

TELFORD & WREKIN COUNCIL

CABINET - 15 SEPTEMBER 2008

CORPORATE ASSESSMENT REPORT

REPORT BY THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE

1 PURPOSE

- 1.1 To present to Cabinet the Audit Commission's Corporate Assessment Report for Telford & Wrekin Council and initial proposals to further develop our approach to delivering continuous improvement.

2 RECOMMENDATIONS

2.1 That Cabinet:

- **notes the Corporate Assessment Report and scores;**
- **endorse the proposal to develop the Council's organisational improvement agenda.**

3 TELFORD & WREKIN CORPORATE ASSESSMENT

- 3.1 In May 2008, the Council underwent a Corporate Assessment by the Audit Commission. This rigorous Assessment forms a core part of the Commission's annual Comprehensive Performance Assessment (CPA) of the Council. We are currently rated 4 stars or "excellent" for CPA.
- 3.2 The Corporate Assessment looked at all aspects of how the Council is managed, the quality of services it delivers and the value-for-money it provides for local people. It involved an intense fortnight of interviews and workshops with Members, officers, partners and residents. The Assessment focused on 5 themes:
- **Ambition** – does the Council and its partners have a clear vision for what it is trying to achieve?
 - **Prioritisation** – is the Council focused on delivering its vision?
 - **Capacity** – has the Council got the resources (money, people) to deliver its Vision?
 - **Performance Management** – is the Council effectively tracking and driving progress to deliver this Vision?
 - **Achievements** – is the Council delivering this Vision?
- 3.3 We have now received the Audit Commission's Assessment Report. Overall, the Commission awarded the Council a "4" – the highest possible mark. Only 15 other comparable local authorities have received

this top mark to date. This result also means the Council is well placed to retain its CPA “excellent” rating for 2008. This will mean that the Council will continue to be subject to a “lighter touch” external audit and inspection regime with the associated reduction in fees. A copy of the Report’s executive summary is presented in Appendix One with the full Report available on the intranet at

<http://intranet/sites/PolicyPerformancePartnerships/Pages/CorporateAssessment.aspx>

Summary of Assessment Scores	
Ambition	4
Prioritisation	4
Capacity	3
Performance management	3
Achievement	3
Overall	4

- 3.4 Of the 5 Assessment themes, we scored top marks (“4”) and were described as “performing strongly” for Ambition and Prioritisation. The Report states that “The Council and its partners have developed clear and challenging ambitions to transform the borough so that residents can enjoy better quality of life. This long term strategic vision is underpinned by a set of inter-connecting short and medium term strategies.” and, importantly, that our ambitions are translated into “clear and robust priorities” which are “firmly based on a sound understanding of the needs and views of local people”. These priorities “are fully integrated into the Council’s financial and performance frameworks”.
- 3.5 For the Assessment Themes of Capacity, Performance Management and Achievement we scored “3” and were described as “performing well”. The Report emphasises that the Council has “good political and managerial leadership [which] ensures effective management and sound governance” with an operational culture which is “strong, providing a sound basis for transparent, relevant and timely decision making. Relationships are characterised by mutual respect”. This is supported by “rigorous arrangements for monitoring and the review of performance information, including in partnership” with the Council having a culture of “improvement and learning”. Together, this has resulted in “the Council and its partners...delivering improved quality of life for the people of Telford & Wrekin”.
- 3.6 The Report emphasises the progress we have made with our partners on community safety, physical, economic and social regeneration, enabling more older people to live independently, and that local people are now living longer and healthier lives. Outcomes for children and young people are described as “good”.
- 3.7 These findings are, overall, a reflection of the hard work and commitment of Members, officers and all of our partners to ensuring we

are focused on and deliver ongoing improvement to the quality of life experienced by all residents in the Borough.

4 NEXT STEPS: DRIVING ORGANISATIONAL IMPROVEMENT

- 4.1 A key purpose of the Corporate Assessment process is to help councils identify areas for improvement. The Assessment Report identifies two such areas. Whilst the Council is making real improvements in the delivery of its equality and diversity strategies, the Report argues that we need to sharpen our overall strategic focus in this area. The second area relates to performance management which the Report, again, recognises as a real strength, but is an area they suggest we need to develop Members' "challenge" role and work to ensure that all our performance measures and targets are making a tangible difference in the Borough.
- 4.2 As well as developing a response to these two specific areas, we are now developing proposals to drive forward the Council's organisational improvement agenda more widely. It is our intention to link this improvement agenda to Priority Plans as they are refreshed in the coming months. A first step in this process will be to identify and prioritise issues for change and development.
- 4.3 We will also use this process to initiate preparations for Comprehensive Area Assessment which will replace CPA as the Audit Commission's core local authority inspection regime from April 2009.
- 4.4 Finally, to have such positive recognition of the Council and how we operate from the Audit Commission through the Corporate Assessment process is very pleasing. However, our focus must now be on moving forward as there are many issues and challenges in the Borough to address. We will continue to deliver improving services and working towards being an efficient, effective and customer-focused Council that delivers value-for-money for the community.

Report Prepared by Jon Power: CPA Improvement Project Manager. Tel 80141.

APPENDIX ONE: TELFORD & WREKIN CORPORATE ASSESSMENT REPORT

Executive summary

5 The Council is performing strongly. Effective leadership, responsive systems and strong partnership working are delivering good outcomes for local people. The Council and its partners have developed clear and challenging ambitions to transform the borough so that residents can enjoy better quality of life. This long term strategic vision is underpinned by a set of inter-connecting short and medium term strategies.

6 Partnership working is well established and effective. There is a genuine sense of shared ownership of the vision for the borough, characterised by the strap line 'Team Telford', and this is based on a clear understanding of how the local challenges and opportunities fit into the wider regional and national context. Delivery is supported by a robust strategic framework and excellent working relationships.

7 Priorities are firmly based on a sound understanding of the needs and views of local people, derived from close consultation with, and detailed data about, local communities. Priorities are designed to make the most of local and regional opportunities and translate into action through outcome based targets. Sound service and financial planning translate the priorities into actions for council services, and robust performance management ensures that delivery remains on track.

8 The Council is a strong community leader, working astutely with others in the public, private and voluntary sectors. It champions the needs of Telford and Wrekin to maximise benefits for the local area, and to promote improvement in the wider area. This is making a real difference to the borough, and enhancing the prospects for growth and prosperity in the sub-region.

9 Political and managerial leadership are strong and effective. The Leader and Chief Executive are well regarded throughout the Council, ambitions and organisational values are well communicated internally and externally and a 'can do' culture amongst staff maximises their ability to deliver against the Council's ambitions. Good workforce planning underpins the effective deployment of staff, and excellent partnership working, especially with the local PCT, further enhances capacity. The Council has been slow to improve ICT and Customer Access but clear plans are now in place to upgrade customer access with agreed capital and revenue in place. The Council provides good value for money, driven by a commitment to reduce the financial burden on local taxpayers.

10 The Council has a good track record of effective performance management, with an appetite for performance improvement that is shared with partners. The well established systems to monitor and manage

performance are rigorous and the Council and its partners have continued to work to improve them.

11 Working with its partners, the Council has made tangible improvements to the quality of life in Telford and Wrekin in the last three years. Achievements reflect the focus on social and physical regeneration, especially in the borough's most deprived communities.

12 The Council has spearheaded the drive to transform the borough through social and physical regeneration. It has worked closely with partners to create the conditions whereby the borough can resolve some of the long standing socio-economic problems that were built into the original design of Telford New Town. In doing so, it has already attracted additional high quality inward investment to the Borough, significantly improved the local skills base, and made a strong start to improving the quality of life in housing estates in the most deprived areas. The creation of a local urban regeneration company, Transforming Telford, has drawn in over £15 million from Advantage West Midlands on the back of pooled land assets with English Partnerships and the impact of that is already beginning to be felt, for example in tackling poorer housing conditions in the private sector. The Council is actively shaping sustainable communities by ensuring that the ambitious local building programme learns from past mistakes, with the first phases of three new communities already characterised by high quality design, community focus, accessibility and a strong commitment to sound environmental practice. The local environment has also improved through increased recycling, enhanced access to, and satisfaction with local public transport, and the provision of improved open spaces and cycle paths.

13 A strong multi-agency approach has significantly reduced crime and anti-social behaviour. Crime levels overall are below average, and the local crime reduction partnership is the most improved in the country. All major crime rates have fallen since 2003/04, some of them, such as burglary, dramatically. Engagement with minority communities is building cohesion, as is work with partners on hate crime. People feel increasingly safe in the borough.

14 The strategic approach to health taken by the Council and its partners has achieved improved outcomes in the health of local people, but challenges remain. Rates of cancer and coronary heart disease have reduced and are now much closer to those for England as a whole. The gap on life expectancy has also closed. The Council and its partners have taken a creative and integrated approach to healthier lifestyles, learning and community cohesion which has won national support from sporting governing bodies. However, problems with alcohol abuse and teenage pregnancy remain.

15 The Council and its partners take a strategic approach to meeting the needs of older people, and the carers who support them. A clear focus on encouraging and maintaining independence is achieving outcomes for frail or otherwise vulnerable elderly people. There is a wide range of initiatives across service areas aimed at older people, and close policy engagement with, and valued support for, the local Senior Citizen's Forum. These programmes take

increasing account of the needs of the Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) community and other groups at risk of disadvantage.

16 Outcomes for children are good and generally improving. Most health outcomes are in line with similar authorities and all referrals to specialist mental health services are seen within expected timescales. Educational achievements are in line with similar authorities. Looked after children live in stable placements and a high number receive timely health assessments. Young people have good opportunities to contribute their views and these influence changes in service delivery. Fewer children, and adults, are being killed or injured on the borough's roads.

17 The Council's overall approach to equality and diversity is good, but sometimes lacks both coherence and impact. It clearly understands the range of factors that impact on equality of outcomes for local people, and takes this into account in its approach to service design, delivery and management. There are clear structures and mechanisms in place for managing and implementing activity in support of equality and diversity, and robust plans for monitoring impact and driving further improvement. And the Council's commitment to achieving a workforce that is reflective of the local population has been reflected in the recent increase in the proportion of staff with disabilities. However, the growing network of delivery to diverse groups within the community requires stronger strategic focus. Impact is often unclear and; despite the recent changes in the composition of the workforce, the proportion of BME staff remains low.

18 The Council delivers good value for money. There is a robust and well established system for delivering this, with a full participation by councillors that adds real value.

TELFORD & WREKIN COUNCIL

CABINET - 15 SEPTEMBER 2008

JOINT AREA REVIEW REPORT

REPORT BY THE DIRECTOR OF CHILDREN'S SERVICES

1 PURPOSE

- 1.1 To present to Cabinet the Ofsted Joint Area Review Report for Telford & Wrekin Children's Services Authority Area and proposals to develop our response to the report.

2 RECOMMENDATIONS

2.1 That Cabinet:

- **notes the Joint Area Review Report;**
- **endorses the proposals to develop an action plan to take forward the recommendations**

3 TELFORD & WREKIN JOINT AREA REVIEW

- 3.1 In May 2008, Telford & Wrekin underwent a **Joint Area Review** (JAR) led by Ofsted to assess the contribution of local services in ensuring that children and young people:
- at risk, or requiring safeguarding are effectively cared for
 - who are looked after achieve the best possible outcomes
 - with learning difficulties and/or disabilities achieve the best possible outcomes
- 3.2 An additional investigation was also carried out to assess the quality of the partners' strategy for addressing teenage conception rates and providing support for young parents.
- 3.3 An **Enhanced Youth Inspection** (EYI) took place alongside the JAR and focused on 3 key aspects of youth service provision.
- 3.4 A concurrent joint inspection of the Shropshire, Telford and Wrekin **Youth Offending Service** took place in February 2008 and its findings were fed into the JAR.

- 3.5 The JAR focused primarily on the most vulnerable children and young people and used our 2007 annual performance assessment (APA) as a starting point for the inspection. The review covered publicly-funded services for children and young people in the borough, including those that are directly managed or commissioned by the council, as well as services provided by health and youth justice services. The review also covered the leadership and management of services for children and young people and, in particular, the way that our services work together to improve outcomes. The JAR evaluated how well all our services, when taken together, improve the well-being of children and young people in the borough.
- 3.6 The JAR involved an initial assessment week in April which focused on case file reviews, documentary evidence, APA data sets and our Children's Trust's Children and Young People's Plan (CYPP). This was followed in May by an on-site inspection fortnight involving interviews, focus groups and observations with members, officers, partner agencies, children and young people and their carers.

4 INSPECTION FINDINGS

- 4.1 We have now received all three reports and they are available from the Education and Learning front page on our council Internet site. They can also be accessed directly from:

JAR	http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/oxcare_providers/la_download/(id)/4434/(as)/JAR/jar_2008_894_fr.pdf
EYI	http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/oxcare_providers/la_download/(id)/4435/(as)/JAR/jar_2008_894_ys.pdf
YOS	http://inspectors.homeoffice.gov.uk/hmiprobation/inspect_reports/yot-inspections.html/Shropshire_Telford_and_Wrek1.pdf?view=Binary

- 4.2 The inspections were all judged as good with an overall rating of 3, making a significant contribution to the overall excellent Corporate Assessment score. Inspectors assessed that *'partnership working is excellent, including through Children's Trust arrangements but also across the wider agenda of regeneration, skills and economic development.'* They observed that *'capacity is enhanced by highly committed officers and staff who have developed effective relationships across the council and partner agencies at both strategic and operational levels, supported well by good training and professional development opportunities.'*

- 4.3 The inspectors rated our ambition for children and young people as *'outstanding'* and recognised the interweaving with ambitions for the wider community. They supported the localisation agenda being at the *'heart of strategic development, not only for children and young people but also for the wider citizenry of the borough.'* They confirmed that ambitions are well embedded and *'firmly owned at the highest levels of the council and partner organisations, including strong commitment from the Chief Executives of the council and the primary care trust.'*
- 4.4 The inspectors were very complimentary about the new CYPP which *'contains a clear vision, underpinned by an excellent and sustained focus on the Every Child Matters principles of early intervention and prevention, narrowing the gap, and delivery of multi-disciplinary, inter-agency services in localities'* and *'identifies a manageable number of key priorities, shared by all partners and based on very good knowledge of local need in clusters'*.
- 4.5 The inspectors praised our *'outstanding multi-agency preventative and family support services delivered through local clusters'* and reported that *'all child protection case conferences were held on time and within timescales.'* They assessed that there was *'effective partnership work to secure a comprehensive Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS) and that 'good arrangements promote physical and mental health, and secure education for those not at school.'* They also confirmed that we take *'effective action to identify and respond to risk.'*
- 4.6 The inspectors found that *'partners have a strong and effective commitment to looked after children'* and that there is *'strong participation of looked after children in service planning and delivery.'* They identified that there was a wide range of services to *'promote learning and personal development'* and that we have *'very good service and outcomes for care leavers.'*
- 4.7 The inspectors rated as *'good'* our *'health provision for children with physical disabilities in mainstream schools'* and confirmed that our *'Common Assessment Framework and Team Around the Child arrangements ensure cohesive and flexible support to families to keep children within the family.'* They also highlighted our *'good support services for children with visual and hearing impairment'* and our *'very good range of leisure and recreational opportunities.'*
- 4.8 Engagement with children and young people and their parents/carers was highly rated - *care leavers receive very good support involvement of children and young people at both strategic and operational levels is very good, including hard to reach groups parents and carers of young children with disabilities receive very good support very good communication between health and social care agencies promotes a cohesive and responsive service to families.*

- 4.9 Youth work provision in Telford & Wrekin is '*flexible and responsive*', with young people's achievement among those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities rated as '*outstanding*'. Youth work is delivered by '*workers who are well qualified, motivated, experienced and respected by young people*' and the analysis of young people's needs is '*comprehensive and coherent*.'
- 4.10 A key purpose of the inspections is to assist us in identifying areas for further development. The inspectors recognised that improvements could be achieved around quality assurance and performance management arrangements, use of performance data, case file allocation and monitoring, social care capacity and further reduction in teenage conceptions.
- 4.11 The reports' main findings can be found at Appendices 1 to 3. The grades assessed for each inspection are:

Joint Area Review	Local services overall
Safeguarding	2
Looked after children	3
Learning difficulties and/or disabilities	3
Service management	3
Capacity to improve	3

Enhanced Youth Inspection key aspect		Grade
1	Standards of young people's achievement	3
	Quality of youth work practice	3
2	Quality of curriculum and resources	3
3	Leadership and management	3

Youth Offending Service Inspection criteria	Judgement
Work in the courts	3
Work with children and young people in the community	
Work with children and young people at risk of offending	3
Work with children and young people who have offended	3

Work with parents/carers	3
Outcomes of work with children and young people in the community	3
Work with children and young people subject to custodial sentences	3
Victims and restorative justice	3
Management and leadership	3

4: outstanding 3: good 2: adequate 1: inadequate

4.12 These results are an affirmation of the commitment of all partners to improving the well-being and outcomes for all children and young people in the borough and to securing continuous service improvement.

5 PROPOSALS TO DEVELOP AN ACTION PLAN TO TAKE FORWARD THE RECOMMENDATIONS

- 5.1 We will circulate the report locally to our partners, the Local Safeguarding Children Board and the local media. The report will also be made available through our council website and copies will be sent to local services and service users.
- 5.2 We have seventy working days from the publication of the JAR and EYI reports on 9 September to consult with partners and draw up action plans to respond to findings and address recommendations in the reports. It is proposed that development, ratification, publication and monitoring of the action plans are carried out by our Children's Trust Board. Circulation of the plans will be as for the reports and also to Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills and the Secretary of State.
- 5.3 Following consultation with partners, an action plan arising from the Youth Offending Service inspection has already been drawn up and approved by the lead inspector. The Youth Justice Board Regional Manager has the responsibility for overseeing implementation of the plan and it is also being monitored by the Children's Trust Board.
- 5.4 A key requirement for us in the development of all action plans is to ensure that they integrate, where possible, with our existing consultation, planning and performance cycles to ensure that we monitor the outcomes in a timely and robust way.

Report prepared by:

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JOINT AREA REVIEW – MAIN FINDINGS

The main findings of this joint area review are as follows:

- The contribution of local services to improving outcomes for children and young people at risk or requiring safeguarding is adequate. Outstanding family support services are delivered through five local integrated multi-agency cluster teams and aligned networks which provide effective early support for families. Good arrangements promote physical and mental health, and secure education for those not at school. Although appropriate action protects children at risk of harm, the quality of practice in social care services is variable which means that not all children receive timely and purposeful support.
- The contribution of local services to improving outcomes for looked after children and young people is good. Partners have a strong and effective commitment to looked after children. Regular consultation with young people helps shape and improve the services they receive. Care plans vary in quality but effective multi-agency collaboration ensures outcomes are good for most children and young people. GCSE results are in line with similar councils, however there are high levels of absence from school. Care leavers receive very good support.
- The contribution of local services to improving outcomes for children and young people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is good. Well-established partnership working provides responsive, local services for children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and their families. Specialist services are valued highly by schools and parents although access to support for autistic spectrum disorder is inconsistent. Whilst progress in school is often good, the council does not use borough-wide performance data well enough to evaluate the impact of its inclusion strategy.
- The quality of the partners' strategy for addressing teenage conception rates and providing support for young parents is adequate. Young people receive a good range of information, advice, and support around relationships and sexual health. Young parents are well supported. However, taken together, the work of partners has not had sufficient impact on reducing the high teenage pregnancy rate. It is too early to judge whether the significant but very recent reductions in the teenage pregnancy rate are part of a firm downward trend.
- Service management is good with good capacity to improve further. Commitment to fulfilling the ambitions for children and young people is strong at all levels of the council and partner organisations. The involvement of children and young people at both strategic and operational levels is very good. A new, more focused Children and Young People's Plan is in place to deliver key priorities, supported by very good partnership working which enhances capacity. Performance

management arrangements are adequate but with areas for improvement.

ENHANCED YOUTH INSPECTION – MAIN FINDINGS

Youth work provision in Telford and Wrekin is good, and the local authority sufficiently secures its provision. The integration of youth and Connexions services in 2007 has progressed quickly and effectively, producing a more coherent service for young people. Their achievement is good, especially in vulnerable groups. The outcomes of well-targeted project work are very positive and, for young people with learning difficulties and disabilities, outstanding. However, the narrow range and restricted availability of accreditation are denying a significant proportion of young people the opportunity formally to recognise their achievements. Youth work practice is strong, and workers typically enjoy good relationships with young people. There is a good mix of qualifications and experience, which is well deployed and supplemented by expertise from partner organisations. Young people's needs are thoroughly analysed at all levels, and responsive programmes are developed by youth workers to meet them. Youth work provision is dynamic and flexible, and, for target groups, is inclusive and well differentiated. Access to provision is variable, and in some locations there is a significant lack of suitable accommodation. Access to information and communications technology (ICT) is also too limited. Leadership and management are good. The business plan is clear and consistent with those of partners. Partnerships are very strong and varied. Management information and quality assurance of practice are barely adequate, although a single quality assurance system for C4Y is beginning to enhance sessional youth work assessments with the assessment of individual practice.

YOUTH OFFENDING SERVICE INSPECTION – MAIN FINDINGS

Work in the courts

- The YOS had staff who undertook specific court roles using its clearly defined court procedures. Two experienced staff members acted as mentors to new staff and students.
- Pre-sentence report writers proof-read reports and passed them to their relevant manager for a further review. All reports were checked by court staff before being presented to the court.
- In all the cases seen in the inspection pre-sentence reports differentiated between the likelihood of reoffending and the Risk of Harm to others.

Work with children and young people in the community

- Both local authorities were trailblazers and held beacon status in developing integrated children's services in line with the Every Child Matters agenda.
- The Youth Inclusion Support Panel linked to the Common Assessment Framework, the Team Around the Child and lead professional model.
- In the three years preceding the inspection, the YOS had developed a risk led approach. This helped to ensure that resources were targeted at children and young people with the highest Risk of Harm, likelihood of reoffending and safeguarding concerns.
- Employment, training and education staff were notified of all children and young people not in full-time provision. They liaised with key employment, training and education stakeholders on behalf of the YOS, with the aim of achieving alternative education provision for individual children and young people.
- Over three-quarters of cases had evidence that the active engagement of parents/carers had been facilitated by the work of the YOS.
- Progress against the first priority criminogenic factor was noted in 70% of cases involving children and young people who had offended.
- Few Risk of Harm assessments addressed victims' issues.
- Records did not adequately address safeguarding work in almost half of the relevant cases.

Work with children and young people subject to custodial sentences

- In three-quarters of the relevant cases the link social worker attended the final review meeting in the secure establishment. Vulnerability action plans had been completed in the same proportion of cases.
- Effective action on compliance had been taken in two-thirds of cases.
- Three-quarters of cases showed that the learning outcomes achieved by the children and young people had been applied in their daily lives.
- Few cases could show that the escalation processes, in which staff brought to the attention of managers problems in accessing relevant

health or education services, had helped practitioners to access the required resources.

Victims and restorative justice

- A comprehensive restorative justice strategy and a clear action plan were evident. The YOS's performance in this area compared favourably with its YJB defined family and the West Midlands area as a whole.
- Children and young people subject to final warnings, who were not offered an intervention programme, were asked to write a letter of apology/explanation where appropriate.
- Almost all of the cases had evidence to show that victims' needs had been sufficiently assessed.
- Whilst the numbers had been increasing, at the time of the inspection only half of the cases showed that children and young people had been involved in reparation work.

Management and leadership

- The YOS had adapted to the differing needs of the two local authorities to ensure that services were provided through locally available structures.
- Performance was monitored by exception reporting. Action plans were driven by the performance manager through reports to team managers. Disaggregated reports to the two individual authorities were provided and performance information was shared with the whole staff group.
- YOS staff used the Common Assessment Framework to collect and share information and the Team Around the Child to enable staff to work in partnership.
- The risk led approach helped the YOS to focus on Risk of Harm, likelihood of offending and safeguarding. Through restructuring the service and the introduction of risk led national standards, the YOS had organised itself on the principle of resources following risk.
- YOS staff received regular supervision. All managers had undertaken an effective supervision course and had completed all the essential corporate management training.
- There was insufficient evidence of outcome data being used to drive forward developments in the organisation. The YOS was not confident about the accuracy of first-time entrants and reoffending rate data.
- The financial contribution of the National Health Service Trusts did not meet the Youth Justice Board guidance, and formal agreements between the YOS and health services did not encompass the comprehensive provision of physical and mental health services.

TELFORD & WREKIN COUNCIL

CABINET - 15th SEPTEMBER 2008

UPDATED ANNUAL GOVERNANCE STATEMENT 2007/08 FOLLOWING THE AUDIT OF THE ACCOUNTS BY KPMG

REPORT OF THE CORPORATE DIRECTOR: RESOURCES

1.0 PURPOSE

- 1.1 For the Cabinet to agree the updated Annual Governance Statement 2007/08 following minor changes arising from the audit of the accounts by the External Auditors – KPMG. The revised statement will be signed by the Leader and Chief Executive and will be included in the audited 2007/08 annual accounts being presented to the Audit Committee on 16th September and then Council on 25th September for approval.

2.0 RECOMMENDATION

- 2.1 **That members of the Cabinet agree the updated Annual Governance Statement 2007/08, attached as Appendix A.**

3.0 SUMMARY

- 3.1 The Council's External Auditors – KPMG have undertaken their audit of the accounts for 2007/08 and recommended minor changes to the Annual Governance Statement. These changes need to be agreed by Cabinet, the Audit Committee and then Council.
- 3.2 The Annual Governance Statement was a new requirement for English Authorities in 2007/08 so the External Auditors have reviewed it against current guidance¹. It is pleasing to report that for our first statement we have only been requested to make minor changes.

4.0 PREVIOUS MINUTES

- 4.1 Cabinet 16th June 2008

5.0 BACKGROUND

- 5.1 The changes made are tracked in Appendix A.
- 5.2 The reference to "see glossary" inserted in paragraph 2.2 is to include a definition in the glossary to the accounts for CIPFA/SOLACE. The glossary entry is – "CIPFA/SOLACE Delivering Good Governance in Local Government - Framework - CIPFA - the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy, have worked with SOLACE - the Society of

¹ The CIPFA Finance Advisory Network – THE ANNUAL GOVERNANCE STATEMENT – Meeting the requirements of the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2003, *incorporating Accounts and Audit (Amendment)(England) Regulations 2006* – Rough Guide for Practitioners with effect from 2007/08

Local Authority Chief Executives and Senior Managers, to develop the good governance framework for local authorities based on the "The Good Governance Standards for Public Services" produced by the Office for Public Management

- 5.3 The changes in paragraph's 4.1 (3rd bullet) and 5.7 are to distinguish between the assurance framework and the effectiveness of that framework in respect to performance management.
- 5.4 The change in paragraph 5.8 is to insert March 2008. This is to clarify that the results included in the statement are from Use of Resources and data quality reviews of 2006/07 which were reported as part of the Comprehensive performance Assessment in the Annual Audit and Inspection Letter in March 2008.

6.0 OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

AREA	COMMENTS
Equality & Diversity	One of the principles in the Local Code of Corporate Governance is inclusivity.
Environmental Impact	None
Legal Implications	Accounts and Audit (Amendment) (England) Regulations 2006 and CIPFA guidance SORP 2007 and Delivering Good Governance for Local Government. Operating good corporate governance and internal control systems should demonstrate high ethical standards and minimise some forms of claims against the Council.
Links with Corporate Priorities	The Local Code of Corporate Governance should ensure improved links with the community and the delivery of appropriate corporate priorities in an open and accountable manner.
Opportunities and Risks	Reviewing the Council's corporate governance and internal control systems and identifying areas for improvement will ensure that the Council's risks have been and will be effectively managed.
Financial Implications	Good corporate governance and internal controls reduce the risk to the Council of financial loss.
Ward Implications	None.

7.0 BACKGROUND PAPERS

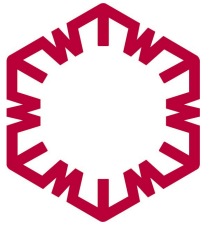
Local Code of Corporate Governance 2006 and updated May 2008

CIPFA – Delivering Good Governance in Local Government June 2007

CIPFA's Financial Advisory Network –ANNUAL GOVERNANCE STATEMENT - Meeting the Requirements of the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2003, incorporating the Accounts and Audit (Amendment) (England) Regulations 2006 – Rough Guide for Practitioners with effect from 2007/08

Feedback from KPMG July 2008

APPENDIX A



Telford & Wrekin

C O U N C I L

ANNUAL GOVERNANCE STATEMENT 2007/08

1. Standards of Governance

- 1.1 The Council expects all of its members, officers, partners and contractors to adhere to the highest standards of public service with particular reference to the formally adopted Codes of Conduct, Constitution, and policies of the Council as well as the applicable statutory requirements.

2. Scope of Responsibility

- 2.1 Telford & Wrekin Council is responsible for ensuring that its business is conducted in accordance with the law and proper standards, and that public money is safeguarded and properly accounted for, and used economically, efficiently and effectively to secure continuous improvement.
- 2.2 To this end the Council has approved and adopted a local code of corporate governance which was updated during 2006 and again in 2008 to ensure that it is consistent with the principles of the CIPFA/SOLACE [\(see glossary\)](#) Framework Delivering Good Governance in Local Government. Within this code and to meet its responsibilities, the Council (members and officers) are responsible for putting in place proper arrangements for the governance of its affairs including risk management and ensuring the effective exercise of its functions.
- 2.3 The Council continues to review its arrangements against best practice and implement changes to improve the governance framework (including the system of internal control) - see paragraph 5.

3. The Purpose of the Governance Framework

- 3.1 The governance framework comprises the systems and processes, and cultures and values, by which the Council is directed and controlled and its activities through which it accounts to, engages with and leads the community. It enables the Council to monitor the achievement of its strategic objectives and to consider whether those objectives have led to the delivery of appropriate, cost effective services. The system of internal control is a significant part of that framework and is designed to manage risk to a reasonable level. It cannot eliminate all risk of failure to achieve policies, aims and objectives and can therefore only provide reasonable and not absolute assurance of effectiveness. The system of internal control is based on an on-going process designed to:
- a) identify and prioritise the risks to the achievement of the Council's policies, aims and objectives;

- b) evaluate the likelihood of those risks being realised;
- c) evaluate the impact should they be realised; and
- d) manage them efficiently, effectively and economically.

3.2 The governance framework has been in place at the Council for the year ended 31st March 2008 and up to the date of approval of the annual report and statement of accounts.

4. The Governance Framework

4.1 The key elements of the systems and processes that comprise the authority's governance framework include:

- Vision 2026 – Transforming Telford & Wrekin: From New Town to Modern City, the Community Strategy, the Council Plan and the Best Value Performance Plan all outline the Council's ambitions and priorities based on stakeholder feedback and these inform the business planning process with supporting plans at Portfolio, service, business and personal levels;
- The Constitution (which includes the financial regulations and contract standing orders, Information Communication & Technology information and security policies), Forward Plan and decision making processes;
- ~~Continuous improvement through the Council Best Value Performance Plan, the and the Council's well established~~ Performance management framework and data quality systems. These provides regular monitoring reports to Directors, Cabinet and Scrutiny;
- Legal Services ensure that the Council operates within existing legislation and is aware of and acts upon proposed changes to legislation;
- The democratic decision making and accountability processes contained within the Constitution;
- The Standards and Audit Committee, scrutiny function and other regulatory committees;
- The development of internal controls and checks within new systems and when existing systems are reviewed;
- The Council's People Strategy (HR) supported by rigorous recruitment processes. These are followed up by induction training (which includes information on the constitution, key policies, procedures, laws and regulations appropriate to the post and experience of the post holder) and on going training and development in line with Investors in People;
- Member and Officer Code of Conduct and the Officer/member protocol underpin the standards of behaviour expected by members and officers;
- Member development programme to ensure members are properly equipped and have the capacity to fulfil their roles;
- The Council's communication and consultation strategies ensure that the local community knows what the Council is doing, receives feedback from them including the identification of their needs for incorporation into the Council's priorities;
- The Cabinet Member for Resources is responsible for Corporate Governance and Risk Management and the key officer is the Corporate Director Resources. The corporate risk management function has integrated risk management into the service and financial planning process including the provision of appropriate awareness and training for officers and members;

- Comprehensive budget strategy and robust budget monitoring process provides sound financial management and regular reporting of financial management information;
- Internal audit review controls based on risk to provide assurance and recommendations for improvement;
- Anti-fraud and Corruption, Speak Up and Prosecution policies support the council's governance processes and anti-fraud and corruption culture;
- The Council's Partnership protocol and agreed governance and reporting arrangements for the Council's significant partnerships;
- Projects are managed within the PRINCE 2 methodology, as appropriate, which includes risk identification and management. Projects use the Corporate Risk Management methodology as appropriate for the management and reporting of their risks.

5. Review of Effectiveness

- 5.1 Telford & Wrekin Council has responsibility for conducting, at least annually, a review of the effectiveness of the governance arrangements including the system of internal control. The review of the effectiveness is informed by:-
- a) the senior managers within the authority who have responsibility for the development and maintenance of the governance environment;
 - b) the work of internal audit; and also
 - c) by comments made by the external auditors and other review agencies and inspectorates.
- 5.2 The Cabinet monitors the effectiveness of the governance framework through the consideration of regular performance, financial and risk management information reports from senior management. Individual Cabinet members receive regular feedback from the senior officers within their portfolios on the progress of objectives and the management of risks linked to their objectives. Issues of strategic and corporate importance are referred to the Cabinet.
- 5.3 During 2007/08 the co-ordination of the Council's Scrutiny function continued to be provided through the Scrutiny Management Board. The Council's Scrutiny function continues to review the decision making process and areas of concern. The subjects for the areas of concern are informed from corporate community consultation, direct feedback to members from the citizens of the Community and the results of review and inspection (both external and internal).
- 5.4 For the last four years internal audit have planned their work on the outputs from the risk management and performance management processes, CPA improvement areas, the requirements of the External Auditor, comments from senior management and their opinion of the current state of the governance arrangements and internal control system. During 2007/08 the Internal Audit team achieved 90% of their planned work (best practice is 90%) and this has been used with the relevant output from unplanned work to form their opinion on the systems of internal control.
- 5.5 Internal Audit report regularly to the Standards and Audit Committee. During the year a review of these reporting arrangements was undertaken. It was agreed that for the

- 5.6 2008/09 municipal year that a separate Audit Committee would be set up to further improve the effectiveness of the Audit Committee.
- 5.7 The External Auditor (KPMG) during 2007 revisited the Corporate Performance Assessment (CPA) Use of Resources for the Council based on again more challenging criteria. The Council scored 3 or 4 (top score 4) in all eleven sub sections and maintained an overall score of 3. The Council scored the top score of 4 for 3 of the sub sections – asset management, risk management and the arrangements that promote and ensure probity and propriety. The Internal Control section retained its top score of 4. These combined and improved results indicate continued and improved sound governance arrangements and systems of internal control.
- 5.8 The Council's performance management framework has well established systems and procedures which drive continuous improvement in performance. The External Auditor ~~has~~ reviewed the Data Quality arrangements and concluded that they were good.
- 5.9 This Use of Resources assessment and data quality review contributed to the Council being judged as 4 stars (excellent) by the Comprehensive Performance Assessment process in March 2008.
- 5.10 As mentioned in paragraph 2.2, the Council has revised again the local code of Good Governance to ensure that it reflects good practice. There is now some work outstanding to raise renewed awareness of the revised code across the Council. This is included in the action plan in Annex 1.
- 5.11 In addition to reviewing the code, during the year the Council has continued to review and put into place improved policies, management processes and reporting arrangements to enable it to satisfy itself that its approach to corporate governance is both adequate and effective in practice and that sound systems of internal control are operating. However there are still areas where improvements can be made and actions to address. The annual review by Internal Audit of the key systems, corporate governance and risk management arrangements have reported that at the time of the reviews the internal control systems were operating subject to minor recommendations identified. Appropriate corporate actions are included in the action plan attached to this statement (Annex 1).
- 5.12 All Directors and Heads of Service have signed two assurance statements (half year and year end) confirming that governance framework has been operating within their areas of responsibility, subject to the actions outlined in Annex 1.
- 5.13 As the system of internal audit has not changed and we are still waiting for guidance on how to undertake a review of the effectiveness of the system of internal audit the Council has updated the review from 2007. The action plan from this review has been reviewed and updated. The outstanding improvement actions are included in the action plan to this statement. A full review will be undertaken in 2008/09 when guidance has been provided (this is currently being worked on by CIPFA).
- 5.14 In addition to the CPA assessment, the Council has again received a very positive Annual Audit & Inspection letter from the Audit Commission which included that:
- Telford and Wrekin Council is an Excellent Council that is improving well.
 - The services provided to Children and Adults are strong.

- There is strong leadership and innovation from Members and Officers to further develop service.
- The Council has strong governance and internal control arrangements.
- There was an unqualified opinion of the accounts and a conclusion on the vfm arrangements to say that these arrangements are adequate
- The Best Value Performance Plan has been audited.
- The assessment of data quality concluded that the Authority has good arrangements in place.

5.15 We have been advised on the implications of the review of the effectiveness of the governance framework by the Cabinet, Standards & Audit Committee, Scrutiny, senior managers, Internal Audit and external review, and plan to address weaknesses and ensure continuous improvement of the framework as outlined in the action plan attached as Annex 1.

5.16 The action plan will be monitored and reviewed during the year by the Audit Committee.

Leader of the Council.....

Chief Executive.....

Date.....

ACTION PLAN FOR 2007/08 ANNUAL GOVERNANCE STATEMENT (for implementation 2008/09)

No.	ACTION	Resp.	Date	Additional Comments
1.	Develop and implement a communication and awareness plan for the revised Code and roles and responsibilities in respect to corporate governance once agreed by Council 26 th June 2008.	Audit & Risk Manager	30/09/08	Leaflet to be developed as part of this and further enhancements to the intranet page.
2.	Corporate Business Continuity plan – a) review; and b) test.	CD ACC and Head of P&P	31/03/09	Testing of the corporate BCP has slipped due to the absence of a dedicated resource to lead this work, sickness absence of the responsible business manager and consequent delays in appointing a time limited project officer. The project officer will take up their post in Summer 08. A new British Standard has been introduced since the corporate BCP was approved in March 2007 and therefore a review and update of the plan has been commissioned through an external consultant.
3.	Revised ICT business continuity plan to be produced during 2008/09	Head of ICT	31/03/09	This is work that is continuing to completion in 2008/09.
4.	Ensure that ICT infrastructure projects supports the corporate & service continuity plans	Head of ICT	31/03/09	Implementation of the ICT infrastructure is currently being planned. This will provide improved business continuity arrangements for servers in scope. Plans will need to be developed for servers not in scope.

ANNEX 1 (continued)

No.	ACTION	Resp.	Date	Additional Comments
5.	Catering - Implement the outstanding areas from the internal audit review and on-going system/processes update.	Head of BSF, Resources & Regeneration	31/08/08	There are still some issues with the new computer system. Internal Audit is continuing to work with catering to improve the systems and controls.
6.	Develop and agree a corporate procedure for the appointment, induction and control of consultants.	Head of HR	31/07/08	Agency contract implemented but still further work required on corporate procedures.
7.	Develop a specific confidential reporting statement for contractors	Audit & Risk Manager	31/07/08	Speak Up policy updated again March 2008 therefore contractor statement delayed.
8.	Ensure robust evidence for CPA Use of Resources 2008 (2007/08)	CD Resources; Head of Finance; Head of PPP; Audit & Risk Manager	30/09/08	Action plan from 2007 feedback report being worked on along with evidence for 2008 requirements.
9.	Continue the implementation of the actions from the review of the effectiveness of the system of internal audit 2007 and undertake a full review when guidance received for 2008/09.	Audit & Risk Manager	31/10/08 31/03/09	Reviewed January 2008 and outstanding actions included in 2008/9 action plan. Guidance awaited for 2008/09 review.
10.	Review and agree revised scrutiny arrangements and provide appropriate additional training when appropriate.	Head of Audit & Democracy	31/12/08	To be presented to Council in November 2008

ANNEX 1 (continued)

No.	ACTION	Resp.	Date	Additional Comments
11.	a) Review the results of the Ethics, Standards and Conduct Survey undertaken in March 2008 and develop an action plan b) implement actions as per the action plan.	Audit & Risk Manager	31/07/08 31/03/09	This survey was undertaken in March 2008 based on an IDEA/ Audit Commission toolkit to assess levels of awareness and understanding of members and officers down to business level in these areas.
12.	Implement any governance recommendations from the 4 external inspections: a) CPA b) JAR c) Enhanced Youth Inspection d) Youth Offending Service	Chief Exec & CD C&YP	31/03/09	Final reports to be received by the Council over the next 3 – 4 months. Action plans will then be developed.

TELFORD & WREKIN COUNCIL

CABINET 15 SEPTEMBER 2008

EDUCATION HOME TO SCHOOL TRANSPORT POLICY

REPORT OF HEAD OF BSF, RESOURCES & SOCIAL REGENERATION

1.0 PURPOSE

To request Members' approval of the revised Education Home to School Transport Policy – revised as a result of the LA's duty to extend provision of transport assistance for low income families.

2.0 RECOMMENDATION

2.1 That the policy be approved and implemented with effect from September 2008.

3.0 SUMMARY

The Education and Inspections Act 2006, with effect from September 2008, extends the right to free home to school transport to all secondary-aged pupils from low income families. Pupils from low income families will be entitled to transport assistance to any one of their 3 nearest schools if the distance is between 2-6 miles, and to the nearest school preferred on the grounds of religion or belief if the distance is between 2-15 miles.

Children from low income groups are defined in the Education and Inspections Act 2006 as those who are entitled to free school meals, or those whose families are in receipt of their maximum level of Working Tax Credit.

4.0 PREVIOUS MINUTES

September 2004.

5.0 INFORMATION

The Council's Education Home to School Transport Policy was last approved by Cabinet in 2004.

New government legislation places additional duties on Local Authorities to extend the provision of transport to children from low income groups – to any one of their 3 nearest schools if the distance is

between 2-6 miles and to the nearest faith school if the distance is between 2-15 miles. The revised policy incorporates these requirements.

To date, T&W has not received many requests from low income families whose children will be starting secondary school in September 2008, as a result of the new legislation.

The whole policy has been reviewed in order to ensure that the Council's procedures provide each eligible pupil with the most appropriate form of transport assistance. Definitions have been expanded to try and avoid any ambiguity and clearly define which groups and individuals are eligible for transport and in what circumstances.

The assessment process for children with complex medical needs will be much more rigorous and a detailed checklist/risk assessment will be completed upon receipt of a request for transport assistance.

5.1 Background

Prior to the legislation in the Education & Inspections Act 2006 applications for home to school transport were considered according to the criteria in the policy – income was not taken into account.

The initial minimum distance criterion used for all secondary applications was 3 miles and the maximum distance criterion was 10 miles; an application may then have been considered on SEN grounds.

The minimum distance criterion which must be considered with effect from admission in September 2008 for low income groups is 2 miles, to a maximum of 6 miles, to any one of their 3 nearest schools. Low income groups will also be entitled to transport assistance to the nearest school requested on the basis of the family's religion or belief if the distance is between 2 and 15 miles.

5.2 Equality & Diversity

The policy has been reviewed in liaison with the Council's Equalities Officer and subject of an Equality & Diversity assessment.

5.3 Environmental Impact

The environmental impact should be slight.

It is anticipated that the increase in the number of requests for transport assistance (from low income groups) will be relatively small.

Wherever possible, the Council will issue an eligible pupil with a bus pass to travel on a public service vehicle.

5.4 Legal Comment

The proposed amendments to the Education Home to School Transport Policy are required to ensure the Authority meets its statutory obligations under the Education and Inspections Act 2006

5.5 Links with Corporate Priorities

The policy links to the following corporate priorities:-
Giving children and young people the best possible start in their lives.
Maintaining a high quality, attractive and sustainable environment.
An efficient, effective and customer-focused council that delivers value-for-money for the community.

5.6 Opportunities and Risks

The opportunities and risks associated with this revision of the policy have been identified and assessed. Arrangements will be put in place to manage the risks and maximise the opportunities that have been identified.

5.7 Financial Implications

The increased provision of transport for low income families only came into effect for children transferring to secondary school in September 2008; it is very early to predict the financial impact. Based on applications received to date, it is anticipated that there will only be a few additional pupils who will be entitled to transport assistance as a result of the new legislation.

6.0 WARD IMPLICATIONS

District wide implications.

7.0 BACKGROUND PAPERS

Education and Inspections Act 2006
DCSF Home to School Travel and Transport Guidance – May 2007
Education Home to School Transport Policy – September 2004

Report prepared by:

Kathy Swallow, Senior Education Officer, Admissions – tel 380905
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EDUCATION HOME TO SCHOOL TRANSPORT POLICY

June 2008

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1. Introduction

The Telford & Wrekin transport policy intends to comply with the statutory requirements of the Education and Inspections Act 2006.

This document defines the Council's policy on the provision of transport assistance for eligible pupils living within Telford & Wrekin Council's area from home to a state-funded school or college.

Consideration will be given to applications for transport assistance for pupils who live within the Telford & Wrekin Local Authority area, pupils who are in public care looked after by Telford & Wrekin Local Authority and pupils who have a Statement of Special Educational Needs.

Each application for transport assistance will be considered on its individual merits, taking into account all of the circumstances of the case and the criteria in the Council's Education Transport Policy. In accordance with the 1995 Disability Discrimination Act the Council will make reasonable adjustments to meet the needs of all of those pupils who are eligible for transport assistance.

The criteria used to assess the eligibility of pupils for transport assistance are described in Section 4 of this policy. If a pupil is eligible for transport assistance to and from school the type of transport assistance provided will be determined by what best meets the needs of the individual pupil, is best use of resources and is as sustainable as possible.

Decisions made by the Local Authority (LA) will be made by designated officers representing the Corporate Director, Children & Young People. It may take up to 20 working days after receipt of an application form to make a decision as to whether or not a pupil is entitled to transport assistance.

When a parent prefers to send their child to a school which is not the designated or nearest school for the home address, the parent will assume responsibility for the provision of transport and associated costs.

The duty applies to 'home to school' travel arrangements at the start of the day, and 'school to home' travel arrangements at the end of the school day. It does not apply to travel between educational establishments during the school day or to after-school clubs/activities or extended schools programmes.

Pre-school children are not eligible for transport assistance unless they are attending a specialist pre-school setting which caters for their Special Educational Needs and their request meets the criteria described in Section 4 of this policy.

An appropriate application form must be completed by a parent/carers in order for any request for transport assistance to be considered by the LA.

In order to meet the requirements of Health & Safety legislation the LA will undertake risk assessments in order that the most appropriate form of transport is provided.

2. Road Safety

Parents have a duty to ensure their children attend school and in order to do this they may need to make arrangements with respect to the journey to school. This may include:

- Accompanying the child, or arranging for the child to be accompanied in situations where the journey may otherwise be unsafe.
- Accompanying the child, or arranging for the child to be accompanied, to or from a suitable pick-up/drop-off point.
- Providing the child with suitable clothing and footwear, for example, reflective clothing and flashlights when necessary.

Road safety is a matter of education so it is important that parents, in co-operation with the school, ensure that children learn and understand the highway code. Further information and advice can be provided by the Council's Road Safety Officer.

3. Definitions

3.1 Statutory walking distance

The statutory walking distance is 2 miles (3.21 km) for children aged 8 and below and 3 miles (4.82km) for children above that age. However, for the purposes of this policy, Telford & Wrekin Council (T&W) regards the walking distance as 2 miles for all primary aged children and 3 miles for secondary aged children.

New provisions have been brought in by the Government for pupils from low income families transferring to secondary school from September 2008 onwards.

Children from low income families are defined in the Education Act as those who are entitled to free school meals, or whose families are in receipt of their maximum level of Working Tax Credit. They will be entitled to help with transport to any one of their three nearest qualifying schools where they live more than 2 miles but not more than 6 miles from the school. All applications from low income families will be considered in accordance with the T&W school admissions procedure.

The new extended provisions will be applied to requests for transport assistance for pupils who transfer to secondary school from September 2008 onwards.

3.2 Measurements of distance

Distances are measured as follows:

The lower limits (2 or 3 miles) will be measured along the shortest available walking route, as calculated by the Council's Geographic Information System (GIS), route planning software or calibrated pedometer.

The upper limit (6 or 15 miles) will be measured along road routes, using the shortest route.

Measurements are taken between a central point within the school buildings and a central point in the child's home. This journey will be taken to include the use of any public thoroughfare – roads, streets, public footpaths etc. Public driveways are not normally included in such measurements unless they serve more than one home.

3.3 Designated School

Every address within T&W has a designated area (catchment) school, for both primary and secondary aged pupils, determined by the LA. The designated school is the school which the LA considers to serve the home address of the pupil.

A pupil may attend a school which is not the designated school, for example:

- if a child has been permanently excluded from their designated school and the alternative school is then agreed by the LA
- a child may be directed to attend a particular school by the LA, for example to meet the provision described in a Statement of Special Educational Needs (SEN)

In such circumstances, each application for transport assistance will be considered on its individual merits against the criteria outlined in this policy – see Section 4.

3.4 Maximum Distance/Journey Time

Primary age children should not be expected to undertake a journey to school exceeding 6 miles or exceed a travelling time of more than 45 minutes.

Secondary age children should not be expected to undertake a journey to school exceeding 10 miles or exceed a travelling time of more than 75 minutes.

It is recognised that occasionally, for specific reasons such as local geography and the avoidance of excessive transport costs, the maxima stated above may have to be exceeded.

3.5 Transport assistance

Appropriate transport assistance is provided to eligible pupils in order to ensure attendance at school. The Council will always consider the best use of resources when arranging transport assistance.

For primary aged pupils, transport assistance will be considered in the following priority order:

- a mileage allowance to parents using their own vehicle
- occupying a seat on a vehicle operated under contract to the LA

- provision of individual transport.

For secondary aged pupils, transport assistance will be considered in the following priority order:

- a mileage allowance to parents using their own vehicle
- a pass for a public bus service
- occupying a seat on a vehicle operated under contract to the LA
- provision of individual transport.

In certain circumstances the LA may use the services of a specialist transport provider to meet the individual needs of pupils with complex medical needs. The LA will require written medical evidence from a consultant to support the request. The LA will undertake a detailed risk assessment. For further information see Annex 4.

Transport is provided to and from a suitable pick-up/drop-off point to the home/school. Primary aged pupils may be required to walk up to 1 mile to/from an appropriate pick-up/drop-off point.

Secondary aged pupils may be required to walk up to 2 miles to/from an appropriate pick-up/drop-off point. The child's parent/carer is responsible for ensuring that he/she is able to reach the appropriate pick up point safely and for their supervision while waiting for the transport.

If the pick-up/drop-off is the child's home address, the child's parent/carer is responsible for ensuring that they are at home when the child is collected and dropped off by LA Transport.

If there is no-one at home to receive the child, the LA will transport them, for their own safety, to the nearest police station.

4. Criteria for Considering Applications for Transport Assistance

A request for transport assistance received by the LA on a completed application form will be considered against the following criteria. Parents/carers must complete an application form in order for a request to be considered.

4.1 Distance

Primary:

Transport, or help with it, may be provided for eligible children who live beyond the maximum statutory walking distance from their designated (catchment area) or nearest primary school. If a place is not available there, the LA will consider requests for transport assistance to the nearest alternative qualifying school, as determined by the LA, with a place available.

The maximum walking distance for primary aged children is 2 miles.

Secondary:

Transport, or help with it, will be provided for eligible children who live beyond the maximum statutory walking distance from their designated (catchment) area or nearest school. If a place is not available there, the LA will consider requests for transport assistance to the nearest alternative qualifying school, as determined by the LA, with a place available.

The maximum walking distance for secondary aged pupils is 3 miles.

New provisions have been brought in by the Government for pupils from low income families transferring to secondary school from September 2008 onwards.

Children from low income families are defined in the Education Act 2006 as those who are entitled to free school meals, or whose families are in receipt of their maximum level of Working Tax Credit. They will be entitled to help with transport to any one of their three nearest suitable LA schools where they live more than 2 miles but not more than 6 miles from the school.

All applications from low income families will be considered in accordance with the T&W school admissions procedure.

The new extended provisions will be applied to requests for transport assistance only for pupils who transfer to secondary school from September 2008 onwards.

Transport assistance provided to low income families will only be agreed for a period of one academic year.

Further applications will be required for future academic years.

If a family's financial circumstances change and the family no longer meet the eligibility criteria, transport will be withdrawn at the end of that academic year.

There is no guarantee that transport assistance will continue throughout the entirety of a pupil's secondary education.

4.2 Special Educational Needs

In some circumstances, even though the distance criterion is not met, a pupil may be provided with transport assistance because of their Special Educational Needs – eg physical/medical needs.

If the LA is placing a child at a Special School and the family are unable to transport their child due to siblings being at the local mainstream school, the LA will consider a request for transport assistance to the Special School.

In order to meet the requirements of Health & Safety legislation the LA will undertake risk assessments in order that the most appropriate form of transport is provided.

4.3 Qualifying Schools

The Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF) defines a 'qualifying schools' as:-

- a community, foundation or voluntary school

- a community or foundation special school
- a school approved under section 342 (a non-maintained special school)
- a pupil referral unit
- a maintained nursery school
- a city technology college, a city college for the technology of the arts or an Academy

4.4. Individual Needs

Special Educational Needs

An application for transport assistance for a pupil with Special Educational Needs (SEN) will be considered against the criteria in this policy. The issue of a Statement of Special Educational Needs does not automatically entitle the pupil to transport assistance.

A pupil's transport needs will be considered at each stage of their educational career as part of the transition planning. The designated Special Educational Needs Officer for each pupil will be involved in transition planning meetings. Any request for transport assistance will be considered upon receipt of a completed application form.

For further information see Annex 4.

Pupils with Complex Medical Needs

The needs of pupils with complex medical needs will be considered on an individual basis. The LA will carry out a detailed assessment of a pupil's needs and provide the most appropriate form of transport assistance. It may be necessary to utilise the services of a specialist transport provider.

It may be necessary for the LA to provide an escort on a contracted vehicle; no escort may administer medication.

For further information see Annex 4.

4.5 Exceptionally Hazardous Routes

Occasionally the route to school presents danger in the short or long term and special arrangements may be considered. Applications for transport assistance can only be considered if the pupil is attending the designated or nearest school to the pupil's home address.

- 1 In assessing the safety of a particular route, consideration is given only to danger relevant to traffic/highway conditions.
2. It is essential that each case be considered objectively on its merits.

3. It is assumed that the child is accompanied, as necessary, by a responsible person.
4. Where a footway or roadside strip of reasonable width and condition, a public footpath or bridleway exists, this will normally be assumed to provide a safe route for that part of the journey.
5. Where, on a lightly trafficked or narrow road, a verge exists, which is not easy to walk on, but which can be stepped on to by the child and the accompanying person when vehicles are passing, it can normally be assumed to provide a safe route for that part of the journey.
6. Many routes may lie along roads having neither footpath nor verge. On such roads, consideration should be given to the width of the carriageway, traffic speed and composition (such as frequent heavy goods vehicles) and to visibility (i.e. sharp bends with high hedgerows or banks).
7. Consideration should be given to the relevant accident record of the route, with particular regard to the effect on pedestrian movements.
8. Where road crossings are necessary, the availability of facilities to assist such crossings should be taken into consideration.
9. This policy assumes that traffic complies with the speed limits. If it is suggested that this is not the case it will be assumed that the police have been asked to take any necessary enforcement action.

Glossary

Footway	Footways include pavements, road side strips, public footpaths and bridleways. They should be suitable for walking on. This means they should be wide enough for walking on and be in reasonable condition, without excessive ruts and potholes.
Step-Off	A step-off is a facility that allows pedestrians to step off the road. A step-off must be capable of being accessed quickly and easily by pedestrians. Their surface must also be reasonably even and firm.
Visibility	The safe visibility distance varies depending on the speed of the traffic. It is based on the minimum stopping distances for cars (as set out in the highway code).
Volume of traffic	The term "volume of traffic" applies to the amount of traffic on a road travelling in both directions over a specified period of time. The agreed level in these assessments is equal or less than 240 vehicles per hour.

4.5 Pupils attending Denominational Schools

Parents/carers may express a preference for their child to attend a faith school which is not the designated area school for their home address.

In certain circumstances transport may be provided to a faith school.

For further information see Annex 3.

4.6 Examination Years

Pupils in Years 10 and 11 who change their home address during those years will usually be granted transport assistance to continue at their original school provided they now live further than the statutory walking distance (3 miles) but less than 10 miles away. This is to enable them to complete the examination courses they are undertaking.

The LA will not normally consider requests for a pupil whose family moved house prior to the start of Year 10 (1st September is the start of an academic year).

The LA would consider that a pupil is able to transfer between schools up until the end of the autumn term in Year 10.

If an application is submitted on examination grounds prior to Year 10, the LA will require written documentation from the school confirming that the pupil is mid-way through a recognised public examination course.

Transport assistance may be provided for pupils in Years 9, 6 and 2 in order for them to complete their SATs at their current school. Transport assistance will only be considered for pupils who move house between the beginning of the summer term and the end of the week of the SATs. The transport will cease at the end of the examination week.

The appropriate distance criterion will be applied to all requests for transport assistance.

However, assistance with transport will only be provided to pupils attending their designated or nearest school prior to the change in home address. Where a pupil was not attending their designated or nearest school, assistance with transport will not be provided. By initially accepting a place at a preferred school some distance from the home address, parents have accepted responsibility for transport arrangements and the associated costs.

It is considered that a natural break occurs between Year 11 and Year 12 and a pupil within this category would be expected to transfer to the designated school/college to their home address to continue their education. Should the student choose to continue to attend the original school no further transport assistance will be provided.

The parents of all post-16 students, whether at a school or college, will be required to pay an annual contribution to the cost of transport assistance (see Annex 1).

4.7 Attendance at Pupil Referral Units (Pathways centres)

Pupils who attend a Pupil Referral Unit, rather than a school, may be eligible for transport assistance. Any request for transport assistance will be considered against the criteria in the transport policy.

Primary-aged pupils who attend a Pupil Referral Unit on a part-time basis, as well as a primary school, may be provided with transport assistance between home, school and the centre to facilitate their inclusion within the mainstream school.

4.8 Pupils permanently excluded from school

Where, following a permanent exclusion, a child is admitted to an appropriate alternative school, any request for transport assistance will be considered against the criteria in this policy (eg distance and SEN).

Whenever possible, secondary-aged pupils will be issued with a bus pass rather than transported by taxi.

If a parent prefers to admit their child to an alternative school which is some distance from their home address, rather than the nearest alternative school, the transport arrangements and associated costs will be the family's responsibility.

4.9 Pupils placed in school via the Fair Access Protocol

Pupils allocated a school through the Fair Access Protocol will be deemed to be attending their designated school for the purposes of the provision of transport. Any request for transport assistance will be considered against the criteria in this policy.

4.10 School Closure

If, as a result of a school closure, a pupil has to transfer to a different school, transport assistance is not automatically granted. Any transport implications will form part of the consultation exercise around a proposal to close a school. All applications for transport assistance will be subject to consideration against the criteria outlined in this policy.

4.11 Temporary Change of Address

If a child has a temporary change of address due to unforeseen circumstances transport may be provided to enable the child to continue at their current school. This would continue for a maximum of four months/one term initially. In exceptional circumstances it may be extended following a review.

Assistance with transport will only be provided to pupils attending their designated or nearest school prior to the change in address.

If the young person has a temporary change of address due to unforeseen circumstances whilst in Year 10 or 11 they may be entitled to transport assistance to enable them to continue in their original school (see paragraph 4.6, Examination

Years). The maximum distance criteria will be applied to any request for transport assistance.

4.12 Short term medical needs

The LA will consider providing transport assistance to pupils who find themselves unable to get to and from school in the usual way due to an unforeseen short term medical need, for example, a broken leg. The LA would require written medical evidence from a medical practitioner in order to consider the request. In order for transport assistance to be considered the pupil must be attending their designated or nearest school.

4.13 Children and Young People in Public Care

If a child or young person is placed in accommodation by the LA, and the distance between the address and their current school is more than the statutory walking distance, the LA will provide transport assistance to enable them to continue in their current school. The transport assistance will be provided for a maximum period of four months/one term initially and will be granted to provide continuity of education while alternative arrangements are being made.

If the young person is taken into care whilst in Year 10 or 11 they may be entitled to transport to enable them to continue in their original school.

A request for transport assistance for a pupil who is 16 years of age and in public care will be subject to the annual contribution – see Annex 1.

The maximum distance criteria will be applied to any request for transport assistance.

4.14 Post-16 Transport

Transport assistance to post-16 establishments is provided by the LA on a discretionary basis to promote and facilitate attendance.

For further information see Annex 1.

4.15 Disabled lone parent/carer

Transport assistance for children of disabled lone parents/carers in order that their child can get to/from school safely will be considered.

The lone disabled parent/carer will be asked to provide evidence from a medical professional to show that their disability prevents them from accompanying their child along a walking route to school.

Transport assistance will be withdrawn as soon as a parent's incapacity has ended. All arrangements will be reviewed on a termly basis.

Transport assistance will only be considered for children who are attending their designated or nearest school.

5. Escorts

Any application for transport assistance will be considered against the criteria in the transport policy.

The LA does provide an escort on fleet vehicles.

The needs of a pupil on individual transport will be assessed and an escort provided, if appropriate, in a taxi. This provision will be regularly reviewed as the need for an escort may change.

If it is felt that an escort is necessary, the LA, in the first instance, will approach a parent to be the escort. If the journey is beyond the statutory walking distance then the parent would be returned home in the morning and collected in the afternoon. If the journey was less than the statutory distance then the parent is expected to walk the return journey.

Escorts will normally be provided if there are more than five statemented pupils travelling in one vehicle.

Escort duties are to supervise pupils on the vehicle. They will assist pupils to board and alight the vehicle but they cannot collect pupils from their home or take them from the vehicle into a school; other pupils cannot be left unattended in a vehicle.

Escorts are not allowed to administer medicine.

All escorts will carry an identity badge and be qualified under the Passenger Assistant Training Scheme (PATS).

6. Behaviour on vehicles

For further information see Annex 2.

6.1 Lost bus passes

If a pass is lost, there will be a charge of £5 for the first replacement and a charge of £30 for the issue of each subsequent replacement pass.

Eligible pupils will be unable to travel without the relevant bus pass.

7 Transport appeals

If a parent/carer wishes to appeal against the decision to refuse transport assistance they should write, stating the reasons, to Democratic Services, Civic Offices, Telford TF3 4LF.

A mutually convenient date for a daytime appeal hearing will be arranged and parents/carers will be invited to attend.

8 Applications for transport assistance

All applications for transport assistance should be made to:

The Transport Business Unit
Environment & Regeneration
Darby House
PO Box 212
Telford
TF3 4LB

Telephone: 01952 384620.

9 Monitoring

This policy will be reviewed annually.

Annex 1 – Post-16 transport assistance

Transport assistance to post-16 establishments is provided on a discretionary basis by the LA to promote and facilitate attendance.

Applications for transport assistance will normally be considered where the shortest walking distance between the home address and the appropriate maintained school/college is more than 3 miles on condition that:

- the student is ordinarily resident in Telford & Wrekin Council area
- the student will be over 16 and under 19 years of age before 1st September in the academic year concerned
- the student attends a full-time course
- the journey does not normally take more than 90 minutes by public transport
- the student is attending the nearest appropriate college (as designated by the LA)

Transport assistance is subject to an annual contribution.

Parents will be asked to pay a termly contribution before transport assistance will be provided. Parents in receipt of Jobseekers Allowance, Income Support, Free School Meals or Pension Tax Credits will be eligible to a reduced termly contribution.

The annual contribution will be applied to pupils who remain at a school for their post-16 education. This includes those pupils attending a faith school.

In addition to above, new provisions have been brought in by the government for pupils from low income families transferring to secondary school from September 2008.

The new provisions will be applied to all requests for transport assistance for pupils who transfer to secondary school from September 2008 onwards.

Transport assistance usually takes the form of a travel pass for public services.

Where no suitable service exists, or where the individual needs of the student prohibit use of conventional public bus services, travel expenses will be paid at the approved rate, or alternative arrangements will be made.

A request for transport assistance for a post-16 aged pupil who is in public care will be subject to the annual contribution.

Lost bus passes

If a pass is lost, there will be a charge of £5 for the first replacement and a charge of £30 for the issue of each subsequent replacement pass.

Eligible pupils will not be able to travel without the relevant bus pass.

Annex 2 – Behaviour

Dealing with problem behaviour

In order to meet the requirements of Health & Safety legislation the LA will undertake risk assessments in order that the most appropriate form of transport is provided.

Drivers and escorts will normally notify the headteacher of the school and the transport contracts team of any problems with a child's behaviour as soon as the problems occur.

New government legislation empowers headteachers to take action to address unacceptable behaviour even when this takes place outside of the school premises. Persistent poor behaviour on the journey to and from school can be grounds for exclusion from a school and from school transport.

Parents will be informed of any problems and will be asked to assist in preventing their recurrence.

Parents will also be asked to pay for any damage caused by their child.

The majority of vehicles used on school contracts will be equipped with CCTV and the recordings from these will be used as evidence in the cases of serious misbehaviour.

Telford & Wrekin Council reserves the right to refuse to provide transport assistance on a contract vehicle where the behaviour of either the student or parent is such that it is deemed unacceptable. If a child is refused transport on a LA vehicle the family will be offered a mileage allowance or issued with a bus pass for a public service.

The Council reserves the right to withdraw the provision of any transport assistance, either for a temporary period, or permanently for more serious or persistent cases of misbehaviour.

Lost bus passes

If a pass is lost, there will be a charge of £5 for the first replacement and a charge of £30 for the issue of each subsequent replacement pass.

Eligible pupils will not be allowed to travel without the relevant bus pass.

Annex 3 – Faith schools

Parents/carers may express a preference for their child to attend a faith school which is not the designated area school for their home address.

In such cases the LA will consider applications for transport assistance to the nearest appropriate school requested on faith grounds where:

- the school provides education which is significantly different from that provided in other maintained schools and adheres to the parent's religion or belief, **and**
- the family can verify that they adhere to the faith provided by the school, **and**
- the school is beyond the statutory walking distance (up to a maximum of 6 miles for primary schools (2-6 miles) and 10 miles for secondary schools (3-10 miles))

Verification will involve:

- a declaration by parents that they adhere to and participate in the relevant denominational community (on the transport application form)
- the naming of the place of worship and name of the leader of the faith in the community (on the transport application form)
- certification by the Headteacher that he/she is satisfied that the family adheres to the faith in light of discussions with the family.

Parents may also express a preference for their child to attend a school on the grounds of their parent's non-belief.

Primary schools

Where the faith school is between 2 and 6 miles from the home address the transport assistance will be 2/3 refund of public transport fares, or equivalent. However, if a child who is entitled to the 2/3 refund can be accommodated on transport provided by the LA, at no extra cost, a place will be allocated on that vehicle. This arrangement will continue for as long as there is a place available on that vehicle.

Secondary schools

For pupils up to 16 years old a full refund of public fares or their equivalent will be provided.

For post-16 pupils, transport to faith schools is subject to the LA's annual parental contribution scheme (see Annex 1).

In addition to the above, new provisions have been brought in by the Government for pupils from low income families transferring to secondary school from September 2008 onwards.

Children from low income families are defined in the Education Act as those who are entitled to free school meals, or whose families are in receipt of their maximum level of Working Tax Credit.

Pupils from low income families will be entitled to help with transport to a school preferred on the grounds of religion or belief, where they live more than 2 miles, but not more than 15 miles from the school.

The 2 miles distance criterion will be measured along the shortest pedestrian route and the 15 miles distance criterion will be measured along the shortest road route.

The relevant distance criteria will be applied to any such requests.

Annex 4 – Special Educational Needs

An application for transport assistance for a pupil with Special Educational Needs (SEN) will be considered against the criteria in this policy. The issue of a Statement of Special Educational Needs does not automatically entitle the pupil to transport assistance.

If a child or young person is under statutory assessment or has a statement of SEN the decision as to whether transport will be provided by the LA will be taken following the guidance in the SEN Code of Practice published by the Department for Education and Skills (Nov 2001).

The parents' preferred school might be further from the child's home than another school that can meet the child's special educational needs. In such a case, it might be open to the LA to name the nearer school if that would be compatible with the efficient use of the LA's resources. It would also be open to the LA to name the school preferred by the child's parents on condition that the parents agree to meet all or part of the transport costs [section 8:87]

Transport should only be recorded in the statement in Part 6 in exceptional cases where the child has particular transport needs... [section 8:89]

Where the LA names a residential provision some distance from the pupil's home and the local authority, the LA should provide transport or travel assistance; the latter might be reimbursement of public transport costs, petrol costs or provision of a travel pass.

Any application for transport assistance on medical grounds must be supported by appropriate written evidence from a consultant.

In certain circumstances the LA may provide specialist transport services to meet the individual needs of pupils with complex medical needs; the LA would require written medical evidence from a consultant to support the request.

Shared Placement

When a pupil on roll at a special school attends a mainstream school for inclusion opportunities transport may be provided, even if the pupil lives less than the statutory walking distance from the school, in order to facilitate the opportunity for inclusion.

Respite Care

A pupil who is provided with respite care authorised by Social Care will be entitled to transport, provided by Education, between the respite care accommodation and school provided the journey is greater than the statutory walking distance but within the maximum distance/journey time.

Transport will be provided by Education for a maximum of 4 months, or equivalent amount of time, in any one academic year.

Pupils with Complex Medical Needs

Any application for transport assistance on medical grounds must be supported by appropriate written evidence from a consultant.

The needs of pupils with complex medical needs will be considered on an individual basis. The LA will carry out a detailed assessment of a pupil's needs and provide the most appropriate form of transport assistance.

The aim of home to school transport is to provide a safe journey between home and school. All escorts on LA contracted vehicles will have an appropriate level of first-aid training.

However, the following procedures will not be carried out on LA transport:-

- Suctioning
- Continuous pump feeding
- Administering of epilepsy medication
- Decompression of gastrostomy tubes
- Management of oxygen and tracheostomy

The decision not to provide the above on LA vehicles is due to the following factors indicating high risk:-

- The level of knowledge of the child needed
- The knowledge of when intervention is needed
- The necessary skill needed
- The risk of intervention
- The Health & Safety issues of supporting and intervening within the environment of transport including space, interaction with other children, infection control and carrying/charging and use of any equipment.

It may be necessary for the LA to utilise the services of a specialist transport provider.

The LA may offer parents a mileage allowance if they are able to transport their child to and from school themselves.

It may be necessary for the LA to provide an escort on a contracted vehicle; no escort may administer medication.

4.5 Pupils attending Residential Schools

Children who have been issued with a Statement of SEN which names a residential school will be eligible for transport assistance according to the boarding arrangements of the school. For example, weekly boarders will receive transport assistance to and from the school at the beginning and end of each school week. Termly boarders will receive transport assistance at the beginning and end of each

term. Such provision will pay due regard to the LA's responsibility to ensure that a pupil reaches school without undue stress, strain or difficulty.

TELFORD & WREKIN COUNCIL

CABINET - 15th SEPTEMBER 2008

USING CCTV TO TACKLE CRIME AND ANTI-SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR IN THE BOROUGH

REPORT OF CORPORATE DIRECTOR: COMMUNITY SERVICES

1.0 PURPOSE

This report provides a focused response to the development of CCTV provision within Telford & Wrekin which prioritises areas where acts of alcohol related violence and anti-social behaviour (ASB) are prevalent.

2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 That Members endorse the objectives outlined in paragraph 5.5 and note the proposed development of the Council's CCTV System highlighted in paragraphs 5.6 and 5.7;**
- 2.2 That a detailed CCTV Strategy for the Borough is developed and presented to Cabinet in December 2008.**

3.0 SUMMARY

- 3.1 The priorities identified in this paper are drawn from the Safer and Stronger Communities Implementation Plan for CCTV. This seeks to direct resources to areas of greatest need, based on evidence of crime and ASB data. The approach uses digital technology to capture reliable evidence quality images, making best use of pre-existing camera systems, and provides live monitoring at key times in hotspot locations.**

4.0 BACKGROUND

- 4.1 The use of CCTV forms part of the Government's Crime Reduction Programme. Home Office guidance highlights that provision and location of CCTV, particularly with fixed systems but also with re-deployable CCTV, should be supported by reliable evidence of its cost effectiveness and sustainability.**

- 4.2 An essential part of the approach is to ensure that necessary processes and procedures are in place to enable effective deployment. Historically, CCTV provision in Telford and Wrekin has developed in a disparate manner, without the benefit of a clear set of objectives in place to ensure an effective approach. Ten district centres were fitted with stand alone systems, not monitored on a regular basis, and without any evaluation of their effectiveness or value for money.
- 4.3 The Council fitted digital systems are located in Wellington, Oakengates and Dawley. These systems are recognised as forming the infrastructure for surveillance in Telford and Wrekin's night time economy. These also provide the nucleus around which any further development of CCTV will take place.
- 4.4 To supplement these fixed cameras the Safer & Stronger Communities Partnership funded the purchase of a mobile camera system called Domehawk. These consist of 8 individual cameras which have been managed exclusively by the Police. These are placed on enabled lamp posts in identified hot spot areas and can be monitored by way of microwave link to 'line of site' lap top monitors. A protocol has been established with Environmental and Regeneration Services to prioritise the installation of camera fitting points on lampposts throughout Telford and Wrekin area. Currently 102 lampposts have been enabled and this agreement will ensure that crime and ASB 'hotspot' areas are prioritised in any future renewal or upgrading work. Deployment is directed by the Joint Tasking Group, which meets monthly, within the auspices of the Safer and Stronger Communities Partnership. The existing mobile cameras have been overhauled and some individual units replaced as necessary in order to improve the functionality of this resource. This has been drawn from the Safer and Stronger Communities Funding allocation.

5.0 INFORMATION

- 5.1 The starting point for the proposed approach for Telford and Wrekin is improvement and enhancement of existing CCTV equipment. This provides for the effective use of CCTV as a key tool in tackling ASB, crime and 'street disorder'. These measures will be supported and supplemented by other measures within the work of the Safer and Stronger Communities Partnership to tackle ASB, crime and street disorder.
- 5.2 This approach does not provide the means to improve CCTV coverage across all of Telford and Wrekin, but it will enable future development of district centres systems through this infrastructure. Any future developments would be linked via a local control centre at Oakengates to enable some level of monitoring. Beyond any considerations of technology, the capacity to monitor events is the most important aspect of any CCTV system. Advice to services, or areas seeking to develop CCTV would be guided, on the required standards and on the quality of technology which ensures best value for money and effective deployment.

5.3 This approach will ensure that any new cameras, when installed are monitored at a central point, by accredited staff, working to required specifications, at times and in locations identified as 'hot-spot' areas. Such a system will of necessity produce high quality imagery fit for evidential purposes in order to secure appropriate convictions for a range of offences, including violence, ASB, and drugs or alcohol related incidents. This has considerable reassurance value to communities.

5.4 One key measure of success of any CCTV system is to know that it works, and for the public to have confidence that those viewed and caught committing offences will be brought to justice.

5.5 Objectives for the deployment of CCTV system:

The following objectives have been identified as part of the necessary framework to ensure the CCTV systems commissioned are most effective in tackling ASB, Crime and street disorder:-

That partnerships:-

- a) Identify appropriate intervention areas and "hotspots" in order to deploy both static and rapid responsive CCTV where it is assessed as relevant to tackle ASB, crime or disorder problems.
- b) Only utilise equipment which produces images which are admissible in the courts for evidential purposes.
- c) Compliment other target hardening, preventative and community projects where appropriate.

5.6 The above have informed an investment appraisal and a formal commissioning process to ensure that the best possible technology is applied to meet the 'operational requirements' in the identified hot spot areas. These are identified primarily as Wellington, and Oakengates, but the opportunity has also been taken to link Dawley via an existing ICT link. This approach is consistent with an evidence led focus on ASB and crime reduction. This has involved capital spend on upgrading these links and infrastructure to establish an effective CCTV system. The investment provides for new digital decoders, computer equipment to access images, and 'air time' contracts with providers.

5.7 Key to this approach is the investment in monitoring arrangements, and work has been progressed with Shrewsbury and Atcham Borough Council CCTV on a Service Level Agreement. This can be supplemented by accredited staff operating from the Oakengates control centre. The latter will house a bank of digital decoders/ monitoring equipment and provide a relay to the monitoring station in Shrewsbury. At any time,

authorised personnel may access the equipment in the control centre to support particular Police operations.

- 5.8 In the regeneration of the borough towns and the emerging proposals for the development of Telford Town Centre, CCTV will play an increasingly important role and will need to be factored into planning and regeneration considerations; particularly as a resource in promoting a safe night time economy.

- 5.9 The current enhancements to the CCTV system are resulting in demands for technical improvements and/or monitoring in other District Centres and Borough Towns. There is no current budget allocation to meet these demands. An evaluation of the impact of the current improvement programme will be undertaken prior to extending, or building on this infrastructure. At this point other resourcing approaches will be investigated, including private finance, Borough-Towns Initiatives funding / regeneration schemes, Parish Council contributions and also planning stipulations via the Local Development Framework.

It is therefore proposed that a detailed CCTV Strategy be developed to support and direct any future investment or growth in CCTV for the Council.

6.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY

- 6.1 There are no identifiable issues in relation to the implementation of this programme of work, beyond compliance with the legal requirements, and ensuring that this approach does not discriminate on issues of race, disability, gender, age, sexuality, gender identity, religion or cultural belief.

7.0 ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT

- 7.1 The intended environmental impact is one of enhanced community safety, but it is possible that the sighting of cameras may to some members of the public appear physically intrusive.

8.0 LEGAL COMMENT

- 8.1 The application of CCTV systems is governed by important legal considerations contained within the Data Protection Act 1998, Human Rights Act 1998, Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000, Freedom of Information Act, and Security Industries Act 2001. In following the requirements of law and best practice, no surveillance of individuals would take place without reasonable grounds and RIPOR compliance.

9.0 LINKS WITH CORPORATE PRIORITIES

- 9.1 Telford and Wrekin Council's Vision - The CCTV Programme links directly into the Council's Community Priority 4: "To provide a safer, stronger and cohesive community".

10.0 OPPORTUNITIES AND RISKS

The Implementation Plan has been subject to a risk management exercise in accordance with corporate procedures. Key controls and additional mitigation measures have been identified to address the risks.

11.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 11.1 There is currently a sum of approximately £125,558 in 2008/09 made up of capital and one off reserves, available to fund the work required to provide these improvements to CCTV. A staged payment of £35,000 was made against this commissioned work (total £162,145) from last year's budget. The financial profile details this, together with the revenue costs.
- 11.2 Costs will form a key factor in determining both the quality and quantity of future CCTV provision in Telford. The table below outlines the anticipated costs associated with implementing the CCTV improvements incorporating servicing and maintenance costs associated with the portable and static CCTV systems. There is an ongoing revenue budget available within Community Services to fund these costs. This totals £75,380 for 2008/09.

Requirement within the CCTV strategy	Annual Projected Costs
TOTAL Revenue (Projected)	£76,802
TOTAL Revenue Funding Available	£75,380
Shortfall - to be addressed by Community Safety	£1,422
Capital Expenditure ADT Contract	£162,145
Capital Expenditure 07/08 against above contract	£35,000
Capital Expenditure remaining for 08/09 on ADT Contract	£127,145
TOTAL Capital/one off funding available 08/09	£125,558
Shortfall - to be met via Safer & Stronger Community Fund capital	£1,587

12.0 WARD IMPLICATIONS

- 12.1 The improvements to CCTV have borough-wide implications insofar that improvements will be made to link existing cameras with monitoring arrangements, based on their crime profile (evidenced of need). Scope exists within the proposals to further develop CCTV provision, but this is subject to the availability of resources.

13.0 BACKGROUND PAPERS

None

References:

Home Office (1999) CCTV Initiative Application Prospectus

Home Office (2003) National Evaluation of CCTV: early findings on scheme implementation – effective practice guide; Scarman Centre National CCTV Evaluation Team

Report prepared :

Pete Jackson – Head of Community & Neighbourhood

Tel: 01952 382100

TELFORD & WREKIN COUNCIL

CABINET – 15ST SEPTEMBER 2008

ERDF PROGRAMME EXPANSION

REPORT OF ERDF, PACKAGE MANAGER

1.0 PURPOSE

- 1.1 To provide an update on the proposed expansion of the existing Telford Strategy ERDF Package and seek capital approval.

2.0 RECOMMENDATION

- 2.1 It is recommended that Cabinet approves a capital approval and estimate for £4,042,195 in respect of the ERDF Package.

3.0 SUMMARY

- 3.1 The ERDF Package Manager was informed in June by Government Office that there were funds available for additional projects. As a result a package of projects has been identified with the majority of the additional funds forming an extension of the RTH project to deliver additional sub-projects, together with an extension to the Railfreight project and the creation of the new project, Enterprise HQ.
- 3.2 There is no requirement for additional funds from the Council and any new projects will add to the significant benefits delivered to the Borough through the Package.

4.0 PREVIOUS MINUTES

Not applicable.

5.0 INFORMATION

5.1 Background

- 5.1.1 The European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) has been working to encourage economic development in less prosperous areas in Europe since 1975. The Telford Strategic Regeneration Package has operated between 2000- 2008 with total costs of £49,204,166 which includes £17.6 million from the European Regional Development Fund.

All projects within the Telford Strategic Regeneration Package have contributed to the Council's priorities:

- Transforming Telford & Wrekin
- Giving Children & Young People the Best Possible Start in their Lives
- Maintaining a High Quality, Attractive and Sustainable Environment
- Creating a Safe, Strong and Cohesive Community
 - Promoting Healthy Communities and Improving the Quality of Life of Vulnerable and Older People

The table below sets out existing and expanded Package costs with Projects details attached at Appendix A.

5.2 Details

5.2.1 Expanded Projects

Project	Existing Project Cost	Including Existing ERDF	Additional ERDF Grant	Existing Match funding	Expanded Project Cost
RTH	£6,399,537	£1,476,931	£1,593,980	£215,000	£8,209,717
Lloyds Phase 2	£8,100,000	£4,000,000	£145,000	-	£8,245,000
Telford Town Centre	£3,597,147	£1,400,115	£200,000	-	£3,797,147
Railfreight	£8,902,000	£2,238,000	1,201,000	-	£10,103,000
Total	£26,998,684	£9,115,046	£3,139,980	£215,000	£30,354,864

5.2.2 New Projects

Project	ERDF Grant	Existing Match Funding	Project Cost
Enterprise HQ	£502,215	-	£736,287

TSLEC
Total

upto £400,000	£1,081,000	£1,481,000
£902,215	£1,081,000	£2,217.287

5.3 **Equality & Diversity**

5.3.1 An important element of EU funded programme is the focus on delivering the Horizontal Themes; Environmental Sustainability, Equality of opportunity and Innovation. All European funded projects are required to demonstrate the delivery of these themes.

A number of projects within this Package help to address physical barriers. One of the project partners; Severn Gorge Countryside Trust has improved public access to woodland areas. The Coalbrookdale Watercourses also addresses physical access.

Interpretation materials including leaflets and information boards positively address the principle of Equal Opportunities.

Case studies on individual projects within the Package demonstrate a commitment to Equal Opportunities.

5.4 **Environmental Impact**

5.4.1 The ERDF Package has delivered significant positive environmental impacts in particular the Regeneration through Heritage project:

- Restoring and improving historic structures to enhance their appearance in the local community
- Sustainable improvement and management of woodland areas
- Improved footpaths and accessibility within the WHS; encouraging walking and cycling rather than travelling by car
- Significant environmental benefits have been achieved by addressing the problem of land instability within the WHS. These include; reducing the risk of major and irreparable damage to the WHS; removing the need for vehicles to make long detours to avoid roads made impassable or dangerous because of land movement; and visual improvements to the area
- Improving untidy and derelict sites e.g. Coalbrookdale Watercourses

5.5 Legal Comment

- 5.5.1 There is no legal comment to add to this report. Legal advice will be provided as required in respect of the projects mentioned in Appendix A."

5.6 Financial Implications

- 5.6.1 As highlighted earlier in the report there is no requirement for any additional funding from the Council. The package expansion has been structured so as to make use of existing expenditure to lever in additional ERDF Grant of £4,042,195.
- 5.6.2 The current ERDF Programme comes to an end on 31st December 2008. It is therefore imperative that all expenditure is completed by this date. Should this not be achieved, GOWM will reduce the grant payable accordingly, with the Council having to pick up the resulting shortfall.
- 5.6.3 As with the existing ERDF Package there is a potential risk of clawback associated with external funding due to contractual non compliance. However the comprehensive and robust monitoring and audit systems and process operated by the Package Management Team reduce this risk.

6.0 WARD IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 There are no district wide implications.

7.0 BACKGROUND PAPERS

Individual Project Applications
Single programming Document
West Midlands Objective 2 2000-2006 Programme-Management
Report May 2008

**Report prepared by Lindsay James, ERDF Package Manager Tele: 383786
Julie Hutt, Principal Accountant (Projects) Tele: 383780**

PROJECT DETAILS

Extension to Regeneration through Heritage

1. Re-instatement of Footpath 97 (by Chapel Road) in the Gorge (£96,500)

A 5 metre long section of the wall has collapsed undermining the public footpath. The route is an important access facility for residents to walk to Ironbridge, and for visitors to access the museum and heritage sites, including the Iron Bridge itself.

The project will provide a structure that will stabilize the land holding the path in the long-term allowing for an improved surface to be installed, and also help to stabilize the land above the level of the path.

2. Gorge Connect (£60,000)

The maintenance of Gorge Connect bus service, procured from Arriva by the Council, operating at weekends and on Bank Holiday Mondays from the weekend before Easter until the end of October.

The Gorge Connect serves the following locations:

- Coalbrookdale, Museum of Iron/Enginuity
- Ironbridge
- Madeley High Street
- Legges Way car park
- Blists Hill Victorian Town
- Coalport China Museum
- Telford Town Centre bus station
- Museum of the Gorge

3. Proposal for an overarching Interpretation Strategy and Branding within the WHS (£157,500)

All partners agreed in 2006 that there was an urgent need for an overarching Interpretation Strategy, a striking WHS brand accepted and used by all partner organisations, combined with a 'family' of interlocking interpretation from leaflets, on site interpretation (for example, interpretation boards, finger posts, pod casts, historic guided trails) to web based material.

Despite success in the partnership raising funds to provide coherent road signage, this overarching strategy combined with relevant action 'on the ground' has not moved forward in the last 2 years due to lack of resources.

This Project will enable the development of an Interpretation Strategy and branding for the WHS.

4. Enhancing signage and new Fingerposts (£30,250)

Improvements to the signage and finger posts as key way markers into the WHS

5. Sustainable Access Strategy in Ironbridge (£100,000)

A feasibility study to look at overall sustainable access within Ironbridge and the possibility of rail and will include feasibility of footbridge at Dale End Park.

6. Rights of Way improvements (£140,000)

There are approximately 200 km of public rights of way in the ERDF Phase 2 area. The network provides an important access and leisure facility for both local people and visitors. Traditionally where these routes cross fences and hedges access has been facilitated by the provision of stiles. Additionally many of the routes are un-surfaced.

The project will improve accessibility to services, education centres, work places and leisure facilities by upgrading the furniture on the routes and the standard of surface material.

7. Celebrating our World Heritage (£11,000)

The Ironbridge Gorge World Heritage weekend is a celebration of the area's unique, world-class heritage and is an opportunity to raise the local and regional profile of the World Heritage Site and also to increase the local community's awareness and appreciation of the area's historic significance.

The celebration programme will include attractions and entertainment (Victorian Funfair, music and dance, art exhibition and workshops, craft and country market) and also opportunities to find out more about the area's heritage (displays, talks and guided walks) and the significant investment that has been made in the area over recent years through European, national and regional funding programmes.#

The celebration coincides with the regional launch in Ironbridge of the Cultural Olympiad which will include a spectacular light and sound show. This will bring to life some of the area's most significant historic monuments, including the iconic Iron Bridge.

8. Autumn Marketing Campaign (£135,000)

This will include:

- Ironbridge & Telford Visitor Guide
- Ironbridge & Telford Mini Guide
- Weekend Break Package for Ironbridge & Telford

- Website module for visitironbridge.co.uk to enable bookability
- Updating of 5 key information boards within the Gorge
- Filling vacant shop windows in Ironbridge with information boards such as advertisements of forthcoming events in the Gorge and the map of the World Heritage Site
- Production of a nomadic (type) exhibition stand for the Ironbridge Gorge which can be used by partners as a promotional tool exhibitions, events and meetings

9. Cycle Access Ramp at Haybridge Roundabout (£117,000)

Through the 2008/09 LTP capital works programme, Haybridge Roundabout has been identified for enhancements to improve the flow of traffic on the northbound A5223 Whitchurch Drive.

The purpose is to undertake road widening at Haybridge Roundabout to provide a three lane approach northbound, creating additional capacity for traffic travelling from Ketley Brook Island. The enhanced scheme will provide a new footway/cycleway linking local cycle routes in the Haybridge area with the Perry Way, a strategic cycle route. The new 'missing' link will be circa 50m long but overcome what would be (if the alternative existed) a detour of circa 150-200m.

The scheme will contribute towards the ongoing Borough route strategy enabling more efficient management and control of traffic and will serve to support the long term growth of traffic using the route. The enhanced scheme will also improve pedestrian/cycle accessibility, including to/from the nearby Telford College of Arts and Technology.

10. Route 45 – Coalport Road, Ironbridge Gorge, Cycle Scheme (£50,930)

National Cycle Network Route 45 currently starts/finishes at Coalport Road in Jackfield. Shropshire County Council is negotiating an extension of the route between Jackfield and Bridgnorth, which is likely to be agreed in 2008. This will mean the route will cross Coalport Road where currently there is no safe crossing point for pedestrians/cyclists.

This project will therefore deliver a safe crossing point of Coalport Road on NCN R45, improving access to the museums, other attractions, other employment centres in the Ironbridge gorge and NCN R55 which accesses Telford Town Centre and beyond.

11. Ironbridge Gorge World Heritage Site - Pedestrian / Cycle Signing (£150,000)

This project will deliver comprehensive improvements to the cycling and walking environment in the Ironbridge Gorge World Heritage Site, in order to improve sustainable access to the museum sites, the Ironbridge, Mawes Craft Centre, pubs and hotels and other attractions and employment centres in the gorge. The new measures will include new signs, markings, dropped kerbs and additional lengths of footway/cycleway as appropriate.

12. Wynd Landslip (£200,000)

Heavy rainfall in the summer of 2007 lead to a landslide at the top of a wooded valley slope within the Gorge. The landslide extends into the rear garden of a private property located immediately above the slope. The landslide measures approximately 30m wide, involves approximately 1200 tonnes of materials and obstructs a footpath that traverses the wooded slope. This project will stabilise the area through a combination of regrading and retaining structures.

13. New Road (£75,000)

New Road is a very narrow adopted single lane carriageway traversing the steeply inclining residential area on the northern side of the Ironbridge Gorge. The carriageway is bordered by a small stone and mortar retaining wall upslope and with a partially propped stone and mortar retaining wall down slope. The tarmac surface to New Road shows a series of lateral cracks across a distance of ~20 metres running parallel to the road. This project will stabilise the area in order to maintain the vehicular route through this section of Ironbridge. This route is in jeopardy of being lost if the cracking leads to a local landslide which would undermine the carriageway.

14. Geomorphological mapping (£100,000)

The existing 'Ironbridge and Coalbrookdale Ground Behaviour Study' addresses the western section of the Ironbridge Gorge. It provides general guidance and information on ground stability conditions along the valley slopes and presents a series of geomorphological, ground behaviour and planning guidance maps. The proposed project looks to build on this earlier work and to extend the study area to include the remaining parts of the Ironbridge Gorge World Heritage Site. It would also look to include a review of the ongoing remedial schemes including the results of the ongoing ground monitoring results.

15. Ironbridge ground investigation (£100,000)

The historic Iron Bridge shows considerable evidence of distortion as a consequence of the active landsliding affecting the Ironbridge Gorge. The proposed project looks to carry out intrusive ground investigation works to determine the ground conditions at each end of the Iron Bridge and to install instrumentation to determine the nature, depth and speed of ongoing movements in order to assist in development of protection/remedial works.

16. Greenwood Trust (£70,800)

The Centre is open to the public at no charge, and visitors can watch courses on the site, (from coracle building to green oak timber framing) enjoy tea and cakes in the vegetarian free trade café, or take one of the self guided walks that start from the site. The Centre attracts around 10,000 visitors per year, including regular events, courses, café and the Woodland Hall hiring's. This

could be increased to around 15,000/yr with minimal input, but the organisation does not currently have the resources to make this investment. Continuing investment in the site is required to ensure the health and safety of those visiting the site, and to keep the site attractive and welcoming.

The project will deliver refurbishment and upgrading including:

- The upgrade and extension of accommodation huts
- two further wooden huts for accommodation in the woods (for visitors, course participants or for groups of young people)
- Interpretation and marketing
- In addition the centre will work with a qualified marketing officer to offer familiarisation visits, feed through pr stories, offer meeting space, network with other members, make links with accommodation providers, create links with other complementary websites, visit other attractions/members to see how they promote themselves, use networks to find more sales for products
- Purchase of some media equipment to assist with more professional offer for seminars and business meetings

Extension to the Lloyds Land Stability Project

17. Lloyd's Cottage (£40,000)

It is proposed to open the Lloyds Cottage as a visitor centre/museum addressing the geological aspects of the "very young" Ironbridge Gorge. It would build on the opportunity the ongoing investigation and remedial works present to explain the geological structure of the gorge, the natural land instability issues, the development of industry as a consequence of local geology, the ground related legacies resulting from mining and other industrial activities and the planning and development control procedures. This facility, supported by technical and professional staff, will benefit the local and tourist communities alike and would act as a drop in centre during the ongoing and future proposed remediation schemes.

18. Jiggers Bank (£85,000)

A rock face remedial scheme which includes the construction of a reinforced toe buttress against lower rock face and application of rock face netting to upper face.

19. Jackfield Connect (£20,000)

A bus service to run during the road closure at Lloyds Head due to land stabilisation works

Extension to the Telford Town Centre Project

20. Telford Rail Station to Central Park Cycle Track (£70,000)

Silkin Way is a strategic north-south walking/cycle route through Telford. This project will introduce lighting, widened surface and signing to the section linking the NCN55 close to Telford Central rail station and the A442 over-bridge that links to Central Park employment area. The works will therefore improve access to employment and other sustainable modes of transport.

21. Town centre pedestrian footbridge (£100,000)

The purpose of the application is to fund a full assessment and appraisal of the proposal to provide a new pedestrian link between Telford Town Centre, the Railway Station and Central Park. There are two parts to the commission:

- a robust technical appraisal
- a robust business case

The appraisal and business case will be carried forward and provide the basis of an application to fund the design and construct two new footbridges and all associated works.

22. Telford Rail Station to Stafford Park Cycle Track Lighting (£30,000)

An informal pedestrian/cycle route linking Central Telford rail station and Stafford Park, a principal employment estate, avoid the busy Hollinswood Interchange. This project will deliver lighting to this new footway/cycleway to improve the security of the route.

23. Extension to Railfreight Project (£1,201,000)

Since the commencement of on site works the project team have had continued dialogue with GOWM regarding the potential for additional ERDF of £1.201m grant, above and beyond the £2.238m secured previously. The intention being that this could be spent on increasing the quantum of infrastructure installed within the terminal, thereby boosting its capacity to handle trains from 2-3 per day, to the anticipated maximum of 4 trains per day

For the Council this means the Terminal can more easily achieve the objectives set out in Section 4.0 of the April 2008 Cabinet Report. It also means that there is greater potential to secure higher levels of turnover rent, which is directly linked to terminal through-put.

By installing this additional infrastructure now, the Council can take advantage of current capital costs (construction costs continue to rise) and economies of scale derived from having a contractor already on site. The Operator avoids potential future disruption to operations resulting from the installation of this infrastructure during the operational phase.

There are no outputs linked to the ERDF grant, above and beyond that connected to the original grant.

The grant must be spent this year in accordance with ERDF timescales. This is considered to be the only new risk attributable to the funding. However, the

contractor has confirmed that all additional works can be accommodated within these timescales.

New Projects

24. Enterprise Headquarters (£502,215)

Create a showpiece Enterprise HQ, a world class venue bringing together 21st century businesses within the global birthplace of industry. A full circle of 'Enterprise' from the cottage industry that gave birth to the Industrial Revolution to the 21st century home-based enterprise economy bringing wealth and revived neighbourhoods in its wake. Note the recent figures for Shropshire from the Global Entrepreneurship Monitor ranking the county as top of the region in levels of SME enterprise – acknowledged to be aided by the high levels of home enterprise in the county.

25. Telford Sports Leisure and Enterprise Community (TSLEC) (up to £400,000 tbc)

An opportunity has arisen to purchase the West Stand at Telford AFC, which include conference facilities, restaurant, health club and bar, the latter of which is likely to be converted into retail premises. This will add to the existing Council holding of the remaining stand and Learning Centre and forms an integral part of the wider Sports England pathfinder partnership project.

TELFORD & WREKIN COUNCIL

CABINET – 15th SEPTEMBER 2008

CUSTOMER CONTACT PERFORMANCE ANNUAL MONITORING 07/08

REPORT OF HEAD OF CUSTOMER SERVICES & BUSINESS TRANSFORMATION

1.0 PURPOSE

- 1.1.** To report on how the authority is performing against the customer service standards and targets set out in the Customer Charter and the wider Customer Service Performance Information (PI) Framework.

2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

2.1 That the content of this report is noted;

2.2 That Cabinet Members note the performance of their portfolio and work with the respective Corporate Director to identify areas for improvement and take the appropriate action to seek redress and to meet targets for response deadlines;

2.3 To note the introduction of quarterly management reports for each Portfolio identifying performance on complaint, compliment, telephone and enquiry handling processes, including both quantitative and qualitative data prepared and presented by the Customer Quality Team from September onwards.

3.0 SUMMARY

- 3.1** During 2007/08 there was a 3.5% increase in compliments from 766 to 793.
- 3.2** During 2007/08 there was a 4% reduction in complaints from 681 to 656.
- 3.3** 87% of complaints were responded to within the target of 20 working days, against a target of 88%.
- 3.4** Resources responded to 96% of corporate complaints within 20 working days, Community Services 86%, Environment and Regeneration 84%, Adult and Consumer Care 79%, and Children & Young People achieved 67%.
- 3.5** Statutory Complaints: Adult & Consumer Care and Children & Young People responded to 68% and 63% of statutory complaints within the target timescale.
- 3.6** There were 17 Stage 3 complaints in 2007/08 and only three of these resulted in a negotiated resolution or remedial action.
- 3.7** The Local Government Ombudsman reported no findings of maladministration against the council in 2007/08 and there were no recommendations to make a local

settlement.

- 3.8 There has been a 9.5% increase in the number of FOI/Data Protection requests for information in 2007/08.
- 3.9 Overall, we responded to 88% of FOI/DP requests for information within target. Chief Executive's Office achieved 100%, Adult & Consumer Care 98%, Community Services 93%, Resources 90%, Environment and Regeneration 83% Children & Young People 76%, and Cross Portfolio 94%.
- 3.10 The council, excluding the call centres, answered 74.29% of telephone calls within a target of 10 seconds. This equates to over 1 million calls answered within 10 seconds.

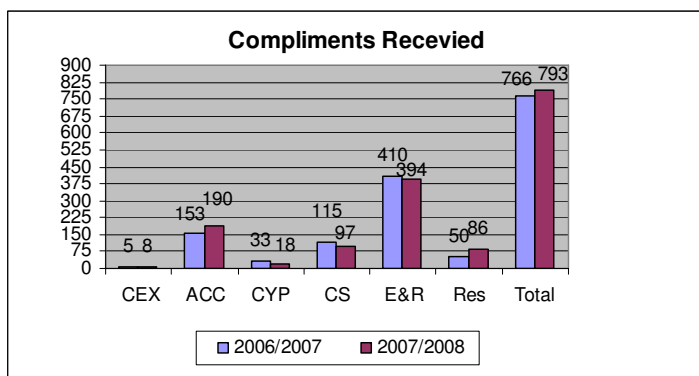
4.0 BACKGROUND

- 4.1 The Customer Charter was originally launched in 2004 and revised and re-launched during National Customer Service Week in October 2007.
- 4.2 In addition the corporate Customer Services Team developed a basket of new local indicators to support the Council's approach to putting customers at the heart of the organisation, in line with the customer services strategy.
- 4.3 These standards are measured through a variety of methods including the VOIP telephone system, mystery customer exercises, customer exit Survey's and the interrogation of a number of customer databases which help to monitor complaints, compliments, FOI and Data Protection requests.
- 4.4 A summary of key performance information for 2007/08 on complaints (Appendix 1), Freedom of Information requests (Appendix 2) and Exit Survey's (Appendix 3) are set out in the attached dashboards - with more detailed information in the body of this report.
- 4.5 With the implementation of the new 'Respond' database estimated to go live in September 2008 we will be able to provide far more detailed customer feedback reports thereafter and will be meeting with each portfolio to tailor these reports to meet their individual requirements.

5.0 OVERVIEW OF PERFORMANCE (COMPLIMENTS/COMPLAINTS)

Compliments

- 5.1 During 2007/08 the council received 793 compliments, a 3.5% increase on last year's total of 766.



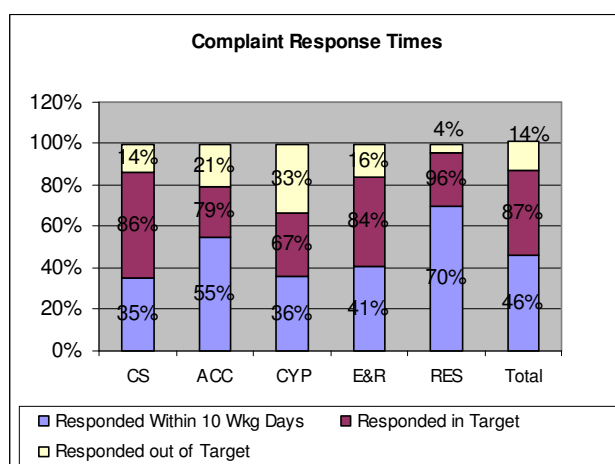
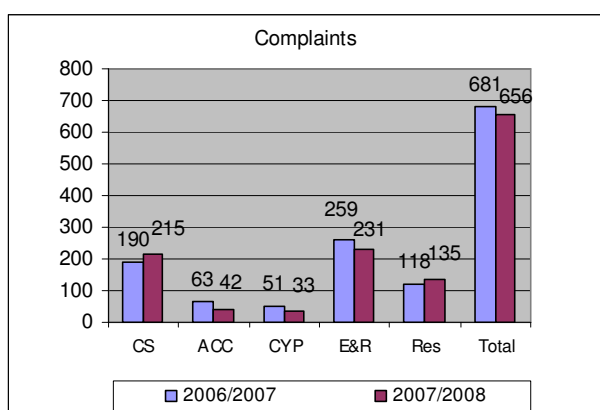
5.2 Below is an outline of the top three areas that received the most compliments and the trends that are apparent.

Compliments	Reason
Environmental Maintenance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Many compliments for TWS for their fast response to collections and cleanliness and improved service. Bulk collection service Graffiti busters rapid clearance Recycling centres received high praise for being helpful, lots of praise also for the recycling collections. Praise for the Chelsea flower show success. Pull out service
Adult Social Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lots of praise for Social work teams in the following sections, Disability, Finance team and older people. Services provided by the Rapid response team. Occupational therapy teams received many compliments for their work.
Leisure Centres and Libraries	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Attitude of staff – professional, helpful, courteous, friendly Nrgize sessions Quality of swimming lessons Online references. Storytelling session

5.4 Complaints

5.4.1 During 07/08 the council received **656** corporate complaints which is a 4% decrease on the **681** received in 06/07.

5.4.2 Whilst as a council we have responded to **87%** of complaints within 20 working days there is still room for improvement to reach our 08/09 target of **88%**. We will be supporting this with the implementation of a robust escalation procedure in line with the outcome of the recent review of complaint handling and the 19 recommendations for change. The introduction of the new 'Respond' database will ensure reminders are sent to those responsible for complaint responses including an escalation to senior officers at the point of service failure.



5.4.3 With the approval of trialling a 10 day response time to Stage 1 complaints, albeit it not planned to go live until September 08, we have provided information of current performance in achieving this.

5.4.4 With the implementation of the new database we will, in future, be able to provide more detailed reports broken down by service area within each Portfolio. This will allow for more in-depth interrogation of where services need to improve as well as celebrating those that are providing excellent customer service.

5.4.5 Below is an outline of the top three areas that received the most complaints.

Area	Reason
Environment & Regeneration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Refuse collection • State of roads, potholes and footpaths • Drainage and flooding issues • Trees and hedges. • Street lights not being repaired. • Planning applications being challenged
Leisure Centres	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Facilities not up to expected standard/cleanliness • Changes to timetables and not being able to use the gym due to it being used by schools. • Cancellation of classes • Problems with the online library service.
Resources (Revenues & Benefits)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Being issued with summons which complainants feel are not justified • Time taken to process claims

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Time spent waiting on the phone to speak to someone • Tone of some reminders.
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5.5 Improvements as a result of complaints

5.5.1 Community Services

5.5.2 In response to complaints about exercise classes being cancelled the session is now only cancelled when it is not possible to provide an alternative instructor. Leisure centres now endeavour to offer an alternative class when a substitute instructor is not available.

5.5.3 Oakengates Leisure Centre has secured funding approved for an NRGIZE (children's gym) facility and this is due to open in September 2008. School children will be able to use this facility and the public will have full use of Aspirations fitness suite.

5.5.4 Bins have been provided in the cemetery to try and prevent the dropping of litter which was then drifting into neighbouring gardens.

5.5.5 The Code of Practice and the Rules and Regulations for the Burial Service, were updated following a complaint about an internment. A policy for removing headstones was incorporated and the inclusion of the burial officer checking the location of grave before internment was included in the working practices.

5.5.6 Revenues & Benefits

5.5.7 Performance has improved regarding processing benefit claims with a reduction of an average of 3 working days from last year to 26.97 days for 07/08. The Department of Works and Pensions target is 30 days so we are exceeding this.

5.5.8 More claims are now being processed via mobile working which means that an assessor can go into a customer's home and calculate benefit for them instantly, on the day of the visit. The overall target for processing benefit claims was 29 days and performance is well above target as currently claims are taking 22 days to assess. This should help reduce queries regarding time taken.

5.5.9 Environment and Regeneration

5.5.10 During the last budget setting exercise over 6.5 million has been targeted towards the Highways service to improve the state of the roads which will include our response to pot holes etc.

5.5.11 Historically Environmental Maintenance has been the Business Unit who receives the most complaints (and compliments) within E&R. This predominantly relates to Refuse & Recycling Services, but this also needs to be put into context i.e. each year a bin or box will be collected circa 5.2 million occasions across the Borough.

5.5.12 In response to formal complaints and service requests, several initiatives have been put in place including: a marketing and promotions plan for a range of environmental/street scene services, doorstep delivery of refuse & recycling calendars & stickers, easy to follow information leaflets encouraging recycling (including a

pictorial leaflet for residents who experience language barriers and in particular eastern Europeans) Officers visit/telephone complainants to develop 'complaint ownership' and make changes to maintenance programmes/operations to meet local needs for example litter collection, grass cutting and hedge maintenance. The table below shows a clear downward trend of formal complaints since 2004. This is not say that Environmental Maintenance only makes service improvements due to formal complaints, each year the Business Unit receives and records tens of thousands of customer enquiries. This is in turn used as intelligent management information and helps to shape service delivery through the contract.

Complaints for:	2004/05	2005/06	2006/07	2007/08
Environmental Maintenance	162	152	112	52

E&R are responsible for the development and delivery of 'Our Promises' these relate to key frontline services which have previously attracted formal complaints. The near perfect performance has helped reduce complaints relating to these service areas and have been awarded a nationally recognised Green Apple Award."

5.6 Complaints and Customer Feedback Review

- 5.6.1 Following on from Directors Board approval in March to make changes to current procedures resulting from a review of all customer feedback processes, the following actions have taken place:
- 5.6.2 Purchase of a new database, CDC Respond, to capture, monitor and learn lessons from customer feedback. Planned to go live in September 08.
- 5.6.3 The Environment and Regeneration Customer Service Officer will be co-locating within the Corporate Customer Quality Team from September for 6 months to progress the aspiration to have a single point of contact for the reporting customer feedback eg complaints, FOI requests, etc.
- 5.6.4 Customer Quality Team will be responsible for the Resources Portfolio feedback channels for a trial period from August – October 08 in line with the single point of contact plans
- 5.6.5 A complainants exit Satisfaction Survey was introduced on 1st January 2008 and this means that all complainants are contacted within 3 weeks of their concerns being responded to ensure we continuously improve our service
- 5.6.6 Introduction of a trial to respond to Stage 1 complaints within 10 working days will commence from September 08.
- 5.6.7 The recent Mori Survey highlighted the substantial improvement in customer satisfaction with complaint handling of over 14 percentage points.

5.7 Statutory Adult Consumer Care Stage 1 Complaints

- 5.7.1 **59** Stage 1 Adult Statutory complaints were received and **73%** responded to in timescale. ****

Community Care Services	Older People	ALD	Mental Health	Substance Misuse	IC/RR/PT 1	Physical Disability	Commissioning	TOTAL
Number of Complaints	23***	10**	10*	4	6	5	1	59

Response Times								
Within 10 days	11***	3	0	2	6	3	0	25
Within 20 days	5	2	4	1	0	2	1	15
Outside Timescale	3	4	4	1	0	0	0	12
Withdrawn	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	4
Stage 2	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	2
Suspended	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1

(1) Intermediate Care, Rapid Response, Occupational Therapy

* 2 complaints are outstanding, but still within the timescale.

** 1 complaint is outstanding, but still within the timescale.

*** 1 complaint was joint with OT, so has been included in those figures.

**** Calculated from the total received, less those withdrawn

5.8 Statutory Children & Young People Complaints

5.8.1 **29** Stage 1 Children Statutory Complaints were received of which **63%** were responded to in timescale.

Business Unit	Children with Disabilities	Placements	Safeguarding and Children in Care	Corp Parenting & 16+	Total
No. of Complaints	2	9	16	2	29
Response in 10 days	2	6	1	2	11
Response in 20 days	n/a	1	5	n/a	6
Response outside 20 days	n/a	2	8	n/a	10
Withdrawn	n/a	n/a	2	n/a	2

5.9 Stage 3 Investigations 2007/08

5.9.1 The number of stage 3 investigations remained constant at 17 although two FOI appeals were investigated at stage 3 of the corporate complaints procedure bringing the total number of stage 3 investigations to 19.

Stage 3 Corporate complaints

Portfolio	No.
Children & Young People	1
Community Services	2
Environment & Regeneration (2 from the same person)	9
Resources (2 were for a service that has transferred to E&R)	5
Total	17

5.9.2 Of these 17 investigations the following decisions were made:

- 11 not upheld
- 1 did not warrant a stage 3 investigation and other action was taken by the complainant
- 1 was closed without a stage 3 investigation due to non-response from the complainant
- 1 was withdrawn
- 3 were subject to a negotiated resolution.

5.10 Local Government Ombudsman

5.10.1 For the period of this report 1.4.2007 to 31.03.2008 the Local Government Ombudsman received 29 complaints about Telford & Wrekin Council. Some of these complaints will be determined in the year 2008/09.

Complaints received by the LGO for the year by service area

Year	Adult care services	Benefits	Children & Family svs	Education	Housing	Other	Planning & Build Control	Public Finance	Social Services other	Transport & highways	Total
2007/08	3	3	1	2	-	11	6	1	-	2	29
2006/07	1	1	-	-	2	7	11	2	-	1	25

5.10.2 The decisions fell into the following four categories:

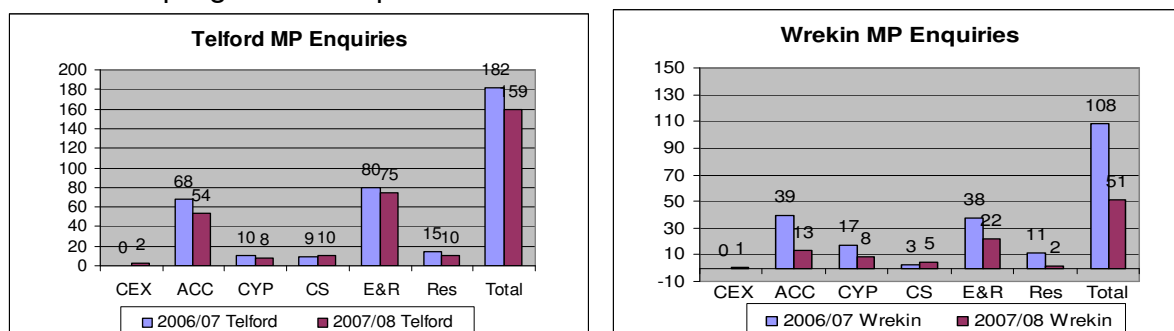
- **10** – No or insufficient evidence of maladministration
- **5** – Ombudsman's discretion
- **7** – Outside jurisdiction
- **4** – Premature complaints
- **3** – Complaints where Local Government Ombudsman did not make a decision within the year.

5.10.3 Once again it is pleasing to see that there we no findings of maladministration against the council and no recommendations to make a local settlement.

5.10.4 The response times to the Ombudsman's enquiries have also dramatically improved this year (2007/08) to 28.7 days from the high of 47.9 days for the previous reporting period 2006/07.

6. MP ENQUIRIES

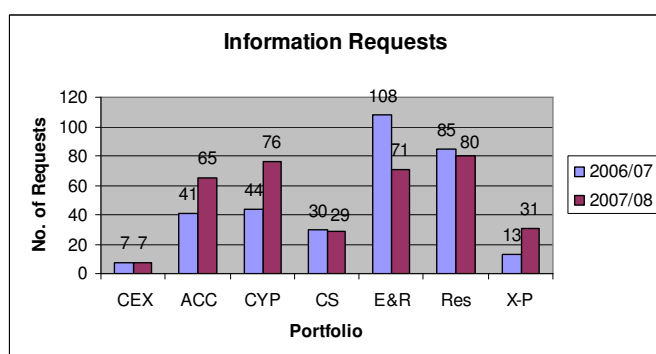
- 6.1 The Chief Executive's Unit continued to receive MP enquiries during the year and monitor the progress of responses



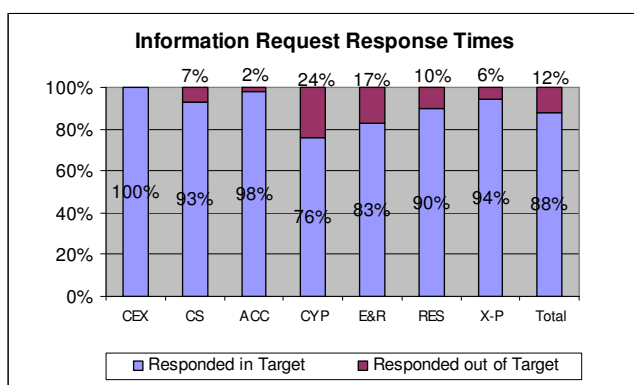
- 6.2 290 MP Enquiries were received in 06/07 compared to 210 in 07/08 which is a 27% decrease compared to the previous year.

7. FREEDOM OF INFORMATION AND DATA PROTECTION REQUESTS

- 7.1. During 2007/08 the council received a total of **359** requests for information which were dealt with under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 and/or Data Protection Act 1998 compared with **328** requests received during 2006/07.
- 7.2. For this year it should be noted that requests under Data Protection have increased by **97%** from **32** in 06/07 to **63** in 07/08. The reason for this may be increased awareness of the right generally to access information and raised awareness within the council which has led to enhanced reporting and tracking of such requests specifically within ACC whose requests increased by 58% from 41 to 65 and CYP by 73%, from 44 to 76 requests.



- 7.3. We responded to **88%** of FOI requests within target and the chart below reflects all information requests such as FOI, Data Protection and Environmental Information Regulations requests for information.



8. **COMPLAINANTS EXIT SATISFACTION SURVEY**

8.1. The Customer Quality Team have recently introduced this survey and the results below are from customers who had complained in January, 38 Surveys were distributed with 13 (34%) being completed and returned. Head line results include;

- 69% stated it was easy to make a complaint
- 46% of people were satisfied with the way the council processed their complaint
- 30% stated it was easy to speak to the investigating officer
- 38% stated they were happy with the time it took to receive a response
- 38% stated they were happy with the outcome of their complaint
- 31% stated that they thought the service had improved as a result of their complaint

The exit survey will continue throughout the year with results presented in the quarterly reports to Portfolio's and also to the Customer Focus Board at which a number of Heads of Service are present. See Appendix 3 for further information.

9. **MYSTERY CUSTOMER EXERCISE**

9.1. The Customer Quality Team have appointed M-E-L (Measurement, Evaluation Learning), based in Birmingham, who have a wealth of experience in working with Local authorities to deliver mystery customer exercises.

9.2. Mystery customer or mystery shopping as it is often referred to is a highly useful tool in providing objective individual feedback on the way our organisation deals with customers on a day to day basis. The results will compliment the customer focus boards work around gathering customer intelligence.

9.3. We will be using our own Telford and Wrekin citizens as part of the mystery customer exercise giving a sense of ownership to the project. Currently no decision has been made as to the service areas to be included as this will be determined following consultation with the Customer Focus Board who will be using the results from the recent Citizen's Panel, annual Mori Survey and the data in this report to advise on the service areas to be included. However it is likely that a maximum of 3 service areas will be involved allowing for more indepth analysis of performance to be obtained and a confidence level built in from which recommendations can be made.

10. CUSTOMER CONTACT INFORMATION (Telephone Answering Performance)

Following the implementation of the new VOIP telephony system in December 2006, we now have our first 12 months telephone answering performance outturn for the whole authority (excluding schools) and for our six mini call centres.

Recruitment to the new customer contact team was completed in December 2007 with a key appointment being the Corporate Contact Manager who is overseeing the plans to develop the council's first corporate contact centre in line with the customer services strategy and the objective of dealing with as many enquiries at the first port of call regardless of the access channel chosen by our customers.

10.1. Overall Telephone Extension Performance Outturn (The phones on each employees desk)

% of telephone extensions answered within 10 seconds - Target 85% (Not including call centres)	All portfolios	74.29%
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10.1.1. Outside of the Contact Centre's, the Council answered just short of 1.5 million telephone calls, with over 1 million of those were answered in less than 10 seconds.

10.1.2. It should be noted that the target of 85% was set without any baseline information. The target for 2008/09 has been set at 80% and benchmarking partners are being explored.

10.1.3. The VOIP infrastructure has provided a level of performance information in relation to call handling that has not previously been available and unlikely to be found in many other councils across the country. Each Business Manager receives a monthly report on performance of their service area. Work is being progressed with ICT colleagues to provide Heads of Service and Directors with performance reports covering wider service areas to allow for an enhanced level of scrutiny.

10.2. Overall Call Centre Telephone Answering Performance

10.2.1. There are two key corporate indicators used to measure our call centres performance:

- Average answer delay in call centres to be less than 1 minute. The target for 07/08 was set at 90%
- The target % of abandoned calls in our call centres to be less than 5% in line with the general industry target.

10.2.2. Our results for 2007/08 are as follows:

Year End 31/03/2008

Average answer delay in call centres to be less than 1 minute - Target 75%

	Calls Handled	Calls answered < 1 min	Percentage answered within 1 minute (average) %
Switchboard	87,545	78,907	90.13
Childrens Services	6871	6102	88.81
Environment Services	85,358	75,394	88.33
Highways Services	22,995	19,063	82.90
Planning Services	36,079	34,775	96.39
Revenues & Benefits	89,119	36,582	41.05

Total	327,967	250,823	76.48
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- 10.2.3. Revenues and Benefit Services are looking at ways of remodelling their call centre to ensure the most efficient set up and are making visits to other call centres across the country to share best practice and look at alternative ways of working. Other Revenues and Benefits call centres experience similar high demands for service. However in line with the customer service strategy the Revenues and Benefits Call Centre will be moving to be part of the first phase development of the Corporate Contact Centre along with the switchboard service. The planned moves will be taking place towards the end of July with responsibility for the Revenues and Benefits Call Centre transferring to the Head of Customer Services and Business Transformation. It is anticipated that more generic working and skills based routing will ensure that performance in the Revenues and Benefits Call Centre will improve over the coming 12 months. However a separate report on planned improvements and options is being prepared by the Corporate Contact Manager and will be available for Directors Board as required.

% of abandoned calls in our call centres to be below Target of 5%			
	Total Calls made	Abandoned Calls	Percentage Abandoned
Switchboard	90,930	3385	3.72
Childrens Services	7352	481	6.54
Environment Services	88,827	3469	3.91
Highways Services	24,852	1857	7.47
Planning Services	37,328	1249	3.35
Revenues & Benefits	112,456	23,337	20.75
Overall	361,745	33,778	9.34

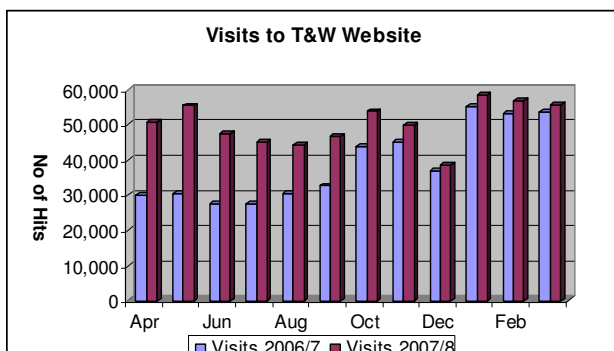
- 10.2.4. Unfortunately, Highways services experienced a very high abandoned rate during the summer floods, making it difficult to recover to an annual performance figure of 5% or below. Highways did endeavour to enact part of their Business Continuity Plan to enable a pre-recorded message explaining to customer what action to take depending on the severity of the call but technical difficulties prevented this from working. Since then work has been completed by Synetrix's (the telephone provider)

to prevent this from occurring in future. The Business Transformation Team working alongside Highways has identified some improvements by introducing electronic processing to replace some paper based systems previously in operation to help enhance performance.

- 10.2.5. Revenues and Benefit Services results mirror the waiting time performance. Clearly, increased waiting time will result in customers abandoning their calls in the first instance.
- 10.2.6. In addition the issue of internal callers is a problem that significantly affects the statistics for most call centres. External facing call centres should only be required to deal with external customer phone calls and not those of internal staff who in reality are 'blocking' the service for customers. The Call Centre Managers Meeting chaired by the Contact Manager is addressing these concerns and developing guidelines of best practice for the mini call centres to adopt to ensure we achieve maximum performance.
- 10.2.7. The customer contact management team are working with the 6 call centre teams to provide assistance with development of more in depth reporting. They are also working with ICT and Synextrix to further enhance our call centre technology solution to bring about service improvements.

11. **WEBSITE INFORMATION**

PI	Target 07/08	Actual 07/08
To increase the number of unique users of the councils website each year	8.00%	29.35% This equates to an increase of 137,000 users to 603,000 users
Increase user satisfaction of the corporate website	68.00%	79%



12. **GENERAL INFORMATION**

12.1. **Equality & Diversity**

12.1.1. Every effort is made to assist customers when making requests to ensure that wherever possible we are able to provide them with the information they need in a format that is useful to them.

12.1.2. An equality impact assessment will be undertaken on the new customer enquiries procedure following the completion of the review of the Corporate Complaints Procedure to ensure we are addressing all equality and diversity needs and capturing vital performance management information within this process.

12.2. Environmental Impact

12.2.1. The move to a higher proportion of requests for information being received via electronic means reduces the paper and printing required to receive, distribute and respond to requests overall. Additionally a change in working practices has resulted in requests for information and complaints being scanned which has reduced the need to distribute paper copies when collating the information.

12.2.2. The outcome of the feedback review will see the purchase of a new improved database which allows scanning and attachments of documents thus removing the need for paper files, which are often duplicated, being held in a number of offices across the council.

12.3. Legal Comment

12.3.1. There are no legal requirements in terms of the corporate complaints procedure, however, compliance with the Freedom of Information Act 2000 , the Data Protection Act 1998 and the Statutory complaints procedure are legal requirements.

12.3.2. There are no direct legal implications arising from this report.

12.4. Links with Corporate Priorities

12.4.1. Modern, effective Council

12.5. Financial Implications

12.5.1. The costs associated with administering the complaints process is in the form of officer time. This is met from within existing budgets across the Council with a large element being within Community Services budgets.

12.6. Ward Implications

12.6.1. Borough wide implications.

12.7. Background Papers.

12.7.1. None

Report prepared by Andrew Meredith, Customer Services Manager, Tel: (01952) 382560

Appendix 1 – Complaints Dashboard

Appendix 2 – Freedom of Information Dashboard (inc. FOI, Environmental Information Regulations & DP)

Appendix 3 – Exit Survey Dashboard

TELFORD & WREKIN COUNCIL

CABINET – 15 SEPTEMBER 2008

REPRESENTATION ON OUTSIDE BODIES 2008-09

REPORT OF THE HEAD OF AUDIT & DEMOCRACY

1.0 PURPOSE

- 1.1 To request Cabinet to amend its nomination to the Walker Trust.
- 1.2 To request Cabinet to approve a representative on the National Association of Councillors.

2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 **That Councillor Joy Francis be confirmed as the Council's nominee to the Walker Trust for the remainder of the four year term until 2010/11;**
- 2.2 **That a representative to the National Association of Councillors be appointed for the remainder of the 2008-09 municipal year.**

3.0 INFORMATION

3.1 The Walker Trust

The Council has made a nomination to the Trust and, for many years, this was the late Peggie Harrison. Unfortunately, the information held on the Trust did not make it clear that any such nomination was for a period of four years. In June 2007 Councillor Joy Francis was approved as the Council's nominee and, as this was included on the list of annual appointments, in June 2008 Councillor Jayne Greenaway was approved by the Cabinet as the nominee for 2008/09. However, the Clerk to the Trust has now informed the Council that any such nomination should be for a four year period and has requested that Councillor Francis (as the original nominee in 2007) be approved as the Council's nominee until 2010-11. Both Councillor Francis and Councillor Greenaway have indicated their agreement to this change.

3.2 The National Association of Councillors

The list of annual nominations submitted to Cabinet in June 2008 omitted this organisation and Cabinet is now requested to make an appointment for the remainder of the municipal year.

4.0 OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

AREA

COMMENTS

Equality & Diversity	Not applicable
Environmental Impact	Not applicable
Legal Implications	Not applicable
Opportunities & Risks	Not applicable
Financial Implications	Not applicable
Links with Corporate Priorities	Not applicable
Ward Implications	Not applicable

5.0 BACKGROUND PAPERS

None.

Report prepared by Susan Goater, Democratic Services Officer – (01952-383214)