



BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL

MEETING OF THE CABINET

WEDNESDAY 1ST JUNE 2016 AT 6.00 P.M.

PARKSIDE SUITE - PARKSIDE

MEMBERS: Councillors M. A. Sherrey (Leader), C. B. Taylor (Deputy Leader), G. N. Denaro, R. J. Laight, K.J. May and P. J. Whittaker

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. To confirm the accuracy of the minutes of the meeting of the Cabinet held on 6th April 2016 (Pages 1 - 6)
4. Minutes of the meetings of the Overview and Scrutiny Board held on 21st March 2016 and 25th April 2016 (Pages 7 - 38)
 - (a) To receive and note the minutes
 - (b) To consider any recommendations contained within the minutes
5. Minutes of the meeting of the Audit, Standards and Governance Committee held on 11th May 2016 (Pages 39 - 46)

To consider the recommendation from the Audit, Standards and Governance Committee held on 11th May 2016
6. Dolphin Centre Replacement - Financial Update (Pages 47 - 54)
7. New Homes Bonus Scheme (Pages 55 - 70)

8. Appointments to Outside Bodies - By Office (Cabinet Appointments) (Pages 71 - 76)
9. 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

Parkside
Market Street
BROMSGROVE
Worcestershire
B61 8DA

20th May 2016

BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL

MEETING OF THE CABINET

6TH APRIL 2016 AT 6.00 P.M.

PRESENT: Councillors M. A. Sherrey (Leader), C. B. Taylor (Deputy Leader),
G. N. Denaro, R. L. Dent and P. J. Whittaker

Observers: Councillors B. T. Cooper, M. Glass and M. T. Buxton

Officers: Ms S. Hanley, Ms J. Pickering, Mrs S. Sellers, Ms A. Scarce and
Ms R. Cole

95/15 **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

An apology for absence was received from Councillor R. J. Laight.

96/15 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest on this occasion.

97/15 **MINUTES**

The minutes of the meetings of the Cabinet held on 24th February 2016
and 2nd March 2016 were submitted.

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meetings of the Cabinet held on
24th February 2016 and 2nd March 2016 be approved as a correct
record in each case.

98/15 **OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY BOARD**

The minutes of the meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Board held on
29th February 2016 were submitted. There was some disappointment
expressed that the Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Board was
not present at Cabinet in this regard.

It was noted that in relation to Minute 108/15, the time period for
processing the potential planning application in Foxlydiate was 16 weeks
rather than 6 weeks. This had been amended at the last meeting of the
Overview and Scrutiny Board.

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting of the Overview and
Scrutiny Board held on 29th February 2016 be noted.

99/15

RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE MEETING OF THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY BOARD HELD ON 21ST MARCH 2016

The recommendations from the meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Board held on 21st March 2016 in relation to the Evening and Weekend Car Parking Task Group were considered as part of the discussion on the Task Group Report.

100/15

REPORT OF THE EVENING AND WEEKEND CAR PARKING TASK GROUP

The Cabinet received the report of the Evening and Weekend Car Parking Task Group. Councillor M. T. Buxton was present at the meeting as a representative of the Task Group, together with Democratic Services officer Ms. A. Scarce, who had provided officer support to the Task Group.

Councillor P. J. Whittaker as the Portfolio Holder responsible for car parking responded to the recommendations put forward by the Task Group. It was recognised that a great deal of work had been undertaken by the Task Group which had originally been set up to review evening car parking and in particular the trial of free evening car parking after 7.00pm. Subsequently the remit of the Group had been extended to cover Evening and Weekend car parking.

In relation to recommendation 1 the Cabinet agreed that car parking was vital to the economic development of the Town and accepted the principles behind the recommendation. It was felt however that the existing Economic Development Priorities should be reviewed in order to assess the impact of car parking charges, rather than produce a new Economic Development Strategy which may need to alter in 6 months time. It was fully accepted that the needs and views of businesses in the Town needed to be taken into account and the new Centre Manager would be fully involved in this review process and in working with local businesses. It was stressed that it was important that the process was undertaken prior to the consideration of the next round of changes to fees and charges. The existing Economic Priorities needed to focus more strongly on car parking. Officers and Members from Economic Development, Car Parking and Planning would need to work very closely together on the further regeneration of the Town Centre.

In relation to recommendation 2, this was largely accepted, with a minor change to the wording to reflect the changes within recommendation 1. In addition the new Centres Manager should be added to the list of officers/Members to be involved in the consultation on car parking.

Recommendation 3 was agreed in its entirety.

Recommendation 4 was agreed subject to a minor change in wording to reflect the changes within recommendation 1.

Councillor Whittaker expressed thanks to the Car Parking Task Group for the detailed work they had undertaken and for the recommendations arising from this. There would be a formal report back to the Overview and Scrutiny Board from the Cabinet.

Councillor Buxton reported that there was some outstanding end of year information in respect of the level of use of car parks which had been unavailable to the Task Group due to the car parking computer system. This would mean a meaningful comparison could be made with the previous year's figures. The Executive Director Finance and Resources confirmed the figures would be available shortly and would be able to form part of the review process.

It was

RESOLVED that the following Task Group recommendations as amended be approved:

- (1) that the Council reviews its Economic Development Priorities to assess the impact of car parking charges as soon as possible, whilst considering the following key features:
 - (a) ensuring that car parking arrangements are managed in accordance with the interests of the local economy;
 - (b) working with partners in business and retail to review the Economic Priorities that includes parking options and tariffs that encourage customers to visit Bromsgrove; and
 - (c) ensuring that car parking arrangements support the Council's Economic Priorities.

- (2) that whilst reviewing the Economic Priorities it is recommended that an external expert be engaged by the Council, with a clear remit of what the Council wishes to achieve. It is suggested that they would need to consult with the following Council officers/Members:
 - (a) Economic Development Team
 - (b) Environmental Services Team
 - (c) Relevant Portfolio Holders
 - (d) Members of the Evening and weekend car Parking Task Group
 - (e) Local businesses and retailers
 - (f) Town Centres Manager

- (3) that prior to any further trials (of any nature) being agreed and carried out, any necessary data should be collected in order to have appropriate comparative data and information available to ensure that any such trial can be measured successfully.

- (4) that until the review of the Economic Priorities, the current parking charges and concessions should be maintained (including the continuation of free evening car parking).

101/15

ASSET OF COMMUNITY VALUE APPLICATION - THE CROSS INN, FINSTALL

The Cabinet considered a report on an application from CAMRA that the Cross Inn, Finstall be listed as an Asset of Community Value.

It was noted that there had been a previous application in November 2013 that the premises be listed as an Asset of Community Value, which had not been supported at that time by the Cabinet and subsequently had not been supported by the Head of Planning and Regeneration. The application had been rejected and the property had therefore not been listed.

The Cabinet considered the current application and noted that there were a significant number of community events held at the premises and uses by local organisations, including for fundraising events, use as a meeting place for local sports teams and use of the car park for the community. In addition the Cross Inn was the only pub in Finstall.

Following discussion it was

RESOLVED that the listing of the Cross Inn, Finstall as an Asset of Community Value be supported.

102/15

ASSET OF COMMUNITY VALUE APPLICATION - BLACKWELL METHODIST CHURCH HALL, GREENHILL, BLACKWELL

The Cabinet considered a report on an application from Lickey and Blackwell Parish Council that the Methodist Church Hall, Blackwell, Bromsgrove be listed as an Asset of Community Value.

The Executive Director Finance and Resources reported that since the publication of the agenda, the Methodist Property Office had stated they had no objection to the listing in respect of the building. Members however raised some queries in respect of the surrounding land indicated on the sketch plan attached to the application which was not particularly clear or to scale.

For the avoidance of doubt it was felt it would be prudent to seek further clarification from the Methodist Property Office and the Parish Council on the status of the land surrounding the building and to request that a more accurate plan be submitted. This would mean the deferral of the application.

Following discussion it was

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RESOLVED

- (a) that consideration of the application in respect of the Methodist Church Hall, Blackwell be deferred to the next meeting of the Cabinet ; and
- (b) that in the meantime further information be sought from the applicants and the Methodist Property Office including a plan indicating the area of land to be included within the application.

The meeting closed at 6.38 p.m.

Chairman

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BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL

MEETING OF THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY BOARD

21ST MARCH 2016 AT 6.00 P.M.

PRESENT: Councillors K.J. May (Vice-Chairman), C. Allen-Jones, S. J. Baxter, C. J. Bloore, B. T. Cooper, M. Glass, P.L. Thomas, M. Thompson and S. A. Webb

Observers: Councillor S. P. Shannon and Councillor M. A. Sherrey

Officers: Ms. J. Pickering, Mr. G. Revans, Ms. B. Houghton, Mr D. Rischmiller, Ms. J. Bayley and Ms. A. Scarce

114/15 **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND NAMED SUBSTITUTES**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors S. R. Colella, R. J. Deeming, L. C. R. Mallett and R. D. Smith with Councillors M. Thompson and S. Webb attending as substitutes for Councillors Mallett and Deeming respectively.

115/15 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND WHIPPING ARRANGEMENTS**

There were no declarations of interest or whipping arrangements.

116/15 **MINUTES**

The minutes of the Overview and Scrutiny Board held on 29th February 2016 were submitted.

Officers advised that the length of time required to process the planning application at Foxlydiate, as detailed in minute No. 108/15, should have been recorded as 16 weeks rather than 6.

RESOLVED that, subject to the amendment detailed in the preamble above, the minutes of the Overview and Scrutiny Board meeting held on 29th February 2016 be approved as a correct record.

117/15 **CRIME & DISORDER PARTNERSHIP SCRUTINY UPDATE REPORT**

The Community Safety Manager presented an update on the work of the North Worcestershire Community Safety Partnership (NWCSP) in 2015/16. During the delivery of this presentation the following matters were highlighted for Members' consideration:

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- The NWCSP was the statutory partnership for Bromsgrove, Redditch and Wyre Forest.
- There was a separate Community Safety Partnership (CSP) representing the south of the county.
- In September 2015 the Safer Communities Board (SCB) had commissioned a review of countywide community safety structures.
- The findings of this review had recently been presented for the consideration of the partnership.
- Key proposals in the report for the CSPs included the suggestion that there needed to be more joined up working between the partnerships in Worcestershire. This could include working together on areas such as commissioning.
- The report had also recommended that there should be a skills audit of members of both CSPs.
- Recommendations had also been made directly to the SCB.
- This included a proposal that the number of Board meetings per year should be increased from 2 to 4.
- As with the partnerships the report authors had also suggested that a skills audit of the Board's members and a proper induction process would be useful.
- It had been suggested that links between the SCB and the Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) could be strengthened.
- Proposals had also been made on the subject of communications as it had been felt that more could be done to promote the work of the SCB and its sub-groups as well as to promote national and regional campaigns at the local level.
- A number of actions had been taken locally to address community safety issues.
- This included the launch of the Bromsgrove Safe Place Scheme, to provide people with a safe environment to turn to. Originally the scheme had been designed for people with learning disabilities, though it had been extended to provide a safe haven to anybody who felt vulnerable.
- The partnership was in the process of negotiating future funding with the office of the PCC. Information received to date indicated that the settlement in 2016/17 was likely to be similar to that for 2015/16.
- In future years the funding arrangements for CSPs would be changing to a commissioning model which would focus on meeting local needs.

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

- The action taken to monitor the impact of local projects and to assess whether this represented value for money. Officers explained that a member of the Community Safety Team took a lead role in monitoring the effectiveness of local projects.

- The approach in the county to providing services to address substance abuse. Local initiatives to address this included drugs and alcohol workshops in schools.
- The Integrated Offender Management Programme in Worcestershire and the focus at the local level on supporting the most vulnerable. Officers advised that Bromsgrove had one of the smallest cohorts in the programme.
- The sustainability of services, particularly projects tackling domestic abuse, in challenging economic circumstances. The Board was informed that the PCC's new commissioning model was designed to enhance the sustainability of projects by allocating funding over a 3 year period rather than for a single year.
- The complexity of local CSP structures and the benefits of an induction process for both the CSPs and the SCB to ensure that participants understood their roles and the purpose of the meeting.

RESOLVED that the report be noted.

118/15

EVENING & WEEKEND CAR PARKING TASK GROUP - FINAL REPORT

Councillor K. J. May, Chairman of the Evening and Weekend Car Parking Task Group, delivered a presentation outlining the findings of the review. During this presentation she highlighted the following matters for Members' consideration:

- The first scrutiny review of car parking had taken place in 2007. Since that date 10 further reviews of the subject had been undertaken.
- The group had interviewed a range of expert witnesses including 51 retailers, the Town Centre Forum, relevant Portfolio Holders and appropriate Officers.
- Members had discovered that 92 per cent of retailers were not aware that free evening car parking was available in the town.
- Car parking charges had often been regarded as a useful source of Council revenue.
- However, the group had come to the conclusion at an early stage that a key role of car parking was to contribute to the economic development of the town.
- For this reason at the end of 2015 the group had asked to extend their deadline to provide time to explore weekend parking options alongside evening car parking arrangements.
- Members had discovered that there was no joined up thinking in respect of car parking.
- The group was proposing that in order to address this and to enhance the contribution of car parking to economic development in the town the Council needed to formulate a clear economic development strategy.

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- The witnesses consulted by the group were keen for a strategy to be developed and for partners to be engaged in the development of this plan.
- Whilst the strategy was being developed the group was suggesting that free evening car parking should be retained.

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

- The contribution that external consultants could make in terms of identifying the long-term strategic parking needs of the town.
- The extent to which the Council could afford to pay external consultants and whether this could be met from existing budgets.
- The role of the Economic Development Unit in formulating a clear Economic Development Strategy. Officers advised that this work would be undertaken by Council staff rather than consultants.
- The potential loss of 130 car parking spaces in the town as a result of development work and the impact that this might have on the local economy.
- The costs of providing free evening car parking, with £60,000 per annum allocated in the budget for this purpose.
- The potential for further businesses to open on Sundays and the extent to which changes to car parking arrangements could incentivise more retailers to open on this day.
- The lack of sufficient data or a business case to enable Members to determine whether the free evening car parking trial had been value for money.
- The need for data to be gathered and a clear business case to be developed in advance of any future trials being undertaken.
- The fact that many local authorities had developed car parking and economic development strategies.
- The age of the car parking machines used by the Council and the need to replace these with machines that would have a longer lifespan.
- The potential to extend pay on foot arrangements as proposed during previous car parking reviews.
- The potential for the proposed Economic Development Strategy to help the Council to support the strategic purpose: help me to run a successful business.

Prior to the vote the Board discussed the order in which the first 2 recommendations detailed in the group's report should be implemented. There was general consensus that car parking arrangements needed to support the Economic Development Strategy for the town centre. Members therefore suggested that the external consultants should only be invited to undertake a specialist piece of work to assess the car parking requirements needed to support the strategy once the strategy had been finalised. For this reason the wording of recommendation 2 was altered to begin "Having formulated the Economic Development

Strategy it is recommended that an external expert be engaged by the Council...”

RECOMMENDED that

- (1) The Council needs to formulate a clear Economic Development Strategy that includes car parking as soon as possible, whilst considering the following key features of any such strategy:
 - (a) Ensuring that car parking arrangements are managed in accordance with the interests of the local economy;
 - (b) Working with partners in business and retail to develop the Economic Development Strategy that includes parking options and tariffs that encourage customers to visit Bromsgrove; and
 - (c) Ensure car parking arrangements support the Council's Economic Development Strategy.

- (2) Having formulated the Economic Development Strategy it is recommended that an external expert be engaged by the Council, with a clear remit of what the Council wishes to achieve, it is suggested that such a consultant would need to consult with the following Council officers/Members:
 - (a) Economic Development Team
 - (b) Environmental Services Team
 - (d) Relevant Portfolio Holders
 - (e) Members of the Evening and Weekend Car Parking Task Group
 - (f) Local businesses and retailers.

- (3) Prior to any further trials (of any nature) being agreed and carried out any necessary data should be collected in order to have appropriate comparative data and information available to ensure that any such trial can be measured successfully.

- (4) Until the introduction of a strategy the current parking charges and concessions should be maintained (including the continuation of free evening car parking).

119/15

PREVENTING HOMELESSNESS IN BROMSGROVE SHORT SHARP REVIEW - VERBAL UPDATE

Councillor C. J. Bloore, Chairman of the Preventing Homelessness in Bromsgrove Short Sharp Review, provided an update on the progress of the review. He explained that since the previous meeting of the Board Councillor B. T. Cooper had resigned from the group to be replaced by Councillor H. J. Jones. Councillors S. J. Baxter, R. D. Smith and S. P. Shannon had remained on the group.

The group had held a number of meetings and had interviewed the Strategic Housing Manager and the Chief Executive of Bromsgrove District Housing Trust (BDHT). Information had been provided about

welfare changes that had already been made as well as forthcoming changes which could impact on housing provision and homelessness levels.

During the meetings of this group it had become clear that this was a complex subject which would need time to review carefully. Members were also mindful of the Cabinet's decision to set money aside to pay for any recommendations made by the group in the event that they were approved. In this context there was cross party support amongst members of the group for this review to be extended into a full Task Group to provide Members with the chance to achieve due diligence in respect of this matter.

RESOLVED that

- (1) The Preventing Homelessness in Bromsgrove review be extended to a full Task Group exercise.
- (2) The deadline for completion of this review be extended to September 2016.

120/15

WORCESTERSHIRE HEALTH OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE - UPDATE

Councillor B. T. Cooper, the Council's representative on the Worcestershire Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee (HOSC), provided an update on the latest meeting of the Committee which took place on 10th March 2016. The main item of discussion during this meeting had been the transformation of Adult Mental Health Services.

Adult Mental Health Services were commissioned by Worcestershire County Council and the Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCGs) in Worcestershire and were provided by Worcestershire Health and Care Trust. However, in challenging economic circumstances the CCGs were reducing their contribution to the Secondary Care Community Services delivered by the Trust by £500,000 and would be reallocating this funding in future to Primary Care Mental Health Services. As a consequence the Trust would need to achieve significant levels of savings and would be investigating the potential to achieve this through service transformation. No plans had yet been finalised though would be reported back to HOSC in due course.

121/15

ACTION LIST

Officers advised that some of the additional information that had been requested by Members at the previous meeting of the Board about the staff survey had been provided and would be emailed to Members.

The Board had been due to consider an update on the Dolphin Centre project. However, the Head of Leisure and Cultural Services had advised that work was not due to be completed until September 2017 and therefore an investigation into support available to displaced groups

would not commence until January 2017. For this reason it was agreed that the update to the Board should be postponed.

RESOLVED that the Dolphin Centre update be provided at a meeting of the Board in January 2017.

122/15

CABINET WORK PROGRAMME

Officers advised that the High Street Refurbishment report would not be reported to Cabinet in April 2016. Instead, further work would be undertaken to gather information on this subject and would be reported in the summer. As requested at previous meetings of the Board Officers would ensure that Members' could pre-scrutinise this report before it was considered by Cabinet.

123/15

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY BOARD WORK PROGRAMME

The following updates were provided in respect of the Overview and Scrutiny Work Programme for Members' consideration:

a) Sickness Absence Report

The annual Sickness Absence Performance report would be presented for Members' consideration in April 2016.

b) Planning Backlog Data

Following the Board's agreement to continue to receive the Planning Backlog monitoring reports dates had been scheduled into the work programme for consideration of this item in 2016/17.

c) Budget Scrutiny

The Board was scheduled to discuss lessons learned during the budget scrutiny process in 2015/16. Members agreed that it would be useful to consider further information about the budget scrutiny process adopted at other Councils in the region as part of this process.

d) 2016/17 Meeting Dates

The dates for meetings of the Board in 2016/17 had been recorded in the Work Programme for Members' consideration.

The meeting closed at 7.07 p.m.

Chairman

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BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL

MEETING OF THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY BOARD

25TH APRIL 2016 AT 6.00 P.M.

PRESENT: Councillors L. C. R. Mallett (Chairman), K.J. May (Vice-Chairman), C. Allen-Jones, S. J. Baxter, C. J. Bloore, B. T. Cooper, R. J. Deeming, M. Glass, R. D. Smith and P.L. Thomas

Observers: Councillor G. N. Denaro and Councillor S. A. Webb

Officers: Ms. J. Pickering, Ms. D. Poole, Mrs B. Talbot, Ms. A. Scarce and Ms. J. Bayley

124/15 **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND NAMED SUBSTITUTES**

An apology for absence was received on behalf of Councillor S. R. Colella.

125/15 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND WHIPPING ARRANGEMENTS**

There were no declarations of interest or whipping arrangements.

126/15 **TO CONFIRM THE ACCURACY OF THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY BOARD HELD ON 21ST MARCH 2016**

The minutes of the meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Board held on Monday 21st March were submitted.

The Chairman thanked Councillor K. J. May for chairing the meeting in his absence.

RESOLVED that the minutes of the Overview and Scrutiny Board meeting held on 21st March 2016 be approved as a correct record.

127/15 **ANNUAL SICKNESS ABSENCE PERFORMANCE UPDATE 2015/16**

The Head of Business Transformation and Organisational Development and the Human Resources and Development Manager presented an update on the sickness absence statistics for Council staff covering the period April 2015 to March 2016. During the delivery of this update the following points were highlighted for Members' consideration:

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- An average of 5.33 days per full time equivalent (FTE) post had been lost due to sickness absence by Bromsgrove staff during the period.
- There had been a decrease in the proportion of days lost due to short-term sickness.
- The Council had worked hard, alongside Redditch Borough Council, to support staff experiencing stress, anxiety and depression.
- Action to support people experiencing difficulties with stress had included the Time to Talk initiative, provision of counselling services and use of the Employee Assistance programme.
- The Council's process for reporting sickness absence was the subject of an ongoing review and a new approach had been trialled in a small number of departments.
- In the trial managers were able to report staff sickness absences directly to the Human Resources team, rather than through Payroll.
- A key finding of the trial had been that the Council's existing Sickness Absence Policy was not supporting managers adequately.
- The trial was due to be extended to other departments over the following months.
- The data arising from the trial would be published on the dashboard and used to help managers to monitor and manage sickness absence levels within their teams more effectively.

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

- The causes of stress and action taken by the Council to identify and address this problem. Members were advised that managers were being provided with training to enable them to identify behaviour which might indicate that a member of staff was suffering from stress.
- The inclusion of statistics for staff employed in Housing, which was solely a Redditch service area.
- The potential for further data to be obtained from the online Employee Assistance programme in order to appreciate the key sources of information required by staff.
- The value of recent initiatives tackling problems with stress in the work place and the extent to which this had helped to address the social stigma associated with mental health difficulties.
- The number of staff absent due to sickness and the size of the teams within which they worked.
- The inclusion of sickness absence statistics for services hosted by Bromsgrove District Council and the extent to which this accurately reflected absences for the local authority in a shared service working environment.
- The potential to reflect sickness absence statistics more accurately for the Council by calculating the proportion of absences in accordance with the division of funding between Councils to support those services.

- The prevalence of musculo-skeletal illnesses within the Environmental Services team as a cause for sickness absence and access within the team to Occupational Health services.
- The level of contact that the Council had with GP practices in cases where managers had concerns about the health of members of staff.
- The potential for comparative figures to be provided for sickness absence levels in previous years.
- The extent to which staff may feel reluctant to explain the causes of stress as it was often considered to be a private and highly sensitive matter.
- The possibility of providing greater clarification in the reports about the causes of stress (e.g. to determine whether this was due to personal issues or working conditions). Concerns were expressed that if additional information was provided on this subject it would need to be presented in an appropriate manner so as to not compromise staff confidentiality.
- The potential for the Board to receive further information about the findings of the review and to scrutinise the Sickness Absence Policy in the event that any amendments were made to this document in response to the trial outcomes.

At the end of these discussions it was

RESOLVED that

- (1) The following amendments should be made to future editions of the Sickness Absence Update report;
 - (a) comparative data should be included in the report;
 - (b) specific information should be provided about absence levels amongst staff delivering services in Bromsgrove district and references to Redditch only services should be removed from future editions of the report;
 - (c) departmental head counts should be provided; and
 - (d) subject to addressing concerns detailed in the preamble above, greater clarification should be provided about the causes of sickness absence due to stress.
- (2) A Sickness Absence Update report be presented to the Board in six months' time.

128/15

OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY ANNUAL REPORT AND REVENUE OF THE WORK OF THE BOARD

The Chairman presented a draft of the Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report 2015/16. In so doing he highlighted some of the key achievements of the Board and a number of Task Groups during the year and he thanked Members and Officers for their hard work supporting the scrutiny process.

In line with best practice Members were invited to consider action that could be taken to improve the scrutiny process in future years. A number of potential options to enhance the scrutiny process had been identified

by the Chairman and Vice Chairman, in consultation with Officers, during briefings as well as following discussions at Board meetings. These ideas were discussed in turn by the Board:

(a) Finance and Budget Scrutiny Working Group

Members were advised that a small working group could meet in private to investigate budgetary matters in detail and report their findings back to the Board. Group members would develop expertise which would be helpful when considering the budget. Meetings could be scheduled to take place in a timely manner so as to enable Members to scrutinise both future budget proposals and information about progress in securing efficiency savings as and when the information became available.

Members concurred that a Finance and Budget Scrutiny Working Group would be useful to establish. There was general consensus that the financial situation for local government would continue to be challenging and under these circumstances detailed consideration by Members of budget proposals would be essential. Furthermore, Officers advised that the external auditors had recommended that there should be greater Member involvement in the budget setting process and this working group would help to achieve this objective.

(b) Performance Dashboard Scrutiny Working Group

Similarly it was proposed that the Board could establish a small working group to review the measures dashboard. To date Members had received limited information about the dashboard, though it had become clear during a presentation on this subject earlier in the year that this would become an increasingly useful tool for the Council. The dashboard contained a vast amount of complex information. A Working Group meeting regularly in private might be in a better position than the Board to develop familiarity with the dashboard and to identify ways in which this could be used to support the scrutiny process. As with the Finance and Budget Scrutiny Working Group the outcomes of these meetings could be reported to the Board.

Again there was general consensus that a working group dedicated to reviewing the measures dashboard would be a useful addition to the scrutiny process. Members noted that a lot of the content of the dashboard appeared to be focused on service performance. There was the potential that the group could help to widen the scope of the dashboard by suggesting content that would focus more on issues which mattered to local residents. Once familiar with the dashboard Members of the working group might also identify key areas of service performance which might be considered suitable for further scrutiny, whether by the Board or by a Task Group. Members were also reminded that the monitoring and scrutiny of performance came within the remit of Overview and Scrutiny.

As with the budget process Members were advised that the Council's auditors had recommended that Members should be more greatly involved in managing service performance and a working group would help the Council to achieve this aim. The Board was also asked to note that the launch of this Working Group would coincide with the provision of access to the dashboard on Members' iPads which would make it easier for Members to access this tool more regularly.

(c) Member Champions on the Board

A further option that had been identified was the potential for members of the Board to be appointed as champions of particular issues. A Member Champion for Risk Management had been appointed to the Audit, Standards and Governance Committee at the beginning of the year and this role had worked well by enhancing member involvement in the Council's approach to managing risks. Member champions on the Board would have an opportunity to learn about particular subjects in detail which could enable them to gain expertise in those areas.

Members expressed some reservations about this suggestion and it was questioned how this would work in a meaningful fashion. There was general agreement that the concept of a scrutiny Member Champion required further consideration. The Board therefore agreed that this should be discussed further in the new municipal year.

(d) Training

A training session had been delivered to Members of the Overview and Scrutiny Board and other non-Cabinet Members in June 2015. Officers suggested that the content could be adapted to focus on particular areas of interest to ensure that it remained useful and interesting.

Members concurred that the training which had been delivered in 2015 had been very good, having provided both an introduction to the scrutiny process and an opportunity for Members to consider subjects that might be suitable for scrutiny during the year. Further consideration of the previous list of proposed subjects for scrutiny, in respect of the outcomes that had been achieved, was considered worthwhile. Members also suggested that future training should provide additional opportunities to discuss suitable subjects for scrutiny in 2016/17.

(e) Additional Points

Officers explained that the introduction of Working Groups could impact on the workload of both the Officers who supported the

scrutiny process as well as on the workload of Members. For this reason it was suggested that if the Working Groups were introduced only 1 Task Group or Short, Sharp Review should take place at any one time, rather than the 2 that were currently permitted, to ensure that workloads remained manageable. In 2015/16 there had only ever been 1 Task Group / short sharp review taking place at any point and therefore it was not anticipated that this would have a negative impact on the outcomes of the scrutiny process. The Board would, however, be able to review the impact on the scrutiny process at the end of 2016/17 and could make further amendments to working arrangements then if considered appropriate.

RESOLVED that

- (1) A Finance and Budget Scrutiny Working Group should be established, with effect from the start of the municipal year in 2016/17.
- (2) A Performance Dashboard Scrutiny Working Group should be established, with effect from the start of the municipal year in 2016/17.
- (3) The membership of both working groups should be determined by the Board at its first meeting in 2016/17.
- (4) Further scrutiny training should be provided to Members early in the new municipal year.
- (5) The concept of scrutiny Member Champions should be considered further by the Board in 2016/17.
- (6) Subject to recording the plans for the future of the scrutiny process, as detailed in the preamble above, the content of the Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report 2015/16 be approved and referred to Council for consideration.

129/15

BUDGET SCRUTINY - LESSONS LEARNT AND ARRANGEMENTS FOR FUTURE YEARS (PRESENTATION)

The Executive Director of Finance and Corporate Resources delivered a presentation on the subject of budget scrutiny arrangements for 2016/17 (attached at Appendix 1). Whilst presenting this report the following points were drawn to the attention of Members:

- Officers were keen to learn from and improve upon previous approaches to budget scrutiny at the Council.
- In recent years there had been difficulties obtaining financial information in a timely manner that would enable scrutiny Members to challenge the Cabinet effectively.
- There had also been limited public consultation about the Council's budget and it was possible that the board and / or Finance and Budget Scrutiny Working Group could help to address this situation.
- Assessing the extent to which expenditure was achieving value for money was challenging; outcomes could be difficult to quantify.

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Overview and Scrutiny Board
25th April 2016

- Officers were aiming in future to develop a budget covering a 4 year period rather than the traditional 3 years that had been covered in the past.
- There was the potential to improve in year monitoring of budget expenditure.
- In future Scrutiny Members might want to engage more with Heads of Service about expenditure. In recent years finance officers had tended to present budget reports, though did not have the level of familiarity with service delivery that Heads of Service had to explain any variances or to answer particular questions about service expenditure.
- Improvements could be made to the presentation of the Council's Statement of Accounts. The first 10 pages needed be written clearly and easy to comprehend.
- The Council's external auditors had made recommendations about the Council's approach to monitoring the budget and had suggested that this needed to become more robust.
- More detailed information could be provided in future to scrutiny Members about the budget, including a breakdown of the costs of service delivery.
- Budget data needed to be made available to Members in a more timely fashion during the budget scrutiny process. In the past Members had often received updates in the form of presentations at meetings which provided limited time to digest the information and to identify both problems as well as possible opportunities available to the Council.
- The Board was advised that many local authorities had bodies like the Finance and Budget Scrutiny Working Group and Officers welcomed the positive contribution that this body could make to the budget setting process.
- In future Officers were intending to provide details of expenditure and income for all cost centres per service. This would enable Members to identify patterns where applicable.
- Income levels would also be considered further in future and this would encompass not just fees and charges for Council services but also opportunities to obtain additional income from more creative delivery of services.
- Further information about the capital programme would be provided in future as this had become an important element of Council finances.
- Officers were hoping that the Government would provide more detail about Business Rate assumptions by the end of the year as this would also increasingly be a core element of local government funding.

Once the presentation had been delivered Members discussed the following:

- The use of black and red text in budget spreadsheets and the potential for the way this was presented to cause confusion.

Officers explained that the Council needed to comply with particular requirements on this subject in line with local government accounting principles.

- The potential for an additional column to be added to future budget spreadsheets reflecting variances in expenditure over 10 per cent.
- The time constraints within which any actions needed to be taken in order to set a balanced budget for 2017/18.
- The potential to achieve anticipated efficiency savings for 2016/17.
- The option to use balances to help achieve a balanced budget.
- The level of detail that would be required by the Government in local government efficiency plans by March 2017.

RESOLVED that

- (1) A copy of the presentation should be circulated for Members' consideration.
- (2) The report be noted.

130/15

**PREVENTING HOMELESSNESS IN BROMSGROVE TASK GROUP -
VERBAL UPDATE**

The Chairman of the Preventing Homelessness Task Group, Councillor C. J. Bloore, provided an update on the progress of the review. The Board was advised that the group had interviewed the Chief Executive of Bromsgrove District Housing Trust (BDHT) and Officers from the Council's Benefits team at consecutive meetings. The impact of the welfare changes at the local level and potential action that could be taken to address this had been discussed during these meetings.

The group had recently met to discuss the next steps in their review. It had been agreed that visits to external service providers would be helpful and the group was aiming to visit both St Basils and the Basement Project in May. Members were also hoping to interview Officers and Councillor C. B. Taylor about Planning Policy matters in June.

131/15

QUARTERLY RECOMMENDATION TRACKER

The Board considered the latest update on progress that had been made to implement recommendations which had been made through the scrutiny process. A number of issues were discussed in particular detail during consideration of this update:

(a) Evening and Weekend Car Parking Task Group

The group's recommendations had been added to the tracker in the amended form of wording that had been agreed by Cabinet. A copy of the background report referred to at Cabinet together with the economic priorities for Bromsgrove was requested to enable Members to appreciate the reasons why Cabinet had amended the group's first recommendation.

(b) Leisure Provision Task Group

The majority of the Leisure Provision Task Group's recommendations had been implemented and could be removed from the tracker. However, in respect of recommendation 4 Members noted that the negotiations with BAM remained ongoing. For this reason it was agreed that this recommendation should continue to feature on the tracker document.

(c) Youth Provision Task Group

The majority of the recommendations that had been proposed by the Youth Provision Task Group had also been implemented and could be removed from the tracker. The Chairman requested that the Board's thanks be reported to the former Chairman of the Task Group, Councillor J. M. L. A. Griffiths, who had attended a meeting of CALC to present the group's findings. One final recommendation from the group remained to be implemented; an investigation of services that could be provided to young people not in education, employment or training (NEETs). This would remain on the Board's Work Programme.

RESOLVED that, subject to the comments detailed in the preamble above, all implemented recommendations be removed from the tracker and the report be noted.

132/15

WORCESTERSHIRE HEALTH OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE - UPDATE

Councillor B. T. Cooper, the Council's representative on the Worcestershire Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee (HOSC), advised that there had been no meetings of the Committee since the last meeting of the Board.

The next meeting would take place on 27th April. The main items on the agenda for this meeting would be:

- An update on the position of Worcestershire Acute Hospitals.
- The quality of acute hospital services.

Discussions about the outcomes of the acute services review would remain on hold during the purdah period for local elections.

133/15

CABINET WORK PROGRAMME 1ST MAY TO 31ST AUGUST 2016

Officers advised that the following edition of the Cabinet Work Programme would be amended to include the correct title for the Preventing Homelessness Task Group. The group's findings would be reported for the consideration of Cabinet on 5th October 2016.

134/15

WORCESTERSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY WORK PROGRAMME

The Chairman noted that every member of the Board had been sent a link to a survey that had been launched by Worcestershire County Council in order to obtain suggestions for the content of their Overview and Scrutiny Work Programme. No Members of the Board had completed a copy of this survey and the deadline had passed. However, Members concurred that it would be useful for a county Scrutiny Committee to assume responsibility for holding the Health and Wellbeing Board to account. There was general consensus that the Worcestershire HOSC would be in a suitable position to undertake this role. Councillor Cooper, in his capacity as the Council's representative on the Worcestershire HOSC, was therefore asked to report this suggestion for the consideration of partners at the Committee's next meeting.

During consideration of Worcestershire County Council's Overview and Scrutiny Work Programme Members questioned progress with the Joint Increasing Physical Activities Task Group. The Board was advised that no date had been set for the group's final report to be presented for Members' consideration. However, Officers reported that the Redditch representative on the review had recently reported at a meeting of the Borough's Overview and Scrutiny Committee that a meeting had been held at the end of March to consider the group's draft recommendations and a date was being investigated for the presentation of their final report to the County Council's Cabinet. Members thanked officers for this update though expressed disappointment in the slow progress that had been made with this review.

135/15

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY BOARD WORK PROGRAMME

Officers advised that the deadline for the Preventing Homelessness Task Group would be recorded in the following edition of the Board's Work Programme as 19th September. The work programme would also be amended to reflect discussions at the following meeting of the Board about the membership of the 2 new working groups.

The meeting closed at 7.15 p.m.

Chairman

BUDGET SCRUTINY ARRANGEMENTS 2017/18

Purpose of Budget Scrutiny

- Provides challenge to decision makers
- Drives improvement in budget setting and transparency
- Enables voice and concerns of the public to be heard
- Principles:
 - Prioritisation
 - Value for Money
 - Review Budget Process
 - Affordability

Key Questions

- Budget Setting:
 - How has budget setting been decided? (income, grants, fixed/variable costs, savings ,use of reserves, impact on council tax, consultation, priorities)
 - What does in year monitoring show? (timing, information – financial and performance, understandability, exceptions, taking action (specific reviews))
 - How is the budget reflected in the financial statements
 - What are lessons learned, impact of future years

Process for Budget Scrutiny

- To consider whether Cabinet has produced an effective budget that meets the Council's Strategic Purposes
- To review each Strategic Purpose Budget to ensure that it is sufficiently detailed to convey a clear picture of proposed spending
- To ensure that the correct budget setting process has been followed in line with the Council's rules and procedures as set out in the Constitution.
- To meet S11 recommendations

Issues from 2016/17

- Lack of detailed information
- Lack of explanation of variances
- Timeliness of information
- Need for more operational discussions (Heads of Service)
- Limited information available on wider context eg – Business Rates / New Homes Bonus

INFORMATION FOR SCRUTINY

- Details of expenditure and income against strategic purposes
- Details of previous year spend / income to proposed budgets
- Details of additional pressures to budget
- Proposed Savings – explanations of how they are derived
- Income levels based on assumptions of demand / realistic
- Reserves Statements
- Review of balances

INFORMATION FOR SCRUTINY

- Capital Programme
 - Details of individual schemes
 - Details of financing costs
 - Spend to save projections
- External Funding
 - New Homes Bonus
 - Grants Received
 - Business Rate assumptions
- Budget report – format for Cabinet & Council

Detailed Financial Information

KEEP MY PLACE SAFE AND LOOKING GOOD

Department		2015/16 Actual £'000	2015/16 Variance £'000
Bereavement Services	Exp		
	Inc		
	Net		
Building Control	Exp		
	Inc		
	Net		
Cesspools/Sewers	Exp		
	Inc		
	Net		
Development Control	Exp		
	Inc		
	Net		
Environmental Health / Protection / Enforcement	Exp		
	Inc		
	Net		
Totals:			

Detailed Financial Information

KEEP MY PLACE SAFE AND LOOKING GOOD				
Department		2016/17 Budget £'000	2016/17 Projected Outturn £'000	2016/17 Projected Variance £'000
Bereavement Services	Exp			
	Inc			
	Net			
Building Control	Exp			
	Inc			
	Net			
Cesspools/Sewers	Exp			
	Inc			
	Net			
Development Control	Exp			
	Inc			
	Net			
Environmental Health / Protection	Exp			
	Inc			
	Net			
Totals:				

Detailed Financial Information

KEEP MY PLACE SAFE AND LOOKING GOOD				
Department		Proposed 2017/18 £'000	Proposed 2018/19 £'000	Proposed 2019/20 £'000
Bereavement Services	Exp			
	Inc			
	Net			
Building Control	Exp			
	Inc			
	Net			
Cesspools/Sewers	Exp			
	Inc			
	Net			
Development Control	Exp			
	Inc			
	Net			
Environmental Health / Protection	Exp			
	Inc			
	Net			
Totals:				

Capital Programme

- Capital Programme

Scheme	Funded by (borrowing / S10 6 etc)	Budget 2017/18 £'000	Budget 2018/19 £'000	Budget 2019/20 £'000

Dates for Scrutiny Meetings

- 27th June
 - projected outturn (pre audit)
 - Update on savings plans
- 8th August
 - 2015/16 outturn v 2016/17 budget proposed (in detail)
- 19th September
 - Update re efficiency plan
- 31st October
 - Fees and Charges pre scrutiny

Dates for Scrutiny Meetings

- 28th November
 - Draft Budget pressures
 - Draft Budget Savings
- 19th December
 - Capital Programme details
 - Financing projections
- 16th January
 - Final Proposals 2017/18 – 2020/21

Agenda Item 4

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BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL

MEETING OF THE AUDIT, STANDARDS AND GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE

11TH MAY 2016 AT 6.00 P.M.

PRESENT: Councillors R. D. Smith (Chairman), P.L. Thomas (Vice-Chairman), M. Glass, C.A. Hotham, K.J. May, P. M. McDonald, S. R. Peters, M. Thompson and S. A. Webb

Observers: Councillor G. Denaro

Officers: Mr. K. Dicks, Ms. J. Pickering, Ms. D. Poole and Ms. A. Scarce

65/15 **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND NAMED SUBSTITUTES**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors S. R. Colella and H. J. Jones with Councillor C. Hotham and K. May attending as substitutes respectively.

Apologies were also received from the Service Manager of the Worcestershire Internal Audit Shared Service and Parish Councillor J. Ellis.

66/15 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND WHIPPING ARRANGEMENTS**

There were no declarations of interest or any whipping arrangements.

67/15 **MINUTES**

The minutes of the meeting of the Audit, Standards and Governance Committee held on 24th March 2016 were submitted.

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting of the Audit, Standards and Governance Committee held on 24th March 2016 be approved as a correct record.

68/15 **VALEUR CONSULTING**

The Chairman reminded the Board that this report was being considered following a request from a number of Members. Members were being asked to note its content and recommend any actions it felt necessary.

The Head of Transformation introduced the report and in so doing highlighted to Members the costs associated with the work undertaken by Valeur Consulting since 2014 together with details of how this work had been funded and how the costs were split between both Redditch

and Bromsgrove Councils. Information in respect of the waiver which had been put in place in respect of this contract and Members were reminded of the Council's Contracts Procedure rules and explained the special circumstances which had been taken into account in this case, together with the details of the benefit in maintaining the continuity with the existing work. The Head of Transformation went on to provide the Board with details of the work that Valeur had been carrying out in, in particular the intervention work with the Management Team and 4th tier managers and particular key areas supported. Strategic support and guidance to the Management Team had also been provided by Valeur Consulting in a number of areas and in respect of the development of the Corporate Plan and the Council's key priorities.

Following presentation of the report Officers responded to a number of questions raised by Members including:

- The use of staffing costs to cover the cost of the work of a consultant and vacant posts in general remaining vacant for some time. Issues around vacant posts had also been raised by the external auditors. Officers confirmed this had been flagged as a weakness and would be addressed in 2016/17.
- The waiver process was discussed - Members were keen for this process to be reviewed and for involvement of the Portfolio Holder to be considered in order to ensure that this process was used appropriately.
- Members were concerned about the level of work being carried out with 4th tier managers as it was felt that the analysis of data referred to was something which managers at this level should be capable of carrying out. Officers provided more detail and explained that the use of the data was completely different to how it had been used in the past.
- The Corporate Dashboard and how if used properly could contribute towards the design of better more efficient services. Officers explained how the aim was to move away from traditional performance indicators.
- The importance of accountability and providing value for money for residents.
- Clarity in respect of the breakdown of costs between the two Councils and how this had been agreed – Members suggested that this process may need to be further reviewed to ensure that Bromsgrove received best value from the arrangement.
- The provision of a clear breakdown of savings made. Officers concurred that this should have been provided prior to the meeting and agreed to send it to Members. It was noted that any saving made would also be reaped in future years.
- The savings made in respect of the implementation of the Place Teams and the work carried out by the Environmental Services team during the transformational work which had occurred and the new ways of working.

Agenda Item 5

Audit, Standards and Governance Committee
11th May 2016

- The significant underspend at the year end and whether this was due to “over estimates” and the inclusion of vacant posts. Officers confirmed that this had been questioned and was being addressed with the relevant Heads of Service managers.
- Ongoing work that was being carried out in order to make much needed savings during the current difficult financial position.
- The Connecting Families work which was being carried out by Valeur Consulting – it was clarified that Redditch were funding the Valeur Consulting costs however, the project as a whole was funded by Worcestershire County Council.
- The reduction in the Bromsgrove “share” of the Valeur Consulting costs and how teams are encouraged to look at how they are able to make savings themselves.
- Members were keen to ensure that where significant savings have been made, that the knowledge of those teams be used in other areas rather than consultants being used.
- Background information in respect of Valeur Consulting – officers gave examples of other Councils that Valeur Consulting had carried out work for, this included Norfolk and Stoke and they had also worked for a number of police and health authorities. It was also confirmed that it was one person who owned/worked for the consultancy.
- Members questioned whether Valeur would be able to attend a future meeting of the Committee if required. Officers were happy for this request to be made if appropriate. It was also confirmed that whilst they had a Council email address, they did not use any Council owned equipment and did not have a designated desk in either Council.
- Details of the number of days which would be covered by the fee that had been charged. Officers estimated that between 32-34 days work had been carried and that the invoices from Valeur Consulting were available as they were a matter public record.
- Whether comparisons had been made with other similar companies when Valeur Consulting had first been engaged by the Council to ensure that value for money was being achieved. Officers confirmed that this had been done and others had proved to be much more expensive.
- Officers confirmed that the procurement rules were currently being reviewed and updated and revised guidelines would be available for Members consideration in due course.
- The number of waivers currently in place – it was agreed that this information should be reported to the Committee on a regular basis to ensure all were monitored.
- It was noted that the waiver was only in respect of Bromsgrove and Members discussed details of the contract between the Council and Valeur Consulting and whether appropriate insurances were in place and verified by officers. Members questioned whether the contract was with one particular Council or whether it was actually with both, as Valeur Consulting was carrying out work on behalf of both Councils.

Agenda Item 5

Audit, Standards and Governance Committee
11th May 2016

The Board went on to discuss a number of recommendations which had been highlighted during its debate and how and where these would be considered and hopefully accepted and implemented.

RECOMMENDED that

- a) the monitoring process in respect of the breakdown of costs between Bromsgrove District and Redditch Borough Councils be reviewed;
- b) the Portfolio Holder for Finance, together with relevant Officers, be included in the process of setting any future waivers;
- c) a report is received by the Audit, Standards and Governance Committee from officers and the Portfolio Holder for Finance in respect of any waivers that have been agreed;
- d) officers ensure that public and professional indemnity insurance is in place for both consultants and contractors;
- e) Virements in respect of staffing budgets are no longer used;
- f) the Council consider other methods of savings within the Council before using consultants; and
- g) the background papers and Minutes of the meeting of the Audit, Standards and Governance Committee from 11th May 2016 are passed to the External Auditors for information.

RESOLVED that the Valeur Consulting Report be noted.

The meeting closed at 7.27 p.m.

Chairman

AUDIT STANDARDS & GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE

11th MAY 2016

VALEUR CONSULTING

Relevant Portfolio Holder	Cllr. Geoff Denaro
Portfolio Holder Consulted	Yes
Relevant Head of Service	Deb Poole – Head of Transformation
Wards Affected	All Wards
Non-Key Decision	

1. SUMMARY OF PROPOSALS

To present the Committee with an update of the work and associated costs in relation to Valeur consulting.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

The Committee is asked to NOTE the update and recommend any actions necessary.

3. KEY ISSUES

Financial Implications

- 3.1 The costs associated with the work undertaken by Valeur Consulting since 2014 has been £139k across Bromsgrove and Redditch Councils. The allocated cost purely for the Bromsgrove related cost is £44k over the two years. There was a charge of £28k in 2014/15 and £16k for 2015/16.

The contract with Valeur Consulting is with Bromsgrove District Council and is supported by a waiver which was agreed in 2014 at an estimated £100k. Two vacant posts in the transformation team have been used to fund the costs over the last two years. The vacant posts are Project Support Officers on a salary of £30k. It was decided to keep these posts vacant in order to fund the specialist systems thinking support needed for the transformation of the organisation. Recruitment of an experienced systems thinker into a post on the establishment would be extremely difficult as these skills are in high demand and consequently command high salaries.

Legal Implications

- 3.2 In accordance with the Bromsgrove District Council Contracts Procedure Rules (Revised March 2008) tendering/quotation procedures may be waived when the work/services is of an urgent nature or other special circumstances as described below and may only be actioned on the written authority of the appropriate Head of

AUDIT STANDARDS & GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE

11th MAY 2016

Service for Contracts valued up to £49,999 or a Corporate Director for Contracts valued over £50,000. The waiver for Valeur was justified due to the work that had already commenced by the Public Services Academy in developing a systems thinking approach to service delivery. It was important to maintain the continuity of the experience in supporting this methodology of working.

- 3.3 There are a number of reasons that a tender procedure is not completed and are included within the Contract Rules. These include:
- where the supply is proposed under special arrangements negotiated by the Office Government Commerce in which event the said special arrangements must be complied with;
 - the timescale genuinely precludes competitive tendering. Failure to plan the work properly is not a justification for a single tender;
 - specialist expertise is required and is available from only one source;
 - the task is essential to complete a project, and arises as a consequence of a recently completed assignment and engaging different consultants for the new task would be inappropriate;
 - there is clear benefit to be gained from maintaining continuity with an earlier project. However, in such cases the benefits of such continuity must outweigh any potential financial advantage to be gained by competitive tendering;

- 3.4 In relation to Valeur Consulting there was benefit in maintaining the continuity with the existing work. The wider transformation programme was continuing in line with the systems thinking method to ensure complete alignment of the locality work to the existing organisational transformation. It is for this reason that Valeur Consulting was being used to support the delivery of the existing transformational work and would need to continue to do so in the locality for continuity and completeness. In addition the work was part of completing a project and engaging different consultants would be inappropriate.

Service/Operational Implications

- 3.5 In 2012 Bromsgrove joined the Reshaping Public Services Academy (along with a number of other public sector bodies – and hosted by Stoke Council) which provided resource to support the ongoing programs of transformation at the Councils. A number of specialist

AUDIT STANDARDS & GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE

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officers were part of the team that we drew on to support this work – this included Valeur Consulting. It was anticipated that the Academy would continue to grow and attract more partners to create a pool of system thinking practitioners that could be called on to offer support and guidance. Unfortunately the Academy was not as successful as expected and to enable the transformation work to continue at Bromsgrove. Valeur Consulting was retained to support the Council with a formal waiver approved to an estimated value of £100k. Using the specialist support officer ensured that the wider transformation program continued in line with systems thinking methods.

Over the two years Valeur Consulting has worked across the organisation in developing service redesign in Environmental Services (place teams), Customer Services and Financial Support and enabling services. Significant savings have been realised for the Council in the support of budget pressures whilst enhancing service delivery to our communities.

3.6 Intervention Work

Valeur Consulting has worked closely with the Management Team and 4th tier managers over the last two years to support the transformational changes to the way we deliver our services and to realise significant savings to support the financial pressures whilst enhancing service delivery to our community. The key areas supported have been;

- Place Teams within Environmental and Community Services;
- Financial Support with the Revenues and Benefits team;
- Providing guidance in working in the localities with BDHT and the Sunrise project.
- Working with the Planning team to ensure applications are dealt with by one officer; and
- Providing support to enabling services in mapping out the service delivery to make them more effective.

3.7 Management Team

Valeur Consulting has provided strategic support and guidance to the Management Team in our development towards being a systems thinking organisation including the creation of opportunities for wider public sector agency work to enhance services to our communities. Other work has included facilitating sessions for Managers and the leadership team in development areas we have identified. Support for the development of the Corporate Plan has been undertaken including a session on key priorities with the Cabinet.

AUDIT STANDARDS & GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE

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3.8 Connecting Families

Valeur Consulting involvement in 'Connecting Families' has been seen as the contribution to the project by Redditch Borough Council and has been charged on this basis. They have provided the lead on the scoping & check stage and has continued to support the team throughout the intervention as they move towards the redesign of their services. This cost has been met in full by Redditch Borough Council.

During 'scoping and check' stage, Valeur:

- Helped the team to understand the method for change;
- Helped the team to 'map the flow' process;
- Explained and supported the mapping of cases,
- Explained why learning and questioning is important;
- Helped them to establish some 'measures'
- Helped them to develop principles,
- Supported the proposed redesign, and
- Supported the development of a different culture and approach,
- Assisted in the identification of 'system conditions' and
- Challenged senior leaders to adopt the different approach and to change how they work.

3.9 'Connecting Families' is a cross agency initiative involving: Health Visitors, Your Ideas, Early Help Parenting, Police, school nurses, DWP, CAMHS, Housing locality, post 16 support, Early Help Transition, Social Workers, Mental Health, Early Help, Early Start, Housing Benefits, Home Start, Stronger Families to support families across the Borough (and ultimately across Worcestershire) in solving issues in a cross organisational way to provide a better service to residents and to save the public purse in the future.

Customer / Equalities and Diversity Implications

3.10 There are no implications arising out of this report.

4. RISK MANAGEMENT

Effective budget and internal control is part of the finance risk register and financial costs are monitored on a monthly basis to ensure overspends to budget are mitigated.

AUTHOR OF REPORT

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Tel: (01527) 881256

Cabinet

1st June 2016

Dolphin Centre Replacement – Financial Update

Relevant Portfolio Holder	Cllr Peter Whitaker Cllr Geoff Denaro
Portfolio Holder Consulted	Yes
Relevant Head of Service	John Godwin
Wards Affected	All
Ward Councillor Consulted	No

1. SUMMARY OF PROPOSALS

The report outlines the final contract sum proposed by the preferred building contractor for the replacement of the Dolphin Centre and the request for additional funding to support the increase in associated costs

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

2.1 The Cabinet is asked to RECOMMEND to the Council that:

2.1.1 That the Capital Programme for 2016/17-2017/18 be increased by £700k to £13.7m to progress the scheme.

And:

2.1.2 (a) That the funding of £700k is released from balances in 2016/17.

Or

2.1.2 (b) That the funding is secured through borrowing

3. KEY ISSUES

Background

3.1 As members will be aware in July 2014 the Council agreed to replace the ageing facilities at the Dolphin Centre with a new site to be built on School Drive.

In Jan 2016 following a successful funding application to Sport England members approved an increase of £1.5m in the overall capital budget available to provide additional facilities for local residents. The current Capital Programme is £13m for the entire replacement centre.

3.2 Over the past 5 months officers have been working with the preferred contractor as part of a 2 Stage tender process to get to a point where an agreed contract sum has been reached and the Council receives the contractors offer for the works.

Cabinet

1st June 2016

- 3.3 As reported to members in Jan 2016 initially work in this area progressed well no concerns had been expressed by the contractor in relation to the delivery of the project within the funding level approved.
- 3.4 Unfortunately in the later part of the 12 week 2 Stage process (around weeks 10 & 11) concerns began to emerge that the cost plan was becoming under pressure as a result of unforeseen additional costs emerging above those included within the key assumptions contained the 2014 report. In addition there has been a rapid increase in building costs as the market has now picked up over the past 6 months and there has been a change in initial approach taken by the main contractor to their internal costs and approach to risk.
- 3.5 Following the contractors assessment of these cost pressures an initial proposal was submitted at approximately £2.5m over the currently approved budget. These were immediately rejected as being unrealistic and not reflective of the costs associated with the scale or scope of the works or the market at that point.

The project management team has undertaken an in-depth review of the contractor's proposals including a full detailed investigation of over 50 work package prices submitted by the main contractors supply chain. This review highlighted several areas of concerns that required further discussion both around the packages and the approaches that were being taken by the proposed contractor.

- 3.6 Following the initial overview, officers, the Design/Project Management team and Commercial Teams have undertaken a number of meetings and cost review exercises with the contractor, which although very challenging at times have been positive and resulted in a contract sum offer on the 4th May 2016 of £10.3m. This is a £619k additional cost to the initial estimate. When added to other costs relating to the development (e.g. purchase of land, contingency) the revised total cost to the Council of the replacement centre would be £13.6.
- 3.7 In addition this would result in the available contingency held by BDC for the project being reduced to 1.5% or £154k. This amount is considered to be insufficient and officers would propose that this is increased to £235k (2.27%) to enable a more realistic contingency to support the project.

Taking into account the impact of the negotiated additional costs the revised capital project funding required to enable the replacement centre to be developed is £13.7m.

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- 3.8 As noted at 3.4 there have been a number of additional cost pressures that were not anticipated in July 2014 and were shown as key assumptions and/or project risk. These are detailed below:

Unusual Ground Conditions: The project and cost plans had assumed throughout the feasibility study period that the ground conditions would be suitable to develop a new build leisure centre with limited remedial costs. However, following the removal of trees, demolition of Blackmore House, detailed site surveys and inspections, the groundwork packages have highlighted additional costs associated with the remediation/preparation of the site for construction works.

The overall site levels have proved to be challenging to work with due to the gradient and makeup of the materials on site. This has resulted in the design of the car park being split across two levels as opposed to a single level flat car park to provide a safe, DDA and building regulation compliant layout. This has unfortunately increased the amount and scope of the foundation solution and retaining walls required and a revised cut and fill model is needed to make up the land once the construction phases are progressed.

An option was considered for utilising the future development land to reduce the overall impact of the levels by changing the car park layout and design. However, it was discovered that the loss of future development land would heavily impact the business model as it would reduce the land value that would be received by the Council.

Retaining Wall Costs £'000	Cut & Fill Costs £'000
251	195

Utility Supplies: Within the original cost plan prepared in July 2014 it was assumed that existing utility supplies and services were sufficient and there would be no large scale costs associated with the site connections.

As the design progressed and the power requirements became clearer we were notified by Western Power that there would be a need for a new substation for the centre as the current substation installed approximately 15 years ago did not have sufficient capacity left within it following recent developments in the area. Furthermore we were informed that this substation would need to be placed a minimum of 9.5meters away from building based on recently revised guidelines which again increases costs.

Severn Trent water have advised that the existing mains supply will require upgrading to meet the needs of the centre. This is due to the original building supply being fed from Well Lane at the rear of the site

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which would no longer be practical given the site of the new car park. Members should be aware that the main supply upgrade in the highway is to be paid for by Severn Trent, with BDC's additional cost being incurred to connect to the new main.

Western Power Cost £'000	Severn Trent Costs £'000
75	3

Inflation - During the inception of the project an inflation allowance was allocated of 7.1% for the period up to midpoint of construction. The actual impact of inflation is now circa 9.8% based on the upturn in the construction sector in general. This is as a result of the increased cost of materials together with the large number of Swimming Pools and Leisure Centres that are being replaced across the Country. Many of this were initially built in the 1960's and 1970's using concrete construction method, this has led to the supply chain being able to be much more assertive in the market place and charging premium rates for specialist services.

Description	Budget £'000	Actual £'000	Difference £'000
Inflation Allowance	511 (7.1%)	794(9.8%)	283

Total Excluded Costs

Area	Cost £'000
Retaining Wall	251
Revised Cut/Fill	195
New Substation	75
Water Supply	3
Inflation Impact	283
Total	807
Overhead and Profit @ 3.5%	28
Design & Build Contingency @ 2.5%	20
Total	855

Members will note that the above costs are higher than the additional funding request at £700K, this is due to the additional saving that have been generated on other works package and thus the full amount of £855,000 is not required to progress the scheme.

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- 3.9 As members will be aware this project is part funded through a Sport England Strategic Facilities grant, as such the team working with us have been part of this process and have played a full role in the work that has been undertaken. We can confirm to elected members that the costs involved in this project are accepted by Sport England and the Project Team in that they reflect the current market position with regard to the construction of sports and leisure facilities.

The square meter rates we have received reflect the recent changes in the market place and the large number of Sports & Leisure Centre currently under construction or about to commence.

It is understood that Sport England is currently involved in 50 such projects across the country. MACE, our project managers, are working on over 5 such schemes at present and we have been informed that between the middle of May and June 16 at least 4 new sites will be opening.

All of these factors contribute to the increased inflation costs in this sector and the need for additional funding.

The following table shows the changes in square meter rates over the period of this project:

Date	Square Meter Rate for Wet & Dry Facility – £	Difference – £
July 2014 – Project go ahead & assumed rate	2,420	150
April 2016 – Contract Submission	2,570	230
May 16 – Current assumed rate for new projects	2,800	N/a

- 3.10 In order to secure the current offer from the contractors and avoid any additional inflation costs that are predicted with a particular focus on steel prices, the Council need to be a positon to sign the construction contracts as a matter of urgency, as package costs will only be held for a limited period.

Therefore, this report has been brought back to members for their urgent attention as soon as possible in order to confirm the contractors offer before it is subject to further inflationary pressure.

Although the increased cost of the replacement centre is frustrating, these issues have been very robustly challenged by the project team and responded to by the main contractor in a positive manner.

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In addition following the in depth review of the proposed costs and an exercise to review the potential cost that the contractor who came second at stage 1 of the procurement exercise could offer, we are comfortable that the offer provided is robust and offers good value for money to BDC and Sport England and that they should remain as the preferred contractor.

- 3.11 With regard to the overall programme the project was scheduled completion in August 2017 with an indicative opening in September 2017. Given we have suffered from a delay currently of 8 weeks due to the contract fee reviews and then need to update members on this matter, the programme will be reviewed again subject to member agreement to progress with an indicative opening of the new site being Autumn 2017.

Financial Implications

- 3.12 As noted previously in this report and as members will be aware the budget set for the replacement of the Dolphin Centre was £11.5million from BDC and £1.5million form a Sport England grant to give a total project cost of £13 million.
- 3.13 The Council's £11.5 million funding was made up as follows:

Area	£'000
Prudential Borrowing	9,600
Land Receipt	1,800
Balances	100
Total	11,500

- 3.14 As covered in Section 3.7 the contractor's price submission and the need to increase the projects contingency fund means that there is a need for an additional £700,000 to be made available for this project to progress.
- 3.15 Following a review of the facility mix agreed within the January 2016 Cabinet Report and the submission of the contractors financial proposal, officers requested that the prudential borrowing position be revisited as part of a final review of the business case. The resulting income levels now anticipated from the larger site to be provided have increased the level of prudential borrowing based on costs of approximately £436k for the provision of the Dolphin Centre.

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Final Business Case – May 2016	£'000
10 year forecast (Average net revenue)	92
Improvement compared to current revenue position	528
Prudential borrowing potential at May 2016 (based increased facility mix)	10,565
Original borrowing approved at July 2014 (based reduced facility mix)	9,536
Difference to original assumed borrowing	1,029

- 3.16 Based on this revised level of prudential borrowing there would be no detrimental impact on the Medium Term Financial Plan should the income levels be achieved as expected.
- 3.17 The other opportunity to fund the level of addition cost would be through releasing general fund balances. The balances position is currently £4m and, taking into account the approved draw down as part of the current 3 year financial plan, further reduction of £700k would leave approximately £2m. This would be subject to any additional draw down or increase as a result of the 2015/16 financial outturn.
- 3.18 Members should also be aware that officers will also continue to work with the design team and main contractors prior to signing a contract (should the budget increase be agreed by members) with a view to transferring any additional saving that can be achieved into the contingency fund in order to ensure no further changes will be required to the overall cost plan.

At the end of the project any contingency that was not required for the project will be returned to balances.

- 3.19 Current costs associated with bringing this forward to this stage excluding land purchase costs stand at £1,509 million. As covered in the risk section of the July 14 Committee Report, should the Council not progress with the project past this point, these costs would need to be funded from balances and therefore there would be additional challenges to the Council to ensure the financial plan of the Council is balanced in the longer term.

Legal Implications

- 3.20 There are no direct legal implications contained within this report over and above those already covered in the Committee Reports of July 2014 and January 2016.

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Service / Operational Implications

- 3.21 There are no direct service/operational implications contained within this report. The contractors offer is based up an element of Value Management being undertaken to deliver the contract sum. However this will not change the scope of the project and/or have a negative impact on the quality of services to be provided.
- 3.22 Members should be aware that should they not wish to agree to the additional funding associated with this project that the procurement of the Project and Design Team allows for BDC to terminate the agreements at this stage in such circumstances on a cost incurred up to this point basis.

Customer / Equalities and Diversity Implications

- 3.23 There are no direct Customer, Equality or Diversity Implications contained within this report. However the examples provided in the initial report have all been designed into the final layouts to ensure the services on site are as diverse and user friendly as possible.

4. RISK MANAGEMENT

There are no direct risks associated with this report over and above those contained within the initial information provided to members. Should the construction phase progress a construction risk register will be created to supersede the design risk register that is currently in use.

5. APPENDICES

None

6. BACKGROUND PAPERS

Dolphin Centre Replacement Report – 2nd July 2014
Dolphin Centre Replacement Report – 6th Jan 2016

AUTHOR OF REPORT

Name: John Godwin
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Tel: 01527 881742

NEW HOMES BONUS COMMUNITY GRANTS SCHEME

Relevant Portfolio Holder	Geoff Denaro
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 enable Members to consider a revised New Homes Bonus (NHB) Community Grants Scheme to enable community groups to apply for funding from the New Homes Bonus grant received by the Council.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

2.1 Cabinet are to recommend;

2.1.1 The approval of the revised New Homes Bonus Community Grants Scheme as attached at Appendix 1;

2.1.2 The approval of 25% of the additional New Homes Bonus grant received in 2016/17 to be used to calculate the amount of £101k to be allocated to the scheme; and

2.1.3 An additional amount of £23,840 to be added to the total allocation in respect of funds carried forward from the previous year's scheme.

3. KEY ISSUES

Financial Implications

3.1 As Members are aware the decision on the scheme supporting the New Homes Bonus allocation for 2016/17 was deferred to enable a review of the funding position for the Council within the Medium Term Financial Plan. The allocation of £101k was agreed at Council in February 2016 and the 2016/17 budget was approved to include this level of funding. There was no requirement to draw down from balances to support the balanced budget for 2016/17.

3.2 Officers have reviewed the financial position for 2017/18 and the deficit of £626k as reported to the Council meeting in February 2016 as projected within the Medium Term Financial Plan. This shortfall is currently being addressed by the management team with the aim to identify savings to bridge the gap through costing the demands on the

organisation and reducing waste to improve efficiency and drive down costs. As part of the redeveloped Leisure Centre the net cost to the Council is estimated to reduce by approximately £200k. This will reduce the projected deficit to £426k. Should no further savings be identified, the current level of balances could be released to meet any remaining shortfall. This would lead to the Council having a balanced budget for both 2016/17 and 2017/18, including £101k for New Homes Bonus schemes in 2016/17 and £79k in 2017/18. The current projected balances figure as projected to 2001819 is £2.7m which is £1m more than the recommended balance and therefore funds are available without impacting on the viability of the balances funds. It is uncertain as to the impact of the localisation of Business Rates and the potential impact on the medium term plan until the guidance and legislation are released later this year. Therefore officers will continue to work to address the current shortfall projected for 2018/19.

- 3.3 The New Homes Bonus Scheme was introduced by Government April 2011. The bonus was designed to ensure that the economic benefits of housing growth are returned to the councils where that growth takes place. The NHB is a grant paid by central government to local councils for increasing the number of homes in their area and their use. In two tier areas, like Worcestershire, the bonus is shared between the district council and county council (80% District: 20% County). At present NHB is not ring-fenced and councils can decide how they use the New Homes Bonus, however, there is an expectation that Councils will consult communities about how we will spend the money. The scheme is intended to be permanent however as with all financial funding this can change in the future.
- 3.3 As part of the Financial Settlement Announcement in December 2016 the Government proposed a number of changes to the NHB Scheme which would reduce the allocation granted to Councils. The proposals are included in a consultation document that closes in mid-March and the Council will be formulating a comprehensive response in relation to the significant reductions in funding that are proposed and the impact these will have on the Council over the next few years.
- 3.4 The proposals to change the NHB Scheme include changing the payments from 6 to 4 years, reduce NHB where there is no local plan, where homes have been allowed on appeal or where the growth would have occurred anyway. It is worth noting that the payment of £1.7m may reduce by the following over the next 4 years:

£000's	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	Total
Bromsgrove	542	531	523	663	2,259

- 3.5 Following the petition to Council in April 2014 in relation to the use of NHB, Members agreed that a scheme for allocating funds to communities affected by growth would be available for 2015/16. A fund of £87k was allocated based on 25% of new grant received during the year and a number of groups secured £63k of funding through this framework. Details of those grants received are set out below:

Installation of 5 Painted Steel Benches	Cofton Hackett Parish Council	£2,000
New chairs	Cofton Village Hall	£2,000
4 New Planters	Cofton Hackett Parish Council	£1,100
New Junior Cricket Ground	Bromsgrove Cricket Club	£1,500
Replacement Bus Shelter	Catshill & North Marlbrook Parish Council	£3,500
Improvements/Replacement/Repairs to Scout Hut	6 th Bromsgrove Scouts	£3,000
Catshill Village Meadow Multi Use Facility	North West Ward Association	£2,560
Improvements to Toilet Facilities	Belbroughton Recreation Centre	£2,500
Artificial Wicket	Belbroughton Cricket Club	£2,500

Club House Enhancement	Hagley Cricket Club	£10,000
Improvements to Club Facilities (Phase 1)	Hagley Lawn Tennis Club	£15,000
Alterations to new venue for youth activities.	Alvechurch Communities Together	£12,500
Refurbishment of Two Rooms to Provide Further Patient Access	Hollyoaks Medical Centre	£5,000

- 3.6 It was agreed that the underspend of £24k would be carried forward to increase the available funding for 2016/17. Using the NHB for 2016/17

of £101k this would result in a total available funding of £124k for bids to be considered by the NHB Panel.

- 3.7 As part of the review of the scheme officers have assessed how other Councils allocate funding and it is proposed that funding is allocated on the basis of the homes that have been completed in a particular area during 2014/15, as this is the most recent complete year of data being available. It is appreciated that this would not take into account homes that have been brought back into use nor would it reduce allocations for empty/ void properties. It is considered that this allocation basis, as used by other Councils, would be the fairest way to ensure a consistent framework for all communities who have been affected by growth.
- 3.8 Appendix 2 details the breakdown from the planning system of properties and it is proposed that this is used for the allocations of the £124k during 2016/17. The bidding process remains similar to 2015/16 in that there are different levels of form required to be completed by the groups for consideration.
- 3.9 Appendix 1 reflects the revised policy to include allocation of funds on the basis of growth in an area for Members' consideration.
- 3.10 Should the new allocation policy be approved the bidding process will commence in the new financial year.
- 3.11 Members will be kept updated as to any changes in funding for NHB following the consultation feedback.

Service / Operational Implications

- 3.12 The allocation of funding will support the provision of projects within local communities and do not impact on the operational services provided by the Council.

Customer / Equalities and Diversity Implications

- 3.13 The scheme will support all communities that are affected by growth.

4. RISK MANAGEMENT

- 4.1 An annual scheme based on the additional funding received from NHB for each financial year will mitigate the impact on the Medium Term Financial Plan and ensure that should NHB be revised in the future there is no future commitment from the Council.

5. APPENDICES

Appendix 1 – Revised Draft NHB Community Grants Scheme
Appendix 2 – Allocation table of funds by Wards.

CABINET

1st June 2016

AUTHOR OF REPORT

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BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL

New Homes Bonus Community Grants Scheme 2016/17 Explanatory Notes



Bromsgrove
District Council
www.bromsgrove.gov.uk

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9. Contacts and where to find more information.
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1. Introduction - Where does the New Home Bonus come from?

The New Homes Bonus is paid annually by the government as an incentive to communities and councils to welcome new housing. At present, for a period of six years following the year the house was built, the council receives a grant that is payable on those new homes plus any homes that were empty and have been brought into use. As part of the announcement on the Financial Settlement 2016/17-2019/20, the Government has confirmed that there will be changes to the New Homes Bonus Scheme which will reduce the available funding for future years. There is a commitment to retain the funding for 2016/17 as originally anticipated but a number of changes are included in a consultation document that is to be responded to by mid-March 2016. This includes reducing the scheme payments from 6 to 4 years, withdrawing homes that are built following an appeal and setting a baseline for growth that Councils will have to exceed before funding is granted. All of the changes will have a significant impact on Bromsgrove Council and therefore any scheme for allocation will have to be closely monitored to address the impact of change in funding streams.

At present, the New Homes Bonus is announced alongside our annual financial settlement. In two tier areas, like Worcestershire, the bonus is shared between the District Council and the county council (80% / 20%). The District Council therefore receives 80% of the total New Homes Bonus. This may also change as part of the final scheme following consultation.

At present, the grant is not ring fenced and therefore the Council is free to decide how to use the grant. There has been encouragement from Central Government for the funding to be utilised within communities however this does not form any legislative requirement.

For the financial year 2016/17 the Council has once again decided to make part of the New Homes Bonus available for a New Homes Bonus Community Grants Scheme.

Bromsgrove District Council has agreed that the allocation available for the scheme is to be £101,000 (25% to be based on the District Council grant which will be received in 2016/17 which is attributed solely to the increase in funding from that received in 2015/16). No allocation will be made from the New Homes Bonus that is being paid for previous years. However, £23,840 remains unallocated from the 2015/16 scheme and as agreed, will be added to the 2016/17 allocation, giving a total of £124,840.

Funding this year has been allocated to each Ward (see appendix A) and that allocation has been calculated as follows:

£124,840 divided by the total number of new houses completed in 2014/15, 228 giving a figure of £547.54 (rounded up to £548) per house. The number of new

houses completed in each Ward was then multiplied by that figure to give an allocation per Ward. The 2014/15 completed houses has been used as the basis due to the fact that this is the most recent full year of information. It is appreciated that this does not take into account properties that were empty and have been brought back into use or show a reduction for properties that are now empty.

This Scheme will run for 12 months and be reviewed as part of the budget process for the financial year 2017/18.

2. Who Can Apply for a Grant?

The funding is available for communities that have been affected by growth. These are detailed in Appendix 1 to these guidance notes together with the amount allocated to each Ward.

The New Homes Bonus Community Grants Scheme is intended for not-for-profit groups, such as voluntary organisations, residents' groups, community groups and associations including Parish Councils within those areas affected. Organisations outside the District may also apply where they are delivering projects/activities that benefit the District.

Grants will not be paid to individuals.

You will need to provide full details of your organisation when completing the application form. This form will also need to be signed by your local Ward Councillor to show that you have his/her support for your project.

3. What are the Criteria for Awarding a Grant?

Projects should be substantial and sustainable and provide a legacy for the areas in which they are located whilst also being in line with the Council's strategic purposes (detailed at section 4 of these explanatory notes). The key element of these criteria is ensuring that funded projects complement the Council's long term strategic priorities.

Each organisation may bid for the maximum allocation for its particular Ward (as per Appendix A). Applications in excess of £3.5k will need to provide a more detailed application and will need to provide supporting documentation including a business plan. Councillors will not usually consider more than one application from the same organisation within the 12 month period unless they are clearly for separate projects.

Priority will be given to applications according to the following criteria:

- Meet at least one of the Council's strategic purposes (see section 4 for full details.)
- The impact of growth on the relevant area
- Proposals demonstrate the basis of need or demand as well as the benefits
- Projects must be sustainable.
- All applicants agree to acknowledge the Council as a funder of the project.
- All funded projects keep full records of their activities and how the grant has been spent
- Proposals should outline how they will address the impact (actual and anticipated) of growth.
- The names of other organisations that have been approached for funding.
- The total cost and timescales of the project.
- The communities that will be served by the project.
- Support from the Ward Councillor

4. Bromsgrove District Council's Strategic Purposes

Our Strategic Purposes for Bromsgrove

- Help me to live my life independently*
- Help me to be financially independent*
- Keep my place safe & looking good*
- Help me find somewhere to live in my locality*
- Provide good things for me to see, do & visit*
- Help me run a successful business*

Support services enable us to deliver our purposes

For more information view the Council Plan at:
<http://www.bromsgrove.gov.uk/cms/council-and-democracy/council-plan.aspx>

 **Bromsgrove District Council**
www.bromsgrove.gov.uk

5. Who Determines Grant Applications?

Officers of the Council will assess applications to ensure they satisfy the criteria for eligibility, whether any further information is required and whether costs are realistic relative to the proposals and the funds available.

Applications which are clearly ineligible or inappropriate may be rejected with the agreement of the Chairman of the New Homes Bonus Community Grants Panel. Otherwise officers will prepare a report for the Panel, summarising each bid and making a recommendation.

The New Homes Bonus Community Grants Panel, comprising of Councillors (the Portfolio Holder for Finance and Resources together with a representative from each political group) will meet in July. They are supported by officers and the meeting will be held in public.

Applicants will be invited to attend the meeting and be given the opportunity to make a short presentation to the Members.

The New Homes Bonus Community Grants Panel will then make a recommendation to the Council's Cabinet. Any interested party can make representations in writing, which will be reported to Cabinet. The Cabinet meetings are also open to the general public.

A full timetable is detailed at section 7 of these explanatory notes and sets out the exact dates of when the invitation for applicants will be opened and the closing date for applications, together with details of when the New Homes Bonus Community Grants Panel recommendations will be considered by Cabinet. Following approval of those recommendations the successful applicants will be contacted and provided with details of when the monies from successful bids will be paid.

6. How Grants are Paid and any Conditions attached to them.

A funding agreement will be signed and will include standard conditions, for example:

- Timescales for the project and a schedule of funding payments
- That the contribution made by the NHB Grants Scheme must be clearly identified to the local community.

Other conditions of funding may be included, depending on the nature of each project. All projects must be completed by the end of the financial year 2016/17 unless otherwise agreed by the New Homes Bonus Community Grants Panel.

If part-funding is agreed proof must be given as to where the other money is coming from.

A payment schedule will be agreed as part of the Funding Agreement for each successful application. Dependent upon the amount of the grant this could be phased to meet the forecast spend of the project or a one off payment for a small project.

Monitoring requirements will be dependent on the size and scale of the project and will be agreed for each individual project as part of the conditions of the funding. Any phased payments would be released subject to satisfactory monitoring/progress.

If the proposed project fails any funding already paid and not utilised must be returned, it cannot be transferred to another project.

7. What Happens if a Bid is not successful?

If a bid is not successful you will be advised and given the reasons. In exceptional circumstances the Panel may request some more information and offer to reconsider the bid at a future meeting.

There is no appeals process, however if you are refused a grant you can still apply for future/alternative projects providing they meet the Council's criteria.

8. The Grant Application Process Timetable

Date Applications Open	Date Applications Close
9.00 a.m. Monday 20th June 2016	5.00 p.m. Friday 29th July 2016

Date of New Homes Bonus Grants Panel Meeting	Date of Cabinet Meeting
4.00 p.m. on Tuesday 16th August and (if required) 4.00 p.m. on Wednesday 17th August 2016	6.00 p.m. Wednesday 7th September 2016.

9. Contacts and Where to find more information

New Homes Bonus Community Grants Panel Members

Councillor Representative from each political group
Portfolio Holder for Finance and Resources

Supporting Officers

Jayne Pickering – Executive Director, Finance and Resources
Amanda Scarce – Democratic Services Officer

10. Documentation

Application Form - Small grants up to £3.5k
Application Form - Large grants over £3.5k and no more than £35k
FAQs
Timeline

Ward Name	Dwelling Capacity of site	Total Completions up to 31st March 2015	Completed during 2014/15	Amount of NHB Grant per Ward (£548 x Completed during 2014/15)	Under Construction during 2014/15
Alvechurch South Ward	8	3	3	1,644.00	4
Alvechurch Village Ward	1	1	1	548.00	0
Aston Fields Ward	6	0	0	0.00	6
Avoncroft Ward	37	13	13	7,124.00	24
Barnt Green and Hopwood Ward	2	2	2	1,096.00	0
Belbroughton and Romsley Ward	39	20	10	5,480.00	18
Bromsgrove Central Ward	2	2	2	1,096.00	0
Catshill North Ward	2	2	2	1,096.00	0
Catshill South Ward	84	40	27	14,796.00	43
Cofton Ward	3	2	2	1,096.00	1
Drakes Cross Ward	2	0	0	0.00	1
Hagley East Ward	248	26	26	14,248.00	73
Hagley West Ward	14	10	10	5,480.00	4
Hollywood Ward	1	1	1	548.00	0
Lickey Hills Ward	9	5	5	2,740.00	3
Marlbrook Ward	1	0	0	0.00	1
Norton Ward	6	6	6	3,288.00	0
Perryfields Ward	30	0	0	0.00	30
Rock Hill Ward	4	4	4	2,192.00	0
Rubery North Ward	4	4	4	2,192.00	0
Rubery South Ward	20	4	4	2,192.00	16
Sanders Park Ward	23	17	17	9,316.00	6
Sidemoor Ward	21	7	7	3,836.00	14
Slideslow Ward	25	18	18	9,864.00	7
Tardebigge Ward	187	72	64	35,072.00	91
TOTAL:	779	259	228	124,944.00	342

$\pounds 101,000 + \text{b/f } \pounds 23,840 = \pounds 124,840 \text{ divided by } 228 = \pounds 547.54 \text{ (}\pounds 548\text{)}$

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APPOINTMENTS TO OUTSIDE BODIES

Relevant Portfolio Holder	Cllr Denaro
Portfolio Holder Consulted	Yes
Relevant Head of Service	Claire Felton, Head of Legal, Equalities and Democratic Services
Ward(s) Affected	All
Ward Councillor(s) Consulted	N/A
Key Decision / Non-Key Decision	Non-key

1. SUMMARY OF PROPOSALS

- 1.1 The Cabinet makes appointments and nominations to a number of Outside Bodies each year; some of these are for executive functions and these are made by the cabinet. This report sets out the details of the relevant appointments.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that appointments are made to the bodies listed in the appendix to the report.

3. KEY ISSUES

Financial Implications

- 3.1 There are no financial implications arising directly from this report.

Legal Implications

- 3.2 No specific legislation governs the appointment or nomination of members to outside bodies. Depending on the nature of the relationship the Council has with the organisation, the legal status of the organisation, its corporate, charity or other status and its constitution, there are differing legal implications for the members sitting on these bodies.
- 3.3 The Local Authorities (Indemnities for Members and Officers) Order 2004 governs the Council's ability to indemnify members sitting on outside bodies.

Service / Operational Implications

- 3.4 A number of bodies ask the authority to make appointments to them for terms of office which vary from one year upwards.
- 3.5 The Council's constitution sets out that appointments to appropriate outside bodies may be made at Cabinet. A number of appointments, usually to national or regional bodies and carrying out an executive function, are made by office. In

most cases the portfolio holder for the function carried out by the outside body is the most appropriate appointment.

Customer / Equalities and Diversity Implications

3.6 There are no specific customer or equalities implications arising from this report.

4. RISK MANAGEMENT

4.1 There would be risks arising if the Council failed to make appointments to the Outside Bodies listed in this report; the nature of the risk would vary depending on the type of body in question. The Council needs to participate in certain Outside Bodies to ensure that existing governance arrangements can be complied with. On other bodies the risk would be less severe but non-participation would detract from the Councils ability to shape and influence policies and activities which affect the residents of Bromsgrove.

5. APPENDICES

Appendix 1 - list of appointments to outside bodies - cabinet

6. BACKGROUND PAPERS

Terms of reference and governing documents of organisations are held by Democratic services

7. KEY

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Outside Bodies By Office (Cabinet appointments)

Organisation	Number of representatives and length of term	Representation 2015-16	Nominations 2016-17
Age UK Bromsgrove, Redditch and Wyre Forest branches have recently combined to create a new charity. Details of nominations are awaited and we are asked not to appoint to the charity in the meantime.	Portfolio holder with responsibility for older people	Councillor Sherrey	None to be made; await clarification from Age UK
Greater Birmingham and Solihull Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP)	One Leader and one Substitute nominated from 3 North Worcestershire Councils	Cllr J-P Campion, Wyre Forest DC Sub: Cllr B Hartnett, Redditch BC	Councillor G Chance, Redditch BC Sub: Cllr T Onslow, Wyre Forest DC
Greater Birmingham and Solihull LEP Supervisory Board	Leader by office Substitute – Deputy Leader Check each year	Councillor M Sherrey Substitute Councillor Taylor	Cllr M Sherrey Sub: Cllr K Taylor
Greater Birmingham and Solihull LEP Area EU Structural and Investment Fund (ESIF) Committee	One representative and one substitute to represent the 3 North Worcestershire Districts	Cllr J Fisher, Redditch BC Sub: Dean Piper, North Worcs Economic Devt	Cllr J Fisher, Redditch BC Sub: Dean Piper, North Worcs Economic Development
Bromsgrove Partnership (Local Strategic Partnership)	Leader (Portfolio holder) Substitute – Deputy Leader	Councillor Sherrey Councillor Taylor	Councillor Sherrey Councillor Taylor

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Cabinet 1st June 2016

Organisation	Number of representatives and length of term	Representation 2015-16	Nominations 2016-17
District Councils Network	Leader Substitute – Deputy Leader	Councillor Sherrey Councillor Taylor	Councillor Sherrey Councillor Taylor
Improvement and Efficiency Social Enterprise	Leader	Councillor Sherrey	Councillor Sherrey
Local Government Association General Assembly	Leader Substitute – Deputy Leader	Councillor Sherrey Councillor Taylor	Councillor Sherrey Councillor Taylor
North Worcestershire Community Safety Partnership	Cabinet member	Councillor Sherrey	Councillor May
PATROL (Parking And Traffic Regulations Outside London) Adjudication Joint Committee	Portfolio Holder for Environmental Services Substitute:	Councillor Whittaker Sub:	Councillor Laight Sub:
West Midlands Employers (previously West Midlands Councils)	Portfolio Holder for Human Resources	Councillor Denaro Sub: Councillor Laight	Councillor Denaro Sub: -
Shared Services Members Board (by office and 2 further representatives appointed at Council)	Leader Deputy Leader	Councillor Sherrey Councillor Taylor	Councillor Sherrey Councillor Taylor
Worcestershire Health and Wellbeing Board	1 rep for North Worcestershire and 1 substitute	Cllr M Sherrey Sub: Cllr P Witherspoon, Redditch BC	Cllr Sherrey Sub: Cllr P Witherspoon, Redditch BC

Agenda Item 8

Cabinet 1st June 2016

Organisation	Number of representatives and length of term	Representation 2015-16	Nominations 2016-17
Worcestershire Intermediate Body to Deliver European Structural Investment Funds (ESIF)	One representative and one substitute to represent the 3 North Worcestershire Districts	Cllr J Fisher (Redditch BC) Sub: Dean Piper, (NWEDR)	Cllr J Fisher (Redditch BC) Sub: Dean Piper, (NWEDR)
Worcestershire Local Enterprise Partnership	One representative on behalf of the 3 North Worcestershire Councils – required by LEP constitution	Cllr M Sherrey Sub: Leader from Wyre Forest or Redditch	Cllr Sherrey Sub: TBC from Redditch or Wyre Forest
Worcestershire Local Strategic Partnership	Leader Nominated substitute of the Deputy Leader	Councillor Sherrey Councillor Taylor	Councillor Sherrey Councillor Taylor
Worcestershire Local Transport Board	Two representatives and one substitute from the North Worcestershire authorities	Cllr R Laight Sub: Cllr G Chance, Redditch BC	Cllr G Chance, Redditch BC Cllr T Onslow, Wyre Forest DC Substitute: Councillor R Laight

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