regional level to:</p> <p>a) Consider the option of joint working to reduce the negative impact of benefit sanctions including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The option of a JCP officer working at First Point in Southwater. It is recognised that for this post to have the desired outcomes the post holder must have flexibility and work to an agreed protocol between the Council 	Yes	<p>The Council have recently learnt Universal Credit will be rolled out to some customers across the three Job Centres across the Borough on 1st June 2015.</p> <p>The very nature of Universal Credit will require us to work very closely with colleagues at Job Centre to prepare for implementation and manage our relationship ongoing. Meetings have already been scheduled with the DWP's Universal Credit Regional Implementation Manager which will give us a fresh</p>	Cllr Hilda Rhodes	Lee Higgins	1st July 2015

<p>and JCP.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The need to consider the capacity of JCP managers to engage in meaningful partnership working to reduce the number and impact of benefit sanctions. Develop a pilot the Local Service Support Framework (LSSF) pilot in Telford and Wrekin which would introduce a triage system at interview stage so vulnerable people can be identified and support put in place. Consideration may be given to linking this pilot with the Family Connect service. The Council should consider applying to the Local Enterprise Inclusion Fund to support this work until DWP funding can be drawn down following the implementation of Universal Credit. 	<p>Partial</p>	<p>opportunity to try to redefine our working relationship with the three local Job Centres which may include exploring the merits of co-locating some front-line services with the Job Centre.</p> <p>The Local Support Services Framework has been rebranded by the DWP and is now called “Universal Credit – Delivered Locally” 11 national pilot Councils have recently been announced who will test different methods of supporting Universal Credit claimants by providing a range of triage, advice and support services. These trial sites will commence in February 2015 and will be run over a period of 12-18 months before a full evaluation is undertaken by the DWP.</p> <p>The trialing sites will focus on a range of support options but with 3 main elements:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • triage • digital inclusion 	<p>Cllr Hilda Rhodes</p>	<p>Angie Astley</p>	<p>1st April 2016</p>
--	-----------------------	---	---------------------------------	----------------------------	---

		<ul style="list-style-type: none">• financial inclusion <p>Following the evaluation, the DWP will produce a model of how it wishes Local Authorities to support Universal Credit claimants including decisions regarding the funding available.</p> <p>Telford & Wrekin do not intend to be early adopters of any formal support services arrangements until further details are known about the impact of Universal Credit locally and the results of the pilot sites.</p> <p>However, there are many ways in which Telford & Wrekin Council has developed its front line services over recent years which already pave the way for us being in a strong position to deliver some of the support service that will be expected of us under Universal Credit.</p> <p>For example, the bringing together of front line services such as the Council's benefit service, CAB,</p>			
--	--	--	--	--	--

<p>b) To provide a local response on the implementation of the Oakley recommendations to the Council specifically:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What training has been provided to ensure that JCP staff are able to identify vulnerable people e.g. with learning difficulties and autism 	<p>Job Box and Housing Options into First Point already enables a degree of customer triage.</p> <p>Also the investment that we have made into the Peoples Network is a step towards enabling better digital inclusion for residents.</p> <p>The following responses have been provided by the Local Partnership Managers of the Job Centre Plus in Telford.</p> <p>A programme of training on Autism Awareness has been running for all JCP staff across Telford and Wrekin since November. Three courses have been delivered by Adelphi Care with more dates planned so all relevant staff will have attended by end March 2015. JCP also have regular meetings and close liaison with The Autism Hub.</p> <p>All staff have access to an intranet based product, The Vulnerability Hub which gives case studies, guidance and learning products to</p>			
---	--	--	--	--

<ul style="list-style-type: none">• How has the JCP developed and maintained the intranet list of support organisations so that this provides a comprehensive list of local organisations to which individuals can be referred. This should include the ability for JCP advisors to identify if a claimant is a RSL tenant and make an appropriate referral to the RSL for support or for other tenants to the Housing officer. It is recommended that this list of support organisations is shared with the Council and partner organisations to avoid duplication of effort in developing this database.	<p>help them identify and support vulnerable people. There are also Disability Employment Advisers who have received specialist training in helping claimants with more significant health conditions.</p> <p>The intranet list of support organisations continues to be maintained by Jobcentre Leaders and is available for all Jobcentre staff. In particular, there is a close working relationship between Wrekin Housing Trust and local jobcentres.</p> <p>The jobcentres in Telford and Wrekin have a dedicated Employer and Partnership Manager (previously Kairen Francis, now Kully Chahal) who regularly meets local organisations. This is to promote two-way communications and enable JCP coaches to make appropriate referrals. Kully sits on the Carer Partnership Board and Phil Wright, Senior Operations Manager for Shropshire, sits on the Local Strategic Partnership</p>			
--	--	--	--	--

<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Ensuring that JCP staff should routinely advise claimants with sanctions of hardship payments and there should be a robust referral system to the Crisis Network. This system needs should be more than sign posting a client to the relevant service or organisation in order to maximise uptake.		<p>Board.</p> <p>From 14/7/14, a new hardship process was introduced for all JCP staff. Staff received communications in person to upskill them in the changes which included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Ensuring every customer facing a sanction was given details of the hardship process at every intervention from the point at which doubt raised• Offering the customer a face to face hardship interview on the same day (or at least within 24 hours)• Hardship decisions made and communicated within 3 hours of the interview and payment made within 3 hours of the communication. <p>There was also a process change to Mandatory Reconsiderations whereby they can now be accepted in any format from the claimant. Jobcentre staff encourage all claimants to telephone for a Mandatory Reconsideration as this is then</p>			
--	--	--	--	--	--

		<p>dealt with immediately.</p> <p>The Crisis Network team has been to each Jobcentre within Telford & Wrekin to promote their services and foster closer working relations and increase uptake.</p>			
<p>2) The Council ensures that all staff working with vulnerable adults are aware of the issues regarding benefit sanctions and that claimants will have commitment that they must meet in order to continue to receive JSA. Staff should support clients where appropriate to meet their claimant commitment and where a sanction has been applied ensure that they have access to relevant services and request 'reconsideration'</p>	<p>Yes</p>	<p>The conditions of the claimant commitment are complicated and personalised to each individual claimant. However, the Council does recognise that it would be useful for all front-line staff who are working with financially vulnerable residents to understand the importance of their compliance with the claimant commitment, the implications of failing to comply, and how they can support the customer to challenge the decision where appropriate.</p> <p>It is envisaged that Universal Credit awareness training will be provided to all front-line staff and partner organisations as part of the roll-out in June 2015. We will ensure that awareness of the claimant commitment and</p>	<p>Cllr Hilda Rhodes</p>	<p>Lee Higgins</p>	<p>1st July 2015</p>

		sanctions are included as part of that training.			
3) That the Council continues to work with local voluntary and advocacy organisations to ensure that clients and service users are aware of requirement to meet their claimant commitment in order to continue to receive JSA and that when a sanction is applied the individual has support to request 'reconsideration'.	Yes	See response to recommendation 4). Training will be provided to all partner organisations and stakeholders.	Cllr Hilda Rhodes	Lee Higgins	1st July 2015
4) That the work of this Scrutiny Review is shared with Scrutiny in other West Midlands Local Authorities to identify any common issues that can be taken forward at a regional or national level and that a copy of this review is send to the Communications Group established following the Oakley Review.	Yes	Cabinet fully support the sharing of any common issues or best practice that emerge from this review.	Cllr A McClements	Fiona Bottrill	1st April 2015
5) That the Council has discussions with Wolverhampton Welfare Rights Team and the Wolverhampton University with a view to extending the	Yes	Cabinet recognise the merits of this proposal. As much of the Welfare Rights work in the Borough is undertaken by organisations such as the CAB,	Cllr A McClements	Fiona Bottrill	1st September 2015

<p>support provided law students to defend claimant's entitlements and maximise entitlement to the Telford and Wrekin area.</p>		<p>Cabinet would encourage those organisations to consider how they may form stronger links with Wolverhampton University and consider how this idea may benefit them. Cabinet suggest that scrutiny share this recommendation with the CAB directly.</p>			
---	--	---	--	--	--

TELFORD & WREKIN COUNCIL

CABINET - 19 MARCH 2015

**PRIDE IN YOUR COMMUNITY PROGRAMME – INVESTING IN OUR
INFRASTRUCTURE AND COMMUNITIES**

**REPORT OF ASSISTANT DIRECTOR: NEIGHBOURHOOD & CUSTOMER
SERVICES**

LEAD CABINET MEMBER – CLLR SHAUN DAVIES

PART A – SUMMARY REPORT

1. SUMMARY OF MAIN PROPOSALS

- 1.1 On 09 January 2014, Cabinet approved the 'Everyday Telford' – Pride in Your Community Programme to be delivered across the borough for two years from April 2014.
- 1.2 This detailed a series of tangible Programme Pledges with an overall statement
“We will ensure that our Neighbourhoods are Safe, Clean and Well Maintained and promote Pride in our Borough by making a difference through a 2 year investment programme”
- 1.3 This report provides an update on progress to date on the delivery of the Programme Pledges and the positive impact that this is providing to regenerate our communities. However headline outcomes include:-
- 1.4 Since the introduction of the Pride in Your Community Programme on 1 April 2014 up until the end of December 2014 the number of complaints received for Neighbourhood Services reduced by 47% . This represents 265 complaints received in 2014, compared to 497 complaints received for the same period in 2013.
- 1.5 In addition, 165 compliments were received throughout 2014 making up 38% of the total compliments received by the Council.
- 1.6 **Volunteering**
- 7,200 volunteer hours through the community pay back programme.
 - 146 volunteers, contributing 432 hours to the delivery of environmental projects.
 - 165 Street Champions within communities.

- 159 Snow Wardens, contributing nearly 2,000 hours of voluntary hours each winter season, helping our most vulnerable residents.

1.7 **Employment and Traineeships**

- 9 Parish Environmental Teams (PET's) and 6 Environmental Estate Response Teams with 12 people currently undertaking apprenticeships.
- Further employment or training for 13 apprentices previously employed with the Parish Environmental Teams and the Green Brigade programme.
- Employment and training opportunities for 13 residents from the Cuckoo Oak ward (7 securing full time employment).
- Training sessions for 6 residents in tiling, plumbing, plastering and painting at Sutton Hill Community centre.

1.8 **Highways**

- 46 roads received major surface dressing treatment in 2014
- Patching and resurfacing treatment of 250 highways and 93 footpaths
- Pothole repairs patching 1,000m² of roads
- 100 street name plates replaced since April 2014
- Detailed surveys carried out on 378 different roads

1.9 **Environmental**

- Additional environmental cleansing work impacting positively on 80,000 residents as a result of the additional work carried out by the Parish Environmental Teams and Environmental Estate Response Teams.
- 1,867 residents now using the 'Everyday Telford' app.
- Avoidance of potential fly tips with a total of 2,179 residents taking advantage of the Pride bulk collections discounts.
- 46% reduction in dog fouling in pilot areas nationwide as a result of the Keep Britain Tidy pilot scheme to place "angry eyes" illuminated posters in dog fouling hot spot areas.
- 300 new litter bins purchased and currently being installed borough wide, providing capacity to contain litter over the year equivalent to 8 average sized swimming pools.
- 1 million dog waste bags available to residents.
- 94% resident satisfaction with recycling collection services (survey across all collection rounds November 2014).

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

- ### **2.1 That Cabinet note the progress made to date against the Pride Programme Pledges approved at Cabinet on 9 January 2014.**

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"> • Neighbourhoods are Safe and Clean • Business Supporting, Business Winning Council • Education and Skills • Health and Wellbeing
	Will the proposals impact on specific groups of people?	
	Yes	There will be borough wide impact with targeted community engagement and a focus on young people, education providers and businesses.
TARGET COMPLETION/ DELIVERY DATE	Pride in Your Community is a two year funded programme of work up until 31 March 2016. This report provides an update on the considerable range of environmental and infrastructure improvements and community engagement activities completed so far, together with a position on current and future planned projects and activities.	
FINANCIAL/ VALUE FOR MONEY IMPACT	Yes	The Pride in Your Community Programme is regularly monitored to ensure spend is contained within approved resources. Any variations will be flagged through Services and Financial Planning framework if required. For clarification the programme of works appended to this report does not include the £750k approved growth for 2016/17
LEGAL ISSUES	Yes	The Council has the power to take reasonable action for the benefit of the authority, its area or person's resident or present in its area. There are a wide range of options and powers available to the Council to promote and develop action to support local communities to participate more effectively in local activities and produce practical, social and economic benefits to the community. It will be necessary to ensure that specific actions and activities are within the Council's powers and comply with Council policy and the Constitution before they are finally decided upon. Advice will be provided by Legal Services in respect of individual projects as necessary.
OTHER IMPACTS, RISKS & OPPORTUNITIES	Yes	As funding is time limited, projects will need to be identified and delivered during the period of the Pride in Your Community Programme.

IMPACT ON SPECIFIC WARDS	Yes	The Pride in your Community Programme is a borough wide programme to bring improvements in all wards. It also has a specific focus within high demand areas, such as The Nedge and Targeted Intervention Areas (Brookside, College, Cuckoo Oak, Donnington, Malinslee and Woodside). The approach is to involve residents in delivering the solutions to environmental issues within their areas, whilst developing their skills.
---------------------------------	-----	---

PART B – ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

4.0 Overview

- 4.1 The approach to delivering the programme has involved working jointly with residents; ward members, cross council services and partner agencies to bring together social and physical improvements. It focuses investment to improve the appearance of neighbourhoods.
- 4.2 Ward Members were each allocated an additional £1,000 of funding to spend on environmental projects within their wards. Many initiatives have been identified and delivered through the Pride in Your Community Programme which has had a direct positive impact on individual wards.
- 4.3
- 4.3 £1.26 million has also been made available for community projects through the formation of a Community Pride Fund. Identification of community projects which could potentially benefit from the fund has been co-ordinated with the Pride in Your Community Programme. 37 applications for funding from the Community Pride Fund have now been approved, which will deliver improvements to community buildings and provide sports facilities and equipment.
- 4.4 A further £20,000 of community funding has also been secured for 2015/16 through the Waste Contract with Veolia. The fund will be allocated through the Veolia Envirogrant scheme and will be allocated to community groups in Telford & Wrekin. This will provide up to £1,000 of grant funding for individual projects or schemes to improve the quality of life for their local community.
- 4.5 The identification of priorities for the programme has been established using feedback from ward members, Parish and Town Councils and residents.
- 4.6 Further information on environmental physical and social issues has also been gathered from a number of street audits with residents and Junior Street Champions. A series of community consultation and engagement activities have been and continue to be held to discuss options and opportunities. These events will continue throughout the delivery of the programme.

4.7 **Appendix 1:** provides additional key facts and figures of the impact that the Pride in Your Community Programme has had.

4.8 Pride progress and project updates are regularly posted on the internet www.telford.gov.uk/pride and there are many examples of community focussed projects which have been delivered, or are in the process of being delivered. (There is also a presentation on the delivery of the Pride in Your Community Programme on the website.)

4.9 A high level summary of borough wide progress against the Pride Programme Pledges is summarised below with further information detailed within **Appendix 2.**

4.10 **Our Pledges for your Environment and Open Spaces**

“Enhancing the offer to Parish & Town Councils to develop Parish Environmental Teams”

9 Parish Environmental Teams are working locally within the borough to enhance the Council’s environmental maintenance work.

4.7.1 ***“Improving infrastructure surrounding existing and future developments”***

Hollinswood Local Centre Regeneration project is well underway and a planning application has been submitted. The first phase of works included the demolition of The Woodcutter public house in January 2015 to make way for the development of retail buildings and a community activity hub. The regeneration scheme will affect around 6,000 residents and over 300 children at the local primary school will benefit from the essential safety works being undertaken. The Pride Programme will ensure that the new development is integrated with the existing. More information about this project can be found at www.telford.gov.uk/hollinswoodregeneration.

4.7.2 ***“Making it easier for older residents to dispose of unwanted bulky items and bulk collection promotions”***

Encouraging the take up of the bulk collection service through a series of piloted Borough Wide Bulk Collection Discounts from April 2014.

- ✓ Free annual bulk collection per household for residents aged 65 and above (extended from 70 years and above from October 2014).
- ✓ Free annual bulk collection per household for residents claiming disability allowance.
- ✓ 10% discount for Telford Loyalty Card holders.

- ✓ 25% discount for residents receiving Council Tax Support or Housing Benefit.
- ✓ Plus other borough wide discounts.

4.7.3 Support for Landlords who are part of the Councils Landlord Accreditation scheme providing 3 free CRC permits a year.

4.8 **“Engaging Communities in Environmental Social Awareness”**

A Social Responsibility Campaign to reduce fly tipping, dog fouling and littering:

- Door to door engagement with residents with further engagement planned.
- A ‘CSI’ style campaign in Brookside with Midlands Today, Shropshire Star and Shropshire radio all featuring the campaign
- A Keep Britain Tidy pilot scheme to place national “angry eyes” illuminated posters in dog fouling hot spot areas. This will be followed by a borough wide roll out of the campaign
- Dog waste bags for residents to collect from council offices and community centres
- A suggest a litter bin scheme to engage residents on where a new bin should be installed to help reduce litter in their community

4.8.1 ***“Dedicated estate management”***

Pride in Your Community Environmental Estate Response Teams have been appointed to locally add value by carrying out everyday environmental improvements. The teams are working flexibly and are provided with a work schedule to include priorities raised by members, Parish and Town Councils and residents. Their work includes activities such as litter picking, removal of small fly tips and shrub pruning.

4.9 **Our Pledge for your Highways**

4.9.1 ***“Investing more into highways maintenance”***

A borough wide two year Highways Capital Investment Programme has been developed and is being delivered throughout the borough. Hundreds of road maintenance schemes have been investigated and assessed. Communication on the detail of this programme has been sent to all ward members and Parish and Town Councils. The Programme incorporates not only technical priorities identified from inspections, but priorities highlighted by ward members, Parish and Town Councils and resident enquiries.

4.9.2 ***“Local Improvement schemes”***

Highway reactive maintenance work includes a crew to follow the pot hole repair team to refresh lining on roads, junctions and parking bays.

A delivery programme to improve directional signage and roundabout signage is well underway.

4.9.3 *“Improving connections to residential and employment Zones”*

A feasibility review of the priority list of non maintained highway assets has been undertaken and a delivery plan of works is being developed to bring the worst affected assets up to a suitable standard. The review covers council-owned unadopted roads, car parks, cemeteries and closed churchyards. The maintenance and improvement works will be delivered based on technical priorities and ward member priorities.

4.9.4 Improvements to business parks and industrial estates- Highway improvements are planned and are in the process of being delivered which will impact on over 3,000 businesses contained within our main business and industrial estates. A project is also being scoped to consult with businesses on preferred options for gateway signage at Stafford Park, Halesfield and Hortonwood.

4.9.5 A borough wide review of underpasses to address cleansing, lighting and anti social behavioural issues, particularly within areas that are used to access amenities, has been completed. The results of the review will be incorporated into a proposed programme of improvement works which will be discussed with the relevant ward members.

4.10 Our Pledge for your Community Trees

4.10.1 *“Assessing trees and reducing negative impacts”*

Tree removal, pruning and maintenance work is being carried out in response to detailed surveys which have been completed and assessed by specialists. Tree enquiries received from residents that are not identified through the survey work are logged and work carried out as required.

4.10.2 *“Giving our community access to Information and support”*

An information leaflet has been developed for trees and hedges on private land to provide advice and support for residents on how to address tree issues.

5.0 Our Pledges to You

5.1 “Increasing employment opportunities”

“Providing Access to Training and Resources and working in Partnership with Local Education Providers”

5.2 Additional **Apprenticeships and Training** for local people through the Parish Environmental Teams and Environmental Response Teams with apprentices completing a mix of classroom and vocational training through TCAT to gain a formal qualification in Environment and Cleansing.

5.3 Partnership with Parks for People, Telford Job Box, Turn Around and Telford Green Spaces, providing a free **12 week Green Brigade Skills Development Scheme** at Telford Town Park:

- Practical training to include environmental maintenance, fencing, hard landscaping, brick-laying, step-laying
- How to write a CV and how to secure employment
- Candidates completing the training are offered a guaranteed interview if they apply for a placement with the Parish Environmental or Environmental Estate Response Teams

5.4 Partnership with Sanctuary Housing Group and Seddon Construction in Cuckoo Oak has provided construction taster sessions.

6.0 “Dedicating support to street champions and snow wardens”

6.1 Street Champion Volunteer Scheme

- Street Champions involved in a community street clean up in College.
- Brookside Street Champions heavily involved in events e.g. The Dip Project which led to the recruitment of six additional street champions

6.2 **Neighbourhood Snow Warden Volunteer Scheme** with the number of volunteers continuing to increase following a focussed winter campaign. The scheme includes the provision of tools and equipment being provided to Snow Wardens and Street Champions.

7.0 “Encouraging residents to deliver local environment projects”

7.1 A range of projects have and continue to be delivered working alongside local communities and residents. Examples include:

- Community bulb planting and bird and bat box making event in **Brookside “Dip”**
- **College Street Clean Up** community event in Victoria Avenue in partnership with the YMCA. 20 residents involved, collecting over 20 bags of rubbish.
- **Community Clean Up** Event with Wellington Scouts and Cubs, TWS, McDonald’s and Arlestone Community Development, providing young volunteers with equipment. 60 volunteers collected over 40 bags of rubbish from access points at the retail park.
- **Woodside Junior Youth Club** carried out litter picking around the Park Lane Centre and Shopping Centre. The group plan to litter-pick each term and will be taking part in an environmental street audit in spring 2015.

8.0 *“Encouraging young people’s Involvement and working with education providers”*

- 8.1 **Junior street Champion Accreditation Scheme** was launched in early spring 2015. The scheme is a partnership with Veolia working within schools to deliver a programme of workshops focussing on social responsibility and responsible waste disposal. To gain accreditation schools must complete 3 workshops, one of which must be Workshop 1-Your Streets which comprises of a street audit and discussion around social responsibility within the environment.

9.0 **Engaging with the Community**

- 9.1 **Appendix 3** illustrates some of the communications and engagement that has taken place through the Pride in Your Community Programme at work. Further information can be found on the Council’s website www.telford.gov.uk/pride.
- 9.2 Volunteer Telford is a new website which has been set up to promote volunteering opportunities and support the recruitment of new volunteers to organisations or projects. Requests have also been received from voluntary organisations such as Green Spaces Partnership.

10. **NEXT STEPS**

- 10.1 The Pride in Your Community Programme is a 2 year programme and therefore provides the opportunity to deliver and continue to increase its impact during 15/16. Some projects identified in year 1 will roll into the second year with the majority of investment being aligned to any new or ongoing priorities.

10.2 During the next financial year there will be a further opportunity to revisit priorities with ward members.

11. PREVIOUS MINUTES

December 2013 Cabinet - Pride in your Community Programme – investing in our infrastructure and communities

27 November 2014 Full Council – Community Pride Fund Grant Allocation

12.0 BACKGROUND PAPERS





Pride in Your Community questionnaires completed and returned by ward members and Parish and Town Councils, together with customer enquiry and technical information.

Report prepared by Debbie Germany, Waste & Neighbourhood Performance Management Service Delivery Manager.

APPENDIX 1

Highlighted below are some key facts and performance figures to demonstrate the impact of the Pride in Your Community Programme:

Pride in Your Community Initiative	9 Months April/Dec 14	Direction of Travel	Summary
Employment & Skills			
Hours worked through community payback in the Pride Project Areas	7,200	↑	<p>The scheme supported a varied range of environmental services e.g. cleansing, shrub removal, litter picking.</p> <p>Hours worked has increased by 2,475 from beginning of October.</p> <p>This equates to circa £47,000 in added value work in the Pride Areas.</p>
No. of Environmental Response and Parish Environmental Team apprentices	12	↑	
No of young people not in education, training or employment, securing a position with the Green Brigade Programme	12	↑	Pilot scheme to be rolled out borough wide
No of PET apprentices, securing future education and employment.	7	↑	
Environmental Improvements			
No of Parish and Environmental Response Teams	9	↑	
Bulk collection offer take up	2,179	↑	18% borough wide increase in take up since the Programme began.
Satisfaction with Recycling Collection Services	94%	Baseline data	Based on a survey across all collection rounds in Nov 14 (2,100 responses).
No of litter bins provided through Pride	300	↑	60 requests received from the community under the request a litter bin scheme. A further 172 have been programmed in for replacement over the next few months.

Pride in Your Community Initiative	9 Months April/Dec 14	Direction of Travel	Summary
No of positive environmental crime interventions	298	Baseline data	Raising awareness with residents across the borough where there are increasing concerns about the environment.
No of Littering Fixed Penalty Notices	23		Community Police Support Officer's have received refresher training.
Reduction in dog fouling as a result of the 'angry eyes' anti dog fouling campaign	46%	Baseline data	This is a national average figure from the original pilot. The local figure is expected to be similar. Plans in place to roll out across the borough.
Community Engagement			
No of street champions	165		Support through local community clean ups, tools and information. A further 11 street champions have been recruited since September 2014.
No of snow wardens	159		Support with tools and information. Launch throughout winter has led to a further increase of an additional 12 Snow Wardens in January 2015.
Number of reports through the Everyday Telford App	1,867		Expected to increase to 2,500 by the end of the financial year. An increase of 480 since September 2014.
No of volunteers involved in environmental projects	146	Baseline data	New and existing volunteers.
No of volunteer hours contributing to environmental projects	432	Baseline data	Contributing to projects below.
No of environmental projects delivered with the community	19	Baseline data	Projects include community clean ups, street audits, and bulb planting.

APPENDIX 2

BOROUGH WIDE PROGRESS AGAINST PRIDE IN YOUR COMMUNITY PROGRAMME PLEDGES

Our Pledge for your Environment

<p>We will work with and enhance our offer to Parishes to develop existing and new Parish Environmental Teams to deliver maintenance programmes in high community use areas such as litter picking, footpath clearing, minor tree works, bin emptying and other environmental improvements.</p>	<p><u>Parish Environmental Teams:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Great Dawley Town Council • Hadley and Leegomery Parish Council • Hollinswood and Randlay Parish Council • Ketley Parish Council • Lawley and Overdale Parish Council • Madeley Town Council • St Georges and Priorslee Parish Council • Stirchley and Brookside Parish Council • Wrockwardine Wood and Trench Parish Council
<p>We will engage with local people to improve the infrastructure surrounding existing and future developments to ensure that regeneration projects and new developments integrate and complement existing communities, this forms part of our community deal with developers</p>	<p>Examples include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hollinswood Regeneration is integrating the new development with the existing community including improvements to the underpass. • Town Park improvement works integrated Town Park and the new Southwater development to include the resurfacing of the spinal path. • Lighting project delivered in Malinslee along footpath leading into Southwater • Delivery of public realm improvements in Brookside to blend the new development with existing. • Donnington Parade Regeneration was completed in January 2015 after public consultation • The Nedge carriageway resurfacing, and repair and replacement of steps has been delivered • Sutton Hill infrastructure improvements to walls and steps is ongoing • Woodside environmental, social and infrastructure improvements to areas that did not benefit from regeneration • All Saints Church Wellington remediation

	works to Lych Gate
We will make it easier for our older residents to get rid of unwanted bulky items by providing a free bulk collection offer for our residents aged 65 and above.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One free bulk collection per household for residents over 65.
We will engage with our communities and launch an Environmental social responsibility campaign to include bulk collection promotions in our areas of greatest need. We will target education and awareness of the impact of fly-tipping and littering at our social and private landlords and work with them to increase social responsibility in problem areas.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One free bulk collection per household for residents claiming disability allowance • 10% discount for Telford Loyalty Card holders • 25% discount for residents on Council Tax Support or Housing Benefit. • Plus other borough wide discounts • Landlord's part of the Council's Landlord Accreditation scheme receive 3 free CRC permits <p>Environmental social responsibility campaign with residents:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Door to door engagement with residents with further engagement planned • 'CSI' crime scene campaign in Brookside (press publicised the incident. Midlands Today, Shropshire Star and Shropshire radio all reported on the issue.). • Keep Britain Tidy "Angry eyes" illuminated posters in dog fouling hot spot areas in the borough. This proved nationally to result in a 46% reduction in dog fouling in the pilot areas. • 1 million free dog waste bags available for residents
We will ensure enforcement action is taken against environmental crime on public open space and where appropriate, on private land across the borough and will prosecute where possible	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enforcement project to deliver benefits to communities • Environmental Social Responsibility Campaign providing residents with support and information to report issues

<p>We will introduce a system of estate management by providing a visible dedicated environmental team starting in Sutton Hill and to be rolled out across the borough.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 6 Environmental Estate Response Teams working borough wide, five days a week. Each team with 2 x TWS cleansing operatives and 1 x apprentice
--	---

Our Pledge for your Open Space

<p>We will work with residents to solve issues around untidy pieces of land in their local area which are of greatest concern to them and we will identify sustainable solutions to improve the look of unmanaged land and improve the environmental quality of community open spaces.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Untidy land team spent 10 weeks working borough wide to clean up untidy pieces of council owned land. • Environmental Estate Response Teams have also been trained to deliver added value improvements
<p>We will engage with the community to identify areas of need and will provide more litter bins in addition to the 3,000 bins currently across the borough in areas where litter is an ongoing problem.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Suggest a litter bin campaign. 300 new bins purchased and currently being installed borough wide

Our Pledge for your Highways

<p>We will invest more into our highways maintenance to reduce traffic disruption, improve road quality and safety on our residential roads.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • TRS Gang on site around the borough carrying out pot hole repairs • Highways Capital programme well underway and developed by combining technical and Pride priorities • Small scale patching and other innovative mobile repair techniques carried out borough wide
<p>We will engage with our communities and undertake local improvement schemes to improve the quality of footpaths, white lining on roads, the condition of roundabout signing and unadopted roads owned by the Council</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dedicated Lining Crew following the TRS Gang around the borough to refresh white lining on roads, junctions and parking bays • Borough wide review of all footpaths, roundabout signing and unadopted roads owned by the Council. Work will be scheduled to improve Council owned footpaths and roundabout signing

<p>We will ensure that our roads, footpaths and cycle ways are maintained to an acceptable standard and provide connections from our residential areas to employment zones.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Minor Works Gang is on site each day carrying out minor carriageway repairs across the borough. • The Highways capital programme is addressing the condition of roads, footways and cycle ways around the borough, receiving maintenance improvements e.g. surface dressing. • Borough wide review of underpasses, priority works programme to be agreed with a focus on those connecting residential areas to employment/shopping zones.
<p>We will invest in making key gateways into the borough and industrial estates and employment areas look better to help improve Business and Leisure visitors perception of the borough and to encourage growth and inward investment.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review of signage at business gateways with work scheduled for delivery in 2015 • Review of highways directional signage within industrial estates and employment areas. • Highways Capital Programme improvements and reactive maintenance repairs

Our Pledge for your Community Trees

<p>We will pro-actively work in the community and with our Contractors to improve the liveability in our urban areas and assess our trees to reduce the negative impact that unmanaged trees, overhanging branches and hedges have on everyday living.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tree work programmes for completion in year 1 and year 2. • Surveys, complaints and enquiries used to inform the programme • Year 1 surveys completed - Cuckoo Oak, College, Donnington, Malinslee, The Nedge, and Brookside • Year 1 works completed- Cuckoo Oak, Malinslee, Donnington, College, Purbeckdale & Chiltern Gardens, Smith Crescent,
<p>We will give our local community access to information and support needed to address trees on private land in their community.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information leaflet to provide residents with advice on how to address tree and hedge issues on private land. Available via council website, Southwater and community centres or request directly via customer contact centre

Our Pledge to You

<p>We will increase employment opportunities for local residents by offering traineeships and apprenticeships with all of the Parish Environmental Teams allowing individuals to learn new skills and gain employment qualifications.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Partnership with Parks for people, Telford Job Box, Turn Around and Telford Green spaces. A free 12 week programme at Telford Town Park from 7 October 2014. Range of practical skills (environmental and conservation, fencing, hard landscaping etc.) as well as employability skills such a CV writing • RWS Services contractors delivering accredited training sessions for residents in bricklaying, fencing and step laying skills, linking to the
--	--

	<p>programme at Telford Town Park</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Partnership with Seddon Construction and Sanctuary Housing providing training sessions • Taster session held for residents in tiling, plumbing, plastering and painting at Sutton Hill Community centre • Apprentices working with Parish Environmental Teams. 12 month secondment agreement with either TWS or direct with Parish Councils • Apprentices trained in a mix of classroom and vocational training, delivered by TCAT leading to an NVQ level 2 in Cleaning and Environmental Services • Environmental Estate Response Teams receiving further training, including soft skills e.g. communicating effectively, reducing work place risks
<p>We will ensure dedicated support to recruit street champions and snow wardens in our areas of greatest need and increase access to training and resources to encourage people to take responsibility for their local area and to learn new skills to help deliver environmental improvement projects.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Street Champions – supported in street community clean ups e.g. College and provided with a Toolkit and support • Brookside Street Champions heavily involved in events e.g. The Dip with six new street champions recruited from the event • Snow Wardens supporting their local communities during periods of snow and ice • Junior Street Champion Scheme launched in partnership with Veolia, delivering flexible mix of workshops • College Street Clean Up community event in Victoria Avenue in partnership with the YMCA. 20 residents involved, collecting over 20 bags of rubbish
<p>We will encourage and support residents to deliver local environmental projects across the borough such as 'adopt a street' scheme and provide direction and guidance to the most actively involved members of the community.</p>	<p>Examples include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social Responsibility Campaign launched • Suggest a bin via the 'Everyday' Telford app • Suggest a street name plate scheme launched • Community bulb planting events • Local environmental projects e.g. a locally run 'tool library' was set up in Sutton Hill • Woodside Junior Youth Club carried out litter picking around the Park Lane Centre and Shopping Centre. The group plan to litter pick each term and will be taking part in an environmental street audit in spring 2015

<p>We will work in partnership with our local education providers to encourage young people's involvement in delivering the physical and social regeneration planned schemes across the borough.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Junior street champion street audits carried out in primary schools in Donnington and Malinslee • Junior street champion Accreditation Scheme
<p>We will make it easier for our residents to make us aware of environmental issues in their local area by providing a free app, 'Everyday Telford' that enables reporting from mobile phones.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We have launched our free app 'Everyday Telford' to make it easier and quicker for resident to report issues in their local area. 'Everyday Telford' aims to make it quick and easy to report the things that are important to our residents whenever and wherever they are. The app can be used to report issues such as missed bin collections, tree and undergrowth issues, street cleaning and littering, fly tipping, streetlights, roads, paths and verges, drainage and flooding, street furniture, abandoned vehicles and graffiti etc.
<p>We will empower local Ward Members by giving them additional funds through the Ward Co-operative Fund to use on improving the environment in their local area.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2014 Ward Cooperative Fund launched again in April 2014, with an additional £1,000 for members to spend on Environmental Projects.
<p>We will acknowledge the most active and socially responsible members of the community by holding events to thank them for their time and commitment.</p>	<p>Examples include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bat and bird box making in Brookside and community bulb planting of 20,000 bulbs • 'Thank you' award ceremony with a certificate and a bag of bulbs to take home

APPENDIX 3



Borough Wide Communication and Community Engagement

- Pride Estate Teams and Pride highways vehicles on the ground

Regular Borough Wide Updates

Media updates:

- Junior Street Champions help clean up Arleston
- Pride in Your Community tackles potholes
- Community Pride fund opens for application
- £1 million capital grant set up to support Pride in Your Community
- Pride in Your Community bulk collections offer
- New Estate Response Teams to help improve local environment
- CSI comes to Brookside as Council tackles fly tippers
- Junior Street Champions help improve Malinslee
- Telford schemes to benefit from Community Pride cash

Your Voice and Community Notices

- Pride update in every edition of Your Voice
- Community notice boards in community centres to update residents on progress.
- Subscribe for regular updates on Council Services (GovDelivery)
- Social Media - regular updates added to corporate Facebook and Twitter accounts

Social Awareness Campaigns

Fly tipping

- CSI Telford - led to an interview on BBC Midlands, Radio Shropshire and an article in the Shropshire Star, as well as a lot of Social Media interest

Dog fouling

- Glow in the dark posters now in hotspot areas for dog fouling and will be moved around to different areas on a 4 week rolling cycle to renew impact
- Additional 1 million dog fouling bags provided for residents

Littering

- A suggest a litter bin location scheme was launched with the options to report via the mobile app. The campaign is continuing with publicity of where the new bins are located

Snow Wardens and Street Champions

- Rebranded and re-launched under the Pride in Your Community Programme

Making Reporting easier

- Pride Issues reported via the mobile app

Delivery of Pride Community Projects through Engagement and Events

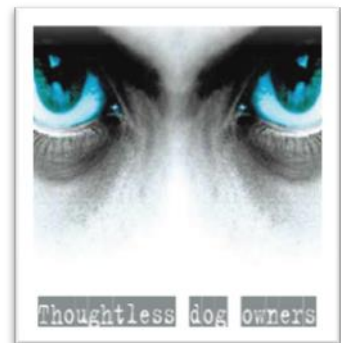
Community consultation and information events:

- Pride at Mardi Gras in Wellington and consultation with residents of Donnington regarding Donnington Parade
- Bulb planting and bird and bat box making at the Dip in Brookside
- Local litter picking and tidy up events

Green Brigade Programme

- Regular Blog week by week updates

Pride in Pictures



TELFORD & WREKIN COUNCIL

CABINET - 19 MARCH 2015

REGENERATION OF BROOKSIDE LOCAL CENTRE – UPDATE REPORT

**REPORT OF ASSISTANT DIRECTOR: DEVELOPMENT, BUSINESS &
EMPLOYMENT & ASSISTANT DIRECTOR: NEIGHBOURHOOD & CUSTOMER
SERVICES**

LEAD CABINET MEMBER: CLLR SHAUN DAVIES

PART A – SUMMARY REPORT

1. SUMMARY

- 1.1 In January 2012, Cabinet agreed to carry out a programme of public consultation with the Brookside Community and, working with residents, public sector partners and businesses as part of the Co-Operative Pilot, to fully develop a masterplan for the regeneration of Brookside Local Centre.
- 1.2 The masterplan received overwhelming support from the Brookside community and was granted planning approval in December 2012. Funding of £6.123m was allocated to the scheme and included in the approved capital programme for 2011/12 to 2013/14.
- 1.3 With completion of most of the key features of the masterplan expected in March 2015, this report provides an update on the scheme and the emerging transformation of Brookside Local Centre. It also provides an update on the on-going engagement of the community as well as on environmental improvements that are being undertaken across Brookside as part of the Council's Pride in Your Community Programme.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 That Cabinet notes the progress made in the delivery of the Brookside Local Centre project and its success as an example of co-operative working and of comprehensive physical and social regeneration**
- 2.2 That Cabinet endorses the actions being taken as part of the Pride programme and on-going community collaboration**

3. SUMMARY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

COMMUNITY IMPACT	Do these proposals contribute to specific Priority Plan objective(s)?	
	Yes	The regeneration works at Brookside directly contribute to the following Priority Plan objectives: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We will regenerate those neighbourhoods in need and work hard to ensure that local people have access to suitable housing
	Will the proposals impact on specific groups of people?	
	Yes	The residents of Brookside
TARGET COMPLETION/ DELIVERY DATE	End of March 2015	
FINANCIAL/VALUE FOR MONEY IMPACT	Yes	The regeneration activities outlined within this report have been funded from budgeted capital allocations for Brookside regeneration and from the Pride in Your Community Programme. JAC 280115
LEGAL ISSUES	No	There are no legal implications arising from this report as it is for noting only.
OTHER IMPACTS, RISKS & OPPORTUNITIES	No	
IMPACT ON SPECIFIC WARDS	Yes	Brookside

PART B – ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

4. INFORMATION

- 4.1 Brookside Local Centre is located approximately 2 miles south of Telford Town Centre. Prior to investment the centre comprised a supermarket, three retail units, an outdated and unwelcoming community centre building and a youth service building of poor quality. It was surrounded on three sides by flats that were a mixture of social rented and leasehold, where there was a high turnover of tenants and management was increasingly difficult.
- 4.2 Surveys carried out with Brookside residents showed clearly that the improvement of the Local Centre was a priority for them, with strong dissatisfaction about the local environment and levels of crime and anti-social behaviour. The Centre was constructed in the form of a dark covered square of inward facing shops and community facilities (including poor quality facilities for the Brookside Nursery), making it not only unsafe but unattractive.
- 4.3 Brookside is a Co-operative Council pilot ward and as such the Council wished to work closely with residents to deliver major improvements to the Centre. In keeping with this commitment, the masterplan for the redevelopment of the Local Centre was drawn up with the active participation of residents and stakeholders. During 2012 residents engaged in open sessions, design workshops, exhibitions and one to one consultation, resulting in a masterplan a copy of which is attached at Appendix 1.

4.4 The key features of the Brookside Masterplan are:

- New shopping facilities, the shops to be let to existing operators
- Flats above the shops to improve security by overlooking of adjacent space
- Refurbishment and extension of the Community Centre to become the hub of the community and to include a community cafe, a new Wrekin Housing Trust shop and high quality outside space for the Brookside nursery
- The clearance of the existing Youth Centre and its replacement with a new facility within the extended Community Centre
- The acquisition and demolition of 37 flats within the project boundary to address the feeling of enclosure and the imbalance in the social mix of the area
- The construction of new housing in the form of a low density development of bungalows to provide more housing for older people, closer to the Local Centre
- The creation of a new public square to create an enhanced setting for the Centre, incorporating parking as well as space for community use, and an extended parking area adjacent to the school
- A new play area for younger children

Current Position

4.5 Over a 12 month period, the Council's Project Team worked with partners to re-house tenants living in the flats to be demolished and negotiated with private owners to acquire their properties. Owners were assisted to find and acquire an alternative property in an area of their choice and all those affected were re-housed in accordance with their preferences, with home loss and disturbance payments made to all tenants to ensure that they were not disadvantaged by the move. By September 2013 all flats were vacant and were demolished alongside the old youth centre.

4.6 The project architects worked closely with the owners of the shops to design new shop premises that would meet the needs of their businesses. A post office was integrated within the supermarket and two purpose designed units were created for the existing fish and chip shop and hairdressers.

4.7 Completion of the new shops was delayed by complications with utility diversions, however in early June 2014, over 800m² of new shop space was handed over to the shop owners and local feedback shows that these units, which are now welcoming and appealing, are attracting significant footfall into the centre. Two new flats above the supermarket are now occupied, adding to the security of the area.

4.8 The demolition of the old shops was delayed by the discovery of significant quantities of buried asbestos, but the old shops have now been demolished, opening up the area and illustrating how open and accessible the new development will be.

4.9 Work is rapidly coming to a conclusion on the refurbished and extended community centre with the internal works almost complete and work commencing on external finishes. Work is also underway now on the new Nursery play area, community garden and other areas of public realm. Handover of the new community centre is scheduled to take place at the end of March 2015.

4.10 The new development of 18 new bungalows is being constructed by the Wrekin Housing Trust, who are now on site undertaking service diversions and other

groundworks to facilitate the development. It is anticipated that the development will be complete by Autumn/Winter 2015.

4.11 Appendix 2 contains a number of before and after pictures demonstrating the transformation taking place in the Local Centre.

Community Engagement and Social Regeneration

4.12 Throughout the regeneration project, the physical regeneration of the Centre has been complemented by the work of the Co-Operative Pilot, which has delivered a range of interventions to improve outcomes for residents, focusing on employment, skills and training and supporting families with complex needs to improve health and wellbeing outcomes.

4.13 Residents are still closely engaged with the scheme and consultation started in December 2014 about the setting up of a 'friends of the community centre' group who will be engaged in the management of the Centre. Residents will also be taking on the running of the new community centre cafe and they are being supported by the Council to develop a new business plan and recruit volunteers to run the facility. This will link closely with the new community garden where fruit trees are being planted to provide a sustainable food source for the cafe. A community interest company has been gifted a compound in the Local Centre by the Wrekin Housing Trust, where they will be carrying out cycle repairs and recycling bikes at affordable rates, supporting the Council's Wheels to Work programme.

Pride in Your Community

4.14 The Council is ensuring that the improvements taking place in the Local Centre are complemented by environmental improvements across the wider estate. In January 2015, the Pride in Your Community Programme started to improve the visual appeal of Burford, adjacent to the Local Centre development, removing damaged and ageing bollards, refurbishing walls, re-lining parking bays, repairing kerbs and undertaking tree works.

4.15 Public consultation has taken place to identify improvements to the green open space known locally as 'the Dip'. The project is well underway with the delivery of several schemes including the repair of the steps into the Dip, street lighting upgrades and community events held over two days during October half term, offering bird and bat box making sessions and a community bulb planting event. The delivery of this project has encouraged residents to use this unique green open space as a community area that local people can benefit from and take pride in.

4.16 Funding has also been approved for 2015/16 to improve the 'spinal path'. This path runs laterally through the centre of the Brookside estate, passing many residential properties, the Windmill School and the estate's largest children's play area. The project is currently being developed in consultation with the community and is scheduled for delivery in spring/summer 2015. Improvements will include tree and shrub management, bulb planting, and drainage and pathway repairs. A community gardens project is also being set up to support residents to improve the gardens adjacent to the path.

5 IMPACT ASSESSMENT – ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

None

6 PREVIOUS MINUTES

CB88 26 January 2012

7 BACKGROUND PAPERS

None

Report prepared by Kathy Mulholland, Team Leader Investment and Funding & Mark Young, Project Manager

Appendix 2 Brrokside Local Centre – Before & After Works im Progress



TELFORD & WREKIN COUNCIL

CABINET - 19 MARCH 2015

REGENERATION OF HOLLINSWOOD LOCAL CENTRE – UPDATE REPORT

**REPORT OF ASSISTANT DIRECTOR: DEVELOPMENT, BUSINESS &
EMPLOYMENT & ASSISTANT DIRECTOR: NEIGHBOURHOOD &
CUSTOMERSERVICES**

LEAD CABINET MEMBER: CLLR SHAUN DAVIES

PART A – SUMMARY REPORT

1. SUMMARY

- 1.1 In 2014 a feasibility study was carried out to investigate the potential to replace the shops at Hollinswood Local Centre as has been done at other local centres such as Malinslee, Sutton Hill and Leegomery.
- 1.2 In order to generate increased activity and footfall to the centre the feasibility of relocating a new Activity Hub for Adults with Learning Difficulties was also investigated. This is to be funded through a property rationalisation programme disposing of 3 existing properties at Halesfield 22, Lakeside and 11 The Bridges.
- 1.3 In July a public consultation event was held outlining proposals and inviting feedback. Broadly the proposals were well received and it was agreed to replace the existing shops with the same size and number of shops allowing existing tenants to re locate.
- 1.4 Cabinet approval for a comprehensive redevelopment was obtained on the 18th September with £1million of Pride funding combined with re prioritisation of other Capital Programme monies and Property Rationalisation capital receipts.
- 1.5 Enabling works commenced in September with the acquisition of the Woodcutter Public House. This site was to create space for the new shops. Following surveys and consultation with Natural England around bat surveys the building was demolished at the start of January 2015.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 That Cabinet notes the progress made in the delivery of the Hollinswood Local Centre project;
- 2.2 That Cabinet endorses the actions being taken as part of the Pride programme and on-going community collaboration

3. SUMMARY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

COMMUNITY IMPACT	Do these proposals contribute to specific Priority Plan objective(s)?	
	Yes	The regeneration works at Hollinswood directly contribute to the following Priority Plan objectives; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> We will regenerate those neighbourhoods in need and work hard to ensure that local people have access to suitable housing.
	Will the proposals impact on specific groups of people?	
	Yes	The residents of Hollinswood
TARGET COMPLETION/ DELIVERY DATE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> New Retail Units open: December 2015 New Activity Hub open: April 2016 Demolition of the existing retail unit's inc. flats above and construction of new car park/external works complete: April 2016. 	
FINANCIAL/VALUE FOR MONEY IMPACT	Yes	The capital programme includes a total allocation of £2,187k to fund the refurbishment of Hollinswood local centre and the construction of the Activity Hub for Adults with Learning Difficulties. In addition, the works to the underpass and Deepdale will be funded from the Pride in Your Community capital allocation for 2015/16. Financial advice and support will be provided throughout the project.
LEGAL ISSUES	Yes	The Council has the power to carry out regeneration in the ways detailed in this report. Any contracts must be awarded in compliance with the Council's Contract Procedure Rules and any European requirements. Legal advice will continue to be provided at appropriate times, particularly with regards to the property transactions.
OTHER IMPACTS, RISKS & OPPORTUNITIES	No	
IMPACT ON SPECIFIC WARDS	Yes	Nedge

PART B – ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

4. INFORMATION

- 4.1 Hollinswood is located approximately 1km from Telford Town Centre, within the Nedge Ward. It is accessed via three Roads; Deercote, Downmead and Dale Acre Way which form the major perimeter. Three independent car parks serve the centre and a number of footpaths cross through and around the local centre.
- 4.2 The local centre comprises of a supermarket, three retail units (hot food takeaway, hairdresser's salon and pharmacy) with three flats situated above, a community centre, public house and doctor's surgery. The majority of facilities/services are

owned and managed by Telford & Wrekin Council's Property Investment Portfolio (PIP). Two of the flats are privately owned as is the doctor's surgery.

- 4.3 Hollinswood Local Centre was constructed in the 1970's and consists of a rectangular shaped square of inward facing shops and community facilities. It is viewed by the local Parish as unattractive, outdated, unsafe, subject to vandalism, and is set back from the main roads and through routes. The Woodcutter Public House (which has now been demolished) was also in a state of decline and its customers contributed to the problems of the area. These factors discourage business and safe pedestrian thoroughfare. The physical environment of the centre makes it a focus for many of the social and community problems in the area with growing issues of crime and anti social behaviour.
- 4.4 These concerns were evidenced in the 2011 'The Nedge Ward Profile' resident survey which collected views on the Borough and Ward as a place to live. The key issues from the survey were that:
- Whilst 76% of respondents were satisfied with their local area, this satisfaction level was low (21/33 wards) when compared to other Wards.
 - Only 50% of respondents felt the Council was making the area a better place to live.
- 4.5 In response to this, in March 2014, Full Council approved a £1m investment in the regeneration of the local centre as part of the 'Pride in Your Community' programme which seeks to significantly improve residential and employment areas including district centres and borough towns. Over the past few months, officers have been working cooperatively with Hollinswood residents, public sector partners, and businesses to develop proposals which will deliver major improvements to the area and improve linkages to Telford Town Centre.

Current Position

- 4.6 Negotiations with the tenants of the shops and owners of the three flats are close to completion. This will pay compensation to the flat owners and tenants for the surrender of their units. The shop tenants have all agreed to re locate to the new shops and surrender their existing leases and sign new agreements. The project architects are working closely with the owners of the shops to design new shop premises that will meet the needs of their businesses.
- 4.7 Negotiations are ongoing with the Parish Council to refurbish the community centre they have a lease on and ensure the building blends in with the new development. Telford Council has offered to grant a new 999 year lease in exchange for the Parish Council investing in the building. A scheme including alterations to the entrance, a small extension, refurbishment of the hall and toilets together with external cladding works are currently being estimated.
- 4.8 Tenders for the main building works closed on 6th February. Following detailed analysis and a value engineering exercise to ensure the scheme is affordable a contract within the funding envelope has been awarded to Paveaways. This contractor has been involved in other schemes of a similar nature and most recently

is delivering the Brookside community works. Site set up will start the week commencing 23 March 2015.

- 4.9 Prior to work starting a final consultation event will be held to display the latest plans and invite feedback on types of finishes and public realm works which will be undertaken.
- 4.10 Options around residential development which could potentially create around 7 units are being held back until completion of the main scheme which is the priority.

Pride in Your Community

- 4.11 Adjoining the site there is an underpass which links to the nearby school. This has been subject to vandalism and anti social activities. It is poorly lit and suffers from graffiti. Concerns were raised at the public consultation and it has been agreed to use Pride monies to remove the graffiti and apply anti graffiti paint, improve the lighting and re landscape the entrances.
- 4.12 Nearby Deepdale is benefiting from a pride project which will focus on the installation of a new parking area including lining of the new parking bays, installation of a new footway, removal of shrubs and repair of the steps.

5. IMPACT ASSESSMENT – ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

None

6. PREVIOUS MINUTES

CB-36

7. BACKGROUND PAPERS

None

Report prepared by Chris Goulson, Property & Design Service Delivery Manager

TELFORD & WREKIN COUNCIL

CABINET - 19 MARCH 2015

THE GOWER, GOWER STREET, ST GEORGES – UPDATE REPORT

REPORT OF ASSISTANT DIRECTOR: DEVELOPMENT, BUSINESS & EMPLOYMENT

LEAD CABINET MEMBER – CLLR SHAUN DAVIES

PART A – SUMMARY REPORT

1. SUMMARY

- 1.1 The former youth building which is owned by the Council has been closed for many years. It is a Victorian brick built building occupying a prominent roadside position on Gower Street, St Georges (See plan Appendix 1). The building is important to the history and heritage of St Georges and Telford and has been used for a variety of purposes over the years.
- 1.2 It has been subject to repeated vandalism and is in a poor condition requiring complete refurbishment. A range of uses has been considered and local residents and interested individuals volunteered to work together to form the Gower St Action Group in April 2014. Working with Ward Members and Council Officers members of the group carried out a number of successful on-site clean-up and consultation events. The group is now well established and has become formally constituted as the 'Gower Heritage and Enterprise' group. Its aims include the restoration of the Gower Street building bringing it back into community use and actively engaging and consulting with the community about its potential use in the future. The building has recently received grade II listed status.
- 1.3 The 2015/16 budget includes a capital provision of £650,000 to facilitate and contribute to the refurbishment of the building for a range of community uses to benefit local residents and various clubs and organisations.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 That Cabinet notes the approach being taken to the refurbishment of the former Gower Street Youth Club.**
- 2.2 That Cabinet delegates authority to the Assistant Director of Development, Business & Employment, in consultation with the lead Cabinet Member for Neighbourhood, Employment & Skills, to review and, if acceptable, approve the final business plan.**
- 2.3 That Cabinet delegates authority to the Assistant Director of Development, Business & Employment, in consultation with the lead Cabinet Member for Neighbourhood, Employment & Skills, to implement a programme of refurbishment and governance structure when an appropriate business plan is developed and agreed.**

3. SUMMARY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

COMMUNITY IMPACT	Do these proposals contribute to specific Priority Plan objective(s)?	
	Yes	The regeneration works at Gower Street directly contribute to the following Priority Plan objectives; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Housing Regeneration & Prosperity • Children & Young People • Active Lifestyles-Leisure & Culture • Community Protection & Cohesion
	Will the proposals impact on specific groups of people?	
	Yes	The residents of St Georges
TARGET COMPLETION/ DELIVERY DATE	Business Plan June 2015 Complete refurbishment works December 2015	
FINANCIAL/VALUE FOR MONEY IMPACT		The capital programme includes a one off allocation of £650k as a contribution towards the refurbishment cost of the Gower Street building. (£250k in 2015/16 and £400k in 2016/17). As detailed within this report, TWC officers will work with the Gower Street Action Group to develop a refurbishment plan for the building. Any costs over and above the capital allocation will have to be met from other funding streams and third party grants secured by the Action Group. The Action Group will also be responsible for developing a business plan which demonstrates the ongoing financial viability of the building as a community facility as the Council does not have any revenue funding available to support the ongoing running costs of the building. Finance advice and support will be provided as necessary JAC 270215
LEGAL ISSUES	Yes	No legal concerns arise out of the recommendations in this report. Cabinet has power to deal with land and property management matters in these circumstances (IR19.02.15)
OTHER IMPACTS, RISKS & OPPORTUNITIES	No	
IMPACT ON SPECIFIC WARDS	Yes	St Georges

PART B – ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

4. INFORMATION

4.1 **Governance/Use/Consultation**

A robust business plan together with efficient governance structure is essential to the future sustainability of the building. It is necessary to fully engage all groups and organisations in the area to understand the community aspirations for the building. This could possibly be led by the Gower Street Action Group whose aim is to restore the building and bring it back into community use. These then need to be translated into a fully costed refurbishment plan.

4.2 In conjunction with this, a business plan setting out running costs against potential income streams needs to be developed to demonstrate the viability of the proposed uses and business model.

4.3 To support and build on the previous consultation and engagement with residents, Ward Members commissioned a local survey in summer 2014. This was sent out to 750 randomly selected households who lived in the area near to Gower Street. There were 132 responses to the survey, with over 80% of responses citing it was either very, or quite important, that the building was reopened and used as a community facility and resource. When invited to give further comments, 30 respondents commented that it was a wonderful historic building that needs renovating, with a further 14 commenting that it was a great community resource and facility.

4.4 Local Ward Members organised the first meeting of the St Georges Partnership in December 2014, membership included Ward Members, Council Officers, Police, Schools, Telford College of Arts & Technology, Parish Council, Housing providers, local businesses and community groups. Whilst it was agreed St Georges has many good things to offer residents, it also has a number of significant challenges and it was agreed that the future of the Gower Street building should remain a priority.

4.5 **Refurbishment Works**

The capital allocation will make a significant contribution to the refurbishment of the building, car park and play areas. However there are several unknowns such as the exact extent of the damage, the possible presence of hidden asbestos and the standard of finishes and use the community will want the building to be used for. Such factors will influence how far the money goes and what elements of the building works are prioritised. Certain works such as repair to the roof to ensure the building is watertight can be done immediately but the majority of the works will be agreed once the use of the building is decided.

4.6 In light of the above, it is recommended that a series of meetings are set up and facilitated via the Gower Street Action Group to agree a way forward.

4.7 There may be other funding streams such as the SITA grant monies for projects up to £60,000 which may also be accessible to top up the budget for specific elements of the refurbishment.

4.8 **Pride in Your Community**

In addition to refurbishment of the Gower Street building, improvement works are planned in St Georges as part of the Pride in the Community programme. The Timbers/Gower Street Roundabout which is about 200 metres north of the building is programmed to have improved signage and markings together with new barriers. A similar improvement scheme is proposed south of the building at the Gower Street/Church Street mini roundabout. Both are earmarked for Spring 2015.

5. **IMPACT ASSESSMENT – ADDITIONAL INFORMATION**

None

6. **PREVIOUS MINUTES**

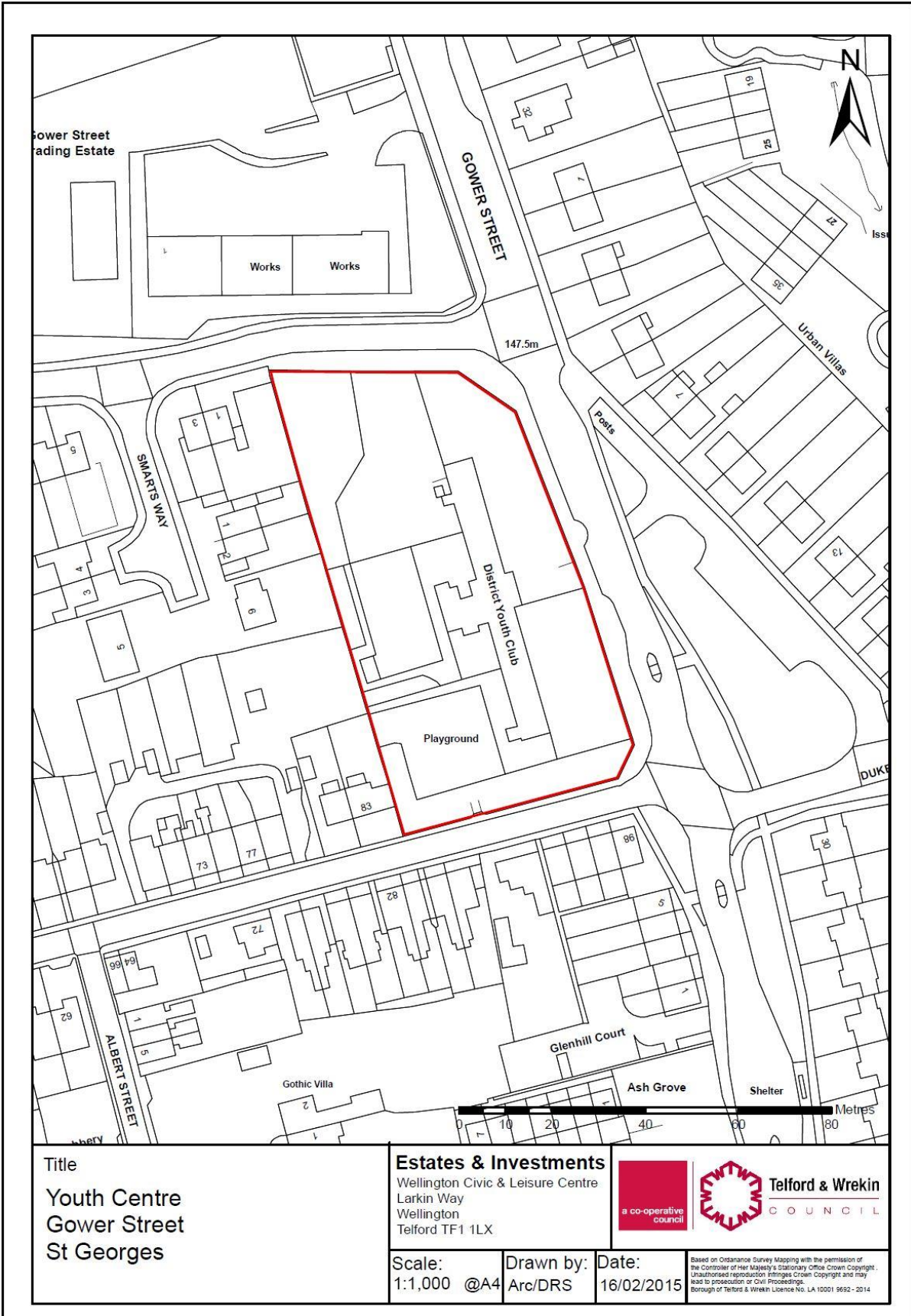
CB-75

7. **BACKGROUND PAPERS**

None

Report prepared by Chris Goulson, Service Delivery Manager, Tel: (01952) 384302

Appendix 1 – The Gower, Gower Street



<p>Title</p> <p>Youth Centre Gower Street St Georges</p>	<p>Estates & Investments Wellington Civic & Leisure Centre Larkin Way Wellington Telford TF1 1LX</p>		
<p>Scale: 1:1,000 @A4</p>	<p>Drawn by: Arc/DRS</p>	<p>Date: 16/02/2015</p>	<p><small>Based on Ordnance Survey Mapping with the permission of the Controller of Her Majesty's Stationary Office Crown Copyright. Unauthorised reproduction infringes Crown Copyright and may lead to prosecution or civil Proceedings. Borough of Telford & Wrekin Licence No. LA 10001 9692 - 2014</small></p>

TELFORD & WREKIN COUNCIL

CABINET - 19 MARCH 2015

PRIDE IN YOUR HIGH STREETS & LOCAL CENTRES

REPORT OF ASSISTANT DIRECTOR, DEVELOPMENT, BUSINESS & EMPLOYMENT

LEAD CABINET MEMBER – CLLR SHAUN DAVIES

PART A – SUMMARY REPORT

1. SUMMARY OF MAIN PROPOSALS

1.1. The Pride in Our High Streets & Local Centres Fund (hereafter referred to as the Fund) is comprised of two parts totalling £1m;

- a bidding pot (hereafter referred to as the Bidding Fund) of around £800k which will be made available for bids meeting the criteria set out in 5 below,
- a separate budget (hereafter referred to as the Innovation Fund) of around £200k which will be used by Telford & Wrekin Council to invest in promotions and activities to attract people to visit and use the local high streets and local centres, adding to the attraction of the Borough as a destination of choice for visitors.

1.2. It is proposed that the criteria for evaluating proposals submitted for the Bidding Fund will include:

- The creation or protection of jobs.
- Bringing redundant or empty properties back into economic use.
- Increasing footfall on the High Street, e.g. by introducing a new service.
- Making centres safer and more attractive places

Consideration will also be given to

- Innovation
- Sustainability
- Value for money
- The level of community engagement in, and support for, the project

1.3. The Bidding Fund will seek to make an equitable distribution of grants across the different High Streets and Local Centres in the Borough. No one High Street or Local Centre will be able to benefit from more than £100,000 of grants in total.

1.4. Applications for funding will be considered against the grant criteria by a team of business representatives and local authority officers with recommendations for funding, then being presented to Cabinet for consideration.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

That Cabinet:

- 2.1. Agree the process set out for allocating the Fund including the criteria for the Fund outlined in 5.1.7.
- 2.2. Agree the process for assessing applications including the establishment of an Assessment Panel who will evaluate applications and make recommendations on grant allocation to Cabinet for a decision.
- 2.3. Delegate responsibility to the Assistant Director, Development, Business & Employment to oversee the administration and implementation of the Fund
- 2.4. Delegate responsibility to the Assistant Director, Leisure, Culture & Facilities Management in conjunction with the Assistant Director, Development, Business & Employment and the Lead Cabinet Member to oversee the investment of the £200k in line with proposals in the Report.

3. SUMMARY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

COMMUNITY IMPACT	Do these proposals contribute to specific Co-Operative Council priority objective(s)?	
	Yes	The proposals within this report will contribute directly towards the following priorities: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Protect and create jobs as 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?	
	No	
TARGET COMPLETION / DELIVERY DATE	The scheme will open for applications during May 2015 with a deadline for submission of the end July 2015. Dependent upon the number of successful applications, there may be opportunity for subsequent applications in October 2015.	
FINANCIAL / VALUE FOR MONEY IMPACT	Yes	<p>£1m revenue funding is included in the budget strategy for 2015/16 to fund the Pride in Our High Streets & Local Centres Fund. A bidding pot of £800k will be created and a separate budget of £200k for TWC to invest in promotions and activities.</p> <p>The successful bidders into the bidding pot will be required to enter into a grant agreement which will cover</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the terms of the grant and the purpose for which it is approved, • the arrangements for the drawdown of funding, • the monitoring arrangements for the grant, • the arrangements for the repayment of grant funding

		<p>if it is unspent or used for purposes other than those agreed under the grant agreement.</p> <p>Finance support will be provided in the finalisation of the Grant Conditions, the evaluation of bids and the monitoring of successful grant bids.</p> <p>JAC 060215</p>
LEGAL ISSUES	Yes	<p>Any decision made by the Authority can be subject to challenge in respect of its reasonableness or lawfulness. Therefore a robust and transparent assessment procedure has been developed so as to avoid challenge of either the process or recommendations made by the Initial Assessment Panel and the decisions taken by the Cabinet. This should be supported by developing a Terms of Reference for the Initial Assessment Panel which should detail:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Who the key members of the Initial Assessment Panel will be • The roles and responsibilities of the Initial Assessment Panel • How the Initial Assessment Panel will operate (Governance) • The key processes for ensuring accountability, probity, transparency, compliance with legal obligations and value for money • How stakeholders can contribute to the work of the Initial Assessment Panel <p>Although the State Aid De Minimis principle is likely to apply in the vast majority of cases the assessment and award process will need to ensure that State Aid does not arise either directly or indirectly by the award of grant funding to individual organisations or joint ventures which could distort competition and affect trade by favouring certain undertakings.</p> <p>Legal Services have developed a standard form of grant agreement that should be used in each award of funding</p>
OTHER IMPACTS, RISKS & OPPORTUNITIES	Yes	<p>This investment will have a wide economic impact on the Borough in terms of regeneration and the development of new services. It will further trigger increased spend by local residents and visitors attracted by the new services and facilities available and the promotional activity.</p>
IMPACT ON SPECIFIC WARDS	Yes	<p>The initiative will impact on wards which include High Streets and / or Local Centres.</p>

PART B – ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

4. AIMS OF THE PRIDE IN YOUR HIGH STREETS & LOCAL CENTRES PROGRAMME

4.1. The Pride in Our High Streets & Local Centres initiative aims to deliver a programme of physical and social regeneration across the Borough to support the Council's business supporting, business winning agenda and its intention to promote the concept of a "Living High Street". The programme also shows a commitment by the Council that it is addressing the issues that are important to local people.

The Pride in Our High Streets & Local Centres initiative will complement the recent Pride in Your Community Programme. It will provide a grant scheme to fund a wide variety of projects across the Borough's High Streets and Local Centres. It will also compliment and extend the focus on improving vitality of our key centres, which is being piloted in Wellington and Dawley. The scheme provides an opportunity for voluntary, public and private sector organisations to access funding that will help to improve buildings and facilities, organise events and purchase items for projects within the Borough. This funding aims to support projects that are of community or strategic importance in terms of high street and local centre regeneration and that have potential to support or create local employment opportunities.

4.2. The Pride in Our High Streets & Local Centres initiative also aims to support the delivery of the Council's priority objectives. Applications will need to demonstrate how the project will deliver outcomes that support the delivery of one or more of the following priorities as well as meeting the detailed criteria set out in 5.1.7 below;

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

4.3. Telford & Wrekin Council will be looking for projects that are innovative and sustainable.

4.4. As well as providing an opportunity for larger, well established organisations to access funding, the initiative also aims to support small community and voluntary sector organisations by providing an opportunity to apply for smaller grants. It is envisaged that this will enable small or new organisations to develop their ideas and grow in confidence and expertise in accessing funding and delivering projects which should assist with their longer term sustainability.

4.5. The initiative will seek to unlock the creativity and energy of young people in the community by promoting the involvement of young people and youth groups, both in the development of proposals and bidding for funds, and in the delivery of projects

themselves. This will align with the objectives of the Youth Pledge currently being developed by Telford & Wrekin Council.

4.6. The Fund consists of two elements totalling £1m.

- A Bidding Fund of around £800k will be made available for applications meeting the criteria set out in 5.1.7 below.
- A separate Innovation Fund of around £200k which will be used to support interesting and exciting projects and activities that will help promote our borough towns as destinations in their own right.

Part 5 of this report outlines proposals for the operation of the Bidding Fund. Part 6 outlines proposals for operation of the Innovation Fund.

5. PRIDE IN YOUR HIGH STREETS & LOCAL CENTRES – BIDDING FUND

5.1. Application for grants from the Bidding Fund

5.1.1 Who can apply

The Bidding Fund will be made available for applications from the groups below.

- Parish Councils
- Town Councils
- Regeneration Partnerships
- Businesses and Social Enterprises
- Charities and the Voluntary Sector

Note the following:

- Organisations are able to make joint bids. Telford & Wrekin Council believes that collaboration will yield benefits both in terms of the scale of what is achievable and in the level of community involvement, so joint bids will be considered favourably.
- Organisations (or groups of organisations) are able to make more than one application.
- Applications from individuals or groups of individuals will not be accepted.

Council Officers will be available to offer advice on appropriate organisational constitutions if required.

5.1.2 Application milestones

The Bidding Fund will open for applications during May 2015 with a deadline for submission of the end July 2015. Initial evaluation will take place during August 2015, allowing the Funding Advisory Panel to sit during September 2015.

Announcements regarding successful applicants are anticipated by the end of September 2015.

5.1.3 Minimum and maximum grants

Applicants can apply for grants up to a maximum of £100,000. No one High Street or Local Centre will be able to benefit from more than £100,000 of grants in total. In line with our desire to support smaller organisations, the minimum grant allocated will be set at £5,000.

5.1.4 Match funding

Applicants will be expected to fund at least the first 10% of any project cost. Applicants will not be expected at time of application to be able to prove the match funding is available, but applicants will be expected to explain how they will acquire the funding should they be successful and receive a funding allocation.

5.1.5 Type of project allowed

The Bidding Fund will be classified as revenue, providing great flexibility regarding the types of projects that will be considered.

5.1.6 Scope of allowable projects

Projects must deliver outcomes that link directly to a specific High Street or Local Centre in Telford & Wrekin Borough.

5.1.7 Project evaluation guidelines

Bidders will be encouraged to put forward bids that meet as many of the following criteria as possible.

1. Create or protect jobs
2. Increase footfall into the local High Street or Local Centre.
3. Bring redundant or empty units back into economic use.
4. Bring a new service or function to a High Street or Local Centre
5. Promote 5 Ways to Well-being
6. Help make the High Street or Local Centre safer
7. Help extend the “established” operating hours of the High Street or Local Centre (for instance, during the evenings or at weekends)
8. Help make the High Street / Local Centre cleaner and more pleasant
9. Encourage innovation and entrepreneurship
10. Involved local young people in the bidding process or will encourage them to become involved in subsequent delivery

Projects are also expected to be innovative in their objectives for the High Street or Local Centre, and offer a model for long-term sustainability. They must offer value for money.

Finally, projects will be evaluated on the degree of community / public support the project has received or is likely to attract.

5.1.8 Support for Applicants

Support for applicants will be provided in terms of guidance on how to complete the application form and the types of information required, and about the evaluation process in general. Telford & Wrekin Council will arrange workshops where organisations can meet with Council Officers and get help.

Support from Council Officers for actually completing application forms or pre-evaluation quality checks on potential submission material will not be provided on the grounds of impartiality.

5.1.9 Materials for Applicants

A pack containing guidelines for applicants will be issued to all applicants describing the evaluation criteria, the documentary and financial evidence required and the evaluation process itself. An application form template will be provided.

5.2. Evaluation of submitted applications for funding

5.2.1 Initial Assessment Panel

An initial review of applications against the criteria listed in 5.1.7 above will be made by an Initial Assessment Panel made up of T&WC Officers and representatives of the business sector (including the Chair of the Telford Business Board). This review stage will indicate to Cabinet how well applications are structured and how well they meet the key criteria. The Initial Assessment Panel will make recommendations to Cabinet for the grant of funding for consideration. A Terms of Reference document will be provided to Initial Assessment Panel members.

5.2.2 Cabinet Review

It will be the task of Telford & Wrekin Council's Cabinet to review the recommendations made by the Initial Assessment Panel and make decisions about which projects should be taken forward and allocated funding. A Terms of Reference document will be provided to Cabinet members.

5.2.3 Conflict of Interest

Members of the Initial Assessment Panel and Cabinet will be asked to declare any potential conflict of interest relating to applications that are to be considered at the start of each evaluation meeting.

5.2.4 Evaluation Programme

The evaluation process will take place during September 2015.

5.2.5 Funding Distribution

Grants are to be distributed between High Streets and Local Centres on an equitable basis. The focus will be on the following recognised High Street / Local Centres¹:

Dawley
Donnington
Hadley
Ironbridge
Madeley
Newport
Oakengates

¹ With regard to centres the adopted Telford & Wrekin Core Strategy states that the focus will be Telford Town Centre and the district centres of Dawley, Donnington, Hadley, Madeley, Oakengates and Wellington. These borough towns will meet the local needs for shopping, services and facilities. Policy CS5 identifies that the six district centres will be the focus of new development which serves the needs of their respective communities with a mix of retail, recreation, leisure and culture, housing and employment uses. Smaller centres will provide more accessible local services and small scale community services to meet people's day to day needs. For the purposes of this Fund, we have recognised Ironbridge, Newport and St Georges as High Streets / Local Centres to be included.

St Georges
Wellington

On this basis no one High Street or Local Centre will be allowed to benefit from more than £100k in total.

Telford & Wrekin's Cabinet Council's Cabinet will ensure this fair allocation of funding. If they are not able to do this, for instance, if there are insufficient projects submitted relating to one or more High Streets or Local Centres, the unallocated funds can be retained by Telford & Wrekin Council and added to the budget for distribution by Telford & Wrekin Council as described in 6 below, or used for a later round of applications.

6. PRIDE IN YOUR HIGH STREETS & LOCAL CENTRES – INNOVATION FUND

- 6.1. The £200k Innovation Fund is designed to support our High Streets and Local Centres as destinations in their own right by celebrating their distinctiveness and highlighting their individuality. This will be achieved through the promotion and backing of interesting and exciting projects that will help to integrate them more closely into the Borough and link them together.
- 6.2. The Innovation Fund will be used to provide additional activity and animation in the high streets which celebrate the unique character and appeal of distinctive public spaces. These will compliment the existing facilities and provide an additional draw to the town which benefits the local economy. Activities will be drawn up in partnership with the community, inviting their input to the content, themes and occasion.
- 6.3. Projects and activities supported by the Innovation Fund will integrate into and link with existing, recognised events in order to offer an enhanced promotion of the Borough and all its various assets. This will help encourage a wider range of visitors, both local and regional.
- 6.4. The Innovation Fund links to and complements the Arts & Culture Events Programme managed by Telford & Wrekin Council's Arts & Culture team. Projects supported will be integrated into the framework of key activities which are delivered on an annual basis. They will also be expected to complement the existing 'fringe events' in the borough towns that already add depth and richness to the borough offer (e.g. Wellington Literary Festival, Oakengates Carnival, etc.)
- 6.5. Groups and organisations intending to run an event will be required to submit an expression of interest (EoI) outlining their concept. EoI's involving multiple partners will be considered favourably. EoI's will be used by the Arts & Culture team to determine the level of alignment with the framework mentioned above which will help them link up the applicants with other event teams and sources of support.
- 6.6. Events supported by the Innovation fund will be encouraged to link up with the delivery of projects that win funding through the Bidding Fund. Events that link up with projects in this way will be considered favourably.

6.7. The Innovation Fund can also be used by the Arts & Culture Service to support local communities to strengthen their existing offers and enhance local events. This could be done in a number of ways:

- through advice and/or joint procurement of event content and artists
- for training and up skilling volunteers and event organisers
- support for the promotion and marketing of activities and events on council social media, websites and in facilities and buildings
- for community and schools workshops to create content with the community members and get them engaged
- for the acquisition of equipment or resources to enhance an event e.g. sound and lighting, materials for costumes and effects, etc.

7. IMPACT ASSESSMENT – ADDITIONAL INFORMATION – NONE

8. PREVIOUS MINUTES – NONE

9. BACKGROUND PAPERS – NONE

Report prepared by Steve Hill, Business Support & Skills Team Leader, Telephone: 01952 384418.

TELFORD & WREKIN COUNCIL

CABINET - 19 MARCH 2015

MADELEY NEIGHBOURHOOD DEVELOPMENT PLAN: PROCEED TO MAKING

REPORT OF THE ASSISTANT DIRECTOR: PLANNING SPECIALIST

LEAD CABINET MEMBER: COUNCILLOR CHARLES SMITH

PART A) – SUMMARY REPORT

1.0 SUMMARY OF MAIN PROPOSALS

- 1.1 Madeley Town Council submitted their Neighbourhood Development Plan (NDP) with supporting documents to the Council in February 2014. The documentation was checked in accordance with the authority's statutory duties to be able to commence a 6-week publicising period followed by an Independent Examination in June 2014.
- 1.2 The appointed Independent Examiner (the Examiner), John Parmiter, conducted the Examination including a public hearing and submitted the Examiners report to the Council in June including a recommendation to proceed to Referendum, subject to a number of modifications. Those modifications were applied to the NDP and Cabinet agreed to proceed to formal Referendum, in October 2014.
- 1.3 The purpose of this report is to recommend that Cabinet 'Make' the Madeley NDP part of the Development Plan for Telford & Wrekin following a successful Referendum on 29th January 2015. This will mean that the policies within the Madeley NDP will be considered alongside national and borough wide planning policy in the determination of planning applications within the NDP area.

2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

That Cabinet agree to Make the Madeley Neighbourhood Development Plan

3.0 SUMMARY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

COMMUNITY IMPACT	Do these proposals contribute to specific Priority Plan objective(s)?	
	Yes	Co-operative Council: - Involving local people more in planning and running services - As a Council, supporting our community better and encouraging people to do more to help their own communities
	Will the proposals impact on specific groups of people?	
	Yes	Neighbourhood Plans establish a formal statutory planning framework for future development within a designated area. Production of the Madeley NDP has involved the whole of the Madeley Parish community through consultation where people have had the opportunity to provide formal comments on policies which will affect the future development of their area, including a 6-week formal publicising consultation period. The Referendum stage provided an opportunity for the whole Madeley Parish to vote on the plan prior to formally making the Plan.

TARGET COMPLETION/ DELIVERY DATE	Subject to Cabinet approval, once the Madeley NDP is Made it will be used as part of the Development Plan for the Borough.	
FINANCIAL/VALUE FOR MONEY IMPACT	Yes	The costs associated with the development and approval of the Madeley Neighbourhood Development Plan, including the costs of the referendum, have been funded from DCLG grants made available to Telford and Wrekin Council for this purpose. JAC 090215
LEGAL ISSUES		<p>Because the referendum has now taken place and more than half of those voting have voted in favour of the NDP, the LPA must Make the NDP as soon as reasonably practicable unless it considers that the Making of the plan would breach or otherwise be incompatible with any European Union obligation or any of the Convention Rights within the meaning of the Human Rights Act 1998.</p> <p>If the recommendation is agreed and the NDP is Made, there are further statutory procedural requirements on the Council which include an obligation to publish its decision and its reasons for that decision. The Council also has to publish on its website the NDP as made and details of where and when it can be inspected. IR 060215</p>
OTHER IMPACTS, RISKS & OPPORTUNITIES		Opportunities associated with the NDP include a strengthening of local engagement in the planning process and in the development of the Shaping Places Local Plan, including acceptance of proposed development in the area. A successfully made NDP raises the profile of the Council locally and nationally.
IMPACT ON SPECIFIC WARDS		Cuckoo Oak Ward (Councillors Alan Mackenzie and Derek White), Madeley Ward (Councillors Gill Green and Paul Watling), Woodside Ward (Councillors Kevin Guy and Rae Evans)

4.0 PART B) – ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

4.1 Background

- 4.1.1 In February 2011 Telford & Wrekin Council and Madeley Town Council successfully bid for Madeley to become one of the government's Frontrunners in neighbourhood planning. The Madeley Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group was subsequently formed and has led development of the NDP through a number of key stages. Under the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 Telford & Wrekin Council as LPA has a statutory duty to assist communities in the preparation of the NDP through the various statutory stages in the process.
- 4.1.2 In accordance with the 1990 Act and the Neighbourhood Planning Regulations, Madeley Town Council submitted their NDP on 11th February 2014 for Telford & Wrekin Council to complete the necessary checks and proceed to the next stages of publication, examination and referendum. The NDP, along with supporting documents are available at www.telford.gov.uk/madeleyndp.
- 4.1.3 The Examination version of the Madeley NDP was publicised from 24th February to 8th April 2014 inviting comments from the public and stakeholders. An Independent Examiner was appointed, John Parmiter, to review whether the Plan met the Basic Conditions, other legislative requirements and whether the Plan should proceed to Referendum. A public hearing was held on 6th June and the Examiners Report was received in June recommending the Plan, as modified in accordance with his report met all relevant legal requirements and could proceed to referendum. This was agreed by Cabinet on the 16th October 2014.
- 4.1.4 The Madeley NDP Referendum was held on the 29th January 2015 receiving a majority 'yes' vote. The result was 94% of valid votes in favour and 6% against. Overall turnout at the Referendum was 16.57% from a 12,126 electorate with 4% of turnout voting at a polling station.

4.2 Considerations for Cabinet

- 4.2.1 The LPA can decline to Make the Plan if they consider that it would breach any EU obligations or any Convention rights. It is not considered that the Madeley NDP breaches any EU obligations or Convention Rights. Therefore, following the result of the Referendum, it is recommended that the Madeley NDP is Made by Telford & Wrekin Council. This will allow the Madeley NDP to be given full weight in the determination of planning applications within the Parish of Madeley alongside national and borough-wide adopted policy.

4.3 Following Making

- 4.3.1 Once the Madeley NDP is Made it will be published on the Telford & Wrekin Council website and used in the determination of planning applications for the Neighbourhood Plan area i.e. the Parish of Madeley.

4.4 Conclusion

- 4.4.1 This is the first NDP in Telford & Wrekin to reach the end of the process and become part of the Development Plan. It is currently only one of 74 NDP's out of a total 1310 in England to reach this stage and once it is Made it will be one of only 32 Made NDP's in England. This provides a model for the other four Town & Parish Councils (Ercall Magna PC, Newport TC, Waters Upton PC and Stirchley & Brookside PC) who are currently at different stages of developing their NDPs.

5.0 IMPACT ASSESSMENT – ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

- 5.1 Once the Madeley NDP is Made, it will become part of the statutory planning framework for the Borough.
- 5.2 In accordance with legal requirements, planning applications should be determined in accordance with the provisions of relevant Development Plans which, for the Madeley Parish, would include the NDP as well as the Core Strategy and saved policies from the Wrekin Local Plan. This is unless material considerations indicate otherwise, meaning the NDP policies must be balanced with other considerations as part of the decision making process undertaken by the LPA.

6.0 PREVIOUS MINUTES

- 6.1 Application for the Designation of a Neighbourhood Area – Madeley (Cabinet, 18th October 2012)
- 6.2 Submission of Madeley Neighbourhood Development Plan (Cabinet, March 27th 2014)
- 6.3 Madeley Neighbourhood Development Plan: Consideration of Examiner's recommendations and proposed modifications prior to Referendum (Cabinet, October 16th 2014)

7.0 BACKGROUND PAPERS

Madeley Neighbourhood Development Plan (February 2015)
Madeley Neighbourhood Development Plan: Referendum Version (August 2014)
Madeley Neighbourhood Development Plan: Independent Examiner's Report (June 2014), including the list of proposed modifications.
Madeley Neighbourhood Development Plan: Examination Version (February 2014)
Basic Conditions Statement (February 2014)
Consultation Statement (February 2014)
Regulation 14 Consultation (February 2014)
Historic Conservation Assessment (February 2014)

Evidence base Summary (February 2014)

The Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004, Regulation 9
Screening Determination – Madeley Neighbourhood Plan

Available at www.telford.gov.uk/madeleyndp

Report prepared by Clare Francis, Project Officer, Environment & Planning Policy
Telephone: 01952 384224

TELFORD & WREKIN COUNCIL

CABINET - 19 MARCH 2015

UPDATE ON SUPERFAST TELFORD BROADBAND PROGRAMME

REPORT OF ASSISTANT DIRECTOR: DEVELOPMENT, BUSINESS & EMPLOYMENT

LEAD CABINET MEMBER – CLLR CHARLES SMITH

PART A – SUMMARY REPORT

1. SUMMARY OF MAIN PROPOSALS

- 1.1 In July 2014, Cabinet approved funding for the Superfast Telford Broadband Programme as part of the Broadband Delivery UK (BDUK) £250m Phase 2 Superfast Extension Programme (SEP).

This Programme is part of the government's £1 billion national broadband delivery strategy, which aims to provide superfast broadband (over 24Mbps) to 95% of the UK by 2017 and basic broadband (at least 2Mbps) for all by 2016.

This report provides an update on the Superfast Telford broadband programme which aims to provide Superfast Broadband to at least 96% of residential and business premises across the borough.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 **That Cabinet notes the programme delivery dates, scope of intervention and the process for establishing a delivery plan for eligible areas**
- 2.2 **Cabinet delegates authority to the Assistant Director; Development, Business & Employment to take all actions necessary to finalise the funding package required to deliver the programme**
- 2.3 **Cabinet delegates authority to the Assistant Director; Development, Business & Employment to sign and execute any documentation necessary, including, but not limited to, awarding the contract to the preferred bidder**

3. SUMMARY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

COMMUNITY IMPACT	Do these proposals contribute to specific Priority Plan objective(s)?	
	Yes	Protect and create jobs as a Business Winning and Business Supporting Council.
	Will the proposals impact on specific groups of people?	

	No	
TARGET COMPLETION/ DELIVERY DATE	Contract signature: Mobilisation: Programme start: Programme completion:	27 March 2015 April to September 2015 September 2015 onwards June 2017
FINANCIAL/ VALUE FOR MONEY IMPACT	Yes	There is a capital allocation of £4m to deliver the Superfast Telford Broadband Programme. An announcement was made on the 29 January that The Marches LEP would receive an additional allocation through the LEP Growth Deal. It is anticipated that £1m of the additional funding will be available to fund the Telford Superfast Broadband Programme although this is yet to be confirmed. If received, the LEP Growth Deal funding will be used to displace TWC prudential borrowing. JAC 27.02.15
LEGAL ISSUES	Yes	Compliance with the Public Contracts Regulations is assured through the use of the central Government Framework Agreement, enabling the Council to procure the project through a Call-Off Contract. Central Government has obtained the necessary EU clearance, in relation to State Aid compliance, and the Council will operate in accordance with Central Government requirements. The Council's Constitution would ordinarily require a contract of this value to be sealed by legal services, however, due to practical issues with the likely preferred bidder executing the contract as a deed within the required timescales approval is sought to execute the contract under hand. EH 10.02.15
OTHER IMPACTS, RISKS & OPPORTUNITIES	No	
IMPACT ON SPECIFIC WARDS	No	As this report is for noting only there are no ward implications

PART B – ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

4. INFORMATION

Background

- 4.1 The key objectives of the Superfast Telford Programme are to:
- improve access to services for those that live and work in the borough recognising the increasingly important role that ICT plays in daily life
 - increase home based employment opportunities and encourage entrepreneurship
 - support our young people and the services that assist them

- support the digital economy for consumers in rural areas
- improve business productivity and access to global markets through the development of new and more efficient models
- assist in the reduction of operational costs for SMEs
- act as a unique selling point for inward investment, particularly in key sectors
- support economic growth and job creation

Intervention and Contract Procurement

- 4.3 In July 2014, Cabinet granted delegated authority to the Director for Development, Business and Customer Service in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Housing, Development & Borough Towns to procure a supplier using the BDUK Call Off framework.
- 4.4 Alternative procurement options were considered at an early stage, such as a new open (OJEU) procurement, however these would have been resource intensive and significant delays to delivery would have been incurred.
- 4.5 A number of checkpoints had to be completed prior to issue of a tender to secure approval to proceed from the BDUK Assurance Board. These were required to ensure compliance with EU Regulations and they have been successfully completed by the project team.
- 4.6 An Open Market Review was undertaken in 2014 to establish existing and planned (next 3 years) commercial coverage of broadband services in Telford and Wrekin by all broadband infrastructure providers. Data from the Review was used to identify those areas of the Borough that would be eligible for intervention and two maps were drawn up showing the areas eligible for both Basic Broadband and Superfast Broadband. Copies of the intervention maps are attached at appendix 1. The areas eligible for intervention are shown as White on these maps. The number of premises eligible for intervention are:

	Number of Premises	% of Total
Total Premises	75,237	100%
Total Premises in Out Of Scope Area (i.e. not eligible for intervention as have existing or planned coverage in place)	64,273	85%
Total Premises In-Scope For NGA Superfast Intervention (Shown as white on attached maps)	10,221	14%
Total Premises In-Scope For Basic Broadband Intervention (Shown as white on attached maps)	743	1%

- 4.7 A 30 day State Aid Public Consultation took place in October 2014 which provided residents, businesses and suppliers with the opportunity to comment on the Councils interpretation of the potential intervention areas for superfast broadband. Using BDUK compliance guidance, communications on the consultation included direct e-marketing and communications activity including social media. All relevant information was available on the Superfast pages of the Council website and a business survey was issued to the 4000+ database of Telford and Wrekin businesses.
- 4.8 The Invitation to tender was issued on the 1 December 2014 with a return date of the 20 February 2015. Contract signature is scheduled to take place with the successful supplier on 27 March 2015. The supplier has requested that the Council agree to sign the contracts rather than execute them as a deed as this is much simpler and more efficient for them due to signatory availability.

Delivery Programme

- 4.9 Following contract signature there will be a period of mobilisation, with surveys and detailed design to start within 6 months of the supplier being commissioned under the terms of the contract.
- 4.10 The Superfast Telford programme is part of a significant national scheme and there is now only one active supplier within the BDUK Framework. This means that a number of Local Authorities will be engaged in procurement at the same time as Telford, which will have an inevitable impact on delivery timescales.

Current key programme dates are:

Contract signature:	27 March 2015
Mobilisation:	April to September 2015
Programme start:	September 2015 onwards
Programme completion:	June 2017

Delivery Plan

- 4.11 As part of the supplier contract discussions, Telford & Wrekin Council have had limited opportunity to influence the Delivery Plan for roll out of the programme. It is a BDUK requirement that the supplier develops a plan for roll out that achieves maximum coverage and is the best value for money whilst being commercially viable. Any requests made for prioritisation are a secondary consideration. In view of this, the Council has taken into account feedback received during consultation and has provided the following preferences:

Telford54 – strategic commercial site for inward investment with existing businesses and land for potential businesses

Ironbridge Gorge World Heritage Site – core to the visitor economy and the destination as a place to live

Southwater – a £250m development which aims to develop a vibrant and sustainable heart for Telford Town Centre - including a night time economy
Lawley – a strategic housing site (3300 new houses / approx. 1000 built)
Lightmoor – a strategic housing site (750 new houses / approx. 450 built)

- 4.12 The supplier Delivery Plan will be submitted as part of the bid submission due to be received on 23 February. This will break down delivery into phases, showing the postcodes that are included in each. As with any major infrastructure works the programme will be subject to a number of unknowns that may impact on the delivery timetable.

Demand Stimulation through marketing and communications

- 4.13 The promotion of Superfast Broadband and its benefits are essential in order to stimulate demand across the borough and thus secure a revenue receipt for all high speed take up above an agreed percentage take up per cabinet. Typically the receipt applies to any take up above 20% of the overall intervention area which typically equates to around £16 per premise.
- 4.14 A robust marketing and communications plan with supporting resource will be put in place and all of the Councils existing channels of communication with residents and businesses will be used to:-
- Raise awareness of the programme and superfast broadband
 - Communicate the Delivery Plan
 - Encourage the take up of superfast broadband

The marketing and communications plan will target the following stakeholders:-

- Residents
- Businesses
- MPs/Councillors/Parish & Town Councils

Key activities include:-

- Developing a programme brand
- Launch event (June)
- Press and PR activity linked to key programme milestones
 - Contract signature (March)
 - Mobilisation (April to September)
 - Programme start (September +)
- E-marketing and stakeholder engagement through GovDelivery
- Website development
 - Phase 1 – Holding pages with basic information and FAQ's (March)
 - Phase 2 – Fully functional self-serve information / who gets what, where and when (June)
- Social media – 'Superfast Telford' Twitter account
- Targeted advertising (off and online)
- Branding delivery using printed marketing material e.g. 'Superfast Telford Enabled' cabinet stickers and 'Delivering Superfast Telford' works signage etc.
- BDUK/Supplier collaborative marketing e.g. door knocks and drops

- 4.15 National best practice models around developing a Digital Champions network are also currently being reviewed to run alongside the marketing and communications activity. They vary across programmes but essentially engage with key stakeholders in an area, particularly if they are already proactive in lobbying for Superfast Broadband, so that they can encourage their communities to take up superfast broadband once it has been delivered. A programme may also link into existing ICT based initiatives and training programmes for businesses and residents that are delivered by the Council and its partners.

Governance

- 4.16 The governance arrangements for the programme are summarised in the table below:

4.17

Name	Purpose	Membership	Frequency
Superfast Telford Project Board	Strategic: To monitor, review and challenge progress, provide strategic direction and cover relevant decision points	Director/Assistant Director Programme Manager BDUK Project Director Supplier Strategic Lead	Quarterly (1 month after QTR finish)
Superfast Telford Project Meeting	Operational: To review the suppliers overall performance and delivery of the contract	Programme Manager Supplier Operational Lead Highways Planning Finance Communications	Monthly

5. IMPACT ASSESSMENT – ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Financial Comment

Capital funding of £4m has been allocated to deliver the Superfast Telford Broadband Programme.

Since the Cabinet report in July 2014, an additional allocation from LEP Growth Deal funding has been announced. The allocation is to be confirmed, but it is anticipated that circa £1m will be available to fund the Superfast Telford Broadband Programme. If received, the LEP Growth Deal funding will displace TWC Prudential Borrowing. The overall funding allocation for the programme will remain at £4m.

6. **PREVIOUS MINUTES**

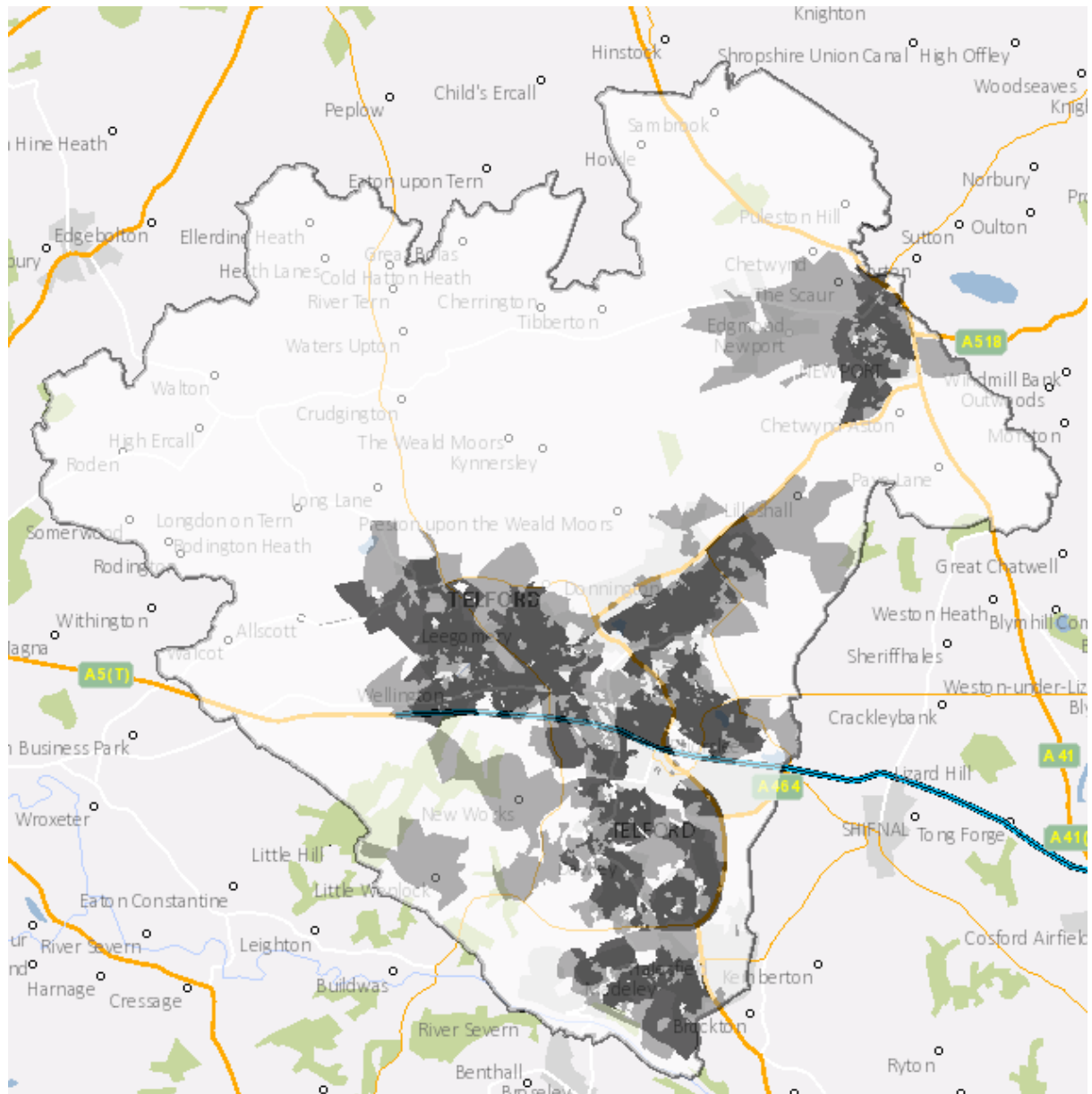
Cabinet meeting held on 24 July 2014: Minute number CB-23

7. **BACKGROUND PAPERS**

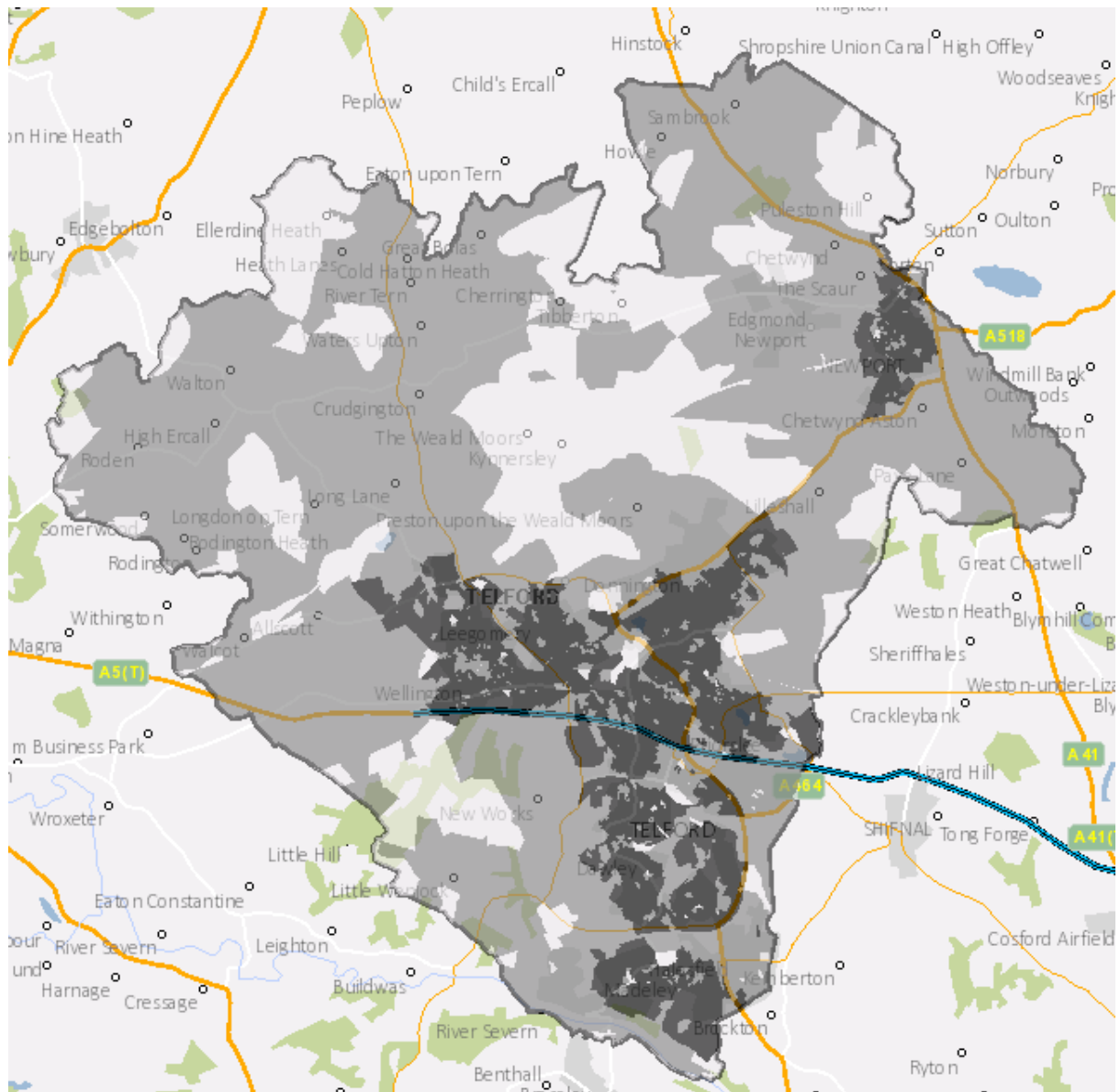
None

Report prepared by Kathy Mulholland (Investment Team Leader) and Claire Critchell (Broadband Programme Manager) Telephone: 01952 567557

Appendix 1 – Eligible areas – Intervention Plans Superfast Broadband – White Intervention Areas



Basic Broadband – White Intervention Areas



TELFORD & WREKIN COUNCIL

CABINET - 19th MARCH 2015

AFC TELFORD UTD DEVELOPMENT REPORT

REPORT OF ASSISTANT DIRECTOR: LEISURE, CULTURE AND FACILITIES MANAGEMENT AND ASSISTANT DIRECTOR: DEVELOPMENT BUSINESS AND EMPLOYMENT

LEAD CABINET MEMBER: CLLR SHAUN DAVIES

PART A) – SUMMARY REPORT

1. SUMMARY OF MAIN PROPOSALS

- 1.1. The purpose of this report is to update Cabinet Members in respect of the current partnership work with AFC Telford, appraise Cabinet Members as to potential future opportunities and to seek Cabinet endorsement for the commitment of Council resources as detailed within the report.
- 1.2. The Council and AFC Telford have a history of successful collaborative working which has brought about significant benefits for both the club and the wider community including:
 - The Men's Health programme
 - Learning Through Football programme
 - Football History and Memories project
 - Community Football and Sports outreach programme
 - Youth engagement activities
 - Arleston community work
 - Telford Loyalty Card
- 1.3. AFC Telford are now seeking a formal commitment from the Council to be part of a project team to develop plans for the extension of the AFC Telford Learning Centre and to explore other leisure related development opportunities, such as the provision of squash courts, for the wider site.
- 1.4. The club have requested that the capital receipt from the sale of the Bucks Head Pub £279k (after costs) is made available to the project team and that this be used as match funding to lever in additional external funding.

- 1.5 The opportunity also exists to combine Council and club ambitions to further improve community leisure facilities and opportunities within south Telford by extending the remit of the project group to develop a business case for the creation of a ‘South Telford Football Hub’. The football hub would provide sporting, education and social facilities, improve the long term sustainability of the Council’s Ski and Snowboard Centre and help the club extend its outreach work into south Telford.
- 1.6 It is considered that working collaboratively would bring about maximum benefit for the community by ensuring that any new provision would be complimentary to the existing borough facility mix, enhance existing and enable the development of new club based community projects.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

2.1 That Cabinet supports the development of a joint project group comprising of representatives from AFC Telford Utd and the Council to further develop plans, business cases and external funding bids to enhance community and club sport, leisure and learning facilities.

2.2 That, subject to 2.3 below, Cabinet delegates authority to the Assistant Director: Development, Business & Employment in consultation with the Assistant Director: Leisure, Culture and Facilities, the Cabinet Member for Neighbourhood, Employment & Skills and the Cabinet Member for Resources to commit capital expenditure of up to £279k to support projects in line with those referred to in this report upon agreement of an acceptable business plan.

2.3 That Cabinet recommends full Council to make the necessary changes to the approved capital programme and revenue budget once arrangements have been finalised to reflect the capital and revenue implications outlined in this report.

3. SUMMARY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

COMMUNITY IMPACT	Do these proposals contribute to specific Co-Operative Council priority objective(s)?	
	Yes	Improve the health and wellbeing of our communities and address health inequalities. Improve local people’s prospects through education and skills
	Will the proposals impact on specific groups of people?	
	No	Particular benefits for children and young people.
TARGET	It is anticipated that the project team would be	

COMPLETION/DELIVERY DATE	formed with immediate effect and that a business plan would be developed within 6months and physical improvements delivered within within 18months.	
FINANCIAL/VALUE FOR MONEY IMPACT		<p>The Council received a capital receipt of £279k (net of costs) from the sale of the Bucks Head Public House in 2013/14 which is held for re-investment within the PIP. At the time of the sale, informal discussions were held with AFC Telford about the possibility of using the capital receipt as part funding towards the cost of future developments with AFC Telford subject to the development of a suitable business case that made good the income shortfall to the Council's Property Investment Portfolio.</p> <p>The ongoing revenue cost to the Council of a capital expenditure commitment of £279k is around £15.5k pa. Therefore, the Council will need to receive a return of this amount from the use of the receipt either in the form of reduced currently budgeted costs or an income share or alternatively the Council will be increasing its budget shortfall by this amount which will necessitate further savings from other services of £15.5k pa.</p>
LEGAL ISSUES	No	There are no direct legal issues arising from this report, however, legal advice will be given regarding any agreements needed should it be considered appropriate to formalise the working group. EH 27.2.15
EQUALITY & DIVERSITY	No	
IMPACT ON SPECIFIC WARDS	Yes	The proposed improvement to existing and development of new facilities will have a borough wide impact.
OTHER IMPACTS, RISKS & OPPORTUNITIES	Yes	Associated opportunities and risks will be considered as part of the business planning process.

PART B) – ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

4. INFORMATION

- 4.1 The facilities on the New Bucks Head site include the football stadium, a 5'a-side football facility and the AFC Telford Utd Learning Centre. The Learning Centre is home to the AFC Telford operational team, the Council's Learning through Football programme and Men's Health programme.
- 4.2 In 2010 the Council and AFC Telford entered into a 150 year peppercorn lease in respect of the New Bucks Head Stadium. Subsequent issues, associated primarily with access to the West Stand which is not in Council ownership, resulted in the need for a revised lease.
- 4.3 In July 2014 delegated authority was given to the Development, Business & Customer Services Director to negotiate and agree the terms for any necessary legal agreements, including new leases.
- 4.4 Negotiations are currently still ongoing in respect of the new lease including the development of a Collaboration Agreement between the respective tenants, AFC Telford and Shropshire College Management Ltd.
- 4.5 AFC Telford have been working with a local consultancy firm (Pleydell Smithyman), to identify future opportunities to support their long term sustainability and have recently approached the Council in respect of:
- The desire to expand and develop the Learning Centre
 - The desire to develop a base within South Telford
- 4.6 Learning Centre Development
- 4.6.1 AFC Telford are seeking to extend and develop the Learning Centre to better cater for their needs, those of the existing users of the Learning Centre and the wider community. The running costs of the Learning Centre, which provides free accommodation for a number of community projects, are met by the Club. The proposed development would:
- Increase capacity for the children and young people's Learning Through Football programme
 - Better accommodate the History and Memories project
 - Support the continued development of the Men's Health project
 - Create capacity for new community activities
 - Provide accommodation for the Georgia Williams Trust

- Providing hot desk facilities and space for Youth Intervention Team activities
- Improve community facilities by providing changing rooms for the 5'a-side pitches
- Facilitate new sporting, learning and cultural events and increased participation
- Generate additional revenue to be reinvested back into the site

4.6.2 AFC Telford have shared an outline business plan for the extension of the Learning Centre and have requested that Council representatives join a project team to further develop the business case, explore opportunities for the potential wider development of the site for the purposes of 'leisure' and to seek external match funding.

4.6.3 The Council has given a commitment to investigate future provision of squash courts to replace those at Stirchley Recreation Centre. The outline business plan identifies an interest in providing squash courts on the AFC Telford site.

4.7 A South Telford Base

4.7.1 AFC Telford have identified an under representation within their existing fan base from the south of the borough and are keen to address this by increasing their 'reach' within the area. An approach was made to the Council with regard to the opportunity to develop an AFC Telford football offer within south Telford.

4.7.2 The Building Schools for the Future (BSF) team have been evaluating potential alternative sites for the location of a new Synthetic Turf Pitch (STP) to replace the original facility at Madeley Court; a feasibility study is currently being undertaken in respect of locating the STP on land adjacent to Telford Ski Centre (Madeley).

4.7.3 There are numerous potential benefits to this site apart from its location, namely an existing commitment to improve the grass pitches and to provide changing rooms. Furthermore the opportunity exists to develop a 'football hub' concept providing sporting, education and social facilities on the site.

4.7.4 It is considered that such a development would extend the reach of the club, compliment and improve the sustainability of the current Ski Centre and provide a valuable community resource within south Telford.

4.7.5 Project costs are currently being obtained with a view to partners exploring potential sources of external funding to bridge any funding gap. The concept has, 'in principle', support from the Shropshire Football Association and the Football Foundation.

4.7.6 The opportunity therefore exists to widen the remit of the proposed project group to include the development of business plans and associated external funding bids for both the on site Learning Centre and the proposed south Telford Football Hub concept.

5. IMPACT ASSESSMENT – ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

5.1 None

6. PREVIOUS MINUTES

6.1 AFC Telford Amendments to Legal Agreements, CB-26, 24th July 2014.

7. BACKGROUND PAPERS

7.1 None

**Report prepared by: Stuart Davidson Assistant Director (Interim):
Leisure, Culture and Facilities Management 383400.**

TELFORD & WREKIN COUNCIL

CABINET - 19 MARCH 2015

**DISCRETIONARY HOUSING PAYMENT AND COUNCIL TAX SUPPORT
HARDSHIP ASSISTANCE**

REPORT OF ASSISTANT DIRECTOR: CUSTOMER SERVICE

LEAD CABINET MEMBER – CLLR BILL McCLEMENTS

PART A) – SUMMARY REPORT

1. SUMMARY OF MAIN PROPOSALS

- 1.1 The Council receives a budget from the Department for Work and Pensions each year from which to pay Discretionary Housing Payments to further assist those in receipt of Housing Benefit with their Housing Costs. The budget is not enough to assist every person in receipt of Housing Benefit and so the purpose of this policy is to determine the instances when a DHP can be paid with the aim of preventing homelessness of those residents who are most financially vulnerable.
- 1.2 With effect from April 2013 when Council Tax Support replaced Council Tax Benefit the Council has provided a budget from which to grant Council Tax Support Hardship Assistance. This fund has been invaluable over the last two years in assisting us to award help to the most financially vulnerable customers. Funding of Council Tax Support Hardship is considered annually as part of the Council Tax Support Scheme.
- 1.3 Over the past two years of operation we have strived to find innovative uses of the DHP fund that maximised residents choices regarding housing mobility and enabled them to move to more appropriate accommodation. As a result we forecast that in 2014/15 all of the funding will be allocated.
- 1.4 The current Discretionary Housing Payment and Council Tax Support Hardship Assistance Policy took effect from April 2013 and so we are seeking approval of a refreshed policy. This new policy will take effect from 1 April 2015 and includes best practice based on the experience the Benefit Service has gained since the government Welfare Reforms were introduced in April 2013.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 **That Cabinet approve the revised Discretionary Housing Payment and Council Tax Support Hardship Assistance Policy attached in Appendix A.**

3. SUMMARY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

COMMUNITY IMPACT	Do these proposals contribute to specific Priority Plan objective(s)?	
	No	
	Will the proposals impact on specific groups of people?	
	Yes	The DHP section of the policy may potentially affect people claiming Housing Benefit or the Housing Element of Universal Credit. The CTSHA section of the policy may potentially affect working age claimants in receipt of Council Tax Support. DHPs and CTSHA are extra assistance to help the most financially vulnerable residents to meet their Housing costs and Council Tax.
TARGET COMPLETION/DELIVERY DATE	The Discretionary Housing Payment and Council Tax Support Hardship Assistance Policy needs to be approved by Cabinet before 31 March 2015. This refreshed policy will take effect from 1 April 2015.	
FINANCIAL/VALUE FOR MONEY IMPACT	Yes	
FINANCIAL/VALUE FOR MONEY IMPACT		
<p>The DWP allocation for Discretionary Housing Payments is £465k for 2014/15 with expenditure levels at the end of period 9 being £366k. The 2015/16 allocation is slightly lower at £405k. It should be noted that the impact of Universal Credit on DHP's is not yet known. There is no provision within the Council's budget to meet DHP awards that exceed the DWP allocation, however in previous years payments of DHP have been managed within the funding received from DWP. It is a requirement of the grant that any unspent funding is returned to DWP.</p> <p>£30k has been earmarked in 2015/16 to provide for Council Tax Support Hardship Assistance. The £30k will be granted in the form of additional Council Tax Support awarded to residents so will effectively reduce the amount of Council Tax collected. This is managed through the Council Tax collection fund. Amounts awarded in 2013/14 and 2014/15 to date have been below the £30k allocation.</p> <p>MLB 04.02.15</p>		
LEGAL ISSUES		The Child Support, Pensions and Social Security Act 2000 provides arrangements which allow authorities to make DHPs to claimants in receipt of Housing

		<p>Benefit or the housing element of Universal Credit. DHPs are payable in addition to Housing Benefit, where certain criteria is met. The regulations covering DHPs are the Discretionary Financial Assistance Regulations 2001. These regulations provide only limited guidance on the administration of the scheme, with each Local Authority having to produce its own policy framework. Section 13A of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 enables authorities to reduce the amount of Council Tax payable for an amount and period that they deem fit.</p> <p>The policy has been updated to include best practice based on the experience gained since the government Welfare Reforms were introduced in April 2013</p> <p>TS 16 January 2015</p>
OTHER IMPACTS, RISKS & OPPORTUNITIES		<p>Universal Credit is being rolled out nationally from February 2015. We do not know what impact this will have on our DHP fund. Universal Credit will be administered and paid by the Department for Work and Pensions. Where appropriate it will contain a Housing Cost element. This will replace Housing Benefit. Universal Credit claimants who have a Housing Cost element included in their calculation will be able to make a DHP application to the Council if they are unable to afford their rent. Universal Credit will typically be paid monthly in arrears directly to the claimant. It could result in additional applications to the DHP fund but it is impossible to predict. We don't know if people will be better off under Universal Credit or how many people in the first stages will receive Universal Credit.</p>
IMPACT ON SPECIFIC WARDS	No	Borough wide impact.

PART B) – ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

4. INFORMATION

4.1 Introduction and Background

- 4.1.1 The Council has a Discretionary Housing Payment and Council Tax Support Hardship Assistance Policy which was approved by Cabinet in February 2013. As it is now two years since Council Tax Support was introduced and the Benefit Service has two years experience on the impact of the government Welfare Reforms including the Social Sector

Size Criteria and overall Benefit Cap it is appropriate to refresh the policy based on current best practice.

4.1.2 Through the work of the Discretionary Awards Team, assisted by the Housing Options Team, Housing Associations, Private Landlords, Citizens Advice Bureau, other Council Teams and agencies the Council has been able to use its DHP budget to successfully mitigate some of the impact on residents of the government's Welfare Reforms.

4.1.3 All applicants are contacted to discuss their claim and for advice to be given before a decision is made. The decision is then followed up by the award letter. We have found that this has worked well. However, in many cases the applicant is already being supported by their landlord or support worker with whom the Discretionary Awards Team will liaise regarding the customer's situation and possible solutions.

5. DISCRETIONARY HOUSING PAYMENTS

5.1 The Discretionary Housing Payment (DHP) scheme was introduced in July 2001 and is funded through an annual Department for Work & Pensions (DWP) cash limited grant.

5.2 The Child Support, Pensions and Social Security Act 2000 provides arrangements which allow authorities to make DHPs to claimants in receipt of Housing Benefit. DHPs are payable in addition to Housing Benefit, where certain criteria is met. The regulations covering DHPs are the Discretionary Financial Assistance Regulations 2001.

5.3 These regulations specify the basic requirements that must be met before an award can be made but thereafter, the regulations give authorities wide discretion on the operation of the scheme, including such matters as;

- the method of making a claim;
- information requirements; and
- the recovery of any overpayments.

5.4 DHPs are free standing payments; that is, they are not part of the statutory Housing Benefit scheme. DHPs provide customers with further financial assistance, in addition to any welfare benefits, when a Local Authority (LA) considers that further help with housing costs is required. Housing costs are not defined in the regulations and this gives Councils a broad discretion to interpret the term as they wish. In general, housing costs means rental liability and most commonly the payments can be used to top-up an existing Housing Benefit award but it can also be interpreted to cover:

- Rent in advance
- Deposits

- Other lump sum costs associated with a housing need such as removal costs

5.5 Funding for DHPs has been increased significantly year on year since 2012, as can be seen in table below, to recognise the additional demand caused by the government's welfare benefit reform programme. The exception to this is that the funding the Council has been allocated for 2015/16 has reduced by just under £60k compared to 2014/15. The number of DHP applications has started to reduce and so it is believed that the allocated amount should be sufficient. However the impact of Universal Credit on the DHP fund is unknown.

Year	DWP Allocation	Actual DHP Spend (to nearest £)
2010/11	£27,148	£27,662
2011/12	£50,859	*£34,236
2012/13	** £102,000	£107,877
2013/14	£356,911	£356,290
2014/15	£465,023	***£366,153 Figure as at 8 January 2015
2015/16	£405,451	-

* As a one off the DWP allowed the £16,533 not spent to be carried forward into the following year (as impact of LHA changes had been mitigated by transitional protection)

** Excludes £16,533 carried over from previous year.

*** The Council forecasts that all funding will be awarded by the end of the year.

5.6 Any unspent allocation of DHP budget has to be repaid to the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP). Any overspend would have to be met by the Council but this cannot exceed 2.5 times the amount allocated by the DWP.

5.7 The increased funding has allowed us to help more individuals and families. In 2013/14 we granted 1,178 DHP awards. In the first 9 months of 2014/15 we have made 921 awards, which has helped 732 different households. The Council has received fewer applications in 2014/15 but this in part is because the Council has made more 12 month awards which has resulted in less repeat applications.

- 5.8 As with the previous policy the basic overriding principle of the scheme is that if a customer has sufficient income to cover their rent after all essential expenditure has been taken into account they **will not** be awarded a DHP.
- 5.9 During 2014/15 we have piloted a number of schemes to expand the use of the DHP fund to assist tenant mobility and help prevent homelessness:
- Help with deposits
 - Payment of rent arrears in certain circumstances to help a resident remain in their current property
 - Payment of rent arrears in certain circumstances to enable customer to be able to access an offer of Social Housing
 - Removal costs

The Benefit Service works closely with the Council's Housing Options Team and local Housing Associations at regular Welfare Reform meetings to develop new initiatives to ensure the best use of the DHP funding.

- 5.10 The impact of the Social Sector Size Criteria has resulted in it being necessary for some tenants of the Social Sector to seek more affordable accommodation. This has included sourcing accommodation in the Private Sector. One of the issues with this is the requirement to pay a deposit to secure a tenancy. We have therefore undertaken a pilot working closely with the Council's Housing and Telford Homefinder Teams to provide deposits. The Council has paid £21,012 towards deposits in the first nine months of 2014/15, helping prevent 46 individuals and families from becoming homeless.
- 5.11 The decision taken by The Wrekin Housing Trust in 2014 to ask new tenants to pay two weeks rent in advance is in some cases acting as a barrier to financially vulnerable customer securing affordable social housing. Our DHP policy has always been that in most cases we will not meet payments of rent in advance as the financial impact on our scheme would likely be greater than we could manage. Housing Benefit is always paid in arrears, so the liability for the rent will ultimately be paid in most cases but not in advance as some landlords now demand. If the Council were to use DHP to pay the rent in advance pending the award of Housing Benefit it would mean that the Council would be paying twice for the same period and would be extremely difficult for the Council to recover the sums. It remains the Council's intention not to pay rent in advance; however in very exceptional cases the Council may consider making an award for example where someone is being discharged from hospital and need to move to specific supported accommodation. All the usual DHP criteria will still apply.
- 5.12 Not having the money to pay removal costs can be barrier for some people moving to more suitable accommodation. It can also result in

people moving but leaving behind some of their belongings. This can result in further expense for them, either because they have to purchase new items or face an invoice from their former landlord to clear the property. The Council will therefore pay removal costs in certain circumstances where the applicant cannot afford the removal costs and the move is essential and to more appropriate accommodation. In the first nine months of 2014/15 we assisted 21 people to move costing £4,150.

- 5.13 It remains the intention not to use our DHP budget to cover shortfalls in rent caused by the overall Benefit Cap. The Government has introduced this cap as they consider that families who receive over £500 per week in benefits (or single people with £350 per week) have sufficient income to cover their rent and living costs. Therefore to replace the benefit cap with DHP would undermine the Government's policy intention and we have insufficient funds from Government to provide support in this way. However to reflect that there may be the need in exceptional cases to assist with a short term award the policy has been updated. Such exceptional cases may include where the person is at extreme risk of being evicted from a property that is suitable for their housing needs, they are awaiting for a benefit decision which will exempt them from the Benefit Cap or whilst they take urgent budgeting advice.

6. COUNCIL TAX SUPPORT HARDSHIP ASSISTANCE

- 6.1 From 1 April 2013 Council Tax Support replaced the national Council Tax Benefit scheme. The qualifying criteria for the Council Tax Support Scheme are determined by each Council. Claimants or their partners who have reached pension credit age are covered by a default scheme which is based on the previous Council Tax Benefit scheme and so are not disadvantaged by the change.
- 6.2 Due to government funding cuts the level of support for working age customers, with the exception of those with a severe disability, is reduced compared to the previous Council Tax Benefit scheme. Working age customers in receipt of Council Tax Support receive 21% less than they would have under the previous national scheme.
- 6.3 Section 13A of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 gives Billing Authorities the power to reduce the amount of Council Tax payable for an amount and period that they deem fit.
- 6.4 As part of Telford & Wrekin Council's Council Tax Support scheme approved on 22 January 2015, members committed to funding £30,000 of support for 2015/16 from which to award Council Tax Support Hardship Assistance (CTSHA) to aid and assist the most impoverished claimants.
- 6.5 The amount awarded under CTSHA in 2013/14 and so far in 2014/15 can be seen in the table below.

Year	Fund	Allocated
2013/14	£65,000	£29,830
2014/15	£35,170	£13,785 Figure as at 8 January 2015
2015/16	£30,000	-

In 2013/14 a fund of £65,000 was made available but as this was the initial year of Council Tax Support it was impossible to predict the impact of the scheme. For 2014/15 approval was granted for unspent funding to be rolled forward to enable the scheme to continue for a second year.

- 6.6 In 2013/14 the Council has provided 390 awards of CTSHA and in the first 9 months of 2014/15 we have made 224 awards. Within these figures a small number of applicants will have received more than one award where a subsequent application has been successful.
- 6.7 Due to increased DHP funding from DWP in 2013/14 and 2014/15 the Council has been able to assist people with their rent shortfalls which has allowed them time to budget and pay their other bills including Council Tax.
- 6.8 As with the previous policy the basic overriding principle of the scheme is that if a customer has sufficient income to cover their rent after all essential expenditure has been taken into account they **will not** be awarded CTSHA.

7. IMPACT ASSESSMENT – ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

- 7.1 The Benefit Service remains satisfied that the Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) undertaken on 31 January 2013 on the previous policy remains relevant to this revised policy. This policy does not have a negative effect on any group and has been developed to help support those most disadvantaged by the government's Welfare Benefit Changes. The updated EIA can be seen at **Appendix B**.

8. PREVIOUS MINUTES

- 8.1 Minute CB-107 of the Cabinet meeting of 28 February 2013 (Discretionary Housing Payment and Council Tax Support Hardship Policy).
- 8.2 Minute 47- i) of the Council meeting of 22 January 2015 (Localised Council Tax Support Policy 2015/16).

9. **BACKGROUND PAPERS**

Appendix A - Discretionary Housing Payment and Council Tax
Support Hardship Assistance Policy

Appendix B – Equality Impact Assessment

**Report prepared by Rebecca Owen-Jones, Benefit Welfare and Assurance
Group Manager**

Telephone: 01952 383881



Telford & Wrekin Council

Discretionary Housing Payment

&

Council Tax Support

Hardship Assistance Policy

Effective from 1 April 2015

1. Introduction and aim of policy

This policy applies to all applications for Discretionary Housing Payment (DHP) and Council Tax Support Hardship Assistance (CTSHA).

The DHP scheme was introduced in July 2001 and is funded through an annual Department for Work & Pensions (DWP) cash limited grant. DHPs provide customers with further financial assistance, in addition to any welfare benefits, when a Local Authority (LA) considers that help with housing costs is required.

From 1 April 2013 Council Tax Benefit was abolished and replaced by Local Council Tax Support. Consequently DHPs can no longer cover shortfalls between Council Tax Benefit and Council Tax liability. As part of this Council's Council Tax Support scheme members have made a cash limited fund available to administer Council Tax Support Hardship Assistance to aid and assist the most impoverished families. A recommendation is made each year by cabinet as to the amount of any hardship funding available as part of the Council Tax Support Scheme which is approved by Full Council as part of the Council Tax setting process.

The aim of the policy is to ensure that the funding is used in the most appropriate way to provide additional financial assistance to the most vulnerable customers, who without it are likely to experience financial hardship, increased levels of unmanageable debt, homelessness, or the inability to secure or retain the appropriate type of accommodation based on specific need.

Whilst the legislation in relation to DHPs only gives a very broad discretion we have a duty to act fairly, reasonably and consistently. This policy gives the outline of when a DHP and or CTSHA award will and will not be granted.

2. Operation of the schemes

Procedural requirements dictate that in every case the claimant must complete the appropriate DHP / CTSHA application form giving details of income and expenditure to show that they require further help with their housing or Council Tax costs. If an applicant has difficulty completing the application then assistance will either be given within First Point or through a home visit.

The Council will use any other available information, including information collected on the original Housing Benefit claim form when considering the claim for a DHP / CTSHA. However, the claimant should provide such available evidence as necessary in support of their claim, for example, a letter from a doctor, evidence of necessary exceptional expenditure, etc. We may request further evidence in support of the application.

A decision maker will speak with the applicant where it is deemed the applicant will benefit from further advice or additional information is required. This may be during a home visit, office interview or via telephone. The purpose of this conversation will be to give the applicant the opportunity to discuss fully their reasons for their application and will allow for

the decision maker to consider income, expenditure and family circumstances. This method of approach has two distinct advantages;

- Enables us to gather as much information as possible to assist with the final decision making process., In doing so it will identify possible entitlement to other welfare benefits or services which the claimant is entitled to which may improve their financial situation.
- It will enable the officer to identify areas and recommend steps that the applicant can take to improve and alleviate their hardship immediately or during the award.

In both the above scenarios a successful award of another benefit or action that the customer can take themselves will reduce or negate the need of a DHP or CTSWA award meaning that the extremely limited funds can be diverted to other cases of hardship.

There may be occasions where it may be deemed not necessary to speak with the applicant including those with a short term need because a known change such as the birth of a child which will end the need for a DHP or where another Officer of the Council e.g. social worker or Partner Organisation e.g. CAB is providing support and advice to the applicant.

The amount and duration of the award is at the discretion of the officers from the Revenues & Benefits Service with delegated responsibility for this function. However a claimant cannot receive a greater amount of DHP / CTSWA award than the shortfall in the weekly eligible rent or Council Tax after taking into account any Housing Benefit / Council Tax Support entitlement. The exception to this is one off lump sum costs such as rent deposits where the amount of shortfall does not determine the amount of the lump sum payment..

The expenditure on both DHPs and CTSWA will be monitored closely. Each month expenditure will be reported within the Revenues & Benefits monthly update which is circulated to the appropriate Service Delivery Managers and Assistant Director. DHP statistics regarding expenditure and the broad reasons for the award are submitted to the DWP on a biannual basis.

3. Factors to Consider

Conditions that must be met for Discretionary Housing Payments

For a DHP to be considered the applicant must be entitled to:

- Housing Benefit; or
- Universal Credit that includes a housing element towards rental liability; and
- Has a rental liability; and
- Requires further financial assistance with housing costs

Whilst there is no definition of housing costs we intend to primarily use the limited budget to cover shortfalls in rent. However, in some limited circumstances we can also consider providing assistance to cover costs associated with:

- Tenancy deposits
- Removal costs

- Assistance with clearing rent arrears
- Letting agent fees

The above will only be considered if there is an absolute necessity for the applicant needing to move property and the specific property is better for the applicant either financially or delivers a social benefit. Such cases would generally have to have been referred to us from the Council's Housing Options team who have assessed the applicants housing needs first.

In conjunction with the Council's Housing Team the DHP budget will be used to help secure accommodation for people who are homeless, at risk of homelessness or to help move to more affordable accommodation. This could for example be as they need to down size as their benefit is restricted by the Social Sector Size Criteria or Local Housing Allowance rates. In such cases the applicant will need to meet with the Housing Team for them to consider their circumstances.

In order to consider someone for a deposit or letting agent fees the following criteria must be met:

There must be a genuine reason for the person moving into new accommodation.

The Council will consider assisting the following:

- A person who is at risk of imminent homelessness
- A person who is actually homeless
- A person who has genuine financial hardship caused by currently being housed in a property that is too expensive for them to be able to afford due to either the Social Sector Size Criteria or Local Housing Allowance rate they are entitled to.
- A person with mental health illness who needs to move and the move is supported by their Support Worker
- A person who is required to move to a different property due to social reasons e.g. Anti Social Behaviour directed to them from neighbours or on recommendation of police or other professional body.

In addition the following criteria **must** be met:

- Housing Benefit or the housing element towards rental liability must be in payment or will be in payment when the person moves.
- The person does not have the means to pay the deposit / fees themselves.
- The property they are moving to must be affordable i.e. within £25 per month of the appropriate Local Housing Allowance rate (providing the person can afford the £25 difference if there is one).

The maximum deposit payable will usually be up to the appropriate Local Housing Allowance rate for that person / family.

DHP can also cover costs for removals. We will usually only consider cases where the move is essential for example to move to more affordable accommodation or where person is at risk of homelessness and the move is to suitable accommodation within the Borough.

It is highly unlikely that an award will be made to cover rent in advance as for someone in receipt of Housing Benefit or housing element of Universal Credit the rent will be covered albeit in arrears. However in extreme and unique circumstances it will be considered e.g. when someone is discharged from hospital and is required to move into specific supported accommodation and there are no alternative funds available.

The Council has also set aside a limited fund available through the Emergency Welfare Assistance fund. This fund may be able to assist people in a crisis with help towards their housing costs but where the person meets the criteria of the DHP policy they will be considered under this policy. Typically the only time the delegated decision maker will consider housing costs under the Emergency Welfare Assistance Policy is where Housing Benefit or the Housing element of Universal Credit is not in payment.

Discretionary Housing Payments cannot help pay for the following;

- Ineligible service charges,
- Water charges,
- Increases in rent to clear rent arrears,
- Shortfalls in entitlement due to sanctions or suspensions,
- Shortfalls caused by Housing Benefit overpayment recovery.

It is not the Council's intention to award a DHP where the shortfall is the result of the overall Benefit Cap. The Government has introduced this cap as they consider that families who receive over £500 per week in benefits (or single people with £350 per week) have sufficient income to cover their rent and living costs.

These families however may benefit from budgeting advice and will be signposted to appropriate agencies. In exceptional circumstances e.g. where an applicant has applied for an income that may exempt them from the bedroom tax or is at severe risk of homelessness a DHP may be considered, usually for a short period whilst they take budgeting advice. Those with severe disabilities are exempt from the Benefit Cap.

Conditions that must be met for Council Tax Support Hardship Assistance

For a CTSHA award to be considered the applicant must be entitled to:

- Council Tax Support; and
- Has a Council Tax liability; and
- Requires further assistance with the shortfall between the weekly amount of Council Tax charged and the weekly amount of Council Tax Support they are entitled to.

Council Tax Support Hardship Fund cannot pay for the following;

- Shortfalls caused by overpayments of Council Tax Support
- Shortfalls in entitlement due to sanctions or suspensions
- Charges incurred as a result of action taken to recover overdue Council Tax, such as liability orders, court costs, fines etc

Given that pension age claimants are protected under the Council Tax Reduction Schemes (Prescribed Requirements) (England) Regulations 2012, which broadly replicate the existing Council Tax Benefit schemes, the hardship fund will only be available to working age claimants. By limiting applications to the working age group, the Authority will be able to target additional assistance to those most in need.

The age someone is considered pension age is based on the age a person could qualify for Pension Credits. The Pension Credit qualifying age for men and women is gradually rising to the age of 65. Details of when a person will reach their Pension Credit qualifying age can be found on the gov.uk website or via the following link:

www.gov.uk/calculate-state-pension

4. Decision Making

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

- If the accommodation could be afforded when the claimant first moved in.
- If a claimant who intended to claim benefit from the outset of the tenancy was aware of the level of their Housing Benefit or housing element of Universal Credit entitlement prior to taking the tenancy.
- Any action taken by the claimant to re-negotiate the level of rent with the landlord.
- If the claimant is entitled to any other welfare benefits that they are not currently claiming.
- If the property is the cheapest available in the area for the household's needs according to the appropriate size criteria. When considering the area in which it is reasonable to compare properties, we will consider the area in which it is reasonable to expect a claimant to be able to move without losing all current community and support networks on which they depend.
- The amount of the shortfall, between the Housing Benefit / housing element of Universal Credit and rent liability, and any steps that have, or can be taken by the claimant to reduce the shortfall. This includes if there is anyone else able to make up the shortfall such as a non-dependant. For example, an adult son, daughter, other family member or other person residing with the claimant on a non commercial basis etc.
- The financial, medical or social needs and circumstances of the claimant, their partner and any other persons in the household.
- The income and expenditure of the claimant and other members of the claimant's household.
- The amount of any savings and capital held by the claimant and other members of the claimant's household.
- Any exceptional circumstances such as, the ill health or disability of the claimant or a member of the claimant's household. Examples include the need for an extra room because of a health problem affecting a member of the household, a requirement for the household to live where they do because of the need for access to medical or support services, specific extra health-related expenses such as non prescription medicine and

the nature of a health problem means the choice of housing is restricted either temporarily or permanently.

- The level of debt of the claimant and family and options to re-negotiate non-priority debts.
- The possible impact of not making such an award, e.g. imminent eviction, the pressure on priority homeless accommodation.
- Whether the applicant has moved into the current property from temporary accommodation in which they were placed as statutorily homeless.
- Any special reasons which make it necessary or especially desirable for the claimant to occupy the dwelling in respect of which the liability arises.
- The probable consequences of rent or council tax arrears for the claimant or family members, especially if any of them are vulnerable by reason of age, sickness or disability.
- Action taken by the landlord to recover arrears of rent.
- The potential discriminatory impact of legislation. For example, housing benefit legislation is such that single claimants aged under 35 are treated significantly less favourably than single people over the age of 35.
- Any other special circumstances

Examples of the kind of situations where further help may be given include:

- Assistance to a claimant who is in need of further financial help due to a rent restriction (where regulations require that the full eligible rent is restricted within the Housing Benefit / housing element of Universal Credit calculation e.g. due to age or under occupation) and whose circumstances are in some way exceptional and/or;
- Assistance to those claimants who reasonably require larger accommodation than that which is normally permitted under the benefit scheme
- Assistance to those claimants who have high housing costs, which they do not have the means to pay, and where moving to cheaper accommodation is not a reasonable option and/or;
- Where there has been a significant change in the claimants and/or family circumstances which means the rent or Council Tax charge is no longer affordable.

These are only examples - the list is neither exhaustive nor prescriptive

The decision maker will not normally award a DHP or CTSHA award in cases where the applicant has demonstrated they have sufficient surplus income or capital to be able to meet the shortfall in rent or Council Tax themselves.

The authorised decision maker decides how much to award based on all the circumstances. This may be any amount within the limits prescribed by the Discretionary Financial Assistance Regulations 2001 or up to the difference between the weekly Council Tax liability and Council Tax Support entitled to.

5. Period of award

The duration and level of the DHP or CTSHA award will be determined individually for each claim by the decision maker. In determining the period of award, examples are given below of the types of factors that may be appropriate for consideration;

- If the need is likely to be short-term.
- If the customer is able to take steps to reduce their financial hardship.
- If the claimant is likely to require assistance in meeting the shortfall for the duration of their tenancy. In these instances, although an award may be made in the short term, where it appears that there is a long term issue of meeting the shortfall the DHP decision maker will work with the claimant to identify solutions and options available to ensure that a DHP is awarded for the shortest possible time. In some circumstances moving will not be an option and a long term award may be necessary.
- At what point in the future suitable alternative accommodation could reasonably be expected to be sought.
- When a particular milestone will be reached which will lead to increased Housing Benefit / housing element of Universal Credit or Council Tax Support entitlement e.g. a family member reaching a relevant age which leads to increased entitlement.
- In the case of CTSHA awards the awards are only intended to be short term awards due to the limited fund available. It is not intended that the fund will be a long-term solution to the overall reduction in Council Tax Support.

Where possible we aim for a decision to be made within 14 days of receipt of all information. If the claim is successful, payment of the DHP will be made in the most appropriate way; this will normally be in line with the payment of any Housing Benefit. CTSHA awards will be made direct to the relevant Council Tax account.

The amount of any DHP or CTSHA award is entirely at the discretion of the delegated officers from the Benefit Service. A successful claim **does not** imply that a further award will be made at a later date, even if the claimant's circumstances have not changed.

The start date of a DHP or CTSHA award will usually be the most appropriate of:

- The Monday after the Council receives the relevant claim; or
- The Monday after a relevant change in circumstances giving rise to the need for the DHP or CTSHA award.

However the decision maker may decide that a different date is appropriate based on the particular circumstances of the claim. Due to the expected pressure on the DHP budget and CTSHA fund a claim will not usually be backdated more than 3 months, although where someone has rent arrears and is at risk of homelessness then backdated awards may be made which cover the period of previous rent arrears. In such cases some Housing Benefit / housing element of Universal Credit must have been in payment for the period concerned.

This will only be considered in appropriate cases to prevent homelessness where the current property is affordable and sustainable based on claimant's circumstances or to allow a person to be considered for a move to a more affordable Housing Association property e.g. where an offer is conditional on previous rent arrears being cleared.

The reasons for the rent arrears will be considered and each case will be looked on its own merits. The applicant will need to be engaged with their landlord, have made efforts themselves to pay the rent arrears (and any other rent arrears or costs not covered by the DHP) and be actively engaged with any suitable support for their circumstances.

A DHP shall not be awarded for any period for which the customer has no entitlement to Housing Benefit under the Housing Benefit statutory scheme or the Housing Cost element (towards rental liability) of Universal Credit.

Claims may be made in advance of a change in legislation.

Most awards will be short term awards, typically not more than 4-6 months, however the length may vary depending on the customer's circumstances. Due to the Government's Welfare Reform changes it may be necessary to award long term DHP awards of 12 months or more e.g. for those suitably housed in a home adapted for the disabled needs of a family member but who are affected by the Social Sector Size Criteria and unable to pay the shortfall.

The following are guidelines for the length of award in the following scenarios:

- **Pregnancy** - in the case of a pregnant woman who has had to move home in readiness for the birth and who will have an extra room allowed in either the Social Sector or Local Housing Allowance size criteria when their baby is born we will usually consider awarding a DHP up to 3 months prior to expected date of birth.
- **Illness** - If a person requires an extra bedroom because of illness e.g. because they need a treatment room or because a member of the household has a condition that makes it difficult to share a bedroom, we will consider a longer term DHP for up to 12 months if moving is not an option. Medical evidence will usually need to be provided for the requirement of the extra room. Ongoing entitlement will then usually be reviewed at 12 monthly intervals.
- **Disability** – If a person is living in a property which has been significantly adapted for their disability needs and moving is not an option then a longer term DHP of up to 12 months will be considered. Ongoing entitlement will then usually be reviewed at 12 monthly intervals.
- **Foster Carers** – One bedroom is included in the Housing Benefit size criteria for a foster child or children living with an approved foster carer. A bedroom can also be included for newly approved foster carers for up to 52 weeks and an approved foster carer who is between placements for up to 52 weeks. However a DHP will be considered where an approved foster carer has more than one foster child as only one room is included in the size criteria regardless of the number of children fostered. Where the foster carer is unable to afford the shortfall in rent a DHP will be considered for up to 12 months. All income and expenditure, including that in relation to the foster child will be taken in to account in the DHP assessment.
- **Shared Life Carers** (formerly known as adult placements) – where a Shared Life Carer has an adult they are caring for, a bedroom is allowed for the adult within the size criteria rules. However there may be times when a carer is between placements and will be affected by the size criteria. If they are unable to afford their rent because of this and moving to smaller accommodation may not be an option if they are keeping a spare bedroom in readiness for their next placement. DHPs in these cases will be considered for up to 3 months.

All the above are subject to the overriding principles that the customer is not able to afford the shortfall, or take steps which will allow them to be able to afford the shortfall or will have a change of circumstance in the future which will affect the shortfall. The length of award will be reduced where a known change of circumstance such as the completion of debt

repayments or the payment of increased income will mean that the applicant will be able to afford the shortfall in rent.

When a DHP or CTSHA period comes to an end, if a customer wishes to reapply they will usually be required to complete a further DHP application or review form to renew their award. It may be possible to extend an existing DHP period for up to eight weeks if the customer has confirmed their circumstances have not changed but whose circumstances are likely to change within the next eight weeks e.g. have been offered a job, moving house, child being born etc.

Where a customer has not taken steps to ease their own financial circumstances, for example;

- they have decided not to look for more affordable accommodation; or
- have not reduced or even increased none essential expenditure

then further applications are likely to be refused. A further award may be made if there is a commitment from the applicant they will take steps to ease their financial circumstances. If after two periods of award the customer has not taken the advice given in previous awards it is unlikely that a future award will be made.

A previous successful award does not guarantee that subsequent awards will be granted.

6. Notification

The Revenues & Benefits Service will notify the customer of the outcome of their application within 3 working days of making the decision.

Where the application is successful, the notification will advise:

- the weekly amount of DHP or CTSHA award granted, if any
- the period of the award
- in the case of a DHP how, when and to whom the DHP will be paid
- the requirement to report any relevant change
- any steps that the applicant should take in during the period of the award to resolve or improve their personal situation

Where the application is unsuccessful, the notification will state clearly the reasons for the decision.

All notifications of decisions on claims shall offer the opportunity for the customer to seek a review of the decision made.

7. Changes in circumstances and overpayments

It remains the duty of the claimant to notify the Benefit Section of any change in circumstance that may be relevant to the continuation of their DHP or CTSHA award.

A DHP or CTSHA award may be revised where the claimant's circumstances have changed. Overpayments of DHPs can be recovered where the payment has been made as a result of a misrepresentation or failure to disclose a material fact or as a result of an error. The Council will normally recover a DHP or CTSHA award where the claimant's own actions contributed towards the overpayment and recovery of the award would enable us to reallocate those sums within the current financial year. However, we will consider the circumstances of each overpayment on its merits, being mindful of the impact that recovery may have on the ongoing financial vulnerability of the applicant.

DHP overpayments cannot be recovered from ongoing Housing Benefit or Council Tax Support. Overpaid CTSHA awards may be recovered via the person's Council Tax account.

Fraudulent claims

The Benefit Service is committed to the fight against fraud. Any claimant who tries to fraudulently claim a DHP by providing a false statement or evidence in support of their application may be liable for prosecution.

8. Officer Roles

Decision Maker (Discretionary Awards Officer or equivalent) – will where appropriate speak with the applicant, either over the phone, in the applicant's home or arrange an office based meeting. They will consider all the information available to them and calculate whether the customer can afford the shortfall between their Housing Benefit / Council Tax Support and their rent / Council Tax liability. The decision maker will also give advice on how the customer can ease their own financial circumstances.

The Decision Maker will decide whether to make an award and the length of any award. They will write to the applicant detailing their decision.

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

Appeal Officer – any appeals received will be decided by the Discretionary Awards Team Leader or where they made the original decision or in their absence by the Benefit Welfare & Assurance Group Manager.

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

9. Appeals

DHPs or CTSHA are not payments of Housing Benefit or Council Tax Support and are therefore not subject to the statutory appeals mechanism, although the route of Judicial Review is available. The Revenues & Benefits Service will operate the following policy for dealing with appeals against any decision on a claim: –

- A claimant or person acting on their behalf who disagrees with a decision may dispute the decision or request the full reasons for it. A request for a review shall be made in writing and must be delivered to the council by any method which is acceptable for a DHP or CTSHA claim. Any request for a review must be made within one month of the customer being notified of the decision.
- Where appropriate, council officers will explain the decision to the claimant by telephone, letter or e-mail. The claimant will be advised of their right to request a review of the decision by a Manager.
- The decision will be reviewed internally by the designated Manager (see 'Officer Roles'), who will not have been responsible for the original decision and they will issue their written decision.
- Where the designated manager carrying out the internal review decides not to revise the original decision, (s)he will notify the appellant of the outcome of the review, setting out the reasons for confirming the original decision.
- In exceptional circumstances only, officers may extend the time limit for a dispute to be made.

10. Publicity

The Revenues and Benefits Service will seek the co-operation of all teams within the Council, , housing associations and voluntary sector organisations to ensure publicity is suitably targeted to ensure it is those who are most in need apply for the extra assistance.

Initial Impact Assessment Template

Please use the following template to help determine whether a community impact assessment is required.

Name of Policy

Discretionary Housing Payment and Council Tax Support Hardship Payment Policy

Purpose and function of policy

(Please provide a brief description, for example, services affected)

To outline the entitlement and decision making process for Discretionary Housing Payment or Council Tax Support Hardship Payments.
--

This policy will help to mitigate the impact of the Government's Welfare Reform changes for the most vulnerable residents. The Government cuts have resulted in large numbers of working age people in receipt of Housing Benefit and or Council Tax Benefit (which was replaced by Council Tax Support from April 2013) having a cut to the benefits they receive to assist them paying their rent or Council Tax. The main cuts are:

Social Sector Size Criteria

A 14% reduction in the eligible rent used in Housing Benefit calculation for those renting in the social sector where they are deemed to be under occupying their home by 1 bedroom

A 25% reduction in the eligible rent used in Housing Benefit calculation for those renting in the social sector where they are deemed to be under occupying their home by 2 or more bedrooms.

Council Tax Support

With the exception of severely disabled residents those working age residents previously in receipt of Council Tax Benefit have seen the help they receive to pay their Council Tax cut by approximately 21% when Council Tax Benefit was replaced by local Council Tax Support.

Discretionary Housing Payments (DHP) give extra financial assistance to those in receipt of Housing Benefit who are unable to afford the difference between the benefit they are entitled to and their eligible rent where they meet the criteria set out in the policy. Assistance is usually short term but due to changes in Housing Benefit legislation some awards will be longer term. Assistance may also be given with other Housing Costs including removal costs and rent deposits.

Council Tax Support Hardship Payments give extra financial assistance to those in receipt of Council Tax Support who are unable to afford the difference between the Council Tax Support they are entitled to and their Council Tax liability where they meet the criteria set out in the policy.

Who does this policy affect

Workforce / Employees		Service Delivery / Communities	X
------------------------------	--	---------------------------------------	----------

Author(s)
Rebecca Owen-Jones

Job title and Service Delivery Unit
Benefit Welfare & Assurance Group Manager Revenues and Benefits

Date completed: 31.1.13 Reviewed on 08/01/14

Sign off (line manager) and date A.J, Astley, Assistant Director, 31/01/2013
If signed off by e-mail please confirm by identifying when and by whom

A separate guidance note is available to support you through the completion of this assessment. You can find it on the intranet.

The general equality duty states that we must have due regard to:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation
- Advance equality of opportunity
- Foster good relations between different groups

Appendix B

Complete the table below, assessing the impact of your policy on people with protected characteristics, including employees and customers. You should also consider the elements of the above general duty.

Protected Characteristic	Positive impact		Negative impact			Reasons/evidence
	Yes	No	High *	Low #	No	
Age		X			X	Age has no impact on whether we will award a payment. People of Pension Credit age are not affected by Social Sector Size Criteria or Council Tax Support cuts. Those of Pension age may still however meet the criteria for one of the discretionary awards if they have a shortfall they cannot afford. Most people who are single and under 35 years of age renting in private sector receive less Housing Benefit. DHP's can mitigate this inequality in the regulations for a short period of time whilst applicant seeks to address their financial hardship.
Disability	X				X	Where a person is living in a property which has been adapted for their disability needs or the disability needs of an immediate family member but they have more bedrooms than they require and they meet the criteria for a DHP they are more likely to receive a longer term DHP

Appendix B

						award. This is in recognition of the difficulty in finding suitable properties (due to limited availability and the cost of adapting a property). Also where a person or their resident family requires an extra bedroom due to disability or illness and they meet the DHP criteria they are more likely to receive a longer term award.
Gender (Sex)	X				X	Whilst gender has no impact on whether or not an award will be made we do have a greater proportion of women claiming benefit assistance who will be impacted by the benefit rule changes (based on Council Tax Support Impact Assessment see appendix 1). It is anticipated that this scheme will support some of those women therefore it will have a positive impact.
Gender reassignment		X			X	Gender reassignment has no impact on whether or not a discretionary award is made
Marriage/civil partnership		X			X	The status of a couple e.g. whether or not they are married or in a civil partnership has no impact on whether or not a discretionary award is made.
Pregnancy/maternity	X				X	We will consider DHP for those who meet criteria 3 months prior

Appendix B

						to giving birth to help them to be able to afford suitable sized accommodation prior to giving birth.
Race		X			X	Race has no impact on whether or not a discretionary award is made.
Religion/belief		X			X	Religion or belief has no impact on whether or not a discretionary award is made.
Sexual Orientation		X			X	Sexual orientation has no impact on whether or not a discretionary award is made.
Deprivation (inc rural/urban)	X				X	These are discretionary awards which are designed to help the most financially vulnerable to be able to afford their rent or Council Tax. By helping a customer to take steps to reduce their financial hardship can help to reduce deprivation.

High – there is significant evidence of adverse impact or potential for adverse impact. The policy etc has consequences for or affects significant numbers of people and/or has the potential to make a significant contribution to advancing equality.

Low – there is anecdotal or little evidence to suggest adverse impact. The policy etc operates mainly within a small unit and affects few people.

Am I required to carry out an Community Impact Assessment?

If you have ticked negative impact as High, then a Community Impact Assessment will need to be completed, available on the intranet.

If a Community Impact is not required, you are required to monitor and review the proposed changes after implementation to check they work as planned and to screen for unexpected equality impacts. Please provide details of how you will

monitor evaluate or review your proposals and when the review will take place in the box below

Monitor and Review

Please provide details of how you will monitor evaluate or review your proposals and when the review will take place.

How will you monitor/review proposals?

Monthly and quarterly collection of data is to be undertaken by the Revenues and Benefits Service. The Department for Work and Pensions have also introduced twice yearly returns for the broad reasons why Discretionary Housing Payments are awarded.

Details of the broad reasons for awards and number of awards made will be reported within the Revenues and Benefits Quarterly monitoring report which is circulated to all Revenues and Benefits staff and the Assistant Director, Customer Services.

When will the review take place?

An update report on Local Council Tax Support is produced at the end of each year with further analysis of the actual impacts incorporating engagement with key stakeholders and detailing the effectiveness of the discretionary hardship fund..

APPENDIX 1

Current Council Tax Benefit Caseload Breakdown (from Council Tax Support Community Impact Assessment 2012)

1a. Breakdown by case group

Case Group	Number of Current Council Tax Benefit claims
Pension Age	7728
Working Age	10774

1b. Working Age claims breakdown by gender by the person claiming Council Tax Benefit

Gender	Number of claims
Female with partner	1607
Female without partner	5493
Male with partner	1464
Male without partner	2210

1c. Working Age claims breakdown by Parish area

Parish	Number of Council Tax Benefit claims
Dawley Hamlets Parish Council	288
Ercall Magna Parish Council	37
The Gorge Parish Council	112
Great Dawley Parish Council	1295
Hadley and Leegomery Parish Council	900
Hollinswood & Randlay Parish Council	425
Ketley Parish Council	269
Lawley & Overdale Parish Council	419
Lilleshall & Donnington Parish Council	886
Madeley Parish Council	1890
Newport Town Council	355
Oakengates Town Council	558
St Georges & Priorslee Parish Council	467
Stirchley & Brookside Parish Council	1047
Wellington Town Council	1332
Wrockwardine Parish Council	66
Wrockwardine Wood & Trench Parish Council	318
Others*	101

*Represents Parish areas with fewer than 20 claimants and have been combined to protect against the potential identification of individuals.

Information extracted from Telford & Wrekin Council Tax information management system
31 August 2012. The number of claimants can change daily so this information is only
accurate at the time of extraction

TELFORD & WREKIN COUNCIL

CABINET - 19 MARCH 2015

TACKLING YOUTH UNEMPLOYMENT – 1 YEAR ON – THE SECOND YEAR CHALLENGES

REPORT OF ASSISTANT DIRECTOR: DEVELOPMENT, BUSINESS & EMPLOYMENT

LEAD CABINET MEMBER – CLLR SHAUN DAVIES

PART A – SUMMARY REPORT

1. SUMMARY OF MAIN PROPOSALS

On 9 January 2014, Cabinet approved a series of pledges focussed on tackling youth unemployment with a view to ensuring that every 16 – 24 year old, who are seeking employment or training, is fully supported on their journey. It was our aim to bring our youth unemployment levels in line with national levels by the end of the two year programme, however only one year in and we have already exceeded our own expectations with youth unemployment in Telford and Wrekin now BELOW national levels.

- Youth Unemployment in the borough has fallen considerably and now stands at 15.7% below the West Midlands Rate (19.8%) and the National rate (17.3%).
- Target of 100 work experience placements within Telford & Wrekin Council has been hit.
- Target of 150 Apprenticeships in the Council has been exceeded.
- 120 young people supported into work through our Job Box Mentor programme, against a target of 200 for the 2 year programme.
- 2014 has seen twice the number of users at Job Junctions compared to 2013 figures.
- ATA programme due for a soft launch at the Jobs Fair on 18th March.
- Life Ready, Work ready programme, which aims to get our young people work ready is due to go to trial during the summer term.
- To the end of January 2015 40 young people are being supported to start their own business against a target of 25 new start ups by the end of October 2015.

This report provides an update on progress to date, one year on from the start of intervention and six months since the previous update. This report highlights the key interventions within the programme that are having or will have the greatest impact on levels of youth unemployment as well as individual's prospects and opportunities.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

2.1 That Cabinet note the progress made to date against the pledges approved at Cabinet in January 2014 to tackle high levels of youth unemployment.

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"> • Improve the health and wellbeing of our communities and address health inequalities • Protect and create jobs as part of a “business supporting, business winning council” • Improve local people’s prospects through education and skills training • Protect and support our vulnerable children and adults • Put our children and young people first
	Will the proposals impact on specific groups of people?	
	Yes	There will be borough wide impact with a specific focus on 16–24 year olds, education providers and businesses.
TARGET COMPLETION/ DELIVERY DATE	This is a two year programme of work to April 2016. Considerable work has been undertaken to date and this report provides an update on progress as well as key milestones going forward. Future funding sources to safeguard successful elements of the programme, post 2016, are currently being identified.	
FINANCIAL/ VALUE FOR MONEY IMPACT	Yes	Funding of £1,304,730 was identified to deliver the programme. Savings came from the anticipated early delivery of savings in 2014/15 as explained on 9 January 2014.
LEGAL ISSUES	Yes	The Council’s statutory duty to provide education and/or training currently extends to 16-19 year olds, however the council can rely upon section 111 of the Local Government Act 1972 which allows the authority to do anything which is calculated to facilitate, or is conducive or incidental to its statutory functions to extend the current and any future schemes to cover 20-24 year olds. The exercise of the power will also be subject to express statutory restraints such as the public sector equality duty, procurement and state aid rules.
OTHER IMPACTS, RISKS & OPPORTUNITIES	Yes	There is a risk that successful initiatives delivered through the programme will no longer be viable post April 2016 when funding has been utilised. It is critical that the two year programme is used to test the performance of new schemes, identify alternative funding sources and develop income generating opportunities to ensure that initiatives are sustainable long term and that there is

		ongoing support for young people and businesses.
IMPACT ON SPECIFIC WARDS	Yes	The proposals will have a borough wide impact but this will be greatest in those wards where there are highest concentrations of youth unemployment including Cuckoo Oak, Woodside, Malinslee, Haygate, Brookside and Donnington.

PART B – ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

4. INFORMATION

4.1 Youth Unemployment – The Data

When the Youth Unemployment pledges were launched in January 2014, youth unemployment across the borough was increasing and at 32.1% was well above both the regional (24.6%) and national (20.8%) rates. This was equivalent to 3,700 people aged 16-24 being unemployed in the borough. This data is derived from the Annual Population Survey for the year ending June 2013 as released in October 2013.

The latest set of figures published by the Annual Population Survey show that Youth Unemployment in the borough has fallen considerably and now stands at 15.7% which equates to an estimated 1,900 people aged 16 – 24 unemployed. This is 2,500 less than one year previously (4,400). This now places Telford and Wrekin below the West Midlands Rate (19.8%) and the National rate (17.3%). This is the lowest rate Telford and Wrekin have seen since the period ending March 2009 (13%).

	Jan12 – Dec 12	Apr 13 – Mar 14	Oct 13 – Sept 14
Local Rate (%)	29.8	26.4	15.7
Regional Rate (%)	21.9	22.3	19.8
National Rate (%)	20.8	19.3	17.3

This decrease is also supported by the reduction of JSA claimants. In December 2014 there were 535 young people aged 16-24 people claiming JSA, a reduction of 85 persons or 13.7% on the previous month. This is a faster rate of change than seen by the West Midlands, down by 7.8% and England, down by 7%. The rate, 2.7% is lower than the West Midlands rate of 2.8% and higher than the England rate of 2.3% and is the lowest rate that we have seen in the period that we report from (Jan 2007 – present).

When compared to a year previously (December 2013), the number of JSA claimants aged 16-24 has almost halved, with 470 less persons, or 46.8% less than in December 2013. This is a faster rate of change than seen by the West Midlands, down by 41% and England, down by 40.9% in the same period.

Appendix 2 shows the comparable rate of Youth Unemployment over the past year.

4.2 Our Role as an Employer

Pledge	Progress to Date
<p>We will provide on an annual basis 100 work placements across the council to those young people who have identified a lack of work experience as a barrier to employment. Placement will be for 12 weeks, expose participants to a range of work across the authority and include employability training, a guaranteed reference and ongoing support into employment and training.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The target of 100 work experience placements for this financial year has been achieved. This figure represents weekly and extended placements • The Learning and Development Team continue to be the main point of contact for all work placements. This enables them to continue to monitor placements authority wide • Older people e.g. women returners to work are attracted to extended work experience to help get back into work. However we are struggling to attract young people to the extended work experience placements – this could be because the placements are unpaid. We have attempted to work with Job Centre Plus to identify potential placements – this hasn't progressed as well as we would've liked – data sharing and conflicts with targets have got in the way. • The learning and development and the skills and employment teams are working on a robust traineeship programme that will help to make our extended work experience offer more attractive.
<p>We will provide a minimum of 150 apprenticeships and improve the quality of and access to our programme, offering a wider range of experiences and employment opportunities across all council services as well as outside of the council.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The target of 150 apprentices for this financial year has now been exceeded and the figure for the year is now 165. • An approach of recruiting by cohort is working well. 4 cohorts of apprentices have been recruited so far which has helped to increase consistent support to managers and apprentices. This approach to recruiting apprentices has also helped to manage the process of recruitment more efficiently • New specific (not generic) apprentice roles are being created in the organisation. • The apprenticeship policy has been updated to reflect on focusing support for apprentices to find work and develop core skills. The timescales for redeployment have increased to reflect this. • We are refreshing our focus on apprentices and care leavers
<p>We will develop and implement a reward scheme to incentivise positive performance and ensure our apprentices and work placements are job ready.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We are currently developing a scheme that will look to support our apprentices coming towards the end of their placement with us, to undertake further funded training that will support them to secure future job roles. For example a young person who has undertaken a business admin apprenticeship could be offered funding to gain a further qualification in typing and shorthand which will enhance their prospects going forward.

4.3 Our Role as a ‘Service Provider’

<p>We know who these young people are and what their barriers are to employment by adopting a single record client management system to drive intervention and support.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A new data system which has been purchased is due to go live in April 2015. Data transfer and testing is now well under way, with a programme of training now in place and due to start imminently. • The new data system will allow us to replace the existing “Profile” system which is currently used to track circa 8,000 16-20 year olds as well as 4 further internal systems from teams which work with an additional 8,000 people aged 20+, • The new system will allow us to track young people, irrespective of their age, so that we can have a greater understanding of where young people in the borough are placed in education and employment. One of the greatest challenges we have had is identifying who these young unemployed people are as they simply ‘fall off the radar’. The new system will enable us to effectively track and support them through the various stages. • The new system will also allow a young person’s information to be captured out in the field so that we can provide immediate and effective support. Once we have basic data we can “push” messages and alerts through the system which will be of interest, to an individual, based on their specific circumstances – these could be employment/training opportunities which fit the individuals’ profile.
<p>We will launch a rolling programme of one to one support for 200 young people by providing the opportunity to work with an employment coach to help them on their journey to employment – from support with filling in an application to helping plan their journey to work.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Since May 2014 our Job Box Mentors have supported 120 young people into work to date by providing one to one individual tailored support. • We are now finding a small number of people are coming back to the service where their temporary contracts have ended, which shows they value and trust the service. • We also have one individual who has been supported into and subsequently lost 4 jobs. He is being supported to understand what is going wrong and help is being sought for this individual where ordinarily he would have simply been another statistic. • Our Job Box Mentors are also providing support to the Job Junctions on a temporary basis as detailed further on in this report. • Appendix 3 shows the sectors where users of the Job Box Mentor service have gained employment into.

<p>Through collaboration with Telford College of Arts & Technology (TCAT) we will increase our number of job junctions from 8 to 15 and opening times from 16 to 30 hours per week to ensure provision in an area of need and will focus training and support on entrepreneurship and employability linked to local labour opportunities.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2014 has seen more than twice the number of users to job junctions than 2013. Appendix 1 provides a breakdown of the number of attendances at each session. • Unfortunately January 2015 has seen TCAT remove their support for the additional Job Junctions. Of the 17 Job Junctions that are running (this is a further increase to the 15 pledged), TCAT supported with the delivery of 8 of these. TCAT are now supporting with just 2. We are committed to the continued delivery of the increased Job Junctions and as such our Job Box Mentors have taken up responsibility for the delivery of the ones that TCAT can no longer fulfil on a temporary basis whilst other options are being explored. • Attendance numbers at some of the Job Junctions continue to be an issue, however we are embarking on a series of activity to promote these Job Junctions but also look at venues and whether there is any where else more suitable in the local area to hold the Job Junctions. • Appendix 1 shows the numbers of people attending Job Junctions as well as the age group of those that have enrolled at Job Junctions.
<p>We will develop and launch a brand to unify the range of initiatives from the Council, partners and employers available to support young people into employment or training.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Job Box brand is continuing to grow in recognition. • Our Facebook Page likes has increased from has 1,429 likes at the last update in September to 2,247 likes at the beginning of February. • The Job Box Twitter page currently has also increased from 320 followers in September to 440 followers at the beginning of February.

<p>We will launch a virtual, web based, one stop shop to bring together employers and potential employees through interactive forums, you-tube postings by business leaders and Young People who have overcome barriers to secure employment, listing of forthcoming job opportunities.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Job Box website (www.telfordjobbox.co.uk – appendix 9) continues to evolve with further services being showcased such as work experience opportunities and the new focussed opportunities for volunteering for the Council. • We have recently introduced a news feed and an events page which have proved popular with the website users. • Website statistics tell us that: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 27.5% of all people viewing the website are aged between 18 – 24 years old • The number of people who visit the website on a weekly basis is steadily increasing, from around 350 when the site first launched in March 2014 to approx 700 per week in February 2015. • The most visited pages continue to be the job search pages. • Future development of the site will see: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Employers uploading their job vacancies to the website with an easy to use form. • Service Providers uploading videos of their provision for us to use on the website. • Revamp of the Job Vacancies page to provide a searchable jobs function for job seekers. • Launch of a self referral function which will guide the user through a series of questions and will support self serve or result in a referral to the relevant team within the Job Box.
---	---

4.4 Our Role as a 'Facilitator & Broker'

<p>We will identify up and coming employment opportunities with existing employers as well as those associated with new developments such as Southwater and will up skill local people to ensure they are ready and able to access these opportunities.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enhancements to the Business Support CRM system will soon be implemented which will enable officers to gather job and skills information at source. This will provide real time information and can be relayed back to officers within the skills departments to inform service users of vacancies coming up.
---	---

<p>We will secure business ambassadors who will pledge to help address youth unemployment directly through their own recruitment practice and indirectly through engagement with children and young people on local skills needs and will reciprocate this commitment through support and collaboration.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • During investigations into our proposed scheme launch it was identified that there is already some fantastic work going on linking businesses with schools through organisations such as BITC. However it was evident that there are still gaps and a need to provide support. • Our aim is not to duplicate or displace but to merely compliment work that is already taking place and look to see how we can bridge the gaps. • It became evident that some schools and businesses are unaware of the support already available to them, but also there are gaps in the support that can be offered. • We are developing a facility where we can meet schools needs by providing them with the information of the support that already exists but also provide further opportunity for businesses and schools to collaborate on specific projects. The aim being that a school will provide detail of where it needs support and businesses can register and provide detail of where they are able to support schools. • We intend to implement a business / school matching system which also contains details of current support on offer all in one place. This system is currently titled “Telford Skills Box” but is in the very early stages of development. We hope to provide more detail in the coming months.
<p>We will launch an apprenticeship hub for local employers to reduce the administrative burden to employers, facilitate apprenticeship sharing across organisations and promote the financial and organisational benefits of “growing your own” through traineeships and apprenticeships and will launch a trainee / apprentice of the year award.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A co-ordinator has been appointed and is due to start the role at the beginning of March. • We have commenced with the initial trial of apprentices through this programme. We have 3 trial apprentices currently in place, 1 placed with Asteria Global, 1 placed with Telford Shopping Centre and a further placement due to start imminently with Faccenda. • The trial has proven to be invaluable with many learning points and areas for development being identified. • Work has been undertaken by the Business Support Team to start to identify businesses who may be interested in the scheme. Feedback and interest to date has been very positive. These will all be followed up when the programme is ready to launch. • The hub will have a soft launch at the Jobs Fair on 18 March, with an official launch a couple of months later.
<p>We will launch a jobs fair at The International Centre in March 2014 at which there will be access to jobs, support with CV writing and employability skills as well as inspirational</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We successfully ran a Christmas Recruitment Jobs Fair at Telford Shopping Centre in September 2014 over a 2 day period. • The event showcased over 80 seasonal job opportunities in retail and hospitality. • The event saw approximately 1000 people come to see us over the 2 day period looking for work and job advice.

<p>talks from business ambassadors and young people.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • On 18 March we are holding our second jobs fair at the International Centre Telford. We are anticipating over 80 employers to the event. • We have also included a Careers Fair the following day on 19 March which will have around 40 local businesses showcasing careers in Telford with have a go activities.
<p>We will work with schools, education providers and the community to ensure young people are equipped with the knowledge to make informed decisions about their futures based on up to date information on skills requirements now and in the future.</p>	<p>Work Readiness & The Skills Passport</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We have developed a programme that will provide schools the opportunity to support all year 10 students due to go on work experience with a work readiness programme. • The programme will be a 1.5 hour training session before their work experience that will look at a core set of competences that employers expect young people to have when entering the work place. The competences have been developed in line with feedback from local businesses. • Students will then be provided with a work book which will further enhance their learning whilst on placement. The work book aims to challenge the students thinking and use their observational skills to identify appropriate behaviour in the work place. We anticipate developing the work book as an Ollie Module when we go to full roll out. • There will then be a further 1.5 hour session on students return from work experience to consolidate their learning. • We are aiming to go out to trial in the summer term with 20 pupils from 2 different schools. <p>Entrepreneurialism & Self Employment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Young Telford successfully launched at Global Entrepreneurship Week in November 2014 with the aim of supporting 25 young people to start up their own business. • Young Telford builds on the success of Young Britain which was run by Shropshire Enterprise Partnership. • The programme aimed to support a minimum of 100 beneficiaries to explore enterprise, up to the end of January 2015, 175 beneficiaries had attended events to explore enterprise. • Up to the end of January 2015 40 new young businesses are under development with excellent potential to complete the programme and become start up businesses. <p>Parent Strategy</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Throughout the development of the pledges it has become evident that support is needed for parents and carers of students • A draft Parents strategy has been developed with the aim of giving parents accurate and up-to-date information on helping young people make informed careers choices, leading to successful, long-term employment. • The strategy identifies a series of objectives and

- | | |
|--|--|
| | associated activities to enable this to happen. <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Work will now be undertaken to implement the strategy. |
|--|--|

4.5 Southwater

The impact that the Southwater investment has had on our Youth Unemployment figures is unquestionable. The Southwater Development has safeguarded 400 jobs and has created a further 300 jobs. Our Job Box mentors have worked with Young People who have secured new jobs at the Southwater Development and have worked very closely with one retailer in particular in order to get their clients into work. Vacancies available at Southwater have been promoted through the Job Box programme with a number of retailers taking stands at the Jobs Fair last year to promote their upcoming employment opportunities.

The development will have a further impact on employment opportunities going forward too, with the owners of the Shopping Centre making a commitment to further investment and expansion which will in turn bring the opportunity of further jobs.

4.6 Sustainability

Funding is in place for this programme until April 2016. Over this period we will be reviewing the success of individual programmes as well as looking at the sustainability of these initiatives going forward and seeking to identify alternative funding streams, including funding from the LEP, sponsorship, funding from the website i.e. charging for advertising vacancies, as well as the opportunity for the Job Box mentors to work more closely with businesses on targeted recruitment campaigns.

Programmes such as the Ambassador Programme and the Apprenticeship Hub are aimed to become self funding with charging options currently being discussed and researched.

5 PREVIOUS MINUTES

Cabinet Meeting – 9 January 2014

Cabinet Meeting – 18 September 2014

6 BACKGROUND PAPERS

None

Report prepared by Kim Hodgetts, Programme Manager – Youth Unemployment, Telephone: 01952 381192

APPENDIX 1 – JOB JUNCTION ATTENDANCE 2014

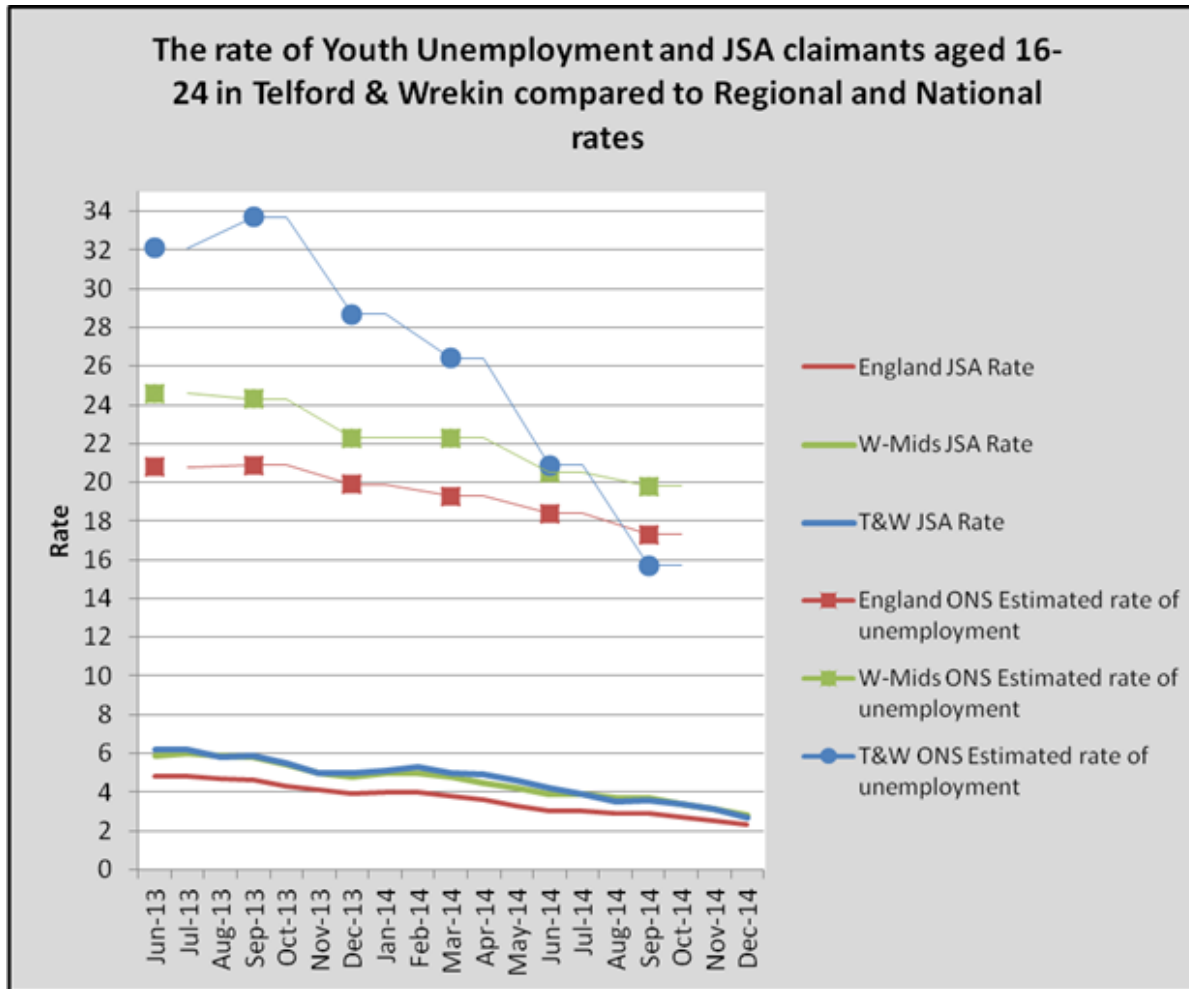
Venue	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Total	2013
Dawley & Malinslee	62	93	143	158	162	179	221	145	164	146	100	60	1633	381
Wellington	68	51	58	77	58	84	65	77	92	67	65	47	809	685
Sutton Hill	49	41	87	65	85	76	67	53	40	39	31	31	664	368
Woodside	55	41	69	41	60	63	42	42	37	43	60	60	613	305
Brookside/Stirchley	58	60	52	30	27	34	26	24	29	40	26	7	413	802
Donnington	73	96	80	65	87	73	79	52	89	66	63	42	865	647
Hadley	X	X	3	5	12	25	20	38	26	28	28	14	199	0
Madeley	X	X	40	27	27	30	44	28	23	32	15	13	279	0
Overdale	X	X	12	12	6	21	18	12	44	10	12	4	151	0
Randlay	X	X	16	6	9	13	21	18	17	6	1	4	111	0
St Georges	X	X	5	12	13	17	16	25	15	14	10	8	135	0
Meeting Point House	X	X	X	67	35	72	49	48	46	53	40	28	438	0
Newport	X	X	X	X	14	20	17	9	20	10	8	10	108	0
Arleston	X	X	X	X	2	7	7	7	5	7	4	5	44	0
Oakengates	X	X	X	62	70	62	56	53	44	65	58	27	497	0
Total	365	382	565	627	667	776	748	631	691	626	521	360	6959	3188

NB: Due to the closure of the Brookside Centre we have used various locations for this Job Junction, it is currently based in Randlay

This table shows the age groups of those enrolling at Job Junctions over the last year.

Age group	Number of enrolments
17 year old	1
18-24	41
25-34	73
35-44	87
45-54	81
55+	51
Total	334

APPENDIX 2 – COMPARABLE UNEMPLOYMENT FIGURES



APPENDIX 3 – SECTORS WHERE EMPLOYMENT HAS BEEN GAINED THROUGH THE JOB BOX MENTORS

