



BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL

MEETING OF THE CABINET

WEDNESDAY 4TH MARCH 2015 AT 6.00 P.M.

THE COUNCIL HOUSE, BURCOT LANE, BROMSGROVE

MEMBERS: Councillors M. A. Sherrey (Leader), C. B. Taylor (Deputy Leader),
D. W. P. Booth, M. A. Bullivant, R. L. Dent and M. J. A. Webb

AGENDA

1. To receive apologies for absence
2. Declarations of Interest

To invite Councillors to declare any Disclosable Pecuniary Interests or Other Disclosable Interests they may have in items on the agenda, and to confirm the nature of those interests.
3. Minutes of the meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Board held on 21st January 2015 (Pages 1 - 12)
 - (a) To receive and note the minutes
 - (b) To consider any recommendations contained within the minutes
4. Bromsgrove Townscape Heritage Initiative - Grant Applications (Pages 13 - 20)
5. Finance Monitoring Report - Quarter 3 2014/15 (Pages 21 - 34)
6. Discretionary Write Off of Debts (Pages 35 - 38)
7. To consider any other business, details of which have been notified to the Head of Legal, Equalities and Democratic Services prior to the commencement of the meeting and which the Chairman, by reason of special circumstances, considers to be of so urgent a nature that it cannot wait until the next meeting

K. DICKS
Chief Executive

The Council House
Burcot Lane
BROMSGROVE
Worcestershire
B60 1AA

24th February 2015

BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL

MEETING OF THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY BOARD

21ST JANUARY 2015 AT 6.00 P.M.

PRESENT: Councillors L. C. R. Mallett (Chairman), C. J. Bloore, R. A. Clarke, S. R. Colella, R. J. Laight, P. Lammas, C. R. Scurrrell, R. J. Shannon, S. P. Shannon, C. J. Spencer and C. J. Tidmarsh

Observers: Councillor M. A. Bullivant and Councillor M. J. A. Webb

Officers: Ms. J. Pickering, Ms. A. Scarce and Ms. J. Bayley

97/14 **ELECTION OF VICE CHAIRMAN**

The Chairman explained that nominations were being sought for the position of Vice Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Board following the resignation of Councillor H. J. Jones from the Board. On behalf of the Board he thanked Councillor Jones for her hard work as Vice Chairman.

Nominations for Vice Chairman were received in respect of Councillors P. Lammas and R. J. Laight.

RESOLVED that Councillor R. J. Laight be appointed Vice Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Board for the remainder of the municipal year.

98/14 **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence was received on behalf of Councillors J. S. Brogan and B. T. Cooper.

99/14 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND WHIPPING ARRANGEMENTS**

Councillor C. J. Spencer declared an other discloseable interest in respect of Minute No. 106/14 as a member of the Artrix Operating Trust and as a Parish Councillor at Finstall Parish Council.

Councillors R. A. Clarke, P. Lammas and R. J. Laight declared other discloseable interests in respect of Minute No. 106/14 as members of the Artrix Holding Trust and Councillor Clarke also declared an other discloseable interest in this item as a Parish Councillor at Wythall Parish Council.

Councillor C. R. Scurrrell declared an other discloseable interest in respect of Minute No. 106/14 as a Parish Councillor at Belbroughton Parish Council.

100/14 **MINUTES**

The minutes of the Overview and Scrutiny Board held on 3rd December 2014 were submitted.

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 3rd December 2014 be approved as a correct record.

101/14 **MINUTES**

The minutes of the meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Board held on 15th December 2014 were submitted.

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Board held on 15th December 2014 be approved as a correct record.

102/14 **LEISURE PROVISION TASK GROUP - CABINET RESPONSE**

The Portfolio Holder for Environmental and Leisure Services, Councillor M. Bullivant, presented the Cabinet's response to the Leisure Provision Task Group's recommendations. He explained that the Cabinet had accepted all of the group's recommendations subject to a minor amendment to the wording of the first recommendation.

RESOLVED that the Cabinet response to the Leisure Provision Task Group's recommendations be noted.

103/14 **ACTION LIST**

The latest version of the Board's Action List was considered by Members. Officers explained that a number of actions had been completed since the previous meeting of the Board and written updates had been circulated for consideration by email. A number of points were subsequently discussed in more detail.

Staff Survey

A response had been received to the Board's questions regarding the staff survey, which were raised in June 2014, following publication of the agenda. The Chairman had been notified of the response and had determined that the subject should be considered in further detail at the meeting of the Board in February 2015.

Finance Updates

The Executive Director of Finance and Corporate Resources apologised for the delay in responding to various requests for further information about financial matters. She explained that the Financial Services team had been prioritising the budget setting process in recent months, however, she hoped to be able provide responses to the Board shortly.

Customer Service Savings

Members were advised that the Customer Access and Financial Support Service was projected to achieve a saving of £34,000 in 2014/15. This saving had been calculated based on the following information:

- A £20,000 over spend was anticipated for Customer Services due to a loss of HUB funding.
- A saving of £7,000 had been achieved through reducing hours and savings on operational budgets.
- A further saving of £47,000 would be reached following a review of the Fraud Service and vacancy management.

The savings could not have been predicted by Officers when the budget had been set because there were a number of factors that the Council had not been aware of at that time. This included:

- The timing of the introduction of the Single Fraud Investigations Services (SFIS).
- The timetable for the rollout of Universal Credit and other welfare reforms.

Staff who currently worked on housing benefit fraud and Council Tax support fraud would be transferred to the Department of Work and Pensions once the full changes to the benefits system in the district had been implemented. Whilst this had already occurred in other parts of Worcestershire the transfer had been delayed in Bromsgrove and Redditch.

RESOLVED that the Action List be noted.

104/14 **QUARTERLY RECOMMENDATION TRACKER**

The Board considered the latest edition of the Overview and Scrutiny Quarterly Recommendation Tracker. During consideration of the tracker a number of key points were discussed in detail.

Planning Policy Task Group

The Head of Planning and Regulatory Services had confirmed that through service transformation a review and mapping process had been carried out in respect of planning and she had offered to provide this work for the board's consideration. Members agreed that this would be a suitable subject to investigate further at the February meeting of the Board.

Detailed responses had been provided to the group's fourth and ninth recommendations and it was therefore agreed that these items could be removed from the tracker.

Youth Provision Task Group

Members were advised that the Chairman of the Task Group, Councillor J. M. L. A. Griffiths, had not yet delivered a presentation on the subject of the

group's findings at a meeting of CALC. This was largely due to CALC only meeting on a quarterly basis and had key topics to discuss at each meeting. However, Members noted that following recent changes to the provision of youth services in the county it would be useful for this presentation to take place and Officers were asked to draw this recommendation to the attention of CALC.

Air Quality Task Group

The Board were advised that no further updates had been received following publication of the agenda. A detailed review of the recommendations was due to take place during the April meeting of the Board and this would provide Members with an opportunity to discuss the matter in further detail.

Members noted that they had not yet requested an update from Worcestershire Regulatory Services (WRS) regarding reminders to taxi drivers about leaving their engines running when waiting for a customer. However, some Members noted that they had observed taxi drivers running their engines in taxi ranks in recent months and therefore it was considered timely to request an update on this matter. The Board discussed a number of actions that could be taken by the Council and WRS to discourage this type of behaviour by taxi drivers and it was agreed that any suggestions should be raised with WRS Officers when they attended a future meeting of the Board.

Artrix Outreach Provision Task Group

The Chairman of the group, Councillor S. P. Shannon, and Head of Leisure and Cultural Services had met with the new Artistic Director of the Artrix following her appointment. There had been a positive response to the group's recommendations and it was anticipated that these would be implemented. The group's second, fourth and ninth recommendations had already been acted on and for this reason Members agreed that no further updates would be required. Members also noted that the Artrix continued to make activities available during school holiday periods.

Leisure Provision Task Group

Councillor R. J. Shannon confirmed that he had agreed to award some of his ward funding to finance the installation of an additional noticeboard. However an update was requested regarding the noticeboard referred to in recommendation 3a.

Recommendations Arising from meetings of the Overview and Scrutiny Board

Members were advised that the recommendation concerning the Dolphin Centre business case and finances for the new leisure centre had been rejected by the Audit Board and could therefore be removed from the tracker.

Joint WRS Scrutiny Task Group

The Board was advised that during consideration of the group's recommendations by the Worcestershire Shared Services Joint Committee a number of the group's recommendations, primarily concerning the governance of the service, had been rejected. These recommendations could therefore be removed from the tracker. The Overview and Scrutiny Board would be expected to track implementation of the remaining as the Council was the host authority for the shared service.

Members discussed arrangements for the operational management of WRS following the departure of the Head of Regulatory Services. Officers confirmed that the Chairman of the WRS Management Board would provide a strategic lead to the service during the interim period whilst the governance and budget for the service was reviewed.

RESOLVED that the Overview and Scrutiny Quarterly Recommendation Tracker be noted.

105/14 **PLANNING APPLICATIONS - QUARTERLY BACKLOG DATA**

The Board considered information that had been provided regarding the backlog with processing planning applications. The Chairman expressed some disappointment regarding the substance of the update that had been provided and Members agreed that further information was required to facilitate constructive scrutiny of the matter. The following additional information was therefore requested:

- An explanation of what qualified as a backlog.
- Clarification regarding action being taken by the Planning Department to address the backlog.
- A breakdown of data by size of application and the length of delay per application.
- An explanation of the reason why combined data had been provided for Bromsgrove and Redditch.
- Comparative data for Redditch Borough Council's planning applications.

Members briefly discussed the current position regarding the Planning Department and whether it was officially in special measures. Officers explained that the Planning Department would be in a better position to clarify the current position of the Council and the implications for the planning process.

106/14 **BUDGET SCRUTINY REPORT**

The Executive Director of Finance and Corporate Resources presented the Medium Term Financial Plan 2015/16 to 2017/18. She explained that the financial position for the Council had altered slightly since the agenda had been published and for this reason she provided an update on the revised position.

Agenda Item 3

Overview and Scrutiny Board
21st January 2015

During presentation of the report the following matters were highlighted for Members' consideration:

- The government grant allocation for 2015/16 was £500,000 less than the settlement for 2014/15 and had fallen by approximately 50 per cent since 2011.
- Officers were assuming that the Council would lose at least 5 per cent of the revenue grant over the next few years, though there were concerns that the figure could be higher.
- Bromsgrove District Council would receive £23,000 from the Greater Birmingham and Solihull Business Rates Pool.
- Officers had not yet allocated any of the New Homes Bonus settlement to the community as no decision had been made on this subject by the Council.
- The budget included an assumption that there would be an increase in Council Tax of 1.9 per cent.
- The previous 10 year funding agreement with the Artrix was due to end. Officers were proposing to allocate a grant of £60,000 to the Artrix in future years.
- In February 2014 Members had agreed to share the Parish Grant Precept to provide Members with a ward funding scheme. This had been a relatively labour intensive scheme though there had been some positive outcomes.
- A number of savings had been achieved. The focus of Officers in forthcoming years would be on how the Council could achieve further efficiency savings.
- The budget position for 2015/16 had changed since the publication of the report as figures for Council Tax had subsequently revealed a higher surplus than anticipated.
- There was one bid to support the Essential Living Fund (ELF). The settlement from the Government for the fund had decreased resulting in a reduction. Whilst the bid would help to support the fund the budget would be much lower than in previous years and therefore could only provide minimum support.
- Officers calculated that the pay award for an Officer would increase in the first two years of their employment as the employee rose through their incremental pay. Once the Officer reached the top of their scale they could only expect to receive the standard pay increase.
- Further detail would be provided for the Board's consideration in February, including an update on the Cabinet's recommendations for the budget.

Following presentation of the report Members discussed a number of points in further detail:

- The reasons why the Ward Members' Fund scheme was labour intensive. Officers explained that the application process was relatively simple, however, the process for transferring funds was quite complicated.
- The distribution of Council Tax funding to relevant public sector bodies. Officers confirmed that the district Council received 14 per cent of the Council Tax, the Police received an equivalent amount, the Fire Service

received approximately 6 per cent and Worcestershire County Council received the remainder.

- Changes to the recording of savings achieved through vacancy managers, which had been made at the request of Members in previous years.
- The notice provided to the Artrix regarding the reduction in funding at the end of the 10 year agreement and the funds to be allocated to outreach work.
- Whether the Artrix was responsible for the maintenance costs to the building.
- The turnover of staff retiring or taking redundancy and the number of new employees who would be at the bottom of their scales.
- The costs of borrowing. Members were advised that the majority of the borrowing costs for the leisure centre would be met from balances.
- There would be costs from borrowing for replacement of fleet vehicles.
- The Council would also be borrowing in the first year after the move to Parkside to cover costs, though it was anticipated that this would be recouped relatively quickly through the sale of the Council House site.
- Interest in the Council House site for development, and the designation of the site as housing land in the Area Action Plan.
- The need for a market rate to be achieved for the sale of the Council House site.
- The potential for multi-year budget settlements to be announced by the Government in future years.
- The impact of the New Homes Bonus in terms of both funding and housing development. Officers confirmed that the New Homes Bonus had had a positive impact from a financial perspective, however, the impact on housing development needed to be discussed further with the planning department.
- The need for Councils to plan to be financially dependent by 2018/19, due to the possibility that the Government grant would be withdrawn altogether in the long-term.
- The implications for Heads of Service and fourth tier managers who were accountable for managing budgets and the need for careful planning.

RESOLVED that the report be noted.

107/14 **CAR PARKING SHORT SHARP REVIEW REPORT**

The Chairman of the Task Group, Councillor S. P. Shannon, presented the group's final report. He explained that the group had undertaken a comprehensive review, gathering evidence from a variety of sources, including comparative data for similar districts and information about parking trends. Members had also taken into account the findings of the previous Recreation Road South Car Park Task Group.

A key source of the evidence had been a survey undertaken by Councillor R. J. Shannon as a member for St John's ward. He had surveyed businesses located in a number of the streets in the town centre to find out about opening arrangements during the evening and on Sundays. This survey had revealed

Agenda Item 3

Overview and Scrutiny Board
21st January 2015

that a significant number of businesses were not open on a Sunday, though might open if there was an increase in footfall.

During consideration of this report the following matters were also discussed by Members:

- The decision that had been taken by Council on 19th January to permit free parking in the evenings in Bromsgrove, which would cost an estimated £60,000.
- The timing of the decision that had been made on Monday and whether it would have been more appropriate for a decision on this matter to be postponed until the Car Parking Short, Sharp review had been completed.
- The costs involved in offering free parking on a Sunday for a trial six month period, which were estimated to be approximately £30,000, and the extent to which the Council could afford to offer this free provision in addition to the costs for free evening parking.
- The need for Cabinet to determine how to fund both schemes.
- Methods that would be used to assess the impact of free parking provision. Officers explained that the Council would need to consult with local businesses to find out about the impact of free parking provision on business in the evening. A similar method could be used to assess the impact of free parking on a Sunday and the feedback could be compared to baseline data gathered by the group.
- The second recommendation had originally been proposed by the Recreation Road South Car Park Task Group and Members had felt that due to slow progress it should be proposed for a second time.
- The potential to expand the pay on foot system to more car parks in the Town Centre Regeneration Programme as part of any resurfacing and maintenance works.
- The extent to which the car parking permit scheme had been used by working people when the process had previously been in place.
- The potential income that could be accrued by the Council following the reintroduction of a car parking permit scheme for the over 65 year olds as well as the potential benefits to day time business from increased custom.
- The concerns of the Older People's Forum regarding car parking charges and the extent to which this reflected general concerns amongst senior citizens.
- The availability of season parking tickets for people working in Bromsgrove.
- The benefits of proposing strong recommendations that required action from Officers. For this reason Members agreed to amend the group's third recommendation which had originally proposed that consideration should be given to re-introducing the car parking permit scheme.

RECOMMENDED that, subject to the amendment detailed in the preamble above, the three recommendations in the report be approved by the Cabinet.

RESOLVED that the report be noted.

108/14 **WCC HEALTH OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

In the absence of the Board's representative on the Worcestershire Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee (HOSC), Councillor B. T. Cooper, a copy of the minutes of its latest meeting had been attached for Members' consideration.

The Chairman noted that the Board had agreed that the subject of GP Practices covered by a Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) in Birmingham should be raised for the consideration of HOSC. To ensure that this occurred at the following meeting of HOSC in Councillor Cooper's absence Officers were asked to notify the lead Scrutiny Officer at Worcestershire County Council of this proposal.

Members were advised that a public meeting of the Redditch and Bromsgrove CCG was due to take place in the Council House the following evening, interested Members were urged to attend this meeting.

109/14 **CABINET WORK PROGRAMME 1ST FEBRUARY TO 30TH APRIL 2014**

The Chairman explained that following publication of the Cabinet Work Programme an urgent item had been added concerning the Hanover Street and George House site. This would be considered at a special meeting of the Cabinet on 18th February and the Chairman had requested that the report also be provided for the Board to pre-scrutinise in February.

Members discussed the content of the plan and commented that it would also be useful for the Board to receive an update on the Modifications to the Bromsgrove District Local Plan, which was scheduled for the Cabinet's consideration on 1st April.

110/14 **OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY BOARD WORK PROGRAMME**

Members were advised that a Topic Proposal Form had been received following publication of the agenda and would be considered alongside general updates on the Board's Work Programme.

Officers explained that at the meeting of the Board in February 2015 Members were due to undertake budget scrutiny and would receive a briefing on the subject of the staff survey, it would also be pre-scrutinising the report concerning the Hanover Street and George House site.

Officers were proposing to present the Overview and Scrutiny Board Annual Report for the consideration of the Board in April rather than in June, due to the potential for a change in membership of the Board following the elections in May 2015.

Members were advised that Democratic Services were keen to prepare appropriate Overview and Scrutiny training for Members in the new municipal year as part of the induction process. The Board agreed that as part of the

planning process for this training it should have an opportunity to contribute towards this during the April 2015 meeting.

Topic Proposal – Introduction of Ipads to District Councillors

Councillor R. J. Shannon presented a topic proposal form which detailed suggested terms of reference for a review of the introduction of Ipads for the use of district Councillors. He explained that, following discussions with other Councillors and the debate at the Council meeting on 19th January, it appeared that the subject of Council Ipads might be suitable for further scrutiny. A Short, Sharp Review of the subject could be completed prior to the elections and any findings could assist Officers in providing a high quality IT support service to new Members.

During consideration of this topic proposal form Members discussed the following points:

- The available capacity of the Democratic Services team to facilitate a Short, Sharp Review of this subject.
- The validity of the topic as a subject for scrutiny.
- The need to limit the number of Members appointed to any scrutiny group at this stage in the municipal year to ensure that meetings could be arranged and the review completed prior to the elections.
- The need for Members to be open minded about the potential outcomes of a review of this subject.
- The mixed experiences of Members when using their Ipads. A number of Members reported that they had experienced no problems.
- The timing of the proposed review, in particular as to whether sufficient time had been provided for Members to realise the full capacity of the Ipads.
- The functionality of the Ipads and the restrictions placed on access to various forms of email attachment.
- The availability of IT support to assist Members experiencing problems with their Ipads and the need for Ipads to be transported to Redditch Town Hall in order for problems to be resolved.
- The impact in terms of Officer time, in both the IT and Democratic Services teams, of resolving problems that had been reported with Ipads.
- The complexity of the Council issued Ipads compared to similar equipment used in various workplaces.
- Limitations placed on the potential for Members to print from their Ipads, an option that was only available at the Council House.
- The impact that limited access to Ipads could have on a Member's access to their emails and the potential to miss an opportunity to respond to constituents' concerns when the Ipad was not working.
- The need for Councillors to ask the IT team to create new folders on their Ipads when needed.
- Councillor R. J. Laight reported that he had consulted with members of his group and they had reported that they were satisfied that any problems experienced with the Ipads had been resolved quickly.

Agenda Item 3

Overview and Scrutiny Board
21st January 2015

- The value of the good software in terms of equipment security and the need to respond to Government requirements concerning data confidentiality and encryption.
- The impact of training on the potential for Members to use their Ipads.
- The reasons why Councillors could not use their personal Ipads if good software was installed.

Following further debate it was

RESOLVED:

- (a) that a short sharp review would not be carried out; and
- (b) the Portfolio Holder for Enabling (including Finance and Governance), the Head of Business Transformation and Organisational Development and the IT Manager be invited to attend a future meeting of the Board to discuss Members' Ipads.

The meeting closed at 8.30 p.m.

Chairman

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Grant Applications under the Townscape Heritage Initiative: 67 High Street Bromsgrove and 1-3 New Road Bromsgrove

Relevant Portfolio Holder	Cllr Rita Dent
Portfolio Holder Consulted	Yes
Relevant Director	Kevin Dicks
Wards Affected	St Johns
Ward Councillor Consulted	Yes
Key Decision	

1. SUMMARY OF PROPOSALS

- 1.1 Under the Town Heritage Initiative (THI) scheme member approval is required to authorise the making of grants over the sum of £150,000. This report sets out two such proposals for members in relation to 67 High Street (Oswald Bailey), Bromsgrove and 1 – 3 New Road (the Tudor House), Bromsgrove, and officers are seeking members approval to proceed with making the grants.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 **That Cabinet approves the offer of a Townscape Heritage Initiative grant as set out in this report for 67 High Street**
- 2.2 **That Cabinet approves the offer of a Townscape Heritage Initiative grant as set out in this report for 1-3 New Road**

3. KEY ISSUES

Financial Implications

- 3.1 The Townscape Heritage Initiative is a grant scheme of £1.6 million jointly funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund (£1.2 M) and Worcestershire County Council (£400K) for the restoration of historic buildings on High Street, including parts of Worcester Road and New Road.
- 3.2 In the Stage 2 Bid and Action Plan to the Heritage Lottery Fund dated 20 April 2012, the Council entered into an agreement with the Heritage Lottery Fund and Worcestershire County Council to set up and run the Townscape Heritage Initiative. The agreement requires that single grants of over £150,000 must be approved by Cabinet.
- 3.3 An application for a grant from the fund has been received from Stephen Bailey who is the owner of 67 High Street, Bromsgrove. A

Cabinet

4 March 2015

photograph of the building is included for members' reference at Appendix 1. The property is a grade 2 listed building that is currently used as a shop at ground floor level (Oswald Bailey) while the two upper floor levels are vacant. It is earmarked as a priority "plus" building which means that it clearly contributes to the enhancement of the conservation area and is eligible for funding through the Townscape Heritage Initiative. The proposal is to insert a new traditional-looking shop front, carry out window and front elevation repairs, and convert the two upper floor levels into two separate apartments.

- 3.4 Pre - application advice has been received for this project and a planning application is expected by the end of February 2015. Support for the proposed grant has been received from the Heritage Lottery Fund Monitor for Bromsgrove Townscape Heritage Initiative.
- 3.5 The proposed grant, based on a quantity surveyor's professional estimate, is £195,500, and the owner of the grant-aided property has agreed to contribute the sum of £45,000 to the £240,500 renovation costs. If the renovation costs of the work increase, following the tender process, the proposed grant will not increase – it will be capped at £195,000.
- 3.6 An application for a grant from the fund has also been received from Philip R. Amphlett who is the owner of 1-3 New Road, Bromsgrove. A photograph of the building is included for members' reference at Appendix 2. The property is a grade 2 listed building of timber-frame construction with a modern single-storey extension on one side. It is currently leased by Your Move estate agents and is recognised as a priority building eligible for funding through the Townscape Heritage Initiative. The proposal is to carry out major repair and reinstatement works to the external fabric of the main historic building, including:-
- Repairing parts of the timber frame in New Green Oak
 - Reinstating infill panels using lime plaster
 - Reinstating cast iron gutters and downpipes
 - Repairing windows
 - Reinstating a dwarf boundary wall and cast iron railings
 - Repairing roof coverings
 - A dendochronological assessment to determine the exact age of the building
- 3.7 Pre - application advice has been received for this project and a planning application is expected by the end of February 2015. Support for the proposed grant has been received from the Heritage Lottery Fund Monitor for Bromsgrove Townscape Heritage Initiative.

Cabinet

4 March 2015

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- 3.8 The works have been tendered and a grant proposal based on the successful tenderers' costings has been calculated at £198,024.

Legal Implications

- 3.9 The Heritage Lottery Fund deficit grant contract for 67 High Street stipulates that two years after the completion of the project, or on the sale of the property, whichever is the earlier, the deficit must be recalculated. If there is a reduction in the deficit, i.e. an increase in the value of the property, in accordance with Heritage Lottery Fund policy, the Worcestershire County Council and the Heritage Lottery Fund will claw back a percentage of that increase.
- 3.10 The Heritage Lottery Fund fixed-percentage grant contract for 1-3 New Road stipulates that if the owner intends to sell the property during a period of 10 years after completion of the project the owner must pay back to Worcestershire County Council and the Heritage Lottery Fund a proportion of the grant calculated according to a formula provided by the Heritage Lottery Fund.
- 3.11 The grant applicant is committed, by way of the grant contract, to maintain the property to a standard commensurate with the character of the building upon restoration. The grant is repayable on breach of this condition for the length of the contract (10 years).
- 3.12 Although Bromsgrove District Council is responsible for project managing the THI grant scheme it is not a major funding partner and will not receive any monies that may be repayable under the claw-back provisions.

Service / Operational Implications

- 3.13 The final grant offers will be based on tendered renovation costs provided with the applications.
- 3.14 THI grant payments are made to property owners in retrospect, and usually in instalments. In both instances grant payments will be made monthly for completed work.

Customer / Equalities and Diversity Implications

- 3.15 A THI Partnership Steering Group meets bi-monthly to receive regular updates on THI progress and provide feedback on the design and

Cabinet

4 March 2015

quality of implemented projects. Membership is drawn from local community and residents' groups (including religious, leisure and youth groups), local business and commercial concerns and the principal amenity groups - Victorian Society, Housman Society, English Heritage and Bromsgrove Society.

4. RISK MANAGEMENT

- 4.1 Without grant-aid it is very unlikely that these two buildings will ever be economically viable to restore.
- 4.2 Monies saved by not agreeing to offer grants for these particular projects would have to be relocated to other properties within the THI area meaning further delays to the delivery and effectiveness of this scheme.

5. APPENDICES

Appendix 1 – Image of 67 High Street, Bromsgrove
Appendix 2 – image of 1 – 3 New Road, Bromsgrove

6. BACKGROUND PAPERS

THI Stage 2 Bid and Action Plan

AUTHOR OF REPORT

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CABINET

4th March 2015

APRIL - DECEMBER (QUARTER 3) FINANCE MONITORING REPORT 2014/15

Relevant Portfolio Holder	Councillor Mike Webb, Portfolio Holder for Finance, Partnerships and Economic Development
Relevant Head of Service	Jayne Pickering, Executive Director Finance and Corporate Resources
Non-Key Decision	

1. SUMMARY OF PROPOSALS

- 1.1 To report to Cabinet on the Council's financial position for Revenue and Capital for the period April -December 2014 (Quarter 3 – 2014/15)

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 That Cabinet note the current financial position on Revenue and Capital as detailed in the report.
- 2.2 To recommend an increase to the Capital Programme for 2015/16 of £40k S106 monies from land off Regent Road, Oakalls development site to improve the quality of parks and open spaces in the Oakalls.

3. KEY ISSUES

- 3.1 This report provides details of the financial information across the Council. The aim is to ensure officers and members can make informed and considered judgement of the overall position of the Council. The report is currently based on the departments within the Council. The aim is to report the financial position across the strategic purposes from April 2015 when the new financial system is implemented.
- 3.2 This report includes both revenue and capital expenditure with a summary for the Council followed by the departmental analysis of expenditure.

Revenue Budget summary
Quarter 3 (April – December) 2014/15 – Overall Council

3.3 Internal recharges have not been included in these figures to allow comparison for each service area. However Support costs have been included.

Service Head	Revised Budget 2014/15 £'000	Profiled Budget 2014-15 £'000	Actual Spend 2014-15 £'000	Variance to date £'000	Projected Outturn 2014/14 £'000	Projected Variance £'000
BDC Reg Client	154	88	36	-52	114	-40
Business Transformation	2,429	1,186	1,161	-25	2,375	-55
Community Services	2,378	1,104	1,050	-53	2,271	-107
Corporate Resources	1,993	1,440	1,394	-46	1,945	-48
Customer Access & Financial Support	567	-97	-151	-55	516	-51
Environmental Services	2,506	1,268	1,449	181	2,771	265
Finance & Resources	464	280	298	17	496	33
Legal & Democratic Services	832	485	497	12	846	14
Leisure & Cultural Services	2,369	1,562	1,548	-14	2,338	-31
Planning & Regeneration	712	584	580	-4	714	2
SERVICE TOTAL	14,403	7,900	7,861	-40	14,385	-18
Interest Payable	283	212	0	-212	0	-283
Interest on Investments	-58	-31	-30	0	-58	0
COUNCIL SUMMARY	14,628	8,082	7,830	-252	14,327	-301

Financial Commentary:

At the end of quarter 3 there is a predicted saving against budget of £301k. This includes a number of variances across services as detailed in this report. It also includes an shortfall in income relating to Environmental Services. The initial budget was based on £250k income realised from the potential sale of the Trade Waste service. Officers are now reviewing the position on Trade Waste to bring forward options that may be available for service delivery. It is anticipated that this will be presented to members in early 2015/16. In addition to the shortfall in income there has also been an increase in vehicle repairs and maintenance.

The savings on interest payable is due to an the initial budget including costs associated with borrowing to support the capital programme during 2014/15. This has not been required this year due to slippage on a number of capital schemes.

CABINET

4th March 2015

Capital Budget summary
Quarter 3 (April -December) 2014/15 – Overall Council

Department	Revised Budget 2014- 15 £'000	Profiled budget April - Dec £'000	Actual spend April - Dec £'000	Variance to date £'000	Projected Outturn 2014-15 £'000	Projected Variance £'000
Regulatory Services	19	2	2	-0	19	-0
Business Transformation	90	90	70	-20	90	0
Community Services	562	562	400	-161	562	0
Environmental Services	235	235	235	-0	235	0
Leisure & Cultural Services	577	577	254	-323	578	2
Planning & Regeneration	4,327	4,327	4,306	-20	4,306	-20
Budget for Support Services Recharges to be allocated to the schemes at the end of 2014/15	25	0	0	0	25	0
TOTAL	5,834	5,792	5,268	-524	5,816	-18

Financial Commentary

Due to the review of Environmental Services, there has been a delay in the procurement of vehicles. Officers have now developed a programme for 15/16. This means that the capital budget has to be carried forward to 2015/16. The parkside project within Planning and Regeneration has also planned spend going into early 15/16.

CABINET

4th March 2015

**Regulatory - Client
Quarter 3 (April - December) 2014/15**

Revenue Budget summary

Service Head	Revised Budget 2014/15 £'000	Profiled Budget 2014-15 £'000	Actual Spend 2014-15 £'000	Variance to date £'000	Projected Outturn 2014/14 £'000	Projected Variance £'000
BDC Reg Client	351	236	193	-43	304	-47
Environmental Health / Protection / Enforcement	-11	-8	-7	1	-8	3
Pest & Dog control	0	0	-4	-4	-4	-4
Public Health	0	0	0	0	0	0
Licenses (all)	-186	-139	-146	-7	-179	7
CMT	0	0	0	0	0	0
Grand Total	154	88	36	-52	114	-40

Financial Commentary:

There is currently an expected saving within the Worcestershire Regulatory Services function which will be shared across all partners and this represents the BDC share.

**Worcestershire Regulatory Services
Quarter 3 (April - December) 2014/15**

Capital Budget summary

BDC share of Regulatory - WETT shared service	19	2	2	-0	19	-0
Total	19	2	2	-0	19	-0

Financial Commentary:

The expenditure for a new IT System is jointly funded by all partners in accordance with the business case. The £19k represents the financial cost for Bromsgrove and it is expected to be fully spent by the end of the financial year.

CABINET

4th March 2015

**Business Transformation
Quarter 3 (April - December) 2014/15**

Revenue Budget summary

Service Head	Revised Budget 2014/15 £'000	Profiled Budget 2014-15 £'000	Actual Spend 2014-15 £'000	Variance to date £'000	Projected Outturn 2014/14 £'000	Projected Variance £'000
ICT	1,945	823	881	59	1,982	37
Human Resources	304	228	172	-55	239	-64
Transformation	65	49	40	-9	66	0
Equalities	34	25	35	10	32	-2
Policy	81	61	32	-29	55	-26
Grand Total	2,429	1,186	1,161	-25	2,375	-55

Financial Commentary:

There are a couple of posts within the HR department that are currently vacant and maternity leave cover is being provided internally. One of the posts has been filled and therefore the savings will not be as significant at the end of the financial year.

An in year saving has been identified of £40k on training, however a programme is in place moving forward.

Capital Budget summary

Capital Project Description	Revised Budget 2014-15 £'000	Profiled budget April - Dec £'000	Actual spend April - Dec £'000	Variance to date £'000	Projected Outturn 2014-15 £'000	Projected Variance £'000
Infrastructure refresh and PSN	90	90	70	-20	90	0
Total	90	90	70	-20	90	0

Financial Commentary:

Work continues with phase I of the PSN project, with work about to commence on Phase II.

CABINET

4th March 2015

**Community Services
Quarter 3 (April - December) 2014/15**

Revenue Budget summary

Service Head	Revised Budget 2014/15 £'000	Profiled Budget 2014-15 £'000	Actual Spend 2014-15 £'000	Variance to date £'000	Projected Outturn 2014/14 £'000	Projected Variance £'000
Housing Strategy	1,769	696	681	-15	1,712	-58
Community Safety & Transport	497	303	252	-51	449	-48
Community Cohesion	111	104	117	13	110	-1
Grand Total	2,378	1,104	1,050	-53	2,271	-107

Financial Commentary:

There has been a reduction in the cost of running the community transport scheme due to the contract being renegotiated. There has been an increase in income for lifeline services due to changes in funding. Within Housing Strategy there is a saving due to reduced spending as the BDHT management fees have not increased as expected and some salary savings due to temp vacancy. There has been a saving on HOS costs due to post being recruited on a lower salary point. These savings which have been identified have been included in the 2015/16 - 2017/18 Medium term financial Plan.

Capital Budget summary

Capital Project Description	Revised Budget 2014-15 £'000	Profiled budget April - Dec £'000	Actual spend April - Dec £'000	Variance to date £'000	Projected Outturn 2014-15 £'000	Projected Variance £'000
Disabled facilities Grant	515	515	376	-139	515	0
Energy Efficiency Home Insulation Project	0	0	0	0	0	0
Grants - affordable housing	23	23	19	-4	23	0
Implementation of Localism Changes	5	5	0	-5	5	0
Discretionary Home Repair Assistance & Housing Renewal Grants	19	19	5	-14	19	0
Total	562	562	400	-161	562	0

Financial Commentary:

Officers are continuing to work with residents to ensure all support is in place in their homes. Affordable Housing grants relate to funds to support Registered Social Landlords and these have not yet been drawn on for 2014/15

CABINET

4th March 2015

**Corporate Services
Quarter 3 (April - December) 2014/15**

Revenue Budget summary

Service Area	Revised Latest Budget 14-15 FY £'000	Budget April - Dec £'000	Actual Spend April - Dec £'000	Variance to date £'000	Projected Outturn 2014-15 £'000	Sum of Projected Variance £'000
Corporate Resources	1,709	1,231	1,198	-33	1,667	-42
Corporate Admin/ central post & printing	283	209	196	-14	278	-5
Grand Total	1,993	1,440	1,394	-46	1,945	-48

Financial Commentary:

Communications services have a saving of £14k on various budgets relating to marketing/promotion. Saving within Corporate Services is due to the vacant post of Executive Director Planning & Regulatory. These savings identified have been included in the 2015/16 - 2017/18 medium term financial plan.

**Customer Access & Financial Support
Quarter 3 (April - December) 2014/15**

Revenue Budget summary

Service Head	Revised Budget 2014/15 £'000	Profiled Budget 2014-15 £'000	Actual Spend 2014-15 £'000	Variance to date £'000	Projected Outturn 2014/14 £'000	Projected Variance £'000
Customer service centre	330	234	235	1	341	11
Financial Support	72	46	42	-5	66	-6
Revenues & Benefits	149	-389	-440	-51	94	-54
Valuation Services	16	12	12	-0	15	-1
Grand Total	567	-97	-151	-55	516	-51

Financial Commentary:

During Quarter 3 it has been possible to reduce the expected overspend on customer services through management of resources made possible due to a reduction in demand being handled by the Customer Service Centre. The Revenues & Benefits underspend is due to savings achieved through Service Reviews and shared service arrangements with Redditch Borough Council, which has reduced the number of managers in the service.

**Environmental Services
Quarter 3 (April - December) 2014/15**

Revenue Budget Summary

Service Head	Revised Budget 2014/15 £'000	Profiled Budget 2014-15 £'000	Actual Spend 2014-15 £'000	Variance to date £'000	Projected Outturn 2014/14 £'000	Projected Variance £'000
Car Parks/Civil Enforcement Parking	-623	-513	-484	30	-617	5
Cemeteries	32	27	15	-11	13	-19
Cesspools/Sewers	-108	-80	-24	56	-41	67
CMT	50	38	37	-1	50	0
Depot	690	499	369	-130	598	-91
Grounds Maintenance	441	294	307	13	416	-25
Highways	174	104	71	-32	125	-49
Refuse & Recycling	937	317	627	310	1,295	359
Street Cleansing	882	573	547	-26	896	14
Transport	-40	-42	-63	-21	-41	-1
Waste Management, policy, promotion, management	-5	-4	-2	2	-2	3
Climate Change	16	12	14	2	17	1
Land Drainage	61	45	35	-10	61	1
Grand Total	2,506	1,268	1,449	181	2,771	265

Financial Commentary:

- Income from off street/on street car parking enforcement is lower than anticipated. Officers will be meeting with Wychavon District Council who provides the parking service under an SLA agreement to discuss this and the SLA payments.
- Bromsgrove Bereavement Services income is more than budgeted and accounts for the projected surplus.
- Cesspools continue to show a deficit due to the removal of trade effluent at Frankley and other pumping stations.
- Salary savings due to vacant posts within Depot services account for most of the projected underspend.
- Savings within the Highways team are due to staff vacancies.
- A £250k saving was built into the Trade Waste Service for 2014-15 for the sale of the trade list. Members have asked Officers to look at some additional options for moving the service forward but due to the timescales, will result in the saving not being achievable in this financial year. Ongoing issues with vehicle breakdown within the service will continue until new freighters are received nearer the end of the financial year.

CABINET

4th March 2015

Capital Budget Summary

Capital Project Description	Revised Budget 2014-15 £'000	Profiled budget April - Dec £'000	Actual spend April - Dec £'000	Variance to date £'000	Projected Outturn 2014-15 £'000	Projected Variance £'000
North Cemetery Phase 2	2	2	2	0	2	0
Refuse collection vehicle replacement programme	126	126	126	0	126	0
Flooding Mitigation Measures	36	36	36	0	36	0
Total	235	235	235	-0	235	0

Financial Commentary:

North Cemetery Phase 2 - work is now at a the design stage therefore the budget has been reprofiled to reflect expenditure taking place at the beginning of 2015/16.
 Refuse Vehicle replacement programme is for Environmental Services Vehicles. Some procurement of vehicles is taking place but the majority is on hold until the Environmental Services review .
 Flood Mitigation Measures - replacement of culvert grilles - the work has been undertaken but invoices have not yet been received

**Finance and Resources
Quarter 3 (April - December) 2014/15**

Revenue Budget summary

Service Head	Revised Budget 2014/15 £'000	Profiled Budget 2014-15 £'000	Actual Spend 2014-15 £'000	Variance to date £'000	Projected Outturn 2014/14 £'000	Projected Variance £'000
Accounts & Financial Management	434	250	266	16	465	32
Central Overheads	30	30	31	1	31	1
Grand Total	464	280	298	17	496	33

Financial Commentary:

The projected overspend is due to redundancy and pension strain costs following a service review. This has been reduced from Qtr 2 through vacant posts.

CABINET

4th March 2015

**Legal, Equalities and Democratic Services
Quarter 3 (April - December) 2014/15**

Revenue Budget Summary

Service Head	Revised Budget 2014/15 £'000	Profiled Budget 2014-15 £'000	Actual Spend 2014-15 £'000	Variance to date £'000	Projected Outturn 2014/14 £'000	Projected Variance £'000
Democratic Services & Member Support	483	306	303	-3	478	-5
Election & Electoral Services	175	80	83	3	175	-0
Professional Legal Advice & Services	266	186	183	-3	267	1
Land Charges	-92	-87	-72	15	-74	18
Grand Total	832	485	497	12	846	14

Financial commentary:

Staffing vacancy within Democratic Services has resulted in a small saving. At the time of reporting the European Election accounts had not been finalised. Members are advised that there is a likelihood that this area will result in an underspend once the election accounts have been agreed - it is not however possible to identify the extent of this underspend at this stage. Search requests are considerably lower than predicted in this final quarter resulting in under achieved income. This is however driven by the market and outside of our control.

**Leisure and Cultural Services
Quarter 3 (April – December) 2014/15**

Revenue Budget summary

Service Head	Revised Budget 2014/15 £'000	Profiled Budget 2014-15 £'000	Actual Spend 2014-15 £'000	Variance to date £'000	Projected Outturn 2014/14 £'000	Projected Variance £'000
Business Development	800	619	629	9	818	18
Cultural Services	272	301	295	-6	271	-1
Leisure & Cultural Mgt	119	89	94	5	118	-1
Parks & Green Space	354	117	122	5	355	1
Sports Services	824	443	404	-39	776	-49
Grand Total	2,369	1,570	1,543	-26	2,338	-31

Financial Commentary:

Business development income has reduced in relation to the Spadesbourne suite as we prepare to relocate to Parkside resulting in a predicted overspend. Sports services is predicting an underspend in sports development and car park refunds at the Dolphin Centre, however this may be offset during the busier months ahead.

CABINET

4th March 2015

Capital Budget summary

Capital Project Description	Revised Budget 2014-15 £'000	Profiled budget April - Dec £'000	Actual spend April - Dec £'000	Variance to date £'000	Projected Outturn 2014-15 £'000	Projected Variance £'000
Sports Facilities	74	74	64	-10	76	2
Play Areas	412	412	191	-221	412	-0
Other Schemes	91	91	-1	-92	91	0
Total	577	577	254	-323	578	2

Financial Commentary:

Officers have advised that all schemes are scheduled to take place before the end of the financial year, so the budgets have been re-profiled to reflect the fact that expenditure will be in - Quarter 4 (Jan – March 2015).
 The revised full year budget has been re profiled to reflect expenditure planned for 2015/16
 There is a new project for approval: £40k of S106 funding to be utilised to improve the quality of the parks and public open spaces in and around the Oakalls.

**Planning and Regeneration
Quarter 3 (April - December) 2014/15**

Revenue Budget summary

Service Area	Revised Latest Budget 14-15 FY £'000	Budget April - Dec £'000	Actual Spend April - Dec £'000	Variance to date £'000	Projected Outturn 2014-15 £'000	Sum of Projected Variance £'000
Building Control	-128	-98	-72	25	-92	36
Development Control	213	147	149	2	169	6
Economic & Tourism Development	150	178	185	7	220	20
Emergency Planning / Business Continuity	14	10	10	-0	14	0
Strategic Planning	404	303	265	-38	351	-53
Town Centre Development	59	43	43	-0	53	-6
Grand Total	712	584	580	-4	714	2

Financial Commentary:

Strategic Planning has had a number of vacancies which will not be filled until early 2015/16. There are also a number of budgets that will be underspent.
 Building Controls income is projected to be slightly down due to less demand on services.
 Development Control planning applications are lower than the previous year but have assumed income will increase to budget.

CABINET

4th March 2015

Capital Budget summary

Capital Project Description	Revised Budget 2014-15 £'000	Profiled budget April - Dec £'000	Actual spend April - Dec £'000	Variance to date £'000	Projected Outturn 2014-15 £'000	Projected Variance £'000
Town Centre Development - Project Management	38	38	38	0	38	0
Town Centre - Public Realm	1,652	1,652	1,632	-20	1,632	-20
Market Hall development site	18	18	18	0	18	0
Stourbridge Road development site	4	4	4	-0	4	-0
Parkside School	2,615	2,615	2,615	-0	2,615	-0
Total	4,327	4,327	4,306	-20	4,306	-20

Financial Commentary:

There are a number of projects that are under construction within this service area. The redevelopment of the High Street Improvements are committed to be fully spent by the end of the financial year. The parkside development has commenced and will be continued going into early 15/16.

4. TREASURY MANAGEMENT

- 4.1 The Council's Treasury Management Strategy has been developed in accordance with the Prudential Code for Capital Finance prudential indicators and is used to manage risks arising from financial instruments. Additionally treasury management practices are followed on a day to day basis.
- 4.2 The Council receives credit rating details from its Treasury Management advisers on a daily basis and any counterparty falling below the criteria is removed from the list of approved institutions.
- 4.3 Due to market conditions the Council has reduced its credit risk for all new investments by only investing in the highest rated instruments and has shortened the allowable length of investments in order to reduce risk.
- 4.4 At 31st December short term investments comprised:

	31st March 2014 £000	31 st December 2014 £000
Deposits	10,000	12,500
Total	10,000	11,000

CABINET

4th March 2015

Income from investments and other interest

- 4.5 An investment income target of £58k has been set for 2014/15 using a projected return rate of 0.5%. During the past financial year bank base rates have remained 0.5% and current indications are projecting minimal upward movement for the short term.
- 4.6 In the 6 months to 31st December the Council received income from investments of £30k.

5. REVENUE BALANCES

5.1 Revenue Balances

The revenue balances brought forward at 1 April 2014 were £3.74m. Excluding the impact of any projected over or under spends it is anticipated that £301k will be transferred to balances during 2014/15.

Legal Implications

None.

Service/Operational Implications

All included in financial implications.

Customer / Equalities and Diversity Implications

None as a direct result of this report

7. RISK MANAGEMENT

- 7.1 Risk considerations covered in the report. There are no Health & Safety considerations

8. APPENDICES

None

9. BACKGROUND PAPERS

Available from Financial Services

AUTHORS OF REPORT

Name: Sam Morgan – Financial Services Manager
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Cabinet

4th March 2015

DISCRETIONARY WRITE OFFS

Relevant Portfolio Holder	Councillor Mike Webb
Portfolio Holder Consulted	Yes
Relevant Head of Service	Amanda de Warr, Head of Customer Access and Financial Support
Wards Affected	All

1. SUMMARY OF PROPOSALS

- 1.1 This report sets out discretionary write offs for consideration for write off.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

That Cabinet RESOLVE to authorise the discretionary write off's detailed in Appendix 1.

3. KEY ISSUES

- 3.1. The current Write Off Policy requires Cabinet to authorise any discretionary write offs

Financial Implications

- 3.2 The total value of discretionary write off for authorisation is £28,141.49.
- 3.3 Provision is made within the Council's budgets to allow for bad debts to be written off. The total amount listed falls inside the existing provisions. The current bad debts provisions are as follows:

	£
Housing benefit Overpayments	485,363
NDR	224,907
Council Tax	214,937
Sundry Debtors	31,493

Legal Implications

- 3.4 Further Legal action in respect of these cases is not considered to be appropriate, or likely to result in repayment of the debt.

Service / Operational Implications

- 3.5 Further recovery work in respect of these cases would not be efficient use of officer time.

Cabinet

4th March 2015

Customer / Equalities and Diversity Implications

- 3.6 The Council's Write Off Policy makes provision for customers to be treated fairly and equally.

4. RISK MANAGEMENT

- 4.1 If Cabinet did not authorise the write off of these debts the debts will remain outstanding with no likelihood of recovery.
- 4.2 This in turn will impact on the Council's ability to reduce outstanding debt, and accurately assess the true picture in relation to debts raised, debts under recovery and other outstanding debt.

5. APPENDICES

Appendix 1- Discretionary Write offs

6. BACKGROUND PAPERS

There are no background papers with this report.

AUTHORS OF REPORT

Name: Amanda de Warr
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Tel: 01527 881241

Discretionary Write Off's

Case 1 – Non Domestic Rates

Reference	406674246	Amount	£24,199.39	No Trace
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Case referred to Bailiffs who visited in December 2012 and found no trace of debtors.

Case returned to us “Debtor absconded.”

Letter also received from solicitors for British Gas asking whether or not we have any details of the whereabouts of these debtors.

The property was again visited in March 2013 where it was established that the property has been repossessed by Nat West on the 5th February 2013.

All attempts to trace the account holder have failed.

Case 3 - Housing Benefit Overpayment

Female	No fixed abode	Amount	£3,942.10
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This overpayment was raised on 13.4.10 as a result of a joint fraud investigation with the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) after information was received suggesting that Ms A was living with an undeclared partner.

Evidence was gathered and she was interviewed under caution but denied the offences.

The DWP Decision Maker considered the evidence including the interview under caution and decided that Income Support had been incorrectly claimed from 16.1.09.

It was decided that Housing Benefit of £4,441.65 had been overpaid for the period 19.1.09 to 8.3.10 and an invoice for this was issued on 4.5.10.

The case was taken to prosecution and Ms A was found not guilty but the overpayment decision stands and no appeal was made against the decision to recover the debt.

Deductions to recover the overpayment were made from Ms A's Housing Benefit entitlement from 13 Aug 2010 to 7 May 2012, 4 Jan 2013 to 1 Mar 2013 and 11 Mar 2013 to 19 Aug 2013.

Cabinet

4th March 2015

There has been no claim for Housing Benefit since that date and DWP records show her as having no fixed abode and to be claiming Employment and Support Allowance (ESA), suffering from anxiety and drug dependency.

Recovery through deductions from ESA were requested but refused by the DWP because existing debts have priority and have given a date of 24 Jan 2020 to re-refer.

The customer has no permanent home and is unlikely to have any possessions of any value and therefore write off is recommended.

Should any further entitlement to Housing Benefit be established the debt can be resurrected and recovery recommenced.