



BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL

MEETING OF THE CABINET

WEDNESDAY 5TH OCTOBER 2011, AT 6.00 P.M.

THE COUNCIL HOUSE, BURCOT LANE, BROMSGROVE

SUPPLEMENTARY DOCUMENTATION

The attached papers were specified as "to follow" on/are an additional item to be added to the Agenda previously distributed relating to the above mentioned meeting.

6. Minutes of the meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Board held on 27th September 2011 (Pages 1 - 8)
 - (a) To receive and note the minutes
 - (b) To consider any recommendations contained within the minutes
7. Overview and Scrutiny Task Group Report - Reduction in Bus Services (Pages 9 - 40)
- 11a. Sale of Freehold 76 - 88 Sherwood Road Bromsgrove (Pages 41 - 44)

K. DICKS
Chief Executive

The Council House
Burcot Lane
BROMSGROVE
Worcestershire
B60 1AA

3rd October 2011

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Agenda Item 6

BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL

MEETING OF THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY BOARD

TUESDAY, 27TH SEPTEMBER 2011 AT 4.00 P.M.

PRESENT: Councillors P. J. Whittaker (Chairman), P. Lammas (Vice-Chairman), C. J. Bloore, J. S. Brogan, Dr. B. T. Cooper, Mrs. R. L. Dent, Mrs. J. M. L. A. Griffiths, P. M. McDonald, S. P. Shannon, Mrs. C. J. Spencer and L. J. Turner

Officers: Ms. J. Pickering, Ms. R. Bamford, Mrs. C. Felton and Ms. A. Scarce

32/11 APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors K. A. Grant-Pearce and R. J. Laight.

33/11 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND WHIPPING ARRANGEMENTS

There were no declarations of interest or whipping arrangements.

34/11 MINUTES - 11TH JULY 2011

The Minutes of the Overview and Scrutiny Board meeting held on 11th July 2011 were submitted.

RESOLVED that the minutes be approved as a correct record.

35/11 REPORT ON THE POSSIBLE INTRODUCTION OF AN ETHICAL POLICY FOR THE COUNCIL

The Executive Director, Finance and Resources gave background information on the policies in place and operational processes that were followed, which ensured that when the Council undertook activities either directly or indirectly through contractors, these were carried out in an appropriate manner and the Council acted responsibly when providing services to the community. The Equality and Diversity Officer ensured that robust policies and procedures were in place to support the equality duty of the Council.

The report submitted to the Board demonstrated that there were sufficient operational procedures and processes in place to ensure that the work of the Council was done within an ethical framework.

The Board discussed the following areas in more detail:

- The procurement questionnaire

- The bank facilities used by the Council and their compliance with the updated procurement questionnaire (officers to seek clarification to ensure this was the case and report back to the Board).
- How staff and contractors would be made aware of the procedures in place to ensure they are adopted – Officers provided details of how this would be carried out.

RESOLVED:

- (a) that the Board is satisfied that the current organisational requirements are being met and there is no need for a specific ethical policy to be developed; and
- (b) that Officers seek clarification to ensure the use of the procurement questionnaire for the sponsorship of roundabouts.

RECOMMENDED that Cabinet ensure that all staff and suppliers are aware of the current procedures in place to ensure that services are provided within a positive framework of addressing ethical issues.

36/11 **QUARTER 1 FINANCE AND PERFORMANCE MONITORING REPORT**

The Board considered the Finance and Performance Monitoring Report for the first quarter of 2011/12. The Executive Director, Finance and Resources explained the new format of the report. The Board questioned and discussed the following areas in greater detail:

- The variance for Corporate Services – and the detail provided in the Financial Commentary.
- Vacancy Management, employment rights for temporary staff, consultancy fees and fees for expert advice.
- Termination costs following Shared Services in relation to Redditch Borough Council and the Worcestershire Enhance 2 Tier arrangements.
- The audit process and role of the Audit Board.
- The format of the Statement of Accounts.
- Clarification on the Capital Budget Summary for Regulatory Services.
- The shortfall in revenue for Car Parks/Civil Enforcement Parking and the work being undertaken to address this. The Executive Director, Finance and Resources agreed to provide further detail within the July – September 2011 monitoring report to the Board.

Members understood that it was difficult to change the format of the report, and asked that in future more detailed explanations be provided in the Financial Commentary section.

RESOLVED that the current financial position for Revenue and Capital as detailed in the report be noted.

RECOMMENDED that the costs of consultancy fees are detailed separately for future financial monitoring reports.

37/11 **MINUTES - 25TH AUGUST 2011**

The Minutes of the Overview and Scrutiny board meeting held on 25th August 2011 were submitted.

RESOLVED that the minutes be approved as a correct record.

38/11 **LOCAL DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK/CONSULTATION EXERCISE - VERBAL UPDATE**

The Head of Planning and Regeneration gave the Board an update on the preparation for the Core Strategy, including the 12 week consultation period which had ended in May 2011. In excess of 3,500 representations had been received and the Head of Planning and Regeneration explained to Members how these had been dealt with by Officers. This included a detailed table being created which would be available to the public, on the Council's website from November 2011. However, Members were able to have sight of this immediately by contacting the Strategic Planning Manager. Members commented that the format of the table was cumbersome and those that had already received an electronic version had difficulty in viewing all the information. The Head of Planning and Regeneration agreed to take this up with officers and have the format modified if necessary.

The information in the table would be fed through the Local Development Framework Working Party (LDF), which had a set membership. However, for the purpose of the Core Strategy, which had district wide implications, there was an "open door" policy to the LDF and the programme of dates for specific areas to be discussed had been published in advance to enable all Members to attend these informal meetings. It was expected that following these meetings and the collation of further information received from these meetings, the document would be formally presented to Cabinet in November 2011 and a further report prepared for Cabinet in January 2012 to discuss the next stages of consultation.

The Board discussed the following issues in more detail:

- Staffing capacity and funding available, to deal with the extra work involved in preparing the document.
- The number and type of responses received.
- The contrast in the number of responses dependant upon the area of the district.

The Head of Planning and Regeneration informed Members that, if required, she or a member of her team would be willing to join Ward Members in the community to give presentations if appropriate. The Head of Planning and Regeneration provided examples of where this had happened and how useful this could be for those concerned.

39/11 **PLANNING SITE VISITS - OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY TOPIC PROPOSAL REPORT**

The Chairman invited Councillor P. M. McDonald to introduce this item as he had put forward the Topic Proposal form. Councillor McDonald explained to Members why he had put forward this topic and suggested that a report outlining the process would be sufficient and used as a reminder to Members of the Planning Committee of the importance of their role.

The Head of Planning and Regeneration confirmed that the purpose of site visits was clearly detailed in the Council's Constitution. There was concern that Members were discussing unnecessary detail at the site visits, which was inappropriate and contrary to what was clearly set out in the Constitution. After further discussion it was

RESOLVED that the Head of Planning and Regeneration, Officers and Solicitor speak to the Members of the Planning Committee to emphasise the importance of their role and remind them of the Code of Practice for Planning Services as set out in the Council's Constitution.

40/11 **CABINET RESPONSE TO THE RECREATION ROAD SOUTH CAR PARK TASK GROUP REPORT**

In the absence of the Portfolio Holder for Leisure, Cultural Services and Environmental Services, the Chairman invited Councillor S. P. Shannon, as the Task Group Chairman, to comment on the Cabinet Response to the Recreation Road South Car Park Task Group Report.

The Board was informed that the Cabinet had responded positively to both the recommendations put forward and the content of the report. The operation of the car parking service would be reviewed as part of the Shared Services and Transformation programme and this would include all aspects of the operation. The Board acknowledged that recommendations 4 and 5 had significant financial implications and that recommendation 3 would be a consideration moving forward with the Town Centre regeneration project.

41/11 **SCRUTINY OF ALL BROMSGROVE CAR PARKS (REDUCTION IN THE NUMBER OF TICKETS SOLD) - OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY TOPIC PROPOSAL REPORT**

The Board considered the Overview and Scrutiny Topic Proposal put forward by a resident, Mr Charles Bateman. As the Board had recently completed a Task Group in respect of the Recreation Road South Car Park and in light of the findings of that report and the imminent review of the car parking operation, it was

RESOLVED that no further action be taken.

42/11 **REDUCTION IN BUS SERVICES TASK GROUP REPORT (REVISED)**

The Chairman invited Councillor C. J. Bloore, as Chairman of the Task Group, to introduce this item.

The Chairman of the Task Group gave a brief outline to the background of the Task Group and the witnesses that had attended. The Board discussed recommendation 1 in detail and was provided with further information and the circumstances which had led to recommendation 2. It was confirmed that all the bus operators had been invited to attend a task group meeting, but those operators linked to the services mentioned in recommendation 2 had not done so, and that there continued to be uncertainty surrounding these services. After further discussion it was

RESOLVED:

- (a) that the report and recommendations attached at Appendix 1 be approved; and
- (b) that the report and recommendations be submitted to Cabinet for approval.

43/11 **WORCESTERSHIRE JOINT OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PROTOCOL**

Officers provided the Board with background information on the Worcestershire Joint Overview and Scrutiny Protocol and the need for such a protocol. Following a general discussion on the merits of joint scrutiny, the Protocol was noted for information by the Board.

44/11 **FORWARD PLAN OF KEY DECISIONS 1ST OCTOBER 2011 TO 31ST JANUARY 2012**

The Forward Plan of Key Decisions was considered and noted by the Board.

45/11 **OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY BOARD WORK PROGRAMME**

The Board considered the Work Programme for 2011-12. Officers advised Members that, as requested at the Board meeting held on 11th July 2011, the Police Inspector had been invited to attend a Board meeting. As he was unavailable for the meeting to be held on 24th October 2011 he had offered to provide a written report if the Board provided a brief outline of the information it required. The Board was reminded that it was not able to scrutinise the work of individual partners from the Community Safety Partnership, however, it was acceptable to ask the Police for a breakdown of domestic burglaries and car crime throughout the district and the detection of these and for details of how the Police were tackling these issues with the support of the Community Safety Partnership.

The Chairman confirmed that he had been contacted by Councillor S. P. Shannon in respect of fly posting. A task group had investigated this issue in 2005 which had highlighted the policy and procedure the Council had in place. Councillor Shannon said there had been several recent incidents of fly posting

which he brought to the attention of the Senior Community Safety Project Officer. After further discussion it was

RESOLVED:

- (a) that the Senior Community Safety Project Officer be formally asked to address the issue of fly posting in the district in line with the Council's policy and procedure; and
- (b) that the item be placed on the Overview and Scrutiny Board's recommendation tracker for monitoring purposes.

46/11 **MARLBROOK TIP**

The Chairman agreed that this matter be raised as an urgent item at the meeting as a decision on this matter could not wait until the next meeting of the Board.

The Head of Legal, Equalities and Democratic Services informed the Board that, following a debate at the full Council meeting held on 14th September 2011, it had been agreed that although an Internal investigation exercise would be carried out, the Overview and Scrutiny Board would be asked to set up a Task Group to investigate the areas covered in the Topic Proposal form put forward. This would mean that a special meeting of the Board would need to be set up to scope those members who wished to be included in the Task Group as currently the Task Group procedure guidelines set task group membership at between 4 and 7 Members and it was expected that there would be significant interest in the issues covered by this particular Task Group. A Chairman would also be appointed at that special meeting.

Members were concerned that this would preclude investigation of certain aspects of the Marlbrook Tip issues. Officers informed Members that at each stage of the task group it would be discussed as to what was the most appropriate way to deal with different issues and, if the task group felt it appropriate in particular circumstances, it could delegate particular areas of the investigation to a more suitable body to investigate.

The Board was of the view that an internal investigation (carried out by the Internal Audit team) should be carried out forthwith and alongside that investigation a Task Group would also look at the areas covered in the Topic Proposal form.

RESOLVED:

- (a) that, in accordance with the wishes of full Council, an Internal Audit investigation be undertaken into the Marlbrook Tip;
- (b) that a Task Group be set up with immediate effect to investigate the planning policy matters detailed within the proposal form; and
- (c) that a special meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Board be arranged for 12th October 2011 at 5.00 p.m. in order to appoint a Chairman of the Task Group and agree the Membership of the Task Group.

The meeting closed at 5.42 p.m.

Chairman

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CABINET

5th October 2011

RECREATION ROAD SOUTH CAR PARK TASK GROUP

Relevant Portfolio Holder	Councillor Margaret Sherrey
Portfolio Holder Consulted	Yes.
Relevant Head of Service for Overview and Scrutiny	Claire Felton – Head of Legal, Equalities and Democratic Services
Wards Affected	All wards
Ward Councillor Consulted	All Ward Councillors were invited to join the Task Group.
Non-Key Decision	

1. SUMMARY OF PROPOSALS

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to allow Cabinet to consider the findings and recommendations of the attached Overview and Scrutiny Board report.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 The Cabinet is requested to:
- (a) consider the attached Overview and Scrutiny Board report (Appendix 1) and the recommendations contained within it;
 - (b) to either agree, amend or reject each of the recommendations contained in the report;
 - (c) provide an Executive Response to the Overview and Scrutiny Board report and recommendations, which may include an Action Plan to summarise how and when each of the agreed recommendations will be implemented.
 - (d) request the relevant Portfolio Holder in consultation with appropriate officers to indicate the expected implementation dates, as appropriate.

3. KEY ISSUES

- 3.1 Following the submission of an Overview and Scrutiny Topic Proposal form, by Councillor C. J. Bloore, at the Overview and Scrutiny Board meeting held on 11th July 2011 it was agreed that a Task Group would be established to investigate the Reduction in Bus Services proposed by Worcestershire County Council. Full details of the Task Group's investigations are detailed in the attached report.

The report and recommendations were agreed by the Overview and Scrutiny Board at its meeting on 27th September 2011 and referred to Cabinet for consideration.

CABINET

5th October 2011

Financial Implications

3.2 There are no financial implications relating to this report.

Legal Implications

3.3 These are detailed within the attached report.

Service/Operation Implications

3.4 These are detailed within the attached report.

Customer / Equalities and Diversity Implications

3.5 N/A

4. RISK MANAGEMENT

4.1 N/A

5. APPENDICES

Appendix 1 – Reduction in Bus Services Task Group Report

6. BACKGROUND PAPERS

See attached report for details.

7. KEY

None

AUTHOR OF REPORT

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Overview and Scrutiny Board **Reduction in Bus Services Task Group**

AUGUST 2011

OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY BOARD

Supporting Officer: Amanda Scarce



Bromsgrove

District Council

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 - Appendix 2** – Scoping Checklist
 - Appendix 3** – Sample emails from residents
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1. CHAIRMAN'S FOREWORD

This cross-party investigation has sought to identify the potential shortfall in public transport provision due to the cuts in bus subsidies proposed by Worcestershire County Council.

At the time this task group was convened major concerns were expressed by residents about the viability and lack of clarification on the future of bus services across the district. This task group has confirmed that bus services in the district are a key way of residents getting to and from work, for businesses attracting customers, children getting to school and college safely and ensuring elderly and vulnerable residents are not left housebound and cut off from friends and family.

There can be no doubt that the people of Bromsgrove care deeply about their bus service as evidenced by the overwhelming response to the investigation. It is the importance of these services to our residents that led this investigation to cover the response and processes followed by this Council to represent its residents concerns over cuts to bus subsidies.

These services are vital to the day to day lives of the residents we serve and there can be little doubt that the future prosperity and regeneration of the Town Centre depend on us working together to address the real shortfalls in services that this report has identified.

I would like to put on record my thanks to all those who have contributed to this report including Councillors, Bus Operators and members of the public.

I hope the conclusions and recommendations of this report will be the first step in addressing some of the real concerns that still exist over the future of some bus services.

Councillor Chris Bloore
Chairman
Reduction in Bus Services Task Group

2. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- 2.1 An Overview and Scrutiny Proposal Form (Appendix 1) relating to the Reduction in Bus Services was submitted to the Overview and Scrutiny Board meeting on 11th July 2011, by Councillor C. J. Bloore.
- 2.2 Councillor Bloore said he had been contacted by many residents who were concerned at the proposed cut in services from Worcestershire County Council (WCC). He was of the view that when a decision is being made by another body and which has a serious impact on the District as a whole, the Council should act on the residents' behalf and put forward the concerns they had. In this case the removal of key public transport services could also have a detrimental effect on the economic growth of the District.
- 2.3 Councillor Bloore also informed Members that the matter needed to be investigated urgently as it was likely that WCC would make a decision on the reduction in bus services as early as September 2011.
- 2.4 Following discussion it was agreed by the Overview and Scrutiny Board that a Task Group would be established to scrutinise the Reduction in Bus Services and that Councillor Bloore would be appointed Chairman.

3. SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendation 1	<p>That, within the Council Constitution, the Corporate Delegations in respect of Consultation Documents be amended as follows:</p> <p><u>"Detail</u></p> <p>2. To respond to consultations by the County Council.</p> <p><u>Delegated to</u></p> <p>2. That consultations routinely go to full Council for debate. However, where there are timescales or other issues which would prevent this, then the Chief Executive responds in Consultation with the relevant Ward Members."</p> <p>in order to ensure that any future consultations undertaken at County Council level receive a co-ordinated response from the Council.</p>
Financial Implications	There are no financial implications arising from this.
Resource Implications	Officer time will be required to ensure this recommendation is carried through.

Recommendation 2	<p>That the Council support Worcestershire County Council by contacting the bus operators, Black Diamond and Johnsons Coaches, to make representations for the 204 service to be reinstated and for clarification on the future of the X50 service.</p>
Financial Implications	There are no financial implications arising from this.
Resource Implications	Officer time will be required to ensure this recommendation is carried out.

4. METHODOLOGY

- 4.1 In accordance with the Overview and Scrutiny Board Inquiry/Task Group Procedure Guidelines (endorsed by the Overview and Scrutiny Board at the meeting held on 1st March 2011) following the meeting held on 11th July 2011 copies of the completed Topic Proposal Form were circulated amongst non-Cabinet Members for consideration, with the request that Members interested in participating in the Task Group contact the Committee Services Officer by 10.00 a.m. on 18th July 2011. Membership of the Task Group is detailed below:

Councillor C. J. Bloore (Chairman)
Councillor Mrs. M. Buxton
Councillor P. M. McDonald
Councillor L. Mallett
Councillor L. J. Turner
Councillor S. P. Shannon

- 4.2 There was in total five meetings of the Task Group. During the first meeting held on 19th July 2011 an Overview and Scrutiny Exercise Scoping Checklist which included the terms of reference of the task group (Appendix 2) was completed and it was agreed, that the Task Group would concentrate on particular bus service routes within the District:

- ❖ 144 (Worcester to Birmingham)
- ❖ 178 (replaced with X50 and S7 Wythall)
- ❖ 202/204 (Cofton Hackett)
- ❖ 318 Stourbridge

It was also agreed that the following people would be called as witnesses to give evidence:

- ❖ WCC Portfolio Holder for Highways and Transport.
- ❖ Portfolio Holder for Community Services, Older People, the Young and Vulnerable People.
- ❖ Parish Council representatives
- ❖ The Bus Operators who covered the services in question.

With a view to the possible key outcome being:

“The successful maintaining of key routes throughout the district in order to allow residents to go about their daily lives.”

Following the meeting held on 28th July 2011 it was also agreed that the terms of reference would be amended to include:

- ❖ 140/141 (The Stokes to Bromsgrove/Droitwich)

5. SUMMARY OF INVESTIGATIONS

- 5.1 At the first meeting of the Task Group (19th July 2011) Members all had concerns about particular services that affected their individual Wards, but were equally concerned about the effect the reduction in bus services would have on the District as a whole, and in particular on the District's economic development. The aim of the first meeting was to establish the terms of reference and agree witnesses to be invited to give evidence and the type of questions that needed to be asked of those witnesses.

Specific services were highlighted and Members agreed that the bus operators for those services should be invited to attend a Task Group meeting in order to put forward their views. Example questions were also provided when the invitations were sent out. The following bus operators were invited to attend the meeting held on 8th August 2011.

- ❖ Diamond Bus Company
- ❖ Hansons Local Buses
- ❖ Johnsons Coaches
- ❖ First Midland Red

In order to ensure an inclusive approach, the Task Group agreed to invite representatives from all Parish Councils to either attend a Task Group meeting, or where this was not possible, due to the short space of time available to complete the investigation, provide written comments to be included within the evidence gathering process.

Verbal evidence was received from the following Parish Councils:

- ❖ Belbroughton
- ❖ Clent
- ❖ Lickey & Blackwell
- ❖ Stoke
- ❖ Wythall

Written evidence was provided by the following:

- ❖ Bourneheath
- ❖ Lickey & Blackwell (Blackwell area specifically)

The Task Group recognised that the reduction in bus services was a decision made at county council level and that there was no relevant portfolio holder or head of service at Bromsgrove District Council (BDC). However, as Portfolio Holder for Community Services, Older People, the Young and Vulnerable People it was felt that Councillor Mrs. M. Sherrey would be the most relevant Portfolio Holder as it was likely that the changes would have a particular effect on older people, and the young and vulnerable people. The Portfolio Holder duly agreed to attend a Task Group meeting.

The Task Group also wished to meet with the WCC Portfolio Holder for Highways and Transport to find out the following:

- ❖ How was it agreed as to which services would be reduced?
- ❖ On what basis were these decisions made?
- ❖ What impact assessments had been done to support the decisions being made?
- ❖ His general view on the future of public transport throughout the County.

Unfortunately the WCC Portfolio Holder for Highways and Transport was unavailable on the dates provided by the Task Group.

Bus Operators Evidence

- 5.2 Representatives from Hansons Local Buses and First Midland Red attended the Task Group meeting held on 8th August 2011. They responded positively when questioned by Members about the affected services. Members agreed that both operators had showed vision and forethought in dealing with the changes that faced them.

Hansons Local Buses, who provided the 318 service, advised the Task Group that they were aware of how important this route was, particularly for those members of the village communities who would be completely isolated without the service. The Task Group was informed that the school service would remain unchanged and the day time service would be every 2 hours and the route had been extended to cover Sidemoor and Bromsgrove Train Station. On its arrival in Stourbridge it had now been timed to link up with a service they also provided to Merry Hill.

First Midland Red explained that for the 144 service which they provided, only the Monday – Thursday service was contracted to WCC, the Friday and Saturday service was completely commercial and would remain unchanged. The Task Group was given background information on the service provided and details of the service which would come into effect from 4th September 2011 and the Task Group agreed, that although not ideal were a significant improvement on those first put forward. First Midland Red also provided the Task Group with an insight into how the bus operators work along side WCC.

Parish Council Evidence

- 5.3 Representatives from 5 parish councils attended the Task Group meeting held on 28th July 2011 and were given the opportunity to pass on concerns from the residents in their parish. Several parish councils had held public meetings for residents and articles had frequently been included in various parish magazines in order to encourage residents to

respond to the WCC consultation. Wythall Parish Council had been particularly proactive and had called a public meeting which over 200 people attended. The WCC Head of Integrated Transport and County Councillors had attended this meeting. The Wythall Parish Council representative gave a detailed account of the actions they had taken to date. The WCC Head of Integrated Transport had also attended a Stoke Parish Council meeting and had explained how the decisions had been made and how WCC had arrived at the decision to cut the subsidies to the buses.

An overriding issue was how isolated many of the changes would leave those residents who did not have their own transport and the problems for young people either attending college or school.

The Stoke Parish Council representative was particularly concerned about the 140/141 service and the Task Group agreed to amend the terms of reference to include this service.

The representative from Lickey & Blackwell Parish Council said there was great concern over the 202/204 service as this was a vital service, there was very few facilities for residents in the parish, for example the Post Office had recently been closed, and again the elderly would be particularly isolated without this service and it would also have an affect on 16 to 18 year old young people attending college in Bromsgrove.

Responses from Members of the Public

- 5.4 The Task Group Members were pro-active in gathering evidence and the response from all those contacted was welcomed. Following a letter to the local newspaper from the Chairman and several subsequent articles published, a significant number of members of the public responded with their concerns about the impending changes to the services.

A sample of these responses is attached at Appendix 3 of this report.

The Task Group therefore recommends the following:

<u>Recommendation 2</u>	
That the Council support Worcestershire County Council by contacting the bus operators, Black Diamond and Johnsons Coaches, to make representations for the 204 service to be reinstated and for clarification on the future of the X50 service.	
Financial Implications	There are no financial implications arising from this.
Resource Implications	Officer time will be required to ensure this recommendation is carried through.

Portfolio Holder for Community Services, Older People, the Young and Vulnerable People

- 5.5 The Portfolio Holder for Community Services, Older People, the Young and Vulnerable People attended the meeting held on 28th July 2011 and confirmed that the Council was also concerned about the cuts, in areas where elderly and young people would be most affected. The Portfolio Holder understood that Councillors had been encouraged to respond individually to the consultation and that the Council had contacted WCC through County Councillors (who were also District Councillors) at both consultation stages, but had not received a great deal of information from WCC on the services to be cut/withdrawn.

There were several points raised which the Portfolio Holder was unable to answer and following the meeting the Portfolio Holder contacted the Chairman of the Task Group with a written response (Appendix 4) to advise that concerns over the cuts had been discussed at a Conservative Group meeting as far back at January 2011 and that County Councillors had been very active during the extended consultation period. The Portfolio Holder also pointed out to the Task Group that when the BOLD programme was carried out by WCC, in Bromsgrove, transport came low on the priorities amongst those residents that had attended the sessions organised by WCC. The written response did not however address all issues raised at the meeting, for example whether an impact assessment had been completed at either District or County Council level. The Portfolio Holder was therefore invited to attend a further meeting of the Task Group but was unable to attend due to prior commitments.

Following further investigation, the Task Group was able to ascertain that impact assessments had been completed by WCC.

The Task Group therefore recommends the following:

Recommendation 1

That, within the Council Constitution, the Corporate Delegations in respect of Consultation Documents be amended as follows:

"Detail

2. To respond to consultations

Financial Implications	There are no financial implications arising from this.
Resource Implications	Officer time will be required to ensure this recommendation is carried through.

POINT TO BE NOTED:

The Task Group was concerned the effect of a reduced bus service would have on the environment, as there were several areas within the District which had been designated Air Quality Management areas. These areas are continuously monitored by the Environmental Health Team and the air quality could be reduced if the traffic (i.e. an increase in private cars use) was to significantly increase.

Transport-related air quality management measures reduce the impacts of traffic on areas where poor air quality exists. These schemes can assist towards the achievement of good air quality across Worcestershire for all residents and visitors. Where motorised traffic is reduced and sustainable transport modes are promoted, this can enhance accessibility for all, but especially young people and elderly, who often do not have access to personal motorised transport.

Transport-related air quality management measures can help protect the natural environment and the historic fabric of our towns and cities, by reducing the adverse effects of otherwise unsustainable traffic growth and promoting responsible and efficient travel choice.

6. CONCLUSION

- 6.1 The Task Group was proactive in its approach to the work that it needed to undertake in a short period of time. The response from witnesses at such short notice also highlighted and reiterated the concerns felt by Parish Councils and residents in particular.
- 6.2 Whilst the Task Group was completing its investigation WCC announced that, after consideration, some of the vital services, which had been discussed at Task Group meetings, would not now be withdrawn or the changes would not be as significant as originally anticipated. This related in particular to the evening bus service to Worcester and Birmingham. The new bus timetables would come into effect from 4 September 2011.
- 6.3 The Task Group was concerned that there was little or no written evidence to substantiate any response from the Council or individual councillors to the WCC consultation and was keen to ensure that this should not happen again. A clear audit trail should be available in future to ensure the Council is open, transparent and inclusive (for example through a task group being set up, an informal meeting being held for all Members, through Cabinet setting up an informal group or at a meeting of the full Council) in dealing with issues that may have a significant impact on residents within the Bromsgrove District.
- 6.4 From the evidence provided, the Task Group concluded that the role in consulting with residents was taken by parish councils rather than the District Council. The Task Group Members agreed that by not providing a “united” response to the consultation, opportunities had been missed to influence the form in which the bus services to the District were provided.
- 6.5 Whilst acknowledging that the issue was a County Council decision, the Task Group concluded that a key lesson learned was that a more proactive/co-coordinated response which was inclusive and transparent from the Council at an earlier stage, would not only have helped to influence changes, but also acknowledged to residents that the Council was acting on the issue.
- 6.6 The Task Group was of the view that the reduction in bus services does not only impact on residents, but could have a detrimental effect on the following areas:
- ❖ Environmental (air quality due to increased traffic)
 - ❖ Town Centre Regeneration (for example visitors to the town centre)
 - ❖ Local Development Framework (issues around housing developments due to lack of transport infrastructure)

7. **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

7.1 The Task Group wishes to acknowledge and thank, in particular, the attendance of representatives from Hansons Local Buses and First Midland Red for taking the time to attend and give evidence at short notice.

7.2 The Task Group also wishes to thank the following Parish Council representatives who also attended a task group meeting, at short notice, to share their concerns over the reductions in bus services:

Belbroughton
Clent
Lickey & Blackwell
Stoke
Wythall

7.3 Thanks also go to Councillor Mrs. M. A. Sherrey for attending in her capacity as Portfolio Holder for Community Services, Older People, the Young and Vulnerable People.

8. SUPPORTING BACKGROUND PAPERS

Indicative List of Proposed Local Bus Service Revisions due to WCC Budget Cuts.

WCC Proposals for Reducing Subsidised Bus Services Consultation papers.

WCC Bus Service Review – Additional Consultation papers.

WCC Local Bus Service Revisions in Worcestershire from 4th September 2011.



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OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY TOPIC PROPOSAL

Name of Proposer: CHRISTOPHER BLOORE

Tel No: 01527 877398 Email: C.BLOORE@BROMSGROVE
.GOV.UK

Date: 5/7/11

Title of Proposed Topic:	INVESTIGATION INTO THE EFFECTS OF BUS SUBSIDY CUTS IN BROMSGROVE
Specific subject areas to be investigated:	THE EFFECT ON STUDENTS, WORKERS, TRADERS AND ELDERLY RESIDENTS BY SERVICE CUTS.
Reasons why this subject should be considered:	MAJOR ISSUE OF CONCERN TO ALL RESIDENTS AND TRADERS IN BROMSGROVE.
Evidence to support the need for this particular investigation:	VERBAL FROM BUS USERS AND LOCAL TRADERS/STUDENTS. VERBAL/WRITTEN EVIDENCE FROM COUNTY COUNCIL OFFICERS AND BUS OPERATORS.
Council priorities it links to:	ENSURING BROMSGROVE IS A NICE PLACE TO LIVE, WORK AND ATTRACT INVESTMENT.
Possible key outcomes: (i.e. what do you anticipate could be achieved?)	IDENTIFY KEY AREAS OF CONCERN AND WHAT SERVICES COULD BE SAVED WITH COOPERATION FROM STAKEHOLDERS. POSSIBLE AWARENESS CAMPAIGN FOR PUBLIC.

Please indicate if any of the following apply to the proposed subject area:

CRITERIA	NO	YES	Why?
Is it a priority issue for the Council or the Local Strategic Partnership?		✓	IT IS A PRIORITY FOR RESIDENTS AND TRADERS AND THEREFORE THE COUNCIL.
Is it an important issue for local residents?		✓	YES.
Is it a topic where Overview and Scrutiny could feasibly and constructively make recommendations?		✓	IT IS THE ROLE OF THE BOARD AND CLRS TO ENSURE PUBLIC CONCERNS ARE HEARD.
Is it a topic where external review would be helpful?	✓		HAVE CONFIDENCE IN BOARD TO CONDUCT THROUGH INVESTIGATION.
Is it a topic where a review could be made in time to make recommendations for the executive decision making process?		✓	THERE IS CURRENTLY A 6 WEEK GAP BEFORE POSSIBLE NOTIFICATION OF REMOVAL OF SERVICES.
Is it a poorly performing service?	✓		NO. BUT THESE CUTS COULD MAKE IT A POOR SERVICE.
Is it a review that could render significant savings or value for money?		✓	INVESTIGATING THE ISSUE NOW COULD ENSURE VALUE FOR MONEY.
Is the topic strategic in scope?		✓	THE REMOVAL OF PUBLIC

TRANSPORT COULD LEAD

Please return completed forms to: Committee Section, BROMSGROVE TO BECOME
Legal, Equalities and Democratic Services, Bromsgrove District Council A LESS DESIRABLE
Email: scrutiny@bromsgrove.gov.uk Page 27 PLACE TO LIVE.

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OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY EXERCISE SCOPING CHECKLIST

This form is to assist Members to scope the overview and scrutiny exercise in a focused way and to identify the key issues it wishes to investigate.

- Topic: **Reduction In Bus Services**

- Specific subject areas to be investigated:

The reduction in specific services to areas within Bromsgrove District and in particular the services provided by bus nos. 140/141 (The Stokes to Bromsgrove/Droitwich), 144 (Worcester to Birmingham), 178 (replaced with X50 and S7 Wythall), 202/204 (Cofton Hackett) and 318 (Stourbridge).

- Possible key outcomes:

(i.e. please state what Members hope to achieve through this investigation):

The successful maintaining of key routes throughout the district in order to allow residents to go about their daily lives.

- Should the relevant Portfolio Holder(s) be invited to give evidence? **YES**

- Which officers should be invited to give evidence?

(Please state name of officer and/or job title)

Portfolio Holder for Community Services

- Should any external witnesses be invited to give evidence? **YES/**

If so, who and from which organisations?

- Representatives from the bus companies who provide the services
- Relevant Portfolio Holder from WCC
- Head of Integrated Transport (WCC)
- Possibly local residents who use the services

- What key documents/data/reports will be required?

Information from WCC including the Consultation Reports

- Is it anticipated that any site visits will be required? **NO ***
If so, where should members visit?

No

- Should a period of public consultation form part of the exercise? **NO***
If so, on what should the public be consulted?

Consultation already undertaken by WCC. In sufficient time to complete further consultation at District level.

(Please Note: A separate press release requesting general comments/suggestions from the public will be issued in the normal way at the beginning of the investigation.)

- Have other authorities carried out similar overview and scrutiny exercises?
YES/NO*
If so, which authorities?

RBC O&S did short review including consultation. Notice of Motion by cross party members at full Council for representations to be made to WCC.

- Will the investigation cross the District boundary? **YES/NO***
If so, should any other authorities be invited to participate? **YES/NO***
If yes, please state which authorities:

- Would it be appropriate to co-opt anyone on to the Task Group/Board whilst the Overview and Scrutiny exercise is being carried out? **YES/NO***
If so, who and from which organisations?

- What do you anticipate the timetable will be for the Overview and Scrutiny exercise?

Report needs to be presented to a special meeting of the Overview & Scrutiny Board to be held on 25th August 2011.

Amanda Scarce

APPENDIX 3

From: Christopher Bloore
Sent: 11 August 2011 14:57
To: Amanda Scarce
Subject: FW: bus cuts

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: 10 August 2011 23:24
To: Christopher Bloore
Subject: RE: bus cuts [REDACTED]

Dear Cllr Bloore,

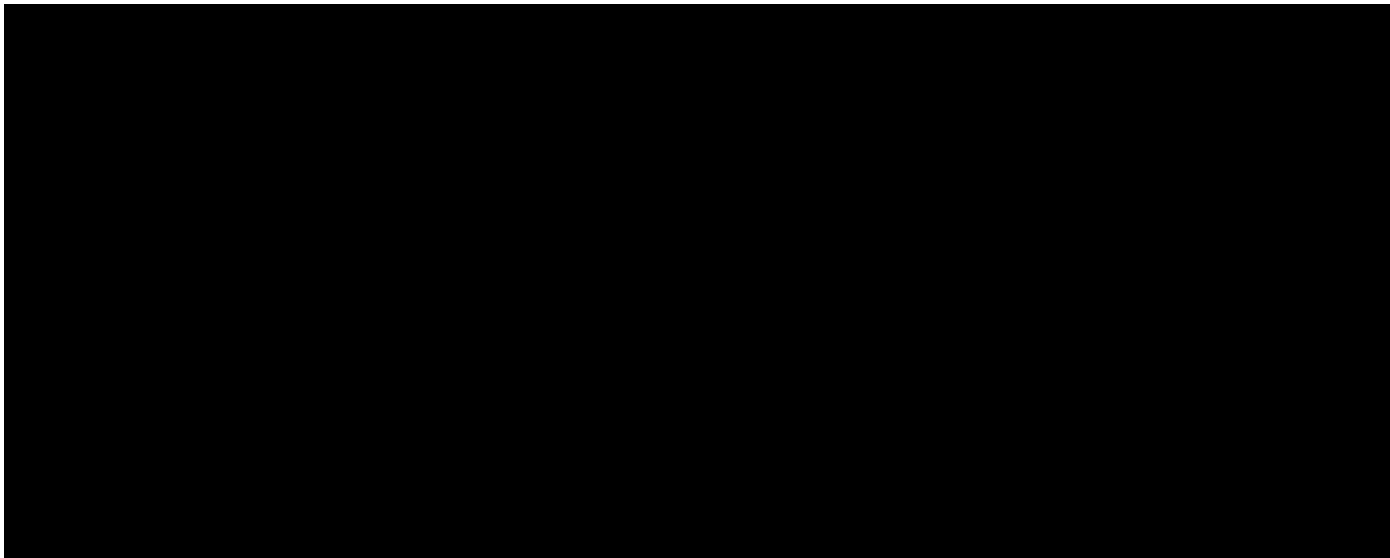
Thank you for youre reply and [REDACTED], thats great news, i get the 144 into Worcester reguarly for N A it leaves Bromsgrove at approx 1900 hrs and departs for my home journey at 2155 from Worcester bus depot for Birmingham meetings 1800 and return 2100hrs

thankyou for representing the people of the County and youre ward

Best Wishes [REDACTED]

Subject: RE: bus cuts
Date: Mon, 8 Aug 2011 10:45:00 +0100
From: c.bloore@bromsgrove.gov.uk
To: [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]



From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Sun 07/08/2011 22:56
To: Christopher Bloore
Subject: bus cuts

Dear Counciller Bloore, i am mailing you as i am going to be effected by the proposed bus cuts, i am recovering addict of four years clean and sobre and this recovery from what is a life threatening disease, has only been possible through the fellowship of NARCOTICS ANOYMOUS, which gives me a daily reprieve from active addiction. these meetings are in birmingham and Worcester and i rely on the later running buses to attend meetings 3-5 times a week 144 indigo line-my life line. I need to attend these meetings to be amongst other recovering addicts and get so much mutal support-i am in isolation in Bromsgrove-and although i carry a message of recovery to the still suffering addict-i know of no one else in the town who is in recovery. However i have many supportive friends and family and proffessionals who give valuable support, and feel blessed to have a life now,and be a productive and valuable member of society at last.

I believe without N A i would be dead, i spent 25 years in active addiction which took me to jails and instutions, alcohol and drug addiction is chronic, progressive, and fatal as i am sure you are aware, i have still got permanent residule health problems which is a consequence of my years in active addiction. if the buses go i will find a way but it will make things much more difficult for me, other essential services i accessed have already fallen foul to the cuts. I am sorry if i have gone on, i dont like to complain, but wanted you to know things from my perspective. i apologise for the spelling and grammer. Thankyou please will you respect my anonimity

yours sincerely, [REDACTED]

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Amanda Scarce

From: Christopher Bloore
Sent: 11 August 2011 14:56
To: Amanda Scarce
Subject: FW: Bus service in Co ton Hackett

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: 27 July 2011 21:14
To: Christopher Bloore
Subject: Bus service in Co ton Hackett

Dear Cllr Bloore,

I am a pupil at Waseley Hills High School and I live in Cofton Hackett. I am really worried that in September I will have no bus transport to get me to and from school. Last year was very difficult as the Diamond 202 service timetable could not be relied upon to get me to school on time, after our school timetable had been changed (The year before, when I was in year 7, it was great to travel on the school bus which I could get for approximately £5 per week).

Unfortunately this past year I have not been able to go home with my friends who live at Lickey & Marlbrook as I am not allowed to buy a ticket on their bus. We have always gone to each others houses on nights that we go to football, and other activities. This caused a lot of problems for all of us.

Luckily for me, my mum was able to take me to school, and at exam time, she took other pupils who were worried they would miss the start of their GCSE'S. However she wants to go back to work as a nurse but is too worried how I will get to school. My Dad works away so he cant take me.

We are constantly being told that our generation needs to use public transport and to keep car journeys to a minimum (to save our planet). It is also good to feel independent as we grow up. I liked to use the school bus. The walk to school is too far and too difficult. There is not a safe place to cross on Groveley Lane or when you get to Leach Green Lane and Eachway there are no pavements. I don't want to walk in the Lickey Woods by myself but I know this would be quicker. I have to carry books, PE Kit, musical instruments and sometimes cooking ingredients to school. We don't have school lockers or anywhere to hang a coat so everything has to be carried around with us all day. Living in Cofton Hackett is too far away to carry all this stuff and keep it dry when it is bad weather. If I was to walk to school in the rain, I would be wet all day, and when I am older, my GCSE work would be ruined..

My friends that live in Lickey and Marlbrook have the Swan Street Coach take them to school, this is a free service for them. I would like this coach to change its journey slightly and come into Cofton (like the old bus used to) and I could then get safely to school with my friends and we could go home together. I don't mind paying for a ticket if I have to, as long as the price is reasonable. I have heard that other buses may only go to The Hare and Hounds in the future. This means that Cofton Hackett is being by-passed for some reason.

There are a lot of families and school children who live in Cofton. Waseley Hills High school is our designated school. We did not have any other choice of school (as other schools are in the "three tier system", and we all go to Lickey Primary, so we go to senior school when we are 11). We did not qualify to go to Colmers High School as this comes under Birmingham and we are all Hereford and Worcester. Now we cant even get to the school that we are told we have to go to!

I hope that people really realise how difficult and dangerous walking to school will be if we don't have a school bus in Cofton Hackett. I am a fit person who plays lots of sports including football, cycling, golf, snowboarding, skateboarding etc.(cycling to school is not appropriate because of the difficult route and traffic), so I am not an unfit kid who sits on the sofa and hates the thought of walking. I just want to get to and from school safely, concentrate on my lessons and not worry about being hurt on the way home or walking in the cold,dark winter.

I hope that you can help Cllr.Bloore,

Thank you for reading this email

[REDACTED] 12 years old
 (I will be in Year 9 in September, at Waseley Hills High School)

[REDACTED]

Amanda Scarce

From: Christopher Bloore
Sent: 11 August 2011 14:54
To: Amanda Scarce
Subject: FW: 144 bus service etc

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: 25 July 2011 21:25
To: Christopher Bloore
Subject: 144 bus service etc

Dear Councillor Bloore,

As promised, I am writing to you regarding the proposed changes to bus services to and from Bromsgrove, in particular the 143 and 144.

I use both of these services and their curtailment at 6pm and 7pm/8.36pm will severely restrict my ability to visit friends and family in Redditch, Birmingham and Worcester.

In addition, in the current economic climate, it would seem likely that this is the first in a series of cutbacks to public transport services, and shows a level of shortsightedness by Worcestershire CC that verges on negligence. Fuel prices will continue to rise. More and more people will be turning to a public transport system that is slowly being eroded and it is therefore unlikely to be fit for purpose. Many people will be stranded at work. Families will become unable to see each other.

For environmental, sustainability and energy-resilience purposes, WCC should be building our public transport system up so that people want to use it more. They need to be asking why people don't use it and taking steps to rectify this. Personally, as an environmentally aware resident, I would happily travel to work by bus, but there is no convenient service between Bromsgrove and Redditch at the time that I require. I often cycle the distance, though. It's no wonder that other, less aware, people don't bother with using the services and continue to use their own cars.

Perhaps Worcestershire CC should be looking at the example set in the West Midlands. There, services are frequent, regular and cheap. As a result of this they are used.

I hope this helps!?

Best wishes

[REDACTED]

BSc (Hons) Environmental Health, PGDip Acoustics and Noise Control, PGCE Secondary Biology.

[REDACTED]

Amanda Scarce

From: Christopher Bloore
Sent: 11 August 2011 14:54
To: Amanda Scarce
Subject: FW:

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: 29 July 2011 17:20
To: Christopher Bloore
Subject:

Dear Mr Bloore,

I am writing to you as I understand that you are the leader of a task group looking at the implications of the proposed cuts in bus services in the region.

I am an 80 year old resident of [REDACTED]. Unfortunately, I have not been able to drive for the last two years and now realize what an essential life-line the 202/204 bus service is for people living along the Old Birmingham Road. For those not able to walk to the A38 to access the 144 bus service which I understand is being retained, it is the only means of reaching the shopping and other facilities of Bromsgrove or Rubery. Bromsgrove is, of course, an essential hub if one wishes to reach the Alexandra or Princess of Wales Hospitals, or other shopping centres in Redditch or Worcester. From [REDACTED] it is nearly a mile to the 144 bus stop at the Marlbrook Pub, a 20- 25 minute walk, depending on age and fitness. From further up the Lickey, it would be an even longer walk. Many of the 202 bus passengers are elderly and would find the walk to the Marlbrook Pub virtually impossible. I might add that I am quite capable of a 20 minute walk, but many of the elderly users of the 202 service may not be. The difficulty of a 1 mile walk, however, increases quite rapidly with age for those in the 80+ age bracket!

I very much hope that the 202/204 bus service can be retained.

Yours sincerely,

[REDACTED]

Amanda Scarce

From: Christopher Bloore
Sent: 11 August 2011 14:53
To: Amanda Scarce
Subject: FW: The death of the 144

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: 25 July 2011 09:30
To: Christopher Bloore
Subject: The death of the 144

Dear Mr Bloore,

I for one am disgusted that WCC have chosen the 144 to be part of its cost cutting exercise. I had lived in Birmingham for 30 years, I work there and I have many friends there. When my wife and I decided to move to a more rural environment we chose Bromsgrove because of its proximity to our old friends and activities and it's bus connection between Birmingham and Worcester. I will no longer be able to visit those friends unless I get the car out. Another consideration in choosing Bromsgrove was that I would be able to commute to work using the bus if the car failed for any reason. This would have required an early start and a late finish but it was 'do-able'. With the proposed cuts this will not be a viable option. I do have a bus pass but I would willingly pay to retain this service and I am sure others would do so too. I am beginning to feel 'trapped' in Bromsgrove as its world contracts around it. Please do what you can to get the 144 service retained in the early mornings and evenings.

Regards

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Amanda Scarce

From: Christopher Bloore
Sent: 11 August 2011 14:52
To: Amanda Scarce
Subject: FW: The Proposed Changes to the 144 Bus Service

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: 23 July 2011 20:50
To: Christopher Bloore
Subject: The Proposed Changes to the 144 Bus Service

Hi Chris

I am totally disgusted at the plan to cut the early morning and evening 144 bus service. When I chose to move to Bromsgrove 4 years ago I picked a house on the bus route so that I did not have to rely on travel by car. I am now faced with Bromsgrove being totally isolated after 7pm. This is a terrible state of affairs for those who cannot afford a car.

No thought appears to have been given to those working in retail/hospitality where evening hours are a necessity. Removing evening buses will result in many losing their jobs. Also, it will make life very difficult for students and anyone going to night school. Anyone who wants to reach the nightlife of Birmingham and Worcester has to get an expensive taxi home late at night. In future they will also have to get a taxi there as well which means that an evening out will be prohibitively expensive.

I am alarmed to be faced with living in a 'ghost town' as nobody will be able to reach Bromsgrove in the evenings. Surely this is going to hit the pubs and eateries in Bromsgrove as people just won't be able to afford taxis and nobody wants to drink and drive. For instance, anyone living in Catshill, Droitwich or Rubery just won't be able to reach Bromsgrove and this will have a clear impact on the already struggling Bromsgrove pubs and clubs.

I was alarmed to find out after I moved here that there is absolutely no transport available to get to the Alexandra Hospital in the evenings. Although difficult, it was just possible to reach the hospital by travelling to Birmingham and from there to Redditch, albeit a long and difficult journey. If the evening 144 service is removed anyone without a car will be totally unable to reach the hospital if they have a sick relative unless they are wealthy enough to afford taxis. I find it a disgrace that there is no bus directly to the hospital from Bromsgrove at ANY time and that the Redditch bus does not run in the evenings.

No plans have been made for any sort of compromise, such as a limited service to Longbridge where you could pick up an alternative bus on the Bristol Road or even a shuttle bus to Bromsgrove Station. At present the distance to the station makes it an impossibility for many Bromsgrovians. It would be 40 minute walk for me!

I have written to my MP, Sajid Javid and have had a reply from Andy Baker, Sustainable Transport Manager at Worcs County Council. This reply does not address any of the questions I asked. Basically, I am told that most people would prefer cutting fewer services with reductions elsewhere. This man does not seem to realise that the 144 service is absolutely vital as it is a lifeline to the outside world. Does he really think that non car owners should stay in their houses after 7pm? The evening service is bad enough as it is, running only every hour and a half and to stop it completely is to deny Bromsgrovians any freedom at all. No alternative has been considered, such as charging more. I am sure concessionary passengers, such as myself (due to disability) would be prepared to pay in full or even more, rather than to be housebound after 7pm. I realise that cutting the daytime services to save money is not appropriate as it is only the evening/early bus services that are subsidised.

I would urge you to protest in the strongest terms on behalf of Bromsgrove residents. Sadly, although many are very unhappy at the proposals, they are somewhat apathetic and are not prepared to make their feelings public! To lose the 144 service in the evenings/early mornings will be catastrophic!

[REDACTED]

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From: Margaret Sherrey
Sent: 08 August 2011 15:42
To: Amanda Scarce
Subject: FW: Bus services task group

Appendix 4

From: Margaret Sherrey
Sent: 08 August 2011 15:41
To: Christopher Bloore
Subject: Bus services task group

Good Afternoon Christopher

Replies to some of the questions I was asked at the meeting on 28th July.

Our concerns were discussed with our group as far back as January 2011.

Our concerns were taken back to the County Council by our County Councillors who have been very active during the extended consultation.

There have been some changes thanks to our Conservative County Councillors.

As Cllr P McDonald is a County Councillor I would have thought he would know if the County had carried out an impact assessment as this would surely be part of the process as well as a equality assessment.

When the Bold Program was carried out in Bromsgrove transport came low on priorities with the public that attended.

The removal is of subsidies not bus services by Worcester County Council. The bus companies are responsible for the actual services.

Sorry for delay in replying but we have been with friends over the weekend.

Regards

Margaret



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টেলিফোন করুন

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پر رابطہ کریں



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CABINET

5th OCTOBER 2011

SALE OF FREEHOLD : 76 - 88 SHERWOOD ROAD

Relevant Portfolio Holder	Roger Hollingworth
Portfolio Holder Consulted	Yes
Relevant Head of Service	Jayne Pickering (Exec Director)
Wards Affected	All
Ward Councillor Consulted	None specific

1. SUMMARY OF PROPOSALS

- 1.1 To ask Members to consider and approve the proposed sale of the freehold of land at 76 - 88 Sherwood Road, Bromsgrove as an urgent decision.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 **That Cabinet considers the proposal and approves the sale of the freehold interest in 76 - 88 Sherwood Road Bromsgrove and that the sale be carried out by auction to enable to Council to achieve best market value.**
- 2.2 **Cabinet approve that in view of the urgency of the matter that the decision be not subject to the Councils call in procedure.**

3. KEY ISSUES

Financial Implications

- 3.1 In June 2009 members agreed to enter into a long lease over the above mentioned site with a third party supermarket chain. Members will recall that the Council benefitted from a £400k premium in relation to the lease assignment, together with an annual ground rent of £25k and that the freehold interest in the property was retained by the Council.
- 3.2 Members were advised in the original report that the freehold interest would be considered for sale in the future and the value of the freehold interest has been estimated between £500k - £600k which would represent a significant capital receipt for projects within the community.
- 3.3 Members are asked to consider the sale of the freehold reversion of the site to a third party purchaser at auction to ensure that the Council achieved the best possible price in the current market.

- 3.4 In agreeing to the sale members are advised that the loss of future revenue income would be included in the unavoidable pressures for 2012/13.

Legal Implications

- 3.5 The Council has a responsibility under the Local Government Act 1972 s123 to obtain the best consideration for the disposal of land. Officers have received professional valuation advice from Worcestershire County Council colleagues and as a result it is proposed that the sale at auction would enable the best value to be achieved.
- 3.6 In accordance with paragraph 15 in part 7 of the Councils Constitution it will be necessary for the call in procedure to be excluded for the reasons set out below.

Service / Operational Implications

- 3.5 Following a review of the Councils Investment Portfolio in 2009 a planned programme of disposal has been undertaken in relation to the properties owned by the Authority on Sherwood Road, Aston Fields .
- 3.6 The site at Sherwood Road is currently occupied by a supermarket under a 175 year lease which was granted in August 2010. The Council has retained the freehold ownership of this site during the recent changes in lease assignment and use of site.
- 3.7 County Council valuation officers, as part of the assets management function that they perform for the Council under contract, have advised that the disposal of the freehold would generate a significant receipt to the Council whilst releasing our responsibility in relation to supporting investments that do not meet the Councils priorities.
- 3.8 It is proposed that the site is marketed through auction to enable a transparent process and deliver the best receipt to the Council.
- 3.9 Members are advised that an initial marketing exercise has revealed that there is considerable interest in this site and in order for the Council to maximise the value of the sale it is felt prudent to ensure that the site is marketed at the next available auction.
- 3.10 In order for this to be achieved it is necessary for the Cabinet to make an urgent decision which will require the call in process to be excluded.

Customer / Equalities and Diversity Implications

3.6 None as a direct result of this report.

4. RISK MANAGEMENT

4.1 The main risk associated with the disposal of the freehold is the potential risk of not achieving the value anticipated. Officers will include an appropriate reserve to ensure the Council maximises its receipts.

5. APPENDICES

None

AUTHOR OF REPORT

Name: Jayne Pickering – Exec Director Finance and Resources
E Mail: j.pickering@bromsgroveandredditch.gov.uk
Tel: 01527-881400

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