



BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL

MEETING OF THE CABINET

WEDNESDAY 4TH OCTOBER 2017 AT 6.00 P.M.

PARKSIDE SUITE - PARKSIDE

MEMBERS: Councillors G. N. Denaro (Leader), K.J. May (Deputy Leader),
B. T. Cooper, M. A. Sherrey, C. B. Taylor 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 September 2017 (Pages 1 - 10)
4. Minutes of the meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Board held on 22nd August 2017 (Pages 11 - 18)
 - (a) To receive and note the minutes
 - (b) To consider any recommendations contained within the minutes
5. Black Country Core Strategy Issues and Options Report (Pages 19 - 26)
6. Townscape Heritage Initiative (THI) Grant) - 67 High Street, Bromsgrove (Pages 27 - 36)
7. Council Tax Support Scheme 2018/2019 (Pages 37 - 40)
8. Discretionary Non-Domestic Rates Revaluation Support Scheme (Pages 41 - 52)

9. Community Panel Survey 2017 (Pages 53 - 70)
10. Commercialisation and Financial Strategy (Pages 71 - 86)
11. Review of Financial Regulations and Contract Procedures (Pages 87 - 164)
12. 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

26th September 2017

BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL

MEETING OF THE CABINET

6TH SEPTEMBER 2017, AT 6.00 P.M.

PRESENT: Councillors G. N. Denaro (Leader), K.J. May (Deputy Leader),
B. T. Cooper, C. B. Taylor and P. J. Whittaker

Observers: Councillor S. R. Colella, Councillor R. L. Dent and Councillor
L. C. R. Mallett

Officers: Mrs. S. Hanley, Ms. J. Pickering, Mrs. C. Felton, Ms. D. Poole,
Mr. G. Revans, Mr. D. Allen, Mrs B. Talbot, Ms. A. Scarce, Ms. J. Bayley
and Mr. M. Bough

23/17 **TO RECEIVE APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

An apology for absence was received on behalf of Councillor M. A. Sherrey.

24/17 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Councillor G. N. Denaro declared a pecuniary interest in Minute Item No. 27/17 in his capacity as a trustee of the Wythall Community Association which had applied for a New Homes Bonus grant. Consequently he left the room during consideration of the item and he took no part in the discussions or voting thereon.

25/17 **TO CONFIRM THE ACCURACY OF THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE CABINET HELD ON 12TH JULY 2017**

The minutes of the meeting of the Cabinet held on 12th July 2017 were submitted.

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting of the Cabinet held on 12th July 2017 be approved as a correct record.

26/17 **MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY BOARD HELD ON 26TH JUNE 2017**

The Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Board, Councillor L. C. R. Mallett, confirmed that there were no recommendations arising from the meeting of the Board held on 26th June 2017. However, there was a recommendation arising from the Board's pre-scrutiny of the Burcot Lane Site Redevelopment Update, which took place at a meeting on 22nd August 2017. This recommendation would be considered alongside the report at Minute Item No. 38/17.

27/17

NEW HOMES BONUS COMMUNITY GRANTS SCHEME

The Deputy Leader welcomed the report from the New Homes Bonus Grants Panel and thanked Members of this group for their hard work.

A significant number of applications had been received from local community groups for grant funding covering a range of areas. The Panel had identified a number of groups that Members felt should be awarded funding and these applicants had been notified in writing that, subject to the agreement of the Cabinet, they would be receiving a grant.

The Deputy Leader drew Members' attention to a grant request for the Bromsgrove Baptist Church in respect of the Youth and Community Hub. Whilst the Panel were supportive of this in principle it had requested that further work be undertaken to ensure that this did not impact on other youth services in Bromsgrove district.

For the first time a checking service had been offered to applicants who were able to submit draft paperwork prior to the deadline. Some applicants had used this service and had found it to be helpful. A number of applicants had had their bids rejected but future bids would be welcomed from these applicants in subsequent years.

RESOLVED that the Cabinet agree the grants, as detailed in the Summary of NHB Grants Panel recommendations attached at appendix 1 to the report.

(Prior to the start of this item Councillor G. N. Denaro declared a pecuniary interest in the subject in his capacity as a trustee of the Wythall Community Association which had applied for a New Homes Bonus grant. Consequently he left the room during consideration of the item and he took no part in the discussions or voting thereon. The Deputy Leader therefore chaired the meeting for this item).

28/17

ACQUISITION AND INVESTMENT STRATEGY

The Executive Director of Finance and Corporate Resources presented the Acquisition and Investment Strategy for Members' consideration.

Members were advised that the strategy would form a key part of the Council's work in respect of economic development. Any opportunities for investment would be subject to a business case to ensure that adequate funding would be available. Specific criteria would apply when assessing the viability of investment and acquisition opportunities and each option would be assessed on a case by case basis. Only in cases where both Members and Officers felt assured would these opportunities be progressed.

A number of local authorities were currently investigating investment opportunities. Many of these Councils were making investments outside their local authority boundaries. In Bromsgrove, however, Officers were

keen to focus on making investments within the district's boundaries only. The Council would also seek to focus on low risk opportunities, though Members might want to consider options with higher associated risks where it was felt that this might lead to economic development in an area of the district in need of regeneration.

The Executive Director of Finance and Corporate Resources explained that a minor amendment was proposed to the report at paragraph 3.7. This would clarify that the report was calling for the Executive Director to have delegated powers to approve business cases and complete acquisitions in consultation with the Leader and Portfolio Holders for Economic Development and Finance and Resources.

Following the presentation of the report Members discussed a number of areas in detail. Questions were raised about the costs involved in establishing a trading company and the length of time this could take to complete. Officers explained that a trading company could be opened at a cost of £6,000 relatively quickly, though in order for a local authority to do so effectively time needed to be taken to follow the proper democratic process. Members also questioned the general level of abortive costs which other local authorities making investments had tended to encounter. The Executive Director of Finance and Corporate Resources undertook to speak to other treasurers in the county in relation to this matter.

RECOMMENDED that

- (1) the Acquisition and Investment Strategy be approved;
- (2) the Executive Director of Finance and Resources together with the Head of Economic Development and Regeneration (North Worcestershire) be responsible for identifying suitable opportunities and developing the viability appraisal and business case for the Council; and
- (3) the Executive Director of Finance and Resources in consultation with the Leader and the Portfolio Holders for Economic Development and Finance and Resources have delegated powers to approve business cases and complete acquisitions.

29/17

HUMAN RESOURCES AND ORGANISATIONAL DEVELOPMENT POLICY

The Human Resources and Development Manager presented the Human Resources and Organisational Development Policy for consideration.

The strategy outlined the skills required by staff across the organisation to deliver on the Council's strategic purposes. Whilst the strategy was a separate document the content needed to be considered in conjunction with the Council's Plan.

The Trade Unions had been consulted during the development of the policy and had indicated that they were supportive of the contents.

The covering report had incorrectly proposed that the policy should be referred to Council. Members were advised that the Cabinet in fact had the authority to determine this item.

RESOLVED that the Human Resources and Organisational Development Policy be approved and adopted.

30/17

**POLICE AND CRIME COMMISSIONER CONSULTATION ON
HEREFORD AND WORCESTERSHIRE FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE
GOVERNANCE ARRANGEMENTS (VERBAL UPDATE)**

The Leader advised that, as agreed at the meeting of Council on 19th July 2017, he had met with the two other Group Leaders to formulate a response to the proposed changes to the Governance arrangements for the Hereford and Worcester and Shropshire Fire and Rescue Services. During their discussions the three Group Leaders had concluded that they could not support the proposals from the West Mercia Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) in respect of the governance arrangements as there were too many unanswered questions. The Leader was providing an update to the cabinet on the outcomes of these discussions as requested by Council.

A formal response would be submitted by the deadline of 11th September 2017 on behalf of the Council, as a non-statutory consultee, explaining that the authority did not support the proposed governance arrangements proposed by the West Mercia PCC.

31/17

STAFF SURVEY JOINT SCRUTINY TASK GROUP

Cabinet welcomed the Chairman of the Staff Survey Joint Scrutiny Task Group, Councillor S. R. Colella, to the meeting and invited him to present the group's report.

The group had initially focused on the reasons for the low response rate to the 2016 staff survey. Staff sickness data had also been taken into account to help Members gauge the possible impact of changes in the workplace on staff morale as it was felt this would potentially manifest itself in sickness absence. As the review progressed it had become apparent that the Programme Board was making significant progress addressing many of the issues that had been raised by staff in completed surveys. The group had concluded that it would be best to focus on looking forward and constructive steps that could be taken to improve future surveys. There had been general consensus that more staff needed to be encouraged to complete the surveys in the future and this might be achieved if bespoke questions were to be provided that were suitable for particular service areas.

The Cabinet discussed the contents of the report in detail and noted that the group had considered the suitability of the Council's strategic purposes moving forward. Councillor Colella explained that the group had found it could be difficult to determine the exact meaning of the strategic purposes and more specific targets might be helpful for staff. The Deputy Chief Executive explained that the Corporate Management Team was aware of the breadth of areas covered by the strategic purposes. For this reason senior officers, in conjunction with Members, were developing detailed action plans for each strategic purpose covering the next three years. The contents of these plans would be shared with all Members in due course.

A small number of recommendations had been proposed at the end of the review. The Overview and Scrutiny Board had been able to resolve on the majority of these at their meeting on 22nd August but one required the attention of the Cabinet.

The Leader commented that at recommendation (b) in the report Members were calling for him, as the relevant Portfolio Holder, to assist the lead Scrutiny Member supporting staff with the formulation of all future staff surveys and attend staff briefings. The Cabinet was advised that he would decline this offer as he felt that it would be more appropriate for a Scrutiny Member to take a lead on this. This recommendation was also due to be reported for Members' consideration at Redditch Borough Council and Officers confirmed that a different decision in Bromsgrove would not affect the decision making process in Redditch.

Councillor Colella thanked every Member of the Task Group for their hard work during the review, together with all the officers who had submitted evidence and the Democratic Services Officers. The Cabinet was also asked to note that this had been the first joint scrutiny exercise involving only Bromsgrove and Redditch Members and a number of useful lessons had been learned which could be applied to any future joint working arrangements.

RESOLVED that the lead Councillor for supporting staff from each Council assists in the formulation of future staff surveys and attends staff briefings.

32/17

CONSULTATION RESPONSES TO WYRE FOREST DC PREFERRED OPTION PLAN AND WORCESTERSHIRE RAIL INVESTMENT STRATEGY

The Portfolio Holder for Planning Services and Strategic Housing presented the Consultation Responses to Wyre Forest District Council's Preferred Option Plan and the Worcestershire Rail Investment Strategy. The Cabinet was advised that there had been limited time to consider the plans, though Members would have another opportunity to comment at the next Council meeting. The report provided for Members' consideration therefore contained a draft response.

The Wyre Forest District Council plan addressed care home units but there were some concerns that the locations where these would be installed had not been specified, nor had the potential impact in those locations been addressed. Similarly there was limited information about the potential impact on traffic in surrounding areas.

The Worcestershire Rail Investment Strategy made reference to parking spaces in Bromsgrove and other locations. However, specific information about the exact locations for these parking spaces had not been provided. Reference was also made to Wythall Railway Station, though no parking spaces were available at this location.

At the conclusion of this item the Cabinet

RESOLVED that Members note the contents of the report; and

RECOMMENDED that

- (1) the draft officer response to Wyre Forest Local Plan Review Preferred Option (as attached at Appendix A to the report) be approved by Council, and submitted to Wyre Forest District Council as the formal consultation response; and
- (2) the draft officer response to Worcestershire Draft Rail Investment Strategy (as attached at Appendix B to the report) be approved by Council, and submitted to Worcestershire County Council as the formal consultation response.

33/17

PROVISION BY BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL OF A GARDEN WASTE SERVICE ON BEHALF OF REDDITCH BOROUGH COUNCIL

The Portfolio Holder for Environmental Services and Leisure presented a report detailing arrangements for the operation of a Garden Waste Service on behalf of Redditch Borough Council.

Bromsgrove District Council already had a Garden Waste collection service. Following the implementation of route optimisation the service had spare capacity and would be in a position to deliver this service on behalf of Redditch Borough Council. The cost of the service per subscription for Redditch Borough Council, in terms of the level paid to Bromsgrove, would be graduated in accordance with the number of customers in order to keep the income at a preferred level. Economies of scale would be achieved where the number of subscriptions reached 2,000 or more.

RECOMMENDED that

- (1) From March 2018 Bromsgrove District Council will operate a seasonal (March to November inclusive) garden waste service on

behalf on Redditch Borough Council as part of the existing shared service agreement; and

- (2) Bromsgrove District Council will recoup operating and overhead costs from Redditch BC at an agreed amount per subscription.

34/17

TREASURY MANAGEMENT - UPDATED BORROWING LIMITS 2017/18 TO 2020/21

The Executive Director of Finance and Corporate Resources presented the Treasury Management Updated Borrowing Limits 2017/18 to 2020/21.

The report addressed the potential to revise the operational and authorised limits for borrowing purposes, taking into account the areas covered in the Acquisition and Investment Strategy. This included the option to increase the operational limit for approval to £38 million by 2020/21. The authorised limit for approval would also increase to £41 million by 2020/21.

Net savings were already being achieved through advance payments of pension contributions to Worcestershire County Council and this would continue up to 2020/21. These savings would be achieved over the full 4 year period rather than in a single year.

RECOMMENDED that

- (1) The Operational Limit for borrowing be increased as follows:-

	2017/18 £m	2018/19 £m	2019/20 £m	2020/21 £m
Operational Limit brought forward	12.0	20.0	23.0	26.0
Add Pension Advance Payment	6.0	-2.0	-2.0	4.0
Add Acquisitions and Investment Strategy	2.0	5.0	5.0	8.0
Revised Operational Limit for approval	20.0	23.0	26.0	38.0

(2) The Authorised Limit for borrowing be increased as follows:-

	2017/18 £m	2018/19 £m	2019/20 £m	2020/21 £m
Authorised Limit brought forward	15.0	23.0	26.0	29.0
Add Pension Advance Payment	6.0	-2.0	-2.0	4.0
Add Acquisitions and Investment Strategy	2.0	5.0	5.0	8.0
Revised Authorised Limit for approval	23.0	26.0	29.0	41.0

35/17

CONFIDENTIAL REPORTING CODE (WHISTLEBLOWING)

The Executive Director of Finance and Corporate Resources presented an update to the Council's Confidential Reporting Code (Whistleblowing).

The whistleblowing policy enabled staff and customers to raise specific areas of concern in relation to matters such as fraud and crime. A whistleblowing policy was essential to demonstrate transparency and accountability within the local authority. The code provided assurances to staff that they could report matters confidentially without being placed at risk of victimisation or discrimination.

It was anticipated that in many instances staff would approach their managers to report any areas of concern. However, this might not always be possible and in such instances staff would be encouraged to report their concerns to the Corporate Anti-Fraud team, a Statutory Officer or Internal Audit. The potential for matters to also be reported to Members was discussed, however, the Cabinet was advised that this could compromise the position of Members, particularly if they were later required to participate in any processes necessary to respond to the matter that had been raised. Members were therefore encouraged to report any whistleblowing issues raised by staff or customers to the appropriate Officers.

RESOLVED that the Confidential Reporting Code (Whistleblowing) be approved.

36/17

FINANCE MONITORING 2017/18 QUARTER 1

The Executive Director of Finance and Corporate Resources presented the Finance Monitoring report for quarter 1 of 2017/18 and in so doing she advised Members that a replacement table had been issued in an additional papers pack as a couple of the figures that were originally provided were incorrect.

The Cabinet was advised that it was difficult in the first quarter of the financial year to assess variances in the budget. However, details had

been provided about the variances that had been identified per strategic purpose wherever possible.

An update had also been provided in the report in respect of progress with the implementation of the Council's Efficiency Plan. Savings had been achieved already through a number of service restructures. Moving forward the budgets were being considered line by line by the Financial Services Team in consultation with Directors and Heads of Service.

The Cabinet discussed the report and noted that the Finance and Budget Working Group had recently questioned the reasons why there had been limited expenditure of the budget for the 'keep my place safe and looking good' strategic purpose. The Executive Director of Finance and Corporate Resources explained that this budget included all the capital charges which were not included in the figures until the end of the year. For this reason the budget could appear to be underspent in earlier stages of the financial year.

RESOLVED that the current financial positions for the quarter April to June 2017, as detailed in the report, be noted; and

RECOMMENDED that the 2017/18 Capital Programme is increased by £414k to include S106 Projects as included in Appendix 2.

37/17

TO CONSIDER, AND IF CONSIDERED APPROPRIATE, TO PASS THE FOLLOWING RESOLUTION TO EXCLUDE THE PUBLIC FROM THE MEETING DURING THE CONSIDERATION OF ITEM(S) OF BUSINESS CONTAINING EXEMPT INFORMATION:-

RESOLVED that under S.100 I of the Local Government Act 1972, as amended by the Local Government (Access to Information) (Variation) Order 2006, the public be excluded from the meeting for the following matters on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12 (A) of the said Act, as amended:

This paragraph is:

Subject to the "public interest test", information relating to Paragraph 3 – financial or business affairs.

Minute 38/17 – Overview and Scrutiny Board Minute Extract (Burcot Lane Pre-Scrutiny) 22nd August 2017.

Minute 39/17 – Burcot Lane Site Redevelopment Update.

38/17

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY BOARD MINUTE EXTRACT (BURCOT LANE PRE-SCRUTINY) 22ND AUGUST 2017

The Cabinet considered a minute extract from the meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Board held on 22nd August 2017 when Members had pre-scrutinised an update in respect of the redevelopment of the Burcot Lane site.

[During consideration of this item Members discussed matters that necessitated the disclosure of exempt information. It was therefore agreed to exclude the press and public prior to any debate on the grounds that information would be revealed which relates to financial or business affairs].

39/17

BURCOT LANE SITE REDEVELOPMENT UPDATE

The Cabinet considered an update report in respect of redevelopment of the site of the former Council House on Burcot Lane.

[During consideration of this item Members discussed matters that necessitated the disclosure of exempt information. It was therefore agreed to exclude the press and public prior to any debate on the grounds that information would be revealed which relates to financial or business affairs].

The meeting closed at 7.29 p.m.

Chairman

BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL

MEETING OF THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY BOARD

22ND AUGUST 2017, AT 6.00 P.M.

PRESENT: Councillors L. C. R. Mallett (Chairman), C. Allen-Jones, C. J. Bloore, S. R. Colella, R. J. Deeming, R. L. Dent, M. Glass, C.A. Hotham, C. J. Spencer, P.L. Thomas and M. Thompson

Observers: Councillor H. J. Jones, Councillor K. J. May and Councillor M. A. Sherrey

Officers: Mrs. S. Hanley, Ms. J. Pickering, Mr. D. Allen, Mr. D. M. Birch, Ms. J. Bayley, Mr. M. Bough, Ms. A. Scarce and Ms C. Welsh

22/17

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND NAMED SUBSTITUTES

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors R. J. Laight and S. A. Webb with Councillors R. Deeming and R. Dent attending as substitutes respectively.

23/17

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND WHIPPING ARRANGEMENTS

Councillor C. A. Hotham declared an other disclosable interest in respect of Minute No. 29/17 as his wife was a GP. He left the room for this item and took no part in the debate.

24/17

MINUTES

The minutes of the meetings of the Overview and Scrutiny Board held on 24th April and 26th June 2017 were submitted.

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meetings of the Overview and Scrutiny Board held on 24th April and 26th June 2017 be approved as correct records.

25/17

LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972

RESOLVED that under S.100 I of the Local Government Act 1972, as amended by the Local Government (Access to Information) (Variation) Order 2006, the public be excluded from the meeting for the following matters on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12 (A) of the said Act, as amended:

This paragraph is:

Subject to the “public interest test”, information relating to Paragraph 3 – financial or business affairs.

Minute 26/7 – Burcot Lane Site Redevelopment - Presentation.

26/17

BURCOT LANE SITE REDEVELOPMENT - PRESENTATION

The Board received a presentation on the subject of the redevelopment of the site of the former Council House on Burcot Lane.

[During consideration of this item Members discussed matters that necessitated the disclosure of exempt information. It was therefore agreed to exclude the press and public prior to any debate on the grounds that information would be revealed which relates to financial or business affairs].

27/17

UPDATE IN RESPECT OF COUNCIL'S ECONOMIC PRIORITIES

The Portfolio Holder for Economic Development, the Town Centre and Strategic Partnerships, Councillor May, provided an update in respect of the Council's economic priorities. Following the delivery of a detailed presentation on this subject to Council in July a workshop session had been held during which Council representatives had liaised with representatives of Worcestershire County Council, the Worcestershire LEP, and the Bromsgrove Economic Development Theme Group. A key aim of the workshop had been to encourage more joined up thinking and greater co-operation in respect of economic development in the district. In addition a new strategy, exploring future growth areas, had been commissioned and would report to Cabinet in due course.

During consideration of this item the Executive Director of Finance and Corporate Resources also provided Members with an update in respect of the Investments and Acquisitions Strategy, which was due to be considered by Cabinet and Council in September. This strategy explored the potential to invest in land or buildings for commercial use. The Council would use its borrowing powers to invest in assets, subject to a business case that demonstrated the income that would be generated from the site. The level of risk associated with projects would dictate the value of the investment in the site and would be within the boundary of the District.

Following Councillor May's verbal presentation Members discussed the following matters in detail:

- The redevelopment of Bromsgrove town centre in recent years and the need to ensure that the whole of the high street received support.

- The extent to which redeveloping land for commercial use and renting this to customers represented a change of policy for the Council. The Board was advised that new income streams were important to explore given the challenging financial circumstances facing local government.
- The location of the land that would be purchased for the industrial units. Officers explained that whilst other local authorities were exploring purchasing land throughout the country Bromsgrove District Council would focus on only obtaining land for this purpose in the district.
- The feasibility study that had been commissioned by NWEDR to improve connectivity within Bromsgrove town centre without losing the distinct characteristics of the local economy. This study would also explore the potential to encourage people using Bromsgrove Retail Park to visit the town centre.
- The potential for pop up stores to be introduced in Bromsgrove town centre.
- The extent to which the Council's Economic Strategy remained relevant, in light of changing financial circumstances for the Council and the emerging Neighbourhood Plans and the Green Belt review.
- The focus of the Council on future development and moving forward constructively building on the foundations provided by the Economic Strategy.
- The potential for the Council to work with Worcestershire LEP to help new companies to grow whilst continuing to be based in the district.
- The difficulties involved in encouraging some landowners to make their land available for commercial development rather than as housing.
- The option for Council to use compulsory purchase orders to obtain land in challenging circumstances.
- The potential for the Council to purchase premises on Bromsgrove High Street and to rent these out to local businesses.

At the end of these discussions the Board

RESOLVED that the update be noted.

28/17

STAFF SURVEY JOINT SCRUTINY TASK GROUP - FINAL REPORT

The Chairman of the Staff Survey Joint Scrutiny Task Group, Councillor S. R. Colella, presented the group's final report. In so doing he highlighted the following points for Members' consideration:

- The group had been keen to be proactive and focus on how improvements could be made to future staff consultation arrangements moving forward rather than to reflect back on past practice.

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Overview and Scrutiny Board
22nd August 2017

- The group had reviewed the content of the surveys and had noted that the number of questions may have deterred some staff from participating.
- The subject of those questions may have also deterred staff in certain teams from completing surveys as these did not necessarily relate to their work.
- During the review it had become apparent that senior managers were doing a lot of work to address many of the concerns that had been raised in completed staff surveys.
- The group had been keen to demonstrate that Members valued staff and the first proposal, to introduce a lead Councillor for supporting staff, was designed to address this.
- As the review progressed Members had become concerned about the performance management framework for staff and the lack of performance targets/measures. The group's fourth proposal was designed to address this.
- The Chairman thanked Members of the group, from both Bromsgrove and Redditch, who had participated in the review for their hard work. The Democratic Services Officers were also thanked for their support.

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

- The success of the review as the first joint Task Group involving only Members from Bromsgrove District council and Redditch Borough Council.
- The background to the review, including previous discussions about Members' concerns in respect of the survey at earlier meetings of the Board.
- The potential value of a member from the Board acting as lead Councillor for supporting staff.
- The need for this lead member to be appointed at the following meeting of the Board, subject to the proposal receiving Members' support.
- The arrangements in place for issuing a further staff survey, which was due to take place towards the end of 2017.

At the conclusion of these discussions the Board

RESOLVED that

- (a) A member of the Overview and Scrutiny function be appointed to the role of Lead Councillor for Supporting Staff;
- (b) A quarterly update on the Programme Board's Action Plan be received by the Overview and Scrutiny Board;
- (c) The Measures Dashboard Working Group's terms of reference be updated to include an area covering performance management

processes, performance target and objective setting across both authorities. (It is envisaged that this would be achieved through joint meetings being held on a regular basis with Redditch Borough Council's Performance Scrutiny Working Group, subject to the recommendation being resolved by its Overview and Scrutiny Committee).

RECOMMENDED that the Lead Councillor for Supporting Staff and the relevant Portfolio Holder assist in the formation of all future staff surveys and attend staff briefings

29/17

HOSPITAL CAR PARKING CHARGES

The Board considered a referral that had been received from Council to undertake a review of parking charges at hospitals, which had been the subject of a Notice of Motion to Council. Whilst concerns had been raised in the motion regarding the impact of parking charges on patients and their families it was noted that some of the content of the motion was factually incorrect. A number of Members who had recently visited hospitals in the county noted that signs were on display in the car parks and these clearly advised patients and visitors that, after covering the costs of maintaining the car parks, any revenue would be reinvested in hospital services.

Members discussed the subject of hospital car parking charges in further detail and in so doing noted the following:

- Concessionary charges were in place and patients / visitors could reclaim costs in certain circumstances.
- Many residents on low incomes would struggle to pay these charges and as such they might be regarded as unfairly penalising people with financial difficulties.
- Concerns were raised that a private company maintained the charging system on behalf of the Worcestershire Acute Hospital NHS Trust (WAHT) and this company might be generating a profit from charging patients and their families.
- The Council did not have the power to make decisions in respect of the charges levied by the trust for parking at hospitals in the county.
- There was the possibility that this subject might be suitable to refer to the Worcestershire Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee (HOSC) for further investigation.

Members noted that it would be helpful to obtain further information about the charges in place for parking at the hospitals in Worcestershire. This investigation could take into account any concessions that were available and the methods used to advertise these concessions to eligible patients and their visitors.

RESOLVED that Officers investigate charging arrangements for WAHT services, and available concessions, in further detail and report back for the Board's consideration in October.

(During consideration of this item Councillor C. A. Hotham declared an other disclosable interest as his wife was a GP. He left the room for this item and took no part in the debate).

30/17

FINANCE AND BUDGET WORKING GROUP - UPDATE

The Chairman of the Finance and Budget Working Group, Councillor L. C. R. Mallett, provided an update on the work of the group. At the latest meeting Members had considered the allocation of costs for a range of shared services. Based on the information provided a decision had been taken to scrutinise three areas in further detail:

- ICT services
- Land charges
- Transformation
- Shared management costs

Discussions had also been held about staffing costs and the extent to which the division of management costs between the Councils sharing services was appropriate.

31/17

MEASURES DASHBOARD WORKING GROUP - UPDATE

Officers informed the Board that a meeting of this Working Group had not taken place since the last update. However, some progress had been made in respect of Members accessing the Measures Dashboard via their iPads and a trial was currently being undertaken. Further volunteers were sought in order to ensure that this trial was viable before it was rolled out to all Members.

Councillor Spencer confirmed that she had volunteered and after initial problems she was meeting with IT on 23rd August when these problems would be rectified. Councillor Allen-Jones confirmed that he had found it difficult to bring his iPad in at a convenient time, but would make arrangements with officers for this to now take place. Councillor Glass confirmed he was happy to join the trial and Councillor Thompson asked for further information outside of the meeting before agreeing to participate in the trial.

32/17

TASK GROUP UPDATES

The Board received updates in respect of ongoing Task Groups and Short Sharp Reviews.

- a) CCTV Short Sharp Review

The Chairman of the CCTV Short Sharp Review, Councillor Colella, confirmed the Group had unfortunately not been able to convene since the last meeting of the Board, but was due to meeting on 13th September when its investigation would continue.

b) Social Media Task Group

In the absence of the Chairman, Councillor R. J. Laight, Councillor M. Thompson provided an update on the work of the Group. At its most recent meeting it had interviewed the Communications Manager and discussed a number of areas and potential recommendations which the Group could put forward. These included training on the use of social media for Members, the use of social media to promote various Council meetings and a review of the Social Media policy for both staff and Members.

33/17

WCC HEALTH OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Officers confirmed that as Councillor Webb, the Council's representative on the Worcestershire Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee had been unable to attend the last meeting the minutes were attached for information only.

34/17

CABINET WORK PROGRAMME

Members were asked to consider whether there were any items on the Cabinet Work Programme which they wished to consider for pre-scrutiny. Officers confirmed that the Industrial Unis Investment Outline Business Case was already on the Work Programme and would be picked up at the next meeting of the Board and Members showed an interest in also have sight of the Centres Strategy.

Officers reminded Members that due to the timing of the Board's meetings it might not be possible to have sight of the full report and that a presentation summarising its content might be an appropriate alternative. This was something which Officers would give consideration to when setting the Calendar of Meetings for 2018/19 with a view to, wherever possible, setting the Board meeting for the Monday prior to Cabinet.

Following further discussion it was agreed that the Commercialisation and Financial Strategy would be considered through the Finance and Budget Working Group, with its comments being fed back to the Board.

35/17

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY BOARD WORK PROGRAMME

Members were reminded that the next meeting of the Board would take place on 18th September. Questions were raised as to why the Parking Enforcement item had been delayed until September and concerns were expressed that it was marked as a verbal presentation. Officers confirmed that this would be a briefing paper to be presented by the

Agenda Item 4

Overview and Scrutiny Board
22nd August 2017

relevant officers, who had been provided with the minutes from the meeting where this had previously been discussed in order to address the concerns raised. Following receipt of that information Members would then be asked to make a decision as to whether they wished to take any further action and investigate the matter further through a task group. The Board had agreed to receive this at its September meeting due to the number of detailed items which had been on the Work Programme for this meeting, which had been arranged specifically to allow pre-scrutiny of those items.

Officers confirmed that the Work Programme would be updated as detailed within the body of these minutes.

The meeting closed at 8.30 p.m.

Chairman

Response to consultation on The Black Country Core Strategy Issues and Options Report.

Relevant Portfolio Holder	Councillor Kit Taylor
Portfolio Holder Consulted	Yes
Relevant Head of Service	Ruth Bamford
Wards Affected	All Wards
Ward Councillor Consulted	Yes
Non-Key Decision	Yes

1. SUMMARY OF PROPOSALS

- 1.1 The Black Country Authorities have been consulting on the Black Country Core Strategy Issues and Options report. Consultation on this report took place between 3rd July and the 8th September.
- 1.2 Appendix A is the informal officer responses submitted to the consultation. This consultation at this stage is non statutory, and should further responses need to be submitted it should be possible to do this through the ongoing engagement the Council has with the Black Country Authorities.

2. RECOMMENDATION

- 2.1 That Members note the contents of the report.
- 2.2 That Cabinet recommends to Council that the draft officer response to the Black Country Core Strategy Issues and Options report (as attached at Appendix A) be approved by Council, and submitted to the Black Country Authorities as the consultation response.

3. KEY ISSUES

Financial Implications

- 3.1 There are no direct financial implications associated with this report.

Legal Implications

- 3.2 The Black Country Authorities are carrying out the consultation in accordance with Regulation 18 of the Town & Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012. It is important that the Bromsgrove District Council engages at the appropriate stages in planning process, this is the first substantive opportunity to respond to the review of the Black Country Core Strategy.

Service / Operational Implications

Summary of Response - the Black Country Core Strategy Issues and Options report

- 3.3 The proposal being put forward by the Black Country is a partial review rather than full core strategy review, although the review will contain strategic allocations, which differs to the previous version of the Core Strategy. The response expresses tentative support for this approach, although highlights that the scale of development that is required may well necessitate a full review of the plan rather than a partial one.
- 3.4 The objectively assessed housing needs of the plan has been determined as being 78,190 dwellings for the period 2014-36. Capacity for 48,185 dwellings has already been already identified, a large element of which is brownfield. This leaves the Black Country 24,670 dwellings short of the target, when also testing 3000 dwellings for the wider needs of the conurbation. Approximately 300 hectares of land also needs to be found for employment needs.
- 3.5 This amount of development can only be accommodated by releasing land from the green belt. The Strategy highlights that the first strategic review of the green belt around the Black Country will be undertaken in about 40 years. It is also possible that land will also be required in districts adjoining the Black Country. The response expresses the Councils wish to be involved in any consideration of sites which are on the periphery of the Black Country which could have implications for BDC.
- 3.6 It is expected that green belt sites on the edge of the Black Country in the vicinity of Hagley will be submitted as possible development sites, some of these sites may well include land in Bromsgrove. The response asks for discussions to take place with the Black Country authorities once the extent of sites submitted around Bromsgrove is known.
- 3.7 Further comments are made in relation to infrastructure, expressing our concerns about the knock on effects of development in the Black Country and the need for a joined up approach to transport modelling.

Customer / Equalities and Diversity Implications

- 3.8 There are no Customer / Equalities and Diversity Implications associated with this report.

4. RISK MANAGEMENT

Cabinet

4th October 2017

- 4.1 The risks associated with not responding to these consultations is that BDCs views will not be taken into account by the Black Country Authorities. If further responses and attendance at future examinations are required, it is essential that the Council's views are expressed as clearly and early as possible.

5. **APPENDICES**

Appendix A – BDC response to the Black Country Core Strategy Issues and Options Report

6. **BACKGROUND PAPERS**

Black Country Core Strategy Issues and Options Report

7. **KEY**

AUTHOR OF REPORT

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Strategic Planning Manager

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Bromsgrove District Council Response to the Black Country Core Strategy Issues and Options Report September 2017

1 Thank you for the opportunity to comment on Black Country Core Strategy Issues and Options Report, the below comments at this stage represents an officer response. Due to the timescales for consultation, there have not been any appropriate Council meetings for this response to be considered formally. This process will take place in October and should any amendments be required as a result of the formal consideration by Bromsgrove District Council we will advise you in due course.

2 At this early stage in the plan making process, the issues and option presented are viewed as a sensible approach to what is a substantial task of reviewing the existing Core Strategy. Whilst in principle partially reviewing the plan as opposed to a wholesale rewrite would appear to be a pragmatic. The introduction of substantial site allocations on land currently allocated as green belt into the process, may necessitate a more substantial review further down the line, should this be the view of BDC the Council will respond appropriately on this point in due course.

A number of more focused comments have been prepared relating to the key issues / sections of the report which are detailed below.

Key Issue 2 – Meeting the housing needs of a growing population.

3 The housing needs of the Black Country as presented under Key Issue 2 is clearly a big challenged which the plan is addressing positively. The Council accepts that a detailed piece of evidence has been presented in terms of the objectively assessed housing need, and at this stage has no reason to doubt the overall figure of 78,190. Recognition of the ongoing work being undertaken at the HMA level is welcomed, and BDC will continue to work alongside all HMA authorities in an effort to fully understand the needs of the Market area and the options for distributing growth. The 3000 houses which the Black Country Authorities have agreed to test is in principle supported. The statement at 3.19 of the report is significant and BDC agree that all the figures surrounding the housing requirement of the plan need to be tested on an ongoing basis as the plan evolves and more evidence becomes available.

Key Issue 3 – Supporting a resurgent economy

4 It is important that the Black Country continues to play its role in the economic prosperity of the region. The requirement of 800ha of employment land over the plan period would appear to maintain a flexible supply of land to cater for a wide range of needs. Acknowledging that the plan already envisages some existing employment land will be lost to housing, it is key that the best employment opportunities are safeguarded. If there are further opportunities for employment land to be released for other uses to minimise greenfield development then they must be considered favourably if appropriate.

Key Issue 6 - Reviewing the role and extent of the green belt

5 As the green belt in the Black Country has not been fully reviewed for approximately 40 years it is key that this work is now undertaken thoroughly. The Council agrees that any sites released from the green belt should be done in the context of the Core Strategy, and not left for other development plans to try and achieve. This is especially important if land outside of the Black Country area is going to be required. For any other authority to agree to take any additional development, the commitment to releasing land from the green belt in the Black Country needs to be enshrined in this plan. This commitment needs to be supported by clear policies which prioritise delivery of sites within the Black Country, before any land in neighbouring authorities is developed.

Key Issue 9 – Working effectively with Neighbours

6 The Council has successfully worked with the Black Country authorities over a large number of years. We look forward to continuing this approach both through the Strategic Housing Needs Study, and also ongoing liaison through the Duty to Cooperate, we would welcome the opportunity to discuss this response at the earliest opportunity.

Section 4. Reviewing the Strategy to Meet New Challenges and Opportunities.

7 This section of the issues and options report is seen as the most important by the Council, decisions made under this heading will have far reaching and long term effect for people, the environment, and the economy both within the Black Country and also beyond its boundaries. The 8 growth options identified on table 2 will all have differing implications and opportunities, some of which could have direct impacts on Bromsgrove District. The Council is not objecting to growth in principle, indeed it will shortly be embarking on a review of its recently adopted plan, including releasing land from the green belt. At this stage the Council is not able to form any definitive views on the options as they are presented. It would seem that all the options in one form or another could involve land being required outside of the Black Country and possibly in Bromsgrove District.

8 The Council would welcome the opportunity to explore these options further; once more information is available as a result of the call for sites process. Understanding what land is being proposed within, and on the periphery of the Black Country is important to begin to assess if any areas being put forward will have an impact on the District, in both positive and negative terms. Options need to be considered holistically in the context of the Core Strategy and the functions and purposes of the green belt around the Black Country. They must also be considered in the context of any emerging review of the Bromsgrove plan. If land is proposed to be released in the areas of Black Country near Bromsgrove or vice versa, full consideration must be given to ascertain if there are approaches which can complement both authorities plans, and bring benefits to both areas.

Policy Area E

9 Transport infrastructure both existing and new is vital to the success of the Core Strategy, the road links between Bromsgrove and the Black Country are heavily used and in some instances congested. Recent disruption caused by work being undertaken on the M5 at Oldbury has highlighted how infrastructure issues north of the District have significant effects across Bromsgrove, this is especially relevant for transport networks and the motorways in particular.

10 The Council welcome the statement made at para 6.1.28 *'following the issues and options stage further transport modelling will be undertaken to forecast the traffic impacts of the specified green belt scenarios, identify locations that may require further investigation regarding traffic impacts and identify the transport infrastructure requirements for any potential new green belt sites (including highway, public transport, walking & cycling routes).'* It is our view that the location of development should, along with all the other evidence, be informed by the consideration of the results of highways modelling as described above, and modelling should not be used simply to identify the mitigation required from a pre chosen site.

11 Bromsgrove DC has been working closely with Worcestershire County Council in response to the Worcestershire Local Transport Plan 4 to begin the preparation of a transport strategy for the north Worcestershire area. As part of this strategy the links and journeys by all modes, between north Worcestershire and the Black Country, and also those that pass through north Worcestershire will need to be understood. Following on from that the implications of range of development scenarios will need to be tested to inform final choices about development locations. We would welcome the opportunity to discuss this further with the Black Country. We would like to ensure that the tools that are available to assess the transport implications of developments some of which may have wider implications that just in one local authority area are used to the fullest, to ensure sustainable development patterns.

BDC Strategic Planning

6.9.17

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BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL

**Grant Application under the Townscape Heritage Initiative:
67 High Street**

Cabinet

4th October 2017

**Grant Application under the Townscape Heritage Initiative:
67 High Street**

Relevant Portfolio Holder	Cllr Kit Taylor
Portfolio Holder Consulted	Yes
Relevant Head of Service	Ruth Bamford
Wards Affected	Sanders Park
Ward Councillor Consulted	Yes
Non-Key Decision	

1. SUMMARY OF PROPOSALS

- 1.1 Under the Town Heritage Initiative (THI) scheme member approval is required to authorise the making of grants over the sum of £150,000. This report sets out one such proposal for members in relation to 67 High Street (OutdoorGear Group Ltd), Bromsgrove, and officers are seeking members approval to proceed with making the grant.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 **That Cabinet approves the offer of a £218,820.34 Townscape Heritage Initiative grant as set out in this report for 67 High Street.**

3. KEY ISSUES

Financial Implications

- 3.1 The Townscape Heritage Initiative is a grant scheme of £1.6 million jointly funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund (£1.2 M) and Worcestershire County Council (£400K) for the restoration of historic buildings on High Street, including parts of Worcester Road and New Road
- 3.2 In the Stage 2 Bid and Action Plan to the Heritage Lottery Fund dated 20 April 2012, the Council entered into an agreement with the Heritage Lottery Fund and Worcestershire County Council to set up and run the Townscape Heritage Initiative. The agreement requires that single grants of over £150,000 must be approved by Cabinet
- 3.3 An application for a grant from the fund has been received from Stephen Bailey who is the owner of 67 High Street, Bromsgrove. A photograph of the building is included for members' reference at Appendix 1.

BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL

Grant Application under the Townscape Heritage Initiative:

67 High Street

Cabinet

4th October 2017

- 3.4 The property is a grade 2 listed building that is currently used as a shop at ground floor level (Millets) while the two upper floor levels are vacant. It is earmarked as a “priority plus” building which means that it clearly contributes to the enhancement of the conservation area and is eligible for funding through the Townscape Heritage Initiative. The proposal is to insert a new traditional-looking shop front, carry out window and front elevation repairs, and convert the two upper floor levels into two separate apartments
- 3.5 Planning permission and Listed building consent was granted 1st July 2015 and advertisement consent granted 15th April 2016 for the proposed shopfront and internal alterations. Support for the proposed grant has been received from the Heritage Lottery Fund Monitor for Bromsgrove Townscape Heritage Initiative
- 3.6 67 High Street was previously brought before Cabinet on 4 March 2015 for approval to offer a Townscape Heritage Initiative grant for 67 High Street, which was approved, with a cap of £195,500 on the grant amount, due to the tenders for the works not being received at the time. This amount was based on a quantity surveyor’s professional estimate. A copy of the 4 March 2015 Cabinet report is included for members’ reference at Appendix 2.
- 3.7 All the required documents has now been submitted and used to work out the conservation deficit using the Heritage Lottery Fund calculation. The proposed grant is £218,820.34, and the owner of the grant-aided property will contribute the sum of £73,666.04 of the £292,486.38 eligible renovation costs. (Please note, these figures are liable to change and are dependent on the District Valuers assessment of the property)

Legal Implications

- 3.8 The Heritage Lottery Fund deficit grant contract for 67 High Street stipulates that two years after the completion of the project, or on the sale of the property, whichever is the earlier, the deficit must be recalculated. If there is a reduction in the deficit, i.e. an increase in the value of the property, in accordance with Heritage Lottery Fund policy, the Worcestershire County Council and the Heritage Lottery Fund will claw back a percentage of that increase.
- 3.9 Although Bromsgrove District Council is responsible for project managing the THI grant scheme it is not a major funding partner and does not receive monies that may become due from claw-back

BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL

Grant Application under the Townscape Heritage Initiative: 67 High Street

Cabinet

4th October 2017

Service / Operational Implications

- 3.10 The final grant offers is based on tendered renovation costs provided with the applications and independent valuation conducted by the District Valuer.
- 3.11 THI grant payments are made to property owners in retrospect, and usually in instalments. In this instance grant payments will be made monthly for completed work

Customer / Equalities and Diversity Implications

- 3.12 A meeting with the Heritage Lottery Fund monitor occurs quarterly to receive regular updates on the THI progress and provide feedback on the design and quality of implemented projects.

4. RISK MANAGEMENT

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

5. APPENDICES

Appendix 1 – Image of 67 High Street
Appendix 2 – 4 March 2014 Cabinet report

6. BACKGROUND PAPERS

THI Stage 2 Bid and Action Plan

AUTHOR OF REPORT

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

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

1. SUMMARY OF PROPOSALS

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

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

2.1 That Cabinet approves the offer of a Townscape Heritage Initiative grant as set out in this report for 67 High Street

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

3. KEY ISSUES

Financial Implications

3.1 The Townscape Heritage Initiative is a grant scheme of £1.6 million jointly funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund (£1.2 M) and Worcestershire County Council (£400K) for the restoration of historic buildings on High Street, including parts of Worcester Road and New Road

3.2 In the Stage 2 Bid and Action Plan to the Heritage Lottery Fund dated 20 April 2012, the Council entered into an agreement with the Heritage Lottery Fund and Worcestershire County Council to set up and run the Townscape Heritage Initiative. The agreement requires that single grants of over £150,000 must be approved by Cabinet

3.3 An application for a grant from the fund has been received from Stephen Bailey who is the owner of 67 High Street, Bromsgrove. A photograph of the building is included for members' reference at Appendix 1.

Cabinet

4 March 2015

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

3.4 Pre - application advice has been received for this project and a planning application is expected by the end of February 2015. Support for the proposed grant has been received from the Heritage Lottery Fund Monitor for Bromsgrove Townscape Heritage Initiative

3.5 The proposed grant, based on a quantity surveyor’s professional estimate, is £195,500, and the owner of the grant-aided property has agreed to contribute the sum of £45,000 to the £240,500 renovation costs. If the renovation costs of the work increase, following the tender process, the proposed grant will not increase – it will be capped at £195,000

3.6 An application for a grant from the fund has also been received from Philip R. Amphlett who is the owner of 1-3 New Road, Bromsgrove. A photograph of the building is included for members’ reference at Appendix 2. The property is a grade 2 listed building of timber-frame construction with a modern single-storey extension on one side. It is currently leased by Your Move estate agents and is recognised as a priority building eligible for funding through the Townscape Heritage Initiative. The proposal is to carry out major repair and reinstatement works to the external fabric of the main historic building, including:-

- Repairing parts of the timber frame in New Green Oak
- Reinstating infill panels using lime plaster
- Reinstating cast iron gutters and downpipes
- Repairing windows
- Reinstating a dwarf boundary wall and cast iron railings
- Repairing roof coverings
- A dendochronological assessment to determine the exact age of the building

3.7 Pre - application advice has been received for this project and a planning application is expected by the end of February 2015. Support for the proposed grant has been received from the Heritage Lottery Fund Monitor for Bromsgrove Townscape Heritage Initiative

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

Legal Implications

3.9 The Heritage Lottery Fund deficit grant contract for 67 High Street stipulates that two years after the completion of the project, or on the sale of the property, whichever is the earlier, the deficit must be recalculated. If there is a reduction in the deficit, i.e. an increase in the value of the property, in accordance with Heritage Lottery Fund policy, the Worcestershire County Council and the Heritage Lottery Fund will claw back a percentage of that increase.

3.10 The Heritage Lottery Fund fixed-percentage grant contract for 1-3 New Road stipulates that if the owner intends to sell the property during a period of 10 years after completion of the project the owner must pay back to Worcestershire County Council and the Heritage Lottery Fund a proportion of the grant calculated according to a formula provided by the Heritage Lottery Fund

3.11 The grant applicant is committed, by way of the grant contract, to maintain the property to a standard commensurate with the character of the building upon restoration. The grant is repayable on breach of this condition for the length of the contract (10 years)

3.12 Although Bromsgrove District Council is responsible for project managing the THI grant scheme it is not a major funding partner and does not receive monies that may become due from claw-back

Service / Operational Implications

3.13 The final grant offers will be based on tendered renovation costs provided with the applications

3.14 THI grant payments are made to property owners in retrospect, and usually in instalments. In both instances grant payments will be made monthly for completed work

Customer / Equalities and Diversity Implications

3.15 A THI Partnership Steering Group meets bi-monthly to receive regular updates on THI progress and provide feedback on the design and quality of implemented projects. Membership is drawn from local community and residents' groups (including religious, leisure and youth groups), local business and commercial concerns and the principal amenity groups - Victorian Society, Housman Society, English Heritage and Bromsgrove Society

4. RISK MANAGEMENT

4.1 Without grant-aid it is very unlikely that these two buildings will ever be economically viable to restore

4.2 Monies saved by not agreeing to offer grants for these particular projects would have to be relocated to other properties within the THI area meaning further delays to the delivery and effectiveness of this scheme

5. APPENDICES

Appendix 1 – Image of 67 High Street, Bromsgrove

Appendix 2 – image of 1 – 3 New Road, Bromsgrove

6. BACKGROUND PAPERS

THI Stage 2 Bid and Action Plan

AUTHOR OF REPORT

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LOCAL COUNCIL TAX SUPPORT SCHEME 2018/19

Relevant Portfolio Holder	Cllr Brian Cooper
Portfolio Holder Consulted	Yes
Relevant Head of Service	Amanda Singleton
Ward(s) Affected	All
Ward Councillor(s) Consulted	None Specific
Key Decision / Non-Key Decision	Key Decision

1. SUMMARY OF PROPOSALS

- 1.1 The Council Tax Support Scheme must be reviewed annually.
- 1.2 The report proposes no changes, with the exception of applying the uprating figures determined by the Government.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

Cabinet is asked to RECOMMEND that

- 2.1 No changes are made to the Council Tax Support Scheme for 2018/19.**

3. KEY ISSUES

Financial Implications

- 3.1 As Members are aware, changes were made to the Council's Local Council Tax Support Scheme with effect from April 2015, which resulted in support being capped at 80% of Council Tax liability for all working age claimants.
- 3.2 It is proposed that there are no changes to the level of support provided by the Council, and as previously agreed the various allowances be uprated in line with the Secretary of State's annual announcement. This will ensure that the scheme is affordable given the year on year reduction of funding for local support schemes.

Legal Implications

- 3.3 On 1 April 2013 Council Tax Benefit was abolished and replaced by a new scheme of Council Tax support called "Council Tax Support Schemes". Under s13A and Schedule 1A of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 (inserted by s10 Local Government Act 2012), each local authority was required to make and adopt a Council Tax Support Scheme specifying the reductions which are to apply to the amounts of council tax payable within their districts

CABINET

4th October 2017

- 3.4 Statutory Instrument 2012/2885, “The Council Tax Reduction Schemes (Prescribed Requirements)(England) Regulations 2012” ensured that certain requirements prescribed by the Government were included in each Scheme (subsequently amended by S.I. 2012/3085)
- 3.5 As the billing authority the Council is required by the Local Government Finance Act 2012 to consider whether to revise its scheme or to replace it with another scheme, for each financial year.
- 3.6 The Authority must adopt its scheme, and make any revisions, no later than 31 January in the financial year preceding the one when it will take effect, so that it will be necessary for the Council’s 2018/19 scheme to be in place by 31st January 2018.
- 3.7 Paragraph 3 to Schedule 1A into The Local Government Finance Act 1992 set out the preparation that must be undertaken prior to the adoption or revision of a scheme, including prescribed consultation requirements. As the recommendation is that no revisions to the current scheme should be made for the financial year 2018/2019 (to which this report applies), the requirement to consult does not have to be met. However, officers will publicise the fact that the current scheme is to continue, subject to up-lift in rates as set by the Department of Work and Pensions, as referred to at 3.11 below.
- 3.8 Instruction is received from the Department of Work and Pensions on an annual basis, of changes to benefits rates and personal allowances. These must be taken into account for housing benefit calculations and it streamlines the claims process if they are also applied to the Local Council Tax Support Scheme.

Service / Operational Implications

- 3.9 Officers continue to provide support to any person liable for council tax who is experiencing severe hardship. This may be in the form of personal budgeting advice, short term financial support, debt management advice, or support to maximise income.
- 3.10 Officers work with local DWP, BDHT and local job coaches to provide a holistic approach to financial support needs.

Customer / Equalities and Diversity Implications

- 3.11 The ‘uprating’ of the benefits rates and personal allowances to be taken into account, in line with the Secretary of States announcement on those that must be taken into account for other benefits, will potentially result in small changes to the amounts of support provided. These will vary according to circumstances.

CABINET

4th October 2017

4. RISK MANAGEMENT

- 4.1 Any changes to council tax support whilst increasing council tax income to the Council and our major preceptors has financial implications for our residents and therefore officers ensure that support on managing finances and advice on other potential benefits is made available.

5. APPENDICES

6. BACKGROUND PAPERS

Held in Revenues Service

AUTHOR OF REPORT

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DISCRETIONARY NON-DOMESTIC RATES REVALUATION SUPPORT SCHEME

Relevant Portfolio Holder	Cllr Brian Cooper
Portfolio Holder Consulted	Yes
Relevant Head of Service	Amanda Singleton, Head of Customer Access and Financial Support
Ward(s) Affected	All
Ward Councillor(s) Consulted	None Specific
Key Decision / Non-Key Decision	Key Decision

1. SUMMARY OF PROPOSALS

- 1.1 Non-Domestic Rating law provides for periodic revaluations of the Rateable Values from which a ratepayer's liability for rates are calculated. Revaluations can lead to significant increases in the rates payable by some ratepayers. Relief from the effects of revaluation are provided for through transitional relief under which large increases in rates are phased in over a number of years.
- 1.2 The last revaluation took place in April 2010 and therefore the 2017 revaluation resulted in a number of businesses at a national level facing large increase in their rates liability.
- 1.3 The Government has provided local authorities with funding so that they may design their own local schemes to support ratepayers facing significant increases in their bills. This report asks for agreement on the criteria for allocating this additional relief.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 Cabinet is asked to RECOMMEND that:
 - 2.1.1 The criteria for allocation of Discretionary Revaluation Support as appended to this report in Appendix 1 are adopted.
 - 2.1.2 The Executive Director of Finance is provided with delegated authority to adjust the percentage relief awarded in years 2018/19 and onwards in order to ensure that the maximum level of support is provided to businesses and that the Government funding meets the overall costs of the relief.

3. KEY ISSUES

Financial Implications

- 3.1 The Government has provided funding for the award of Discretionary Revaluation Support. The amount of funding available to Bromsgrove District Council for the award of the scheme will be:

Amount of Discretionary Funding awarded (£000s)			
2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21
135	65	27	4

- 3.2 The level of funding available to the authority for award of the relief has been fixed and will not be adjusted should the costs of the scheme exceed Government funding. Therefore if the overall costs of Revaluation Support exceeds funding the authority would be required to meet a proportion of the costs.

- 3.3 The availability of Government funding could not be used as criteria to refuse relief. The scheme has been designed to ensure that the costs of relief remain within the allocated funding whilst maximising support for eligible ratepayers. Projections for the costs of relief are contained within Appendix 2.

- 3.4 Authorities are required to consult their major precepting authorities on the scheme as a condition of funding. The authority is mindful of the condition for relief and precepting authorities have been provided with a copy of the proposed Revaluation Support Scheme. The precepting authorities provided comments on the scheme indicating their agreement with the principles and distribution of relief.

- 3.5 The rules for varying an award of Discretionary Relief require one year's notice prior to the removal of the relief. The award of relief then continues to the end of the year in which removal would take effect. This requirement for notice provides a risk that adjustments to awards cannot be made should circumstances change and potentially limits the authority's ability to control the costs of the relief.

Legal Implications

- 3.6 Billing authorities have the power to award discretionary relief under Section 47 of the Local Government Finance Act 1988. Section 47 prevents the award of relief to any billing authority or precepting authority.

- 3.7 The Non-Domestic Rating (Discretionary Relief) Regulations 1989 (The Regulations) provide the requirements for notifying ratepayers of their entitlement to relief, and limiting the authorities powers to vary or alter the decision.

- 3.8 The criteria for the award of relief have been designed to account for the legal requirements of the act and regulations. All relief will be conditional upon eligibility criteria and rules for calculating relief.

State Aid

- 3.9 State Aid law is the means by which the European Union regulates state funded support to businesses. Providing discretionary relief to ratepayers is likely to amount to State Aid. However the Revaluation Support Scheme for ratepayers will be State Aid compliant where it is provided in accordance with the De Minimis Regulations (1407/2013)2.
- 3.10 The De Minimis Regulations allow an undertaking to receive up to €200,000 of De Minimis aid in a three year period (consisting of the current financial year and the two previous financial years). It is necessary for the authority to establish that the award of relief will not result in a business receiving more than €200,000 of De Minimis aid.
- 3.11 The Revaluation Support Scheme is designed to be state aid compliant. Undertakings receiving relief will be required to declare that the total of any relief that they have received is De Minimis as a condition of the receipt of relief.

Service / Operational Implications

- 3.12 The operation of the Revaluation Support Scheme will provide the Customer Access and Financial Support Service with an additional administrative and operational requirement. To minimise the impact on the service the Revaluation Support Scheme is designed to ensure that relief is calculated automatically and will not require a manual recalculation on changes in circumstances.
- 3.13 The software used for the administration does not - at the point at which the Scheme has been designed - provide the functionality for the award of relief. The Scheme has therefore been designed on the basis of discussions with the Council's software provider as to how the functionality will be developed.

Customer / Equalities and Diversity Implications

- 3.14 None

4. RISK MANAGEMENT

- 4.1 The criteria for the award of the relief have been designed to limit the financial risks to the authority and to ensure that the overall cost of the relief remains within the level of Government Funding
- 4.2 Reporting on the costs of Non-Domestic Rates relief are produced on a monthly basis and these reports will be used to highlight any financial risks associated with the costs of the relief.

5. APPENDICES

Appendix 1 - Discretionary Revaluation Support Criteria

Appendix 2 - Projected Costs of Discretionary Revaluation Support

6. BACKGROUND PAPERS

None

7. KEY

AUTHOR OF REPORT

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Tel.: 01527 548 418

Bromsgrove District Council – Discretionary Revaluation Support Scheme

Background

- 1 Following the national revaluation of non-domestic rates premises the Government announced a discretionary fund of £300m over four years from 2017/18 to support those businesses that face the steepest increases in their business rates liability.
- 2 The Government's intention is that every billing authority in England will be provided with a share of the £300m to support their local businesses. The support will be provided by way of Discretionary Rates Relief awarded under section 47 of the Local Government Finance Act 1988.
- 3 Bromsgrove District Council has developed a Discretionary Revaluation Support Scheme which has been designed to provide support to businesses affected by the revaluation and to ensure that support is provided in line with the Government's principles for relief.

Qualifying Criteria for Discretionary Revaluation Support

- 4 Discretionary Revaluation Support Relief will be provided where the following qualifying criteria are met.
 - The rateable value for the property is less than £200,000.
 - The increase in rates payable as a result of the 2017 revaluation is greater than 12.5% after award of all other applicable relief.
 - The ratepayer occupied the premises on 31 March 2017 and 1st April 2017.
 - The ratepayer occupies fewer than 4 hereditaments within England.
 - The ratepayer occupies the premises for ordinary commercial business purposes.
 - The premises are not used for an excluded purpose.
 - The ratepayer has submitted a State Aid declaration.
 - The premises meet the definition of a relevant non-domestic hereditament as contained within The Non-Domestic Rating (Unoccupied Property) (England) Regulations 2008.
- 5 Commercial Business Purposes will be the use of the premises in connection with the ordinary functions of a business either through:
 - a. the retail provision of goods or services to the general public;
 - b. the production, manufacture or storage of goods for sale to businesses or the general public;

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c. the office administration of a commercial businesses or enterprise.

This is not intended to be a definitive list of commercial business purposes but is indicative of those activities and uses which we will consider to be suitable for Discretionary Revaluation Support.

6 Excluded purposes for the operation of Discretionary Revaluation Support are:

- The use of the premise as a Car Park;
- The use of the premises as a school or educational establishment;
- The use of the premises for banking, pay-day lending, or betting shops;
- The use of the premises as a hospital, health centre, or health care surgery;
- The use of the premises for Governmental purposes, for example the use as a Job Centre, or offices of the Civil Service or Executive Agencies of Central Government.

Calculation of Revaluation Support Relief

7 Revaluation Support Relief will be calculated after any or all of the following have been applied.

- a. Exemptions from rating or mandatory rate reliefs.
- b. Transitional Relief or Premium.
- c. Any applicable discretionary rate reliefs awarded under existing local schemes or national mandated Government schemes.

8 The level of relief will be calculated as a percentage of the increase in rates above the transitional limit for medium properties (12.5% in 2017/18) payable between the current rates year and immediately preceding rates year. The level of the relief to be provided in each year will be

Rate Year	2017/18	2018/19	2020/21	2021/22
% Relief on Increase	85	45	20	0

9 The costs of relief for 2018 and subsequent years cannot be adequately forecast as the effect of adjustments to rateable values following appeals is not known. The Executive Director of Finance will have delegated authority to alter the level of relief to be provided in 2018 and subsequent years to ensure that:

- a. Support to ratepayers as a whole is maximised in each subsequent year; and
- b. The overall costs of the relief remain within the authority's share of the Government funding.

Notification of Revaluation Support

- 10 Discretionary Revaluation Support will be awarded automatically on a year by year basis. Ratepayers will be advised of the amount of relief they will be awarded and the end date of the relief.
- 11 In year one ratepayers will be advised that the award of relief is conditional on a declaration that the relief is state aid compliant and that they meet the requirement to occupy fewer than 4 hereditaments within England
- 12 The notification of Revaluation Support will include the conditions under which the relief may be removed or adjusted.

Adjustment and Removal of Revaluation Support

- 13 Revaluation Support will be awarded as percentage of the increase in rates liability year on year. Therefore where there is a reduction in liability as a result of a change in the rateable value of the property the level of relief will be reduced accordingly.
- 14 Relief will not be awarded on the element of rates liability relating to any increase in rateable value effective after 1st April 2017.
- 15 The relief is conditional on a state aid declaration being made if a declaration that the relief is state aid compliant is not received then relief will be removed.

Appeals in Relation to Revaluation Support

- 16 Entitlement to Revaluation Support and the level of relief to be awarded will in most cases be clear. However, in the first instance appeals against a refusal to award relief will be determined by the Financial Support Manager.
- 17 Appeals must state clearly the reasons why the ratepayer qualifies for relief in accordance with the Revaluation Support Scheme or, as applicable, the reasons why the calculated relief is incorrect.

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Projected Costs of Discretionary Revaluation Support Scheme

1 Potential Qualifiers for Revaluation Support Scheme

The Government provided principles and assumptions relating to the distribution of the funding for Discretionary Relief Schemes. The assumptions were that the rateable property has a rateable value for 2017/18 that is less than £200,000 and the increase in the rateable property's 2017/18 bill is more than 12.5% compared to its 2016/17 bill. Analysis has indicated the potential qualifiers sorted by the Valuation Office Agency's analysis codes

Analysis Code	Property Description	Number of Properties	Total 2017 Liability £	Total Increase in Liability £
CG	Petrol Filling Station and Premises	5	92,403.93	12,749.63
CG1	Vehicle Repair Workshop Premises	1	16,939.40	2,177.40
CG3	Showroom and Premises	7	254,384.40	42,755.40
CH	Hotel and Premises	1	9,885.94	1,270.74
CL	Public House and Premises	16	576,615.95	132,739.55
CL2	Club and Premises	1	10,968.95	1,409.95
CP	Car Park and Premises	5	153,001.04	37,204.04
CR	Restaurant and Premises	1	8,469.70	1,088.70
CS	Shop and Premises	10	103,789.59	14,660.99
CX	Miscellaneous Commercial	3	43,562.19	6,415.19
EL	School and Premises	10	177,819.06	25,117.06
EN1	Day Nursery and Premises	1	9,858.17	1,267.17
IM3	Concrete Batching Plant and Premises	1	12,079.73	1,552.73
LI1	Sports Centre and Premises	1	71,850.00	19,820.00
LS2	Golf Course and Premises	1	26,522.94	4,258.94
LX	Miscellaneous Leisure	2	34,909.94	5,506.94
MH	Surgery and Premises	8	138,775.10	19,832.10
MS1	Fire Station and Premises	1	68,976.00	14,768.00
MT1	Communication Station and Premises	1	6,058.00	2,621.60
Totals		76	1,816,870.03	347,216.13

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2. Adjustment to potential qualifiers based on local criteria

The legislation governing awards of discretionary relief precludes the award of relief to Precepting Authorities, therefore any properties occupied by Redditch Borough Council have been removed from the list of potential qualifiers.

In addition the relief will be targeted at:

- i) ratepayers that face the most significant increases in their rates bills, and
- ii) smaller and medium sized businesses.

It should not be provided to governmental or public sector organisations.

Relief will be provided to

- a) Properties that were occupied at 1st April and 31st March 2017 therefore ensuring that relief is provided to ratepayers affected by revaluation
- b) Properties used for commercial businesses
- c) Properties which are not Car Parks; Schools or Educational Establishments; Health Centres, Hospitals or Surgeries; Banks or Financial Services
- d) Ratepayer's occupy less than 4 premises with England

When adjusted for local factors the potential qualifiers are

Analysis Code	Property Description	Number of Properties	Total 2017 Liability £	Total Increase in Liability £
CG	Petrol Filling Station and Premises	5	92,403.93	12,749.63
CG3	Showroom and Premises	7	254,384.40	42,755.40
CH	Hotel and Premises	1	9,885.94	1,270.74
CL	Public House and Premises	7	197,763.98	46,344.58
CL2	Club and Premises	1	10,968.95	1,409.95
CR	Restaurant and Premises	1	8,469.70	1,088.70
CS	Shop and Premises	3	22,437.76	2,884.16
CX	Miscellaneous Commercial	2	38,841.37	5,808.37
EN1	Day Nursery and Premises	1	9,858.17	1,267.17
LI1	Sports Centre and Premises	1	71,850.00	19,820.00
LS2	Golf Course and Premises	1	26,522.94	4,258.94
LX	Miscellaneous Leisure	2	34,909.94	5,506.94
Totals		32	778,297.08	145,164.58

3. Property Level Analysis of Costs

Relief will be provided on the increase in rates bills at the following percentages

Rate Year	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2020/21
% Relief on Increase	85	45	20	0

The expected costs of the relief are:

VOCategory	RV	85% Relief	45% Relief	20% Relief
CL	72,000	3,647.63	1,931.10	858.27
CG3	53,000	3,210.13	1,699.48	755.32
CL	65,000	3,676.47	1,946.37	865.05
CS	32,000	430.84	228.09	101.37
CH	24,500	1,080.13	571.83	254.15
CG3	39,500	1,761.20	932.40	414.40
CG	50,000	2,526.20	1,337.40	594.40
CR	24,000	925.40	489.92	217.74
CS	24,250	382.30	202.39	89.95
CL	42,000	1,865.95	987.86	439.05
LX	90,000	3,770.68	1,996.24	887.22
CG3	102,000	6,148.90	3,255.30	1,446.80
CL	30,000	1,189.35	629.66	279.85
CL	118,000	13,986.33	7,404.53	3,290.90
CG3	83,500	5,170.38	2,737.26	1,216.56
CL	80,000	3,462.97	1,833.34	814.82
LI1*	150,000	16,847.00	8,919.00	3,964.00
CX	32,000	652.32	345.35	153.49
CG3	61,000	3,708.13	1,963.13	872.50
CG	22,750	65.23	34.53	15.35
CS	50,500	1,638.40	867.39	385.51
CG3	176,000	15,296.60	8,098.20	3,599.20
CG3	20,750	1,046.76	554.17	246.30
CL	120,000	11,564.18	6,122.21	2,720.98
EN1	33,500	1,077.09	570.23	253.43
CG	79,000	4,635.20	2,453.93	1,090.64
CG	40,250	1,471.53	779.04	346.24
CX	72,000	4,284.79	2,268.42	1,008.19
CG	45,250	2,139.03	1,132.43	503.30
LX	21,750	910.22	481.88	214.17
CL2	24,250	1,198.46	634.48	281.99
LS2	75,000	3,620.10	1,916.52	851.79
		123,389.89	65,324.06	29,032.92

*The costs of relief shown for this property are included as illustrative of the maximum costs of the relief. The property is used as Training Ground/Sports Centre for a professional football club and therefore relief will not be awarded as the premises are not used for ordinary commercial purposes.

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COMMUNITY PANEL SURVEY 2017

Relevant Portfolio Holder	Councillor G. N. Denaro
Portfolio Holder Consulted	Yes
Relevant Head of Service	Deb Poole, Head of Business Transformation
Ward(s) Affected	All
Ward Councillor(s) Consulted	n/a
Key Decision	

1. SUMMARY OF PROPOSALS

- 1.1 To endorse the new Community Panel Survey for delivery in October 2017.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

Cabinet is requested to resolve that

- 2.1 **that the Community Panel Survey attached at Appendix 1 be noted and endorsed.**

3. KEY ISSUES

- 3.1 Historically, Bromsgrove District Council was part of the Worcestershire Viewpoint project, which consulted a Worcestershire-wide panel on issues relating to a wide range of public sector services and concerns. Until the May 2015 survey, this had received external funding.
- 3.2 On the cessation of the funding, Worcestershire County Council, as the coordinator of the survey, proposed that future arrangements would cost between £2300 and £3500 per year from each partner. This would include only limited set questions for the District Councils, which had to be the same across the County.
- 3.3 It was felt by the Policy Manager and the Head of Business Transformation that the proposed arrangement would not meet the needs of BDC and that pursuing our own corporate consultation would provide greater flexibility and reduced costs.
- 3.4 As the membership list for the Worcestershire Viewpoint belonged equally to BDC, this has been shared, following a consultation exercise with panel members to inform them of changes and ensure they were happy to be part of two panels. This membership has been supplemented by additional recruitment during 2017.

- 3.5 The first survey of the new Bromsgrove Community Panel is proposed for October 2017; the Worcestershire Viewpoint Survey is active during May each year so another survey had to avoid this period to prevent consultation fatigue.
- 3.6 The draft survey (Appendix 1) has been designed to cover key issues and reflect the Council's strategic purposes and the content of the Council Plan. Managers have had an opportunity to suggest service related questions. It does not, however, cover every function of the Council.

Financial Implications

- 3.1 There are limited financial implications arising directly from this report; the survey will be engaged with predominantly online, however, to ensure equality of access, some surveys will be sent through the post, which will incur printing and postage costs. There will also be some small promotional costs. However, this will all be covered by existing budgets and will be at a significantly lower rate than the alternative Worcestershire Viewpoint proposal.

Legal Implications

- 3.4 Certain functions of the Council, such as community safety have a statutory requirement to consult, which can be in part delivered through the Community Panel Survey.

Service / Operational Implications

- 3.7 The results from the survey will help all parts of the Council, staff and Elected Members, in ensuring that we design and deliver appropriate services which meet the needs of our communities.

Customer / Equalities and Diversity Implications

- 3.9 The Community Panel Survey will enable interested residents to be involved, share their opinions and influence decision making. By listening to residents and recognising different needs, the Council will be better placed to design and deliver appropriate, coordinated and relevant services to the communities it serves.
- 3.10 The survey aligns with the Council's approach to equality and diversity and will help the Council to understand the different opinions within our community.

4. RISK MANAGEMENT

- 4.1 There are no risk management implications arising directly from this report.

5. APPENDICES

Appendix 1 - Draft Community Panel Survey questions

AUTHOR OF REPORT

Name: Rebecca Dunne, Policy Manager
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Tel.: 01527 881616

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Bromsgrove Community Panel 2017

1. We are keen to understand responses by area. Please tell us where you live. *

Select One

Please select area

2. To what extent do you agree or disagree with these statements about involvement and influence?

	I agree strongly	I agree	I neither agree nor disagree	I disagree	I disagree strongly
I like to be involved in decisions affecting District Council services	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I like to be involved in decisions affecting my local area	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I can influence decisions affecting District Council services	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I can influence decisions affecting my local area	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I know who my local councillor is and how to contact them	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Comments:

3. To what extent do you agree or disagree with these statements about being informed?

	I agree strongly	I agree	I neither agree nor disagree	I disagree	I disagree strongly
Information I need from the District Council is easy to find	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Information I need from the District Council is easy to understand	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I know how to raise a complaint to the District Council	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I know how to pass on a compliment to the District Council	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Comments:

4. How would you like the Council to keep you informed?

- | | |
|--|---------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Letter/Paper | <input type="checkbox"/> Face to face |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Internet | <input type="checkbox"/> Email |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Social media | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other (please specify):
<input type="text"/> | |

For the next 6 questions, please think about the last time you contacted Bromsgrove District Council.

5. When was the last time you contacted Bromsgrove District Council?

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> In the last week | <input type="checkbox"/> In the last 6 months |
| <input type="checkbox"/> In the last month | <input type="checkbox"/> In the last 12 months |
| <input type="checkbox"/> In the last 3 months | <input type="checkbox"/> More than 12 months ago |

6. What method of contact did you use?

- | | |
|---------------------------------------|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Telephone | <input type="checkbox"/> Website (on-line form) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Face to face | <input type="checkbox"/> Other (please specify):
<input type="text"/> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> E-mail | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Post | |

7. Which service area did you contact?

- Community Safety
- Community Services (e.g. Lifeline, Children's Centres)
- North Worcestershire Economic Development & Regeneration (NWEDR)
- Elections
- Environmental Services
- Finance (e.g. council tax, business rates)
- Strategic Housing
- Human Resources
- Leisure & Cultural Services
- Planning
- Worcestershire Regulatory Services
- Other (please specify):

8. How satisfied were you with the time it took for them to respond?

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Very satisfied | <input type="checkbox"/> Dissatisfied |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Satisfied | <input type="checkbox"/> Very dissatisfied |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied | |

Comments:

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9. Did you feel the member of staff cared about the reason for your contact?

- Yes
 Somewhat
 No

Comments:

10. Did we meet your expectations?

- Yes
 Partially
 No

Comments:

11. To what extent do you agree or disagree with these statements about waste, recycling and the environment?

	I agree strongly	I agree	I neither agree nor disagree	I disagree	I disagree strongly
I understand what I can place in my green recycling bin	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I can recycle waste easily	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I understand what I can take to the household tip and recycling centre	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I am aware of the council's bulky waste collection service	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
My local area is litter free	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
My local area is free from dog mess	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
My local area is free from fly tipping	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Public spaces are well maintained	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Public spaces have sufficient lighting	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I actively try to use less energy and water	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I am aware of the advice and support available to help me use less energy and water	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Comments:

12. Do you have use of a car?

- Yes
 No

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13. To what extent do you agree or disagree with these statements about getting around?

	I agree strongly	I agree	I neither agree nor disagree	I disagree	I disagree strongly	Not relevant to me
I am satisfied with the service provided by public buses	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I am satisfied with the train services in Bromsgrove	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I am satisfied with the service provided by local taxi's- daytime	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I am satisfied with the service provided by local taxi's- night time	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Public paths and pavements are safe and easy to get around on	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Public roads are safe and easy to get around on	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Congestion is often a problem for me within the District	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
There is sufficient, fairly priced public parking in the District	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I am aware of the Bromsgrove Urban Rural Transport (BURT) service	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Comments:

14. To what extent do you agree or disagree with these statements about getting online?

	I agree strongly	I agree	I neither agree nor disagree	I disagree	I disagree strongly	Not relevant to me
I have the skills and confidence to access information online	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I can access information and communicate online through a device in my home	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I can access information and communicate online through a device in my local area	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Comments:

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15. If you say that getting on line isn't relevant to you, please explain why.

- I don't own a device to get me online
- I have no access to the internet at home
- I have no interest in accessing information/communicating online
- Other (please specify):

16. How would you rate the provision of the following facilities/services in Bromsgrove District?

	Very poor	Poor	Adequate	Good	Very good
Theatre	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Museums	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Libraries	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Village halls/community centres	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Events e.g. Street Theatre	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Indoor sports	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Outdoor sports	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Parks & open spaces	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Allotments	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

How accessible are these facilities/services? Please give details.

How would you improve these facilities/services, if appropriate?

Additional comments:

17. To what extent do you agree or disagree with these statements about issues which might be affecting residents of the district?

	I agree strongly	I agree	I neither agree nor disagree	I disagree	I disagree strongly
There is sufficient support for families	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
There is sufficient support for vulnerable individuals	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
There is sufficient support for older people	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
There is sufficient support for mental health and wellbeing	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
There are sufficient opportunities for people to be physically active	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Loneliness is a significant problem in the district	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

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	I agree strongly	I agree	I neither agree nor disagree	I disagree	I disagree strongly
Fuel poverty (struggling to pay for heating/lighting) is a significant problem in the district	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Household debt is a significant problem in the district	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Comments:

18. To what extent do you agree or disagree with these statements about social contact and living independently?

	I agree strongly	I agree	I neither agree nor disagree	I disagree	I disagree strongly	Not relevant to me
I am able to manage my household finances	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I can get the help and support I need from my family, friends or community	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I know how to access care/support for myself or those I care for	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I am aware of community activities/support in my local area	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I have good access to community activities and/or resources	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I have good social contact with people	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I am aware of the Shopmobility service in Bromsgrove Town Centre	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I am aware of the Lifeline service provided by the council	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Comments:

19. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

	I agree strongly	I agree	I neither agree nor disagree	I disagree	I disagree strongly	Not relevant to me
The environment in my area is relatively free from excessive noise	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I don't worry about the risk to my health when I go out/buy food from takeaways in my area	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

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	I agree strongly	I agree	I neither agree nor disagree	I disagree	I disagree strongly	Not relevant to me
I am confident when I buy goods or services in my area that businesses will treat me fairly	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I am confident when I buy products in my area that they will be safe	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Comments:

The local Community Safety Partnership (CSP) is a joint partnership between the District Council, the County Council, West Mercia Police, Hereford & Worcester Fire and Rescue Service, Probation Services and the local Clinical Commissioning Group. Together we work with housing associations, local businesses and voluntary/community organisations to reduce crime and anti-social behaviour and improve community safety in our district.

Each year the CSP carries out a strategic assessment of crime and anti-social behaviour to gather information that will be used to inform the Community Safety Plan.

We would like you to help us with this process by answering the following questions.

20. Have you or a member of your household been the victim of a crime?

- No
 Between 1 and 5 years ago
 In the last 12 months
 More than 5 years ago

21. Have you or a member of your household been the victim of anti-social behaviour?

- No
 Between 1 and 5 years ago
 In the last 12 months
 More than 5 years ago

22. To what extent do you agree or disagree with these statements about community safety and feeling safe and respected?

	I agree strongly	I agree	I neither agree nor disagree	I disagree	I disagree strongly
Bromsgrove District is a safe place to live compared to the rest of the country	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Bromsgrove District is safer than other areas in Worcestershire	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
My local area (within a 15 minute walk) is safer than other areas in Bromsgrove District	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I feel safe outside in my local area after dark	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I feel safe outside in my local area during daylight	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I am treated with dignity and respect in the community	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

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	I agree strongly	I agree	I neither agree nor disagree	I disagree	I disagree strongly
I feel safe and respected when looked after by others	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I feel people from different backgrounds get on well in my area	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Having CCTV helps me feel safe when I'm out in public	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Comments:

23. Using your knowledge of Bromsgrove District as a whole, please tell us the issues that concern you most from the list below (Please tick up to 10 boxes only)

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Burglary
<input type="checkbox"/> Robbery (mugging)
<input type="checkbox"/> Vehicle crimes
<input type="checkbox"/> Hate crime
<input type="checkbox"/> Domestic abuse
<input type="checkbox"/> Sexual assault & rape
<input type="checkbox"/> Drug taking or dealing
<input type="checkbox"/> Damage to property
<input type="checkbox"/> Pedal cycle theft
<input type="checkbox"/> Rowdy/inconsiderate behaviour
<input type="checkbox"/> Nuisance vehicles
<input type="checkbox"/> Other (please specify): | <input type="checkbox"/> Street drinking
<input type="checkbox"/> Harassment
<input type="checkbox"/> Littering
<input type="checkbox"/> Fly tipping
<input type="checkbox"/> Graffiti
<input type="checkbox"/> Dog fouling
<input type="checkbox"/> Dangerous dogs
<input type="checkbox"/> Inconsiderate parking
<input type="checkbox"/> Neighbour disputes
<input type="checkbox"/> Town Centre Safety |
|--|---|

Comments:

24. What do you think are the 3 main issues that impact on Community Safety in Bromsgrove District? (Please tick up to 3 boxes only)

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Drugs
<input type="checkbox"/> Alcohol misuse
<input type="checkbox"/> Unemployment or low income
<input type="checkbox"/> Young people with nothing to do
<input type="checkbox"/> Lack of police presence
<input type="checkbox"/> Not enough deterrent/enforcement
<input type="checkbox"/> Other (please specify): | <input type="checkbox"/> Lack of community co-operation
<input type="checkbox"/> Lack of parental control
<input type="checkbox"/> Poor behaviour & attitudes
<input type="checkbox"/> Lack of crime prevention measures
<input type="checkbox"/> Poor infrastructure & environmental design |
|---|--|

Comments:

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25. We are keen to understand what our residents know about emerging community safety matters. Please indicate your level of awareness for each of the following:

	No knowledge	A little knowledge	Some knowledge	In-depth knowledge
Hate crime- motivated by prejudice towards a person's race, religion, gender, sexual orientation or disability	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Modern day slavery- labour exploitation of vulnerable persons	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Child sexual exploitation- sexual abuse of young people that are tricked or groomed into an inappropriate relationship	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Cybercrime- internet enabled fraud and harassment via social media	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Extremism/radicalisation- the process by which people come to support terrorism and join terrorist and extremist groups	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Comments:

26. To what extent do you get involved in the following? Please do not include any which you undertake in paid employment.

	I already do this, but can't do more	I already do this, and could do more	I would like to do this, but I can't now	I would like to do this, but don't know how	I would not like to do this
Look out for neighbours, or anyone who may be isolated or lonely	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Help family or neighbours who are ill or disabled	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Assist someone to use online public services	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Car share or offer someone in your local area a lift	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Volunteer or help run a charity/community group	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Volunteer or help run a local service	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Participate in local decision-making and consultation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Volunteer to keep my area clean and tidy	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Shop locally and support local business	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Help others to be more active	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Comments:

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27. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following about the way local services are managed and delivered?

	I agree strongly	I agree	I neither agree nor disagree	I disagree	I disagree strongly
Council tax should be increased to help maintain essential services	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Bromsgrove District Council has managed budget decisions well	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Reductions to services have had a significant impact on me	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Further reductions to services would impact me significantly	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Public services would be better managed and delivered by sharing responsibility with another organisation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Public services would be better managed and delivered by an outside organisation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Public services should continue to be managed and delivered by Bromsgrove District Council	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I would be willing to pay/pay more for certain services provided by Bromsgrove District Council	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Comments:

28. To what extent do you agree or disagree that the following should be given priority by Bromsgrove District Council?

	I agree strongly	I agree	I neither agree nor disagree	I disagree	I disagree strongly
Local economic development, town centre regeneration and employment	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Education and skills	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Working with partners on transport and congestion	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Healthy lifestyles and well-being, including mental health	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Maintenance of the landscape and environment	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Bromsgrove's cultural heritage	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

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	I agree strongly	I agree	I neither agree nor disagree	I disagree	I disagree strongly
Supporting the community and voluntary sector	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Waste and recycling	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Support people to live independently	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Providing welfare and financial support to help residents in maximising income/reducing debt	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Support and empower families and communities	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Provide well maintained community parks and open spaces	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Support the development and delivery of appropriate housing in the District	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Reducing homelessness	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Ensure housing in the District is of good quality and accessible	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Support culturally diverse events and arts activities	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Empower residents to get involved and influence decisions	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Comments:

Questions for Equality and Diversity Analysis

29. Which of the following best describes your age?

- | | |
|-----------------------------------|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Under 20 | <input type="checkbox"/> 60-69yrs |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 20-29yrs | <input type="checkbox"/> 70-79yrs |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 30-39yrs | <input type="checkbox"/> 80+ years |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 40-49yrs | <input type="checkbox"/> Prefer not to say |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 50-59yrs | |

30. What sex are you?

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Male | <input type="checkbox"/> Prefer not to say |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Female | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other (please state): | |
-

31. Which of the following best describes your ethnic group?

- White - British, English, Northern Irish, Scottish or Welsh
- White - Irish
- White - Gypsy or Irish traveller
- Any other white background (*please specify)
- Mixed or multiple ethnic - white and black Caribbean
- Mixed or multiple ethnic - white and black African
- Mixed or multiple ethnic - white and Asian
- Any other mixed or multiple ethnic background (*please specify)
- Asian or Asian British - Indian
- Asian or Asian British - Pakistani
- Asian or Asian British - Bangladeshi
- Asian or Asian British - Chinese
- Any other Asian (*please specify)
- Black, African, Caribbean or black British - Caribbean
- Black, African, Caribbean or black British - African
- Any other black British, African or Caribbean (*please specify)
- Other ethnic group - Arab
- Any other ethnic group (please specify in box below)
- Prefer not to say

* Please specify:

32. How would you describe your sexual orientation?

- Bisexual
- Lesbian or Gay
- Heterosexual
- Other

33. What is your religion or belief?

- | | |
|------------------------------------|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Atheist | <input type="checkbox"/> Muslim |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Buddhist | <input type="checkbox"/> Pagan |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Christian | <input type="checkbox"/> No religion/belief |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Humanist | <input type="checkbox"/> Other |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Jewish | |

34. How is your physical health, in general?

- | | |
|------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Very good | <input type="checkbox"/> Bad |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Good | <input type="checkbox"/> Very bad |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Fair | |

35. How is your mental/emotional health, in general?

- | | |
|------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Very good | <input type="checkbox"/> Bad |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Good | <input type="checkbox"/> Very bad |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Fair | |

36. What is your first language?

- English
- Other (please state):

37. Are you a volunteer or family carer who looks after or supports someone else in their home who needs help with their day-to-day life due to disability, illness or old age?

- | | |
|------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No |
|------------------------------|-----------------------------|

38. Do you have any children living with you?

- | | |
|------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No |
|------------------------------|-----------------------------|

39. Do you consider yourself to be disabled?

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> No | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes, day to day activities limited a little |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Yes, day to day activities limited a lot | |

40. If you selected 'yes', please select the options below that most apply:

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Blind or partially sighted | <input type="checkbox"/> Mental health condition |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Deaf (Sign Language (SL) user) | <input type="checkbox"/> Mobility impairment |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Hard of hearing or deaf (not SL user) | <input type="checkbox"/> Speech impairment |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Learning disability | <input type="checkbox"/> Other |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Long term illness or health condition (e.g. lasting more than 12 months) | |

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COMMERCIALISATION & FINANCIAL STRATEGY 2017 - 2020

Relevant Portfolio Holder	Councillor G Denaro
Portfolio Holder Consulted	Yes
Relevant Head of Service	Jayne Pickering – Director of Finance and Resources Deb Poole, Head of Transformation & Organisational Development Guy Revans – Head of Environment
Ward(s) Affected	All
Ward Councillor(s) Consulted	n/a
Key Decision	No

1. SUMMARY OF PROPOSALS

- 1.1 To agree for recommendation to Council the new Commercialisation and Financial Strategy 2017 - 2020.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

The Cabinet is asked to RECOMMEND to the Council

- 2.1 that the Commercialisation and Financial Strategy 2017- 2020 attached at Appendix 1 be approved and adopted.**

3. KEY ISSUES

- 3.1 The strategy broadly outlines Bromsgrove District Councils (BDC) approach to commercialisation and financial sustainability and should be considered as an extension of our existing transformation programme. Assumptions and detailed estimates for savings realised / income achieved are addressed within the detail of the Medium Term Financial Plan.
- 3.2 The strategy adopts a broad view of commercialisation, including all aspects of the ongoing transformation programme. This programme includes service reviews and redesign, shared services, revenue generation, pricing and maximising the value of our assets.
- 3.3 There will increasingly be a need to adopt a culture of actively looking for commercial opportunities without losing focus upon the transformation programme, existing customer base and the quality and ethos of public service delivery.
- 3.4 Services making positive financial contributions, either through commercial activity or internal efficiency, shall increasingly be considered as the norm.

In line with our systems thinking principles our staff will be involved in identifying and developing opportunities to transform and commercialise our services.

- 3.5 This strategy advocates that the commercialisation approach is open to all services (or elements of services). The approach initially is to pick a number of key opportunities. This will ensure organisational learning is built up, services and processes are transformed and redesigned, and projects resourced in the longer term without the need for extensive support.
- 3.6 The draft strategy (Appendix 1) has been designed to cover priority opportunities. A Commercialisation Programme Board has been established and has identified and prioritised three work streams that provide the greatest opportunities in terms of the council becoming more commercial. These are:
- Use of land and assets
 - Contracts
 - Income including fees and charges

Financial Implications

- 3.7 There are limited financial implications arising directly from this strategy.

Legal Implications

- 3.8 There are no legal implications arising directly from this strategy.

Service / Operational Implications

- 3.9 The strategy will help to provide a clear direction for service areas around the Council's approach to commercialisation. It will also help to ensure all parts of the Council design and deliver appropriate services to meet the needs of our communities.
- 3.10 The strategy has been discussed at the Commercialisation Programme Board and at Corporate Management Team. The Unions have also been consulted on its contents.

Customer / Equalities and Diversity Implications

- 3.11 There are no customer/equalities and diversity implications arising directly from this report.

4. RISK MANAGEMENT

- 4.1 There are no risk management implications arising directly from this report.

5. APPENDICES

Appendix 1 - Commercialisation and Financial Strategy 2017 - 2020

AUTHOR OF REPORT

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Commercialisation and Financial Strategy

Bromsgrove District Council
2017 – 2020

Authors:	Deb Poole - Head of Transformation & Organisational Development Guy Revans – Head of Environment Jayne Pickering – Director of Finance and Resources
Date:	13/09/2017
Release Version:	V1.3

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1. Commercialisation in Context

1.1 Overview

This document outlines Bromsgrove District Councils (BDC) approach to commercialisation and should be considered as an extension of our existing transformation programme.

There have been some excellent examples within our Council of shared services, transformation and cost saving initiatives being successfully carried out. These initiatives include; comprehensive sharing of services, redesigning services using a systems thinking approach, re-letting and re-negotiating contracts and consideration of other operating models.

Whilst excellent progress has been made there is a recognition that these measures alone will not be enough offset the significant funding pressures that BDC has experienced and further envisage in the coming years.

This strategy adopts a broad view of commercialisation, including all aspects of our ongoing transformation programme. This programme includes service reviews and redesign, shared services, revenue generation, pricing and maximising the value of our assets. All without compromising our corporate principles (see below) or our commitment to customer care.

Our Corporate Principles

- Design all of our services from the customer's perspective to ensure we respond to the needs of our communities.
- Help people to help themselves where appropriate.
- Be corporately responsible by ensuring we meet our ethical, environmental and social responsibilities, and that services support our communities to develop.
- Constantly innovate, to make the best use of our resources to ensure we deliver efficient, quality services and eliminate waste.
- Make decisions and provide challenge based on data, evidence and learning.
- Use the Council's unique position in the community to encourage and support change amongst partners and other agencies.
- Put the customer at the heart of what we do, treating people and issues fairly, with respect and honesty.
- Identify the best way to work, to satisfy customers' needs, by pushing departmental and organisational boundaries.

1.2 Commercialisation Strategy Drivers

The following key drivers have informed the development of this strategy:

- The Council has an ambition to be more financially sustainable in order to continue to deliver quality services to our residents;
- The Councils need to reduce waste in all services is forcing it to look at operating costs, methods of service delivery and operating models;
- The Council needs to ensure that the chosen methods of service delivery always make most effective use of resources;
- The Council needs to support services for local people as well as raise money to invest in the strategic purposes and priorities detailed in the Council Plan.
- The Council will need to make significant additional income and make better use of assets to offset the ongoing reduction in budgets

1.3 Commercialisation Vision

Our vision is for Bromsgrove District Council to become a systems thinking organisation that is efficient, effective, innovative and entrepreneurial.

This will be achieved by exploiting service transformation and commercial opportunities through trading, to ensure services are put onto a more sustainable long term footing.

1.4 What do we mean by commercialisation

Commercialisation for BDC has been defined as encompassing the following areas:

Shared services;
Transformation and efficiency;
Investments;
Marketing and selling of services and income generation opportunities;
Pricing analysis (fees and charges);
Consideration of concessions;
Better use of Council assets;
Better contract management;
Continuous improvement in procurement;
Digital and online options.

There will increasingly be a culture of services actively looking for additional opportunities without losing focus upon our ongoing transformation programme, existing customer base and the quality and ethos of public service delivery.

Services making positive financial contributions, either through commercial activity or internal efficiency, shall increasingly be considered as the norm. In line with our systems thinking principles our staff will be involved in identifying and developing opportunities to transform and commercialise our services.

This strategy advocates that the commercialisation approach is open to all services (or elements of services). The approach initially is to pick a number of key opportunities. This will ensure organisational learning is built up, services and processes are transformed and redesigned, and projects resourced in the longer term without the need for extensive support.

1.5 Our Commercialisation Principles

- We will ensure that there is a culture within our organisation that embraces change and that the work force has the appropriate skills to deliver successful commercial activities.
- All business cases will use the approved business case template and will include a robust options appraisal, market analysis, business modelling and full costings.
- We will challenge individuals or services that do not follow the approved transformation and business case frameworks.
- We will explore and exploit as many options for alternative methods of service delivery as possible.
- We will create an environment where people are encouraged and able to take considered risks and accept that some ideas may fail.
- Ensure that services will be fit for purpose and fit to compete in the market place.
- Be honest about current performance and accept that not all current services are ready for market.
- Be prepared to invest now for a return in the future.
- Carefully consider any requirement for a concession and understand why a concession is being offered.
- We will continually measure and review of our portfolio of external service offerings to ensure that they are delivering good financial returns and value to our residents and customers.
- Act in a socially responsible way and consider the impact of our business plans on the wider market place.
- To consider and risk assess who will be affected by stopping, changing or charging for any of our services.
- Whatever we do should contribute to the delivery of our strategic purposes.
- Consider opportunities to work with or facilitate the work of community partners to improve the efficiency and/or quality of service provision.

1.6 Links to Council strategies and policies

In devising the Commercialisation and Financial Strategy we have been mindful of the need for it to align with and complement other key documents that contribute towards the overall success of the Council. In particular, this strategy has been aligned to:

- Council Plan 2017-20220;
- Medium Term Financial Strategy
- Investment and Acquisitions Strategy
- Risk Strategy
- Equalities Strategy
- Engagement Strategy
- Branding and Marketing Guidelines
- Approved business case model

2. Key aims & objectives

- The overarching aim of the strategy is to deliver a financial return which contributes to the councils spending plans and helps deliver services and council plan priorities for the local community.
- To deliver this aim we will develop a programme of work that identifies potential commercial opportunities, ensuring that the agreed commercial principles are applied.
- We will ensure that the commercialisation programme is properly resourced and managed to successfully deliver the aims of the strategy.
- We will develop a structure to ensure fledgling commercial opportunities are nurtured and supported.
- We will seek to strengthen our reputation with residents, local businesses, the Local Government sector, staff, other customers, partners, and stakeholders in general.
- We will ensure that strategic and operational transformation programmes are undertaken across all major service areas, to enable us to seek more innovative approaches to delivery, drive out waste and challenge existing approaches to best meet the needs of our communities.
- We will support non-statutory services to reduce their subsidy including reducing overheads and increasing income in order to reduce risk of closure or reduction in service.
- Actively engage in market development and market shaping where no such market currently exists and using customer insight and data to manage specification and demand.
- Explore alternative investment models to support service delivery e.g. through social investment.
- Invest and use our financial strengths to deliver a financial return.

- Become a services provider to new and existing customers both from within the local authority environment and beyond, particularly where we are uniquely placed to do so.
- Use the commercial knowledge acquired through this programme to gain a competitive advantage.

3. Creating the right environment

Careful consideration will be given to creating the right environment within the organisation to nurture innovative ideas and develop them into robust project proposals. This will involve the following activities:

- Carryout a culture and skills review to establish if we have the culture and skills that will enable commercialisation to thrive. This review will also determine whether new governance arrangements and ways of working are required to achieve the maximum benefits from our commercialisation programme;
- Continue the communications campaign to draw in ideas from staff and generate new ideas;
- Use a framework for development of new propositions to be taken forward to outline business case stage;
- Ensuring that staff have the correct skills to successfully deliver our programme;
- Procure external support and expertise when necessary;
- Adopting a project management approach for the implementation of the programme;
- Ensuring new proposals have the right support from the Commercialisation Board, Councillors and stakeholders.

4. Priority opportunities

The Council is already exploring a number of priority commercial opportunities. A Commercialism Programme Board has also been established and has identified and prioritised three work streams that provide the greatest opportunities in terms of the council becoming more commercial. These are:

- Use of land and assets
- Contracts
- Income including fees and charges

In addition, the Council is currently investigating setting up a trading arm or arms to support the delivery of new revenue streams and have secured Local Government Association productivity expert funding to support this work.

Commercial opportunities resulting from these three work streams will be developed and assessed during 2017/18 and other opportunities will also be considered and developed by the Commercialisation Programme Board and brought to Cabinet where appropriate.

In view of the potential opportunities, the intention is to move at pace with the implementation of this strategy. The programme to support this, together with key dates, will be detailed in a commercialisation project plan monitored through the Commercialisation Programme Board.

5. Outcomes

Taking the approach outlined within this strategy is believed to be the most appropriate for Bromsgrove District Council, as it offers a number of key benefits, many of which have already been covered elsewhere within this strategy, including:

- Providing a real, tangible opportunity to make a contribution to the Medium Term Financial Strategy;
- Staff development – new skills will be acquired and can be transferred to other opportunities internally;
- Taking an approach of raising standards and generating revenue at the same time;
- Helping to provide a competitive advantage in key markets;
- Giving BDC an enhanced reputation as an innovative and forward thinking organisation;
- Transforming the organisation into an innovative workplace;
- Bringing benefits to the local economy;
- Ensuring the sustainability of non-statutory services that would otherwise be stopped due to lack of funding.

Financial Strategy 2017 - 2020

6. The Financial Strategy

The Financial Strategy sets out the Council's strategic approach to the management of its finances and provides a framework to enable the Medium Term Financial Plan to be developed to include indicative budgets and Council Tax levels over a four year period.

The overarching strategy informs the medium term financial planning of the Council which will deliver detailed plans of the respective budgets for the General Fund and Capital Programme. The objective of these plans is to deliver a sustainable budget over the medium term.

As referred to in the Commercialisation Strategy as the Council looks towards its financial challenges for 2018/19 onwards it is likely that this shift towards behaving more commercially and considering new funding models will continue. Increasing income generation is key to ensuring that the Council has a core funding stream to support our future service delivery whilst Government funding is reducing. However, we must also ensure focus is given to how we take advantage of new forms of local government finance, for example, through business rates growth.

A robust financial strategy and planning mechanism is essential to turn the Council Plan and strategic purposes into action within the communities of Bromsgrove. The priorities are set out in the Council's Plan for 2017-2020. The Financial Strategy also informs the Council's capital strategy, treasury management strategy and the preparation of annual budgets. These financial plans support the Council Plan in defining the funding available to deliver the councils services.

The Financial Strategy draws on the strength of the Council's corporate governance and control environment as set out in the latest Annual Governance Statement. This provides assurance that the Council's governance and financial arrangements can be relied upon to achieve its plans and policies.

There are a number of ways that the Council will ensure that it achieves financial sustainability. The assumptions and the detailed estimates for the savings realised / income achieved will be addressed within the Medium Term Financial Plan over the four year period. Whilst referred to in the commercialisation strategy the financial strategy framework presents how consideration of these themes can be progressed into tangible savings and additional income for the Council.

7. Generating income from Council services through charging, trading and investment

- Cost recovery – assess the ratio of income to expenditure across all services with the aim to improve recovery of cost to 100% depending on nature of

service, ability to recover income and impact on the delivery of the strategic purposes. Consider increasing fees to cover expenditure whilst managing the impact on those suffering hardship.

- Fees and Charges – review any areas where the Council is not currently charging and consider appropriate fee levels that balance the need for income generation and hardship.
- Identify areas of expertise and explore opportunities for trading with other Councils and organisations within the legislative boundaries.
- Review Council assets to ensure they support the delivery of the strategic purposes.
- In all cases where service redesign required or additional income realised , clear business cases are to be developed using the approved '5 case model' to ensure a consistent approach to reporting is undertaken and appropriate information is provided for the decision making body.
- Generate new marketing opportunities to ensure all opportunities are explored for generating income.
- Regularly review grant opportunities that may be available for the Council to support new initiatives.
- Ensure the Council Tax and Business Rates base are accurate to ensure all income can be recovered from residents and businesses.
- Work with community partners to explore efficiencies through joint and/or community led service delivery models.

8. Reducing costs by improving efficiency and removing waste from the system

- Regularly review contract arrangements (including shared services) with the aim to reduce cost or improve service delivery.
- Develop digital access to reduce costs and improve choice of access method for the community.
- Explore different payment methods to reduce costs and provide greater customer choice. For example, reduce the use of cash and cheques and encourage more direct debits and online payments.

9. Increasing Capital and Revenue returns by delivering housing and economic growth

- The Investment and Acquisition Strategy gives a structured approach to assess schemes based on robust criteria to enable a revenue rate of return to be secured for future projects. Assets will be reviewed to identify those with

the greatest potential for delivering enhanced capital value and/or revenue income.

- Review asset base to identify any areas of vacant land that may be used for investment opportunities to generate income, increase employment, skills and business rate growth.

10. Exploring the impact of changes in Government funding for the Council

- Review the impact of the Business Rate Legislation, impact on the Council and potential changes to pool arrangements.
- New Homes Bonus – assess the impact of future changes to methodology and ensure that all housing developments are included.
- Provide greater financial modelling of funding streams to enable informed decisions to be made across a number of scenarios.

This overarching financial strategy will ensure that the Council has a framework in place to address the future challenges and will inform the detailed Medium Term Financial Plan over the next four years.

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UPDATED CONTRACT AND FINANCIAL PROCEDURE RULES

Relevant Portfolio Holder	Councillor Brian Cooper
Portfolio Holder Consulted	-
Relevant Head of Service	Jayne Pickering – Exec Director Finance and Resources
Ward(s) Affected	All Wards
Ward Councillor(s) Consulted	No
Key Decision / Non-Key Decision	Non–Key Decision

1. SUMMARY OF PROPOSALS

- 1.1 To present the contract and financial procedure rules which have been reviewed and updated using best practice templates. The contract procedure rules provide clarity on roles, responsibilities and limits. The financial procedure rules provide certainty on what is permitted and form a key part of the Council’s internal control framework.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 That Cabinet recommend to Council approval of the updated contract and financial procedure rules which then apply from 23rd November 2017.

3. KEY ISSUES

Contract Procedure Rules

- 3.1 The contract procedure rules are provided at Appendix 1. The rules define the roles, responsibilities and limits which must be followed by the Council.
- 3.2 The procurement limits are summarised on page 3 of Appendix 1 and provided in more detail on page 14. In summary they require:-

Total value	Award procedure
£0- £3,000	There must be evidence of competitive enquiries being undertaken with details of final selection criteria recorded and retained for one year from date of purchase (this can be in electronic form e.g. email)
£3,001 - £25,000	At least 3 written quotations
£25,001- £50,000	<i>Invitation to quote</i> by advertisement
£50,001 – EU threshold*	<i>Invitation to tender</i> by advertisement
Above EU threshold*	<i>EU procedure</i> or where this does not apply, <i>invitation to tender</i> by advertisement

- 3.3 The European Union thresholds are currently £164,176 for supplies and services and £4,104,394 for works contracts. The majority of the Council contracts are supplies and services. The rules will apply the latest EU thresholds as they are updated.
- 3.4 The £3,000 limit for requiring three written quotes is intentionally low to force the discipline on the majority of the Council transactions.
- 3.5 Also in Appendix 1 there are the following areas of interest:-
- Pages 5 and 6 provide the exemptions where the contract procedures rules will not apply. These would be exceptional circumstances and apply in circumstances such as where there is proprietary goods or services, works with Government bodies, specialist plant and equipment, emergencies involving immediate risk to persons, property or serious disruption to services.
 - Page 7 provides the ability to procure through collaborative and e-procurement arrangements where are ready tendered or jointly procured contracts. The contracts can offer savings in both the cost and time taken to procure the services.
 - Pages 8 onwards provide the requirements to be followed on the procurement of goods and services including appraisal of the proposed purchase, preparation of the tender documents, records, advertising, approved lists and framework agreements.
 - Page 16 outlines the steps required if there is a need for consultants including the justification signed off by a Head of Service.

Financial Procedure Rules

- 3.6 The Financial Procedure Rules are attached at Appendix 2 and provide certainty on what is permitted and are a key part of the Council's internal control framework. There is an important link to the Contract Procedure Rules which is recognised on Page 9 paragraph 6.3.
- 3.7 The Financial Procedure Rules cover the key processes – income, ordering, payments, salaries, banking, asset management, audit, budget management and virement, insurance and risk management, treasury management and stores. The Rules also outline the arrangement for preventing financial irregularities and money laundering.
- 3.8 In terms of matters that usually receive most scrutiny the writing off of uncollectable debt is covered on pages 7 to 9 and the budgetary control and virements on page 19 to 21.
- 3.9 The writing off of uncollectable debt limits any write off over £100 to Service Managers (debt £101 to £2,000) and the Section 151/Deputy Section 151 and Head of Customer Access and Financial Support for debts Page 26.

- 3.10 The budget virement rules allow transfers:-
- up to £20,000 subject to approval by the Head of Service and the Financial Services Manager;
 - £20,000 to £40,000 by the Director of Finance and Resources
 - Over £40,000 by Cabinet

3.11 No transfers are allowed for salary budgets.

3.12 Executive Summaries of both the Contract and Financial Procedure Rules have been considered by the Budget Scrutiny Group and the Rules reflect their considerations.

Financial Implications

3.13 As well as proving an internal control framework the Contract and Financial Procedure Rules encourage a process that secures contracts for the goods and services that are required by the Council and the best price. The Efficiency Plan for the Council seeks to deliver savings through procurement.

Legal Implications

3.14 The Contract and Financial Procedure Rules are key internal control documents required by the Council under Section 151 of the Local Government Act 1972 for the proper administration of our financial affairs.

Service / Operational Implications

3.15 The Contract and Financial Procedure Rules provide clarity of how processes should operate and encourages good decision making which in turn should have a positive impact on services/customers.

Customer / Equalities and Diversity Implications

3.16 As 3.10. In addition, the Contract Procedure Rules require the advertising of opportunities to encourage interest from potential tenderers.

4. RISK MANAGEMENT

4.1 The Contract Procedure Rules provide a requirement for a risk assessments/register for any contracts over the EU thresholds. The Financial Procedure Rules outline the requirement for a planned, and systematic approach to the identification, evaluation and control of risk.

5. APPENDICES

Appendix 1 – Contract Procedure Rules
Appendix 2 – Financial Procedure Rules

CABINET

4th OCTOBER 2017

AUTHOR OF REPORT

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Contract Procedure Rules

APPENDIX 1

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INTRODUCTION AND SUMMARY OF ESSENTIAL REQUIREMENTS

A. Introduction

In this document, any words in *italics* are explained in the Definitions Appendix. References to “the Council” includes the Council’s Cabinet and any other Committee or persons acting in accordance with delegated authority on behalf of the Council, as set out in the Council’s Constitution.

These Contract Procedure Rules exist to ensure that the Council lets contracts in a fair, consistent, honest, legal and transparent manner. There is a statutory basis for the rules which promote good purchasing practice and public accountability. Following the rules is also the best defence against potential allegations that a purchase has been made incorrectly or fraudulently.

All Council staff with financial responsibilities, especially for purchasing, must comply with these Contract Procedure Rules. This includes purchasing on behalf of other organisations and purchasing using external funding e.g. grants. The Contract Procedure Rules lay down the minimum requirements and more rigorous procedures may be appropriate for specific contracts. Exemptions are only to be used in exceptional circumstances as detailed in Section 3. Failure to comply with these Contract Procedure Rules could result in disciplinary action.

This edition of the Procedure Rules will apply from 23rd November 2017 and supersedes all previous editions. The Rules are reviewed from time to time and are available on the Council’s Intranet and Website.

B. Summary of essential requirements

- Follow the rules if you have a delegated responsibility to purchase goods or services or order building work.
- Always check with your line manager about your responsibilities and take all necessary legal, financial and professional advice.
- Declare any personal interest in a contract and withdraw from taking part in it. Corruption and or Bribery is a criminal offence.
- Conduct an appraisal of the purchasing need and the requirement to obtain best value for money.
- Check whether there is an existing *corporate or national* contract you can make use of before undergoing a competitive process.
- Allow at least four weeks for submission of bids for high value contracts (not to be submitted by fax or e-mail).

- Keep bids confidential.
- Complete a written contract or Council order before the supply or works begin.
- Identify a *contract manager* (on both sides) with responsibility for ensuring the contract delivers as intended.
- Keep records of all dealings with suppliers.
- Ensure that where there is a requirement for communication to be in writing, this includes e-mail and fax transmissions as well as hard copy.
- Assess each contract afterwards to see how well it met the purchasing need and *value for money* requirements.

C. Summary of values and thresholds determining competition requirements

Total value	Award procedure
£0- £3,000	There must be evidence of competitive enquiries being undertaken with details of final selection criteria recorded and retained for one year from date of purchase (this can be in electronic form e.g. email)
£3,001 - £25,000	At least 3 written quotations
£25,001- £50,000	<i>Invitation to quote</i> by advertisement
£50,001 – EU threshold*	<i>Invitation to tender</i> by advertisement
Above EU threshold*	<i>EU procedure</i> or where this does not apply, <i>invitation to tender</i> by advertisement

See CPR 11 for further information.

Values exclude VAT, staff costs and fees.

*EU Threshold as at 1.1.16 (updated every 2 years):

£4,104,394 (works contracts)

£164,176 (supplies and services contracts)

SCOPE OF CONTRACT PROCEDURE RULES

1. BASIC PRINCIPLES

All purchasing and disposal procedures must:

- achieve *best value* for public money spent;
- be consistent with the highest standards of integrity;
- ensure fairness in allocating public contracts;
- comply with all legal requirements;
- ensure that where *non commercial* considerations are discussed in every contracting decision and that these are linked to and support the Councils 'social value' aims as set out in our corporate strategy. No other *non-commercial* considerations should influence any contracting decision;
- support the Council's corporate vision, aims, values and policies;
- comply with the Council's corporate *procurement strategy*.

2. OFFICER RESPONSIBILITIES

2.1 *Service Unit Managers* will ensure that:

- *Authorised Officers* comply with these procedure rules;
- registers are securely maintained of:
 - contracts completed by signature, rather than by the Council's seal (see Rule 16.3)
 - exemptions recorded under Rule 3.1;
- appropriate training is provided to staff involved in procurement.

2.2 All *Authorised Officers* responsible for purchasing or disposal must comply with these procedure rules, the Council's *Financial Regulations*, and codes of conduct and with all UK and European Union binding legal requirements. *Authorised Officers* must ensure that any agents, consultants and contractual partners acting on their behalf also comply, as if they were an officer of the Council.

2.3 Where the Council is acting jointly with other organisations it shall be a condition of any contribution by the Council that these procedure rules are followed where applicable.

2.4 *Authorised Officers* must:

- have regard to any Council guidance on best practice in purchasing;
- check whether a suitable *corporate or national contract* exists before seeking to let another contract; where a suitable *corporate or national contract* exists, this must be used unless there is an auditable reason not to;
- where appropriate ensure the providers of Council services will comply with the 7 Nolan principles
- comply with the requirements of Government transparency code 2015
- take all necessary legal, financial, audit, procurement and other professional advice.

2.5 When any employee (either of the Council or of a service provider) may be affected by any transfer arrangement, *Authorised Officers* must ensure that the Transfer of Undertakings (Protection of Employment) (*TUPE*) *regulations* are considered and obtain legal advice before proceeding with inviting Tenders or Quotations.

2.6 Any doubts as to the interpretation of these procedure rules should be referred to the relevant Service Unit Manager in the first instance and if necessary to the Procurement Officer or the Director of Finance & Resources.

2.7 Failure to comply with these procedure rules may leave the Council, or individual officers or members, open to the risk of legal challenge. Breaches will be regarded as a serious matter. Any officer becoming aware of any compliance failure should inform the Director of Finance & Resources who will, if necessary, investigate the matter and report to the Cabinet. Alternatively, matters can be raised through the Council's whistleblowing policy.

3. EXEMPTIONS, COLLABORATIVE AND E-PROCUREMENT ARRANGEMENTS

3.1 Exemptions

3.1.1 In exceptional circumstances, these Contract Procedure Rules will not apply if:

- (i) the appropriate *Service Unit Manager*, in consultation with the Director of Finance & Resources, is satisfied that there is no genuine competition, for example where:
 - (a) the goods or materials are proprietary articles or are sold only at a fixed price and no satisfactory alternative is available;
 - (b) the price of goods, materials or services are wholly controlled by trade organisations or government order;

-
- (c) the goods, materials or services are required for repairing or servicing existing specialist plant or equipment;
 - (d) the work is required to be carried out by public service providers.

Where there is no genuine competition, the *Service Unit Manager*, in consultation with the Director of Finance & Resources, will obtain written quotations from the contractor, and where appropriate, will negotiate to obtain best value for money for the Council prior to awarding any contract;

- (ii) the proposed contract for the execution of work forms part of a serial programme, the terms having been negotiated with the contractor on the basis of the rates and prices contained in an initial contract awarded competitively following an invitation to provide a written quotation or tender;
- (iv) the goods, materials or services are required due to an emergency involving immediate risk to persons, property or serious disruption to Council services;
- (v) the appropriate *Service Unit Manager* and the *Head of Service* agree that significant financial loss may be incurred if the letting of the contract is delayed;
- (vi) external/partner funding arrangements require other procedures to be followed;

3.1.2 In cases (iv) and (v) above the appropriate *Service Unit Manager* may obtain verbal quotations provided they are subsequently confirmed in writing.

3.1.3 If the Director of Finance & Resources, appropriate *Service Unit Manager* or *Authorised Officer* with appropriate authority to deal with a particular contract is of the opinion that any of these procedure rules should not apply to a contract, an appropriate report will be submitted to the Cabinet at the earliest opportunity. Where the contract is likely to exceed £50,000, the relevant *portfolio holder* must be consulted.

3.1.4 Where a proposed contract is likely to exceed the *EU threshold*, a *Service Unit Manager* has no delegated powers and the matter has to be determined by the Cabinet.

3.1.5 Where an exemption is necessary because of an unforeseeable emergency the *Authorised Officer* in conjunction with the Director of Finance & Resources and/or *Head of Service* may jointly approve the exemption but they must prepare a report for the next Cabinet to support the action taken.

3.1.6 All exemptions, and the reasons for them, must be recorded and signed by the *Authorised Officer* and countersigned by the *Service Unit Manager* using a form of waiver then signed by the Head of Service.

3.1.7 Where the Council carries out work using a recognised standard form of contract from a professional institution, procedural requirements may differ slightly to those laid down in these Contract Procedure Rules.

3.1.8 *Service Unit Managers* will monitor the use of all exemptions.

3.2 Collaborative and E-procurement arrangements

3.2.1 In order to secure value for money, the Council may enter into collaborative procurement arrangements, including initiatives such as E-auctions with other Councils. *Authorised Officers* wishing to do this must consult the *Head of Service* and the *Director* of Finance & Resources where the purchase is to be made using collaborative procurement arrangements with another local authority, government department, statutory undertaker or public service purchasing consortium.

3.2.2 All purchases made via a local authority purchasing and distribution consortium (e.g. ESPO, YPO and CCS) are deemed to comply with these contract procedure rules and no exemption is required. However, purchases above the *EU threshold* must be let under the EU procedure, unless the consortium has satisfied this requirement already by letting their contract in accordance with the EU procedures on behalf of the authority and other consortium members.

3.2.3 Any contracts entered into through collaboration with other local authorities or other public bodies, where a competitive process has been followed that complies with the contract procedure rules of the leading organisation, will be deemed to comply with these contract procedure rules and no exemption is required. However, advice must be sought from the *Head of Service* and *Director* of Finance & Resources.

3.2.4 The use of e-procurement technology does not negate the requirement to comply with all elements of these contract procedure rules, particularly those relating to competition and value for money.

4. RELEVANT CONTRACTS

4.1 All relevant contracts must comply with these contract procedure rules. A relevant contract is any arrangement made by, or on behalf of the Council for the carrying out of works, or for the supply (or disposal) of goods and materials or the carrying out of services. These include arrangements for:

- the supply or disposal of goods;
- delivery of services, including (but not limited to) those related to:
 - the recruitment of staff;
 - land and property transactions;
 - financial and consultancy services.

4.2 *Relevant contracts* do not include:

- contracts of employment which make an individual a direct employee of the authority, or;
- agreements regarding the acquisition, disposal or transfer of land (for which Financial Regulations shall apply).

COMMON REQUIREMENTS

5. STEPS PRIOR TO PURCHASE

5.1 Pre-commitment appraisal

5.1.1 *Authorised Officers* must carry out an appraisal of the proposed purchase, in a manner appropriate to its complexity and value, taking into account any advice and guidance available within the Council. The appraisal should where relevant:

- take into account the requirements from any relevant review;
- appraise the need for the expenditure and its priority;
- define the objectives of the purchase;
- assess the risks associated with the purchase and how to manage them;
- consider the procurement method most likely to achieve the purchasing objectives, including internal or external sourcing, partnering, packaging strategy and collaborative procurement arrangements with another local authority, government department, statutory undertaker or public service purchasing consortium;
- consult users as appropriate about the proposed procurement method, contract standards and performance and user satisfaction monitoring;
- draft the terms and conditions that are to apply to the proposed contract;
- set out these matters in writing if the *total value* of the purchase is High Value i.e. exceeds £50,000.

5.1.2 The appraisal must confirm that there is member or delegated approval for the expenditure and the purchase accords with the approved policy framework and scheme of delegation as set out in the *Constitution*. The proposed contract must be provided for in an appropriate budget and a proper financial and technical appraisal must be carried out.

5.2 Preparation of tender documents

5.2.1 Where written quotations or tenders are required, the tender documentation will normally consist of some or all of the following documents:

- (i) instructions to tenderers;
- (ii) specification;
- (iii) drawings;
- (iv) pricing schedule;
- (v) conditions of contract;
- (vi) form of tender.

5.2.2 Other information may need to be made available to ensure that tenderers' bids reflect service requirements and are competitively priced. This may include the following:

- (i) an outline of the tender evaluation criteria;
- (ii) the terms and conditions under which any assets will be made available;
- (iii) workforce information required for assessing any prospective liability in relation to *TUPE legislation*. To ensure consistency of provision of information, this may be provided by the Council's *Authorised Officer* and not by an existing contractor;
- (iv) the amount of work likely to be available under the contract.

5.2.3 The *Authorised Officer* will ensure that:

- (i) ambiguities and contradictions do not occur between documents and information provided;
- (ii) any locally prepared variations to standard documentation are clear and use generally accepted terms;
- (iii) contract conditions and specifications are in the best interests of the Council in respect of quality, cost and performance;
- (iv) independent scrutiny of tender documentation occurs at this stage, as errors may eventually prove costly;
- (v) contracts are sufficiently clear and robust to enable the Council to enforce their fulfilment;

-
- (vi) potential tenderers understand the implications of the Freedom of Information legislation, in particular that commercial confidentiality cannot be guaranteed.

5.2.4 To ensure consistency and to aid understanding by the tenderer, tender documentation will be collated by an experienced officer who will obtain the advice and approval of the *Director of Finance and Resources*.

5.2.5 For all contracts, sufficient time must be made available at each of the key stages, for example to allow potential contractors to provide a considered response and answer any supplementary questions.

6. RECORDS

6.1 Where the total value is less than £50,000, the following records must be kept:

- invitations to quote and quotations received;
- a record:
 - of any exemptions and the reasons for them;
 - of the reason if the lowest price is not accepted;
- written records of communications with the successful contractor or an electronic record if a written record of the transaction would normally not be produced.

6.2 Where the total value exceeds £50,000 the *Authorised Officer* must record:

- the method for obtaining bids (see Rule 11.1.1);
- any contracting decision and the reasons for it;
- any exemption under Rule 3 together with the reasons for it;
- the award criteria in descending order of importance;
- tender documents sent to and received from tenderers;
- pre-tender market research;
- clarification and post-tender negotiation (to include minutes of meetings)
- the contract documents;
- post-contract evaluation and monitoring;

- formal communications with tenderers and with the successful contractor throughout the period of the contract.

6.3 Records required by this rule must be kept for six years after the end of the contract. However, written documents which relate to unsuccessful tenderers may be scanned or stored by some other suitable method after 12 months from award of contract, provided there is no challenge to the award.

6.4 *Service Unit Managers* will maintain adequate records in order to produce a register or list of all current contracts, to include the name of the contractor, the work to be done/goods supplied, the contract value, expiry dates and timescales for renewal.

7. ADVERTISING, APPROVED LISTS AND FRAMEWORK AGREEMENTS

7.1 Identifying and assessing potential tenderers

7.1.1 *Authorised Officers* shall ensure that, where proposed contracts, irrespective of their total value, might be of interest to potential tenderers located in other member states of the EU, a sufficiently accessible advertisement is published. Generally, the greater the interest of the contract to potential bidders from other member states, the wider the coverage of the advertisement should be. Examples of where such advertisements may be placed include:

- the Council's website;
- finditinworcestershire website
- Contracts finder website
- portal websites specifically created for contract advertisements;
- national official journals, or;
- the Official Journal of the European Union (OJEU)/Tenders Electronic Daily (TED) (even if there is no requirement within the *EU procedure*).

7.1.2 *Authorised Officers* are responsible for ensuring that all potential tenderers for a *relevant contract* are suitably assessed. The assessment process shall establish that *potential tenderers* have sound:

- economic and financial standing;
- technical ability and capacity to fulfil the Council's requirements.

7.2 Framework Agreements

7.2.1 *Authorised Officers* will check whether a suitable framework agreement exists before seeking to let another contract.

Framework Agreements

7.2.2 The term of a Framework Agreement must not exceed four years. An agreement may be entered into with one provider but where an agreement is concluded with several organisations, there must be at least three in number.

7.2.3 Contracts based on Framework Agreements may be awarded by either:-

- Applying the terms laid down in the Framework Agreement (where such terms are sufficiently precise to cover the particular call-off) without reopening competition; or
- Where terms laid down in the Framework Agreement are not precise enough or complete for the particular call-off, by holding a mini competition in accordance with the following procedure:
 - Inviting the organisations with the Framework Agreement that are capable of executing the subject of the contract to submit written tenders;
 - Fixing a time limit which is sufficiently long to allow tenders for each specific contract to be submitted, taking into account factors such as the complexity of the subject of the contract;
 - Awarding each contract to the tenderer who has submitted the best tender on the basis of the evaluation criteria set out in the specifications of the Framework Agreement.

8. COMMUNITY RIGHT TO CHALLENGE

8.1 The Community Right to Challenge under Part 5 of the Localism Act allows certain *Relevant Bodies* to submit expressions of interest to deliver council services. The Act states that the Council must consider expressions of interest in respect of relevant services from relevant bodies which include:

- (i) voluntary/community bodies;
- (ii) charities;
- (iii) parish councils;
- (iv) two or more employees of the relevant authority.

8.2 Details of the Statutory Guidance on Community Right to Challenge along with other background information can be found at:
<http://www.communities.gov.uk/documents/localgovernment/pdf/2168126.pdf>

8.3 In order to meet our obligations under the Localism Act the Council will:

-
- accept informal approaches from all Relevant Bodies;
 - prepare and maintain an online 'Contracts Register'* detailing when the window of opportunity to bid for each contract will open and close and setting out the time frame within which:
 - (i) Expressions Of Interest (EOI) will be acknowledged;
 - (ii) a decision will be made;
 - (iii) how soon any procurement process *to include the EOI* will start.

* it will be the relevant *Service Unit Managers* responsibility to update and maintain the register in respect of contracts entered by their section – further information can be obtained from Legal and Support Services.

9. CONSTRUCTION, DESIGN AND MANAGEMENT REGULATIONS

Please see separate policy. It is a requirement that all contracts let by the Council comply with Construction, Design and Management (CDM) Regulations.

10. PUBLIC SERVICES (SOCIAL VALUE) ACT 2012

10.1 The Public Services (Social Value) Act 2012 requires contracting authorities to consider at the pre-procurement stage of **any** services contract and services framework agreement (including goods and works contracts procured in combination with services) to which the Public Contracts Regulations 2015) apply:

- how the proposed procurement may improve the economic, social and environmental well-being of their areas;
- how the contracting authority may act with a view to securing that improvement in conducting the process of procurement;
- in addition, the contracting authority is required to consider whether to undertake any community consultation on the above matters.

10.2 If you are undertaking a procurement exercise to which you think this Act applies please consult with the Procurement Officer before proceeding.

CONDUCTING PURCHASE AND DISPOSAL

11. COMPETITION REQUIREMENTS FOR PURCHASE, DISPOSAL AND PARTNERSHIP ARRANGEMENTS

The Authorised Officer must calculate the total value of any proposed purchase or disposal. The following procedures apply where there are no other procedures which take precedence. Other procedures may include agency agreements with

government. If in doubt, *Authorised Officers* must seek the advice of the *Procurement Officer and/or the Director of Finance and Resources*.

11.1 Purchasing: competition requirements

11.1.1 Where the total value for a purchase is within the values in the first column below, the *award procedure* in the second column must be followed.

Purchasing: competition requirements

Total value	Award procedure
£0-£3,000	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <input type="checkbox"/> Must consider using existing corporate contract if there is one or an existing <i>Framework Agreement</i> provided costs are competitive. • There must be evidence of competitive enquiries being undertaken with details of final selection criteria recoded & retained. • The Contractor can be selected on price alone; however if chosen contractor is not the lowest quote, MEAT evaluation should be used to justify choice. • Consider using the Due North Electronic Portal Quick Quote process.
£3,001 - £25,000	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Must consider using existing corporate contract if there is one or an existing <i>Framework Agreement</i> provided costs are competitive. • Must obtain at least 3 written quotations • MEAT evaluation criteria must be used to support decision if contract awarded other than on price alone. • Should consider using Tender procedure if appropriate • Consider using the Due North Electronic Portal Quick Quote Process.
£25,001 - £50,000	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Must consider using existing corporate contract if there is one or an existing <i>Framework Agreement</i> provided costs are competitive • Must advertise the contract and invite expressions of interest via the Due North Portal. • Must use Council's formal Quotation documents
£50,001 – EU Threshold	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Must consider using existing corporate contract if there is one or an existing

	<p><i>Framework Agreement</i> provided costs are competitive</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Must advertise the contract and invite expressions of interest via the Due North Portal. • Must use Council's formal tender documents
Above EU threshold*	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In accordance with <i>EU Procedures</i> and advice from the Procurement Officer and Legal Services

Values exclude VAT, staff costs and fees.

***EU Threshold** as at 1.1.16 (updated every 2 years)

£4,104,394 (works contracts)

£164,176 (supplies and services contracts)

11.1.2 Where it can be demonstrated that there are insufficient suitably qualified *potential tenderers* to meet the competition requirement, all suitably qualified *potential tenderers* must be invited.

11.1.3 An *Authorised Officer* must not split orders, enter into separate contracts or select a method of calculating the total value in order to minimise the application of these contract procedure rules.

11.1.4 Where the *EU procedure* is required, the *Authorised Officer* shall consult the *Director of Finance and Resources* to determine the method of conducting the purchase.

11.2 **Assets for disposal**

11.2.1 For stocks and stores, *Service Unit Managers* will be responsible for the disposal of surplus assets subject to the agreement of the *Head of Service*. This will be by public auction, competitive tender or by other manner most beneficial to the Council. Any disposal of a single asset valued in excess of £5,000 will be reported to the Cabinet.

11.2.2 For land and property assets, the *Head of Service* in conjunction with the appropriate *Portfolio Holder* in accordance with *Financial Regulations* will exercise a delegation to deal with disposals up to £50,000. Disposals over £50,000 will require the prior approval of the Cabinet who will consider a report by the *Head of Service*, which will include the financial, legal and other consequences of the proposed disposal. Disposals over £500,000 also require the approval of full Council.

11.2.3 The Localism Act requires the Council to maintain a register of Community assets. The register is maintained and kept by *The Director of Finance & Resources*. If there is interest in the disposal of any asset listed on the Register a set procedure needs to be followed and a full consultation needs to be undertaken. Any approach made to the Council with regards disposal of an asset listed on the register must go to the *Director of Finance & Resources* in the first instance.

11.3 Providing services to external purchasers

11.3.1 The *Head of Service* and the *Director of Finance and Resources* must be consulted where it is proposed to do work for organisations other than Bromsgrove District Council.

11.4 Collaborative and partnership arrangements

11.4.1 Collaborative and partnership arrangements are subject to all UK and EU procurement legislation and must follow these Contract Procedure Rules. If in doubt, *Authorised Officers* must seek the advice of the *Procurement Officer*.

11.5 Appointment of consultants

11.5.1 *Consultants* will only be used if in the opinion of the appropriate *Service Unit Manager* in consultation with the *Head of Service* the work cannot be handled by Council employees.

11.5.2 If the consultant is to be appointed, a note should be placed on the file stating:

- (i) why it was necessary to use an external consultant;
- (ii) the brief for the project;
- (iii) the brief for selecting the consultant and how this was met;
- (iv) the names of the members and Officers involved in the selection process.
- (vi) Officers should consider any other options for savings before any appointment.

11.5.3 Consultants shall be selected in accordance with table C.

11.5.4 The engagement of a *consultant* shall follow the agreement of a brief that adequately describes the scope of the services to be provided and shall be subject to completion of a formal letter or contract of appointment. The appropriate *Service Unit Manager* will ensure that the requirements of 11.5.5 below are written into the contract and are verified.

11.5.5 Any *consultant* working on behalf of the Council will:

- (i) comply in all respects with the Council's Contract Procedure Rules and Financial Regulations;
- (ii) hold, where appropriate, an adequate level of professional indemnity insurance to cover any loss that may arise;

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- (iii) produce all records relating to the contract on request during the currency of the contract;
 - (iv) pass all relevant records to the *Service Unit Manager* on completion of the contract, to be maintained in accordance with Rule 6.

11.5.6 There may be instances when the use of these Contract Procedure Rules to appoint a consultant would be inappropriate, for example when engaging a barrister or other consultant where quality of performance is more important than the lowest tender.

11.5.7 For all types of *consultants*, the appropriate *Service Unit Manager* will:

- (i) ensure that consultancies can be properly funded, within an approved budget and expenditure code;
- (ii) consider the type of contract and how payments will be made;
- (iii) draw up a written contract with any *consultants* engaged;
- (iv) appoint a project manager to manage and monitor each consultancy project;
- (v) ensure that all documentation relating to a proposed consultancy is collated by an experienced officer in consultation with the *Director of Finance and Resources* if appropriate.

11.5.8 When grants are awarded to outside bodies to fund *consultants* (for example to carry out feasibility studies) the organisation concerned will be responsible for appointing and monitoring the *consultants*.

11.6 Information Technology

11.6.1 The procurement of information technology should follow all other rules but in addition the following requirements apply.

11.6.2 For all information technology purchases, approval must be sought from the IT Services.

11.6.3 Any extension or additional modules to software may be procured without a Tendering process if:

- (i) the original system was procured through a full Tendering exercise;
- (ii) the contracts for the system and any support and maintenance contracts are still in term;
- (iii) the cost of additional modules does not exceed 25% of the original purchase price;

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- (iv) the total cumulative price does not exceed the OJEU Threshold; and
 - (v) the proposed purchase has had a technical sign off by the IT Services and the Procurement Officer .

12. PRE-TENDER MARKET RESEARCH AND CONSULTATION

12.1 The *Authorised Officer* responsible for the purchase:

- may consult potential suppliers prior to the issue of the *invitation to tender* in general terms about the nature, level and standard of the supply,
- contract packaging and other relevant matters, provided this does not prejudice any potential supplier or tenderer, but
- must not seek or accept technical advice on the preparation of an *invitation to tender or quotation* from anyone who may have a commercial interest in them, if this may prejudice the equal treatment of all potential suppliers/tenderers or distort competition, and
- should seek advice as appropriate, for example from the Procurement Officer and the Director of Finance and Resources.

13. STANDARDS AND AWARD CRITERIA

13.1 The *Authorised Officer* must ascertain whether there are any relevant British, European or international standards which apply to the subject matter of the contract. The officer must include those standards which are necessary to properly describe the required quality. *The Director of Finance and Resources* must be consulted if it is proposed to use standards other than European standards.

13.2 The *Authorised Officer* must define award criteria that are appropriate to the purchase and designed to secure an outcome giving value for money for the Council. The basic criteria are:

- 'lowest price' where payment is to be made by the Council;
- 'highest price' if payment is to be received; or
- 'most economically advantageous', where considerations other than price also apply.
- local training and employment opportunities

If the last criterion is adopted, it must be further defined by reference to subcriteria which may refer only to relevant considerations. These may include price, service, quality of goods, running costs, technical merit, previous experience, delivery date, cost effectiveness, relevant environmental considerations, aesthetic and functional

characteristics (including security and control features), safety, after-sales services, technical assistance and any other relevant matters.

13.3 *Award criteria* must not include:

- *Non-commercial* considerations: (fully explained in definitions appendix);
- matters which discriminate against suppliers from the *European Economic Area* or signatories to the *Government Procurement Agreement*.

14. INVITATIONS TO TENDER/QUOTATIONS

*** please use standard documentation when possible**

14.1 All *invitations to tender* must state that no tender will be considered unless it is received by the date, place and time stipulated. Tenders delivered in contravention of this clause will not be considered.

14.2 All *invitations to tender* shall include the following:

- (i) specification that describes the Council's requirements in sufficient detail to enable the submission of competitive offers;
- (ii) requirement for tenderers to declare that the *tender* content, price or any other figure or particulars concerning the *tender* have not been disclosed by the tenderer to any other party (except where such a disclosure is made in confidence for a necessary purpose);
- (iii) requirement for tenderers to complete fully and sign all *tender* documents including a form of *tender* and certificates relating to canvassing and non-collusion;
- (iv) notification that tenders are submitted to the Council on the basis that they are compiled at the tenderer's expense;
- (v) a description of the *award procedure* and, unless defined in a prior advertisement, a definition of the award criteria in objective terms and if possible in descending order of importance;
- (vi) notification that no tender will be considered unless it is enclosed in a sealed envelope or container which bears the word '*Tender*' followed by the subject to which it relates, but no other name or mark indicating the sender;
- (vii) a stipulation that any *tenders* submitted by fax or other electronic means (excluding any formal electronic tendering arrangements) shall not be considered;

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- (viii) the method by which any arithmetical errors discovered in the submitted *tenders* will be dealt with, in particular, whether the overall price prevails over the rates in the tender or vice versa.
- 14.3 All invitations to *tender* or quotations must specify the goods, service or works that are required, together with the terms and conditions of contract that will apply (see Rule 16).
- 14.4 The invitation to *tender* or *quotation* must state that the Council is not bound to accept any *tender* or *quotation*.
- 14.5 All potential suppliers invited to tender or quote must be issued with the same information at the same time and subject to the same conditions. Any supplementary information must be given on the same basis.
- 15. SHORTLISTING**
- 15.1 Any *shortlisting* must have regard to the financial and technical standards relevant to the contract and the *award criteria*. Special rules apply in respect of the *EU Procedure*.
- 16. SUBMISSION, RECEIPT AND OPENING OF TENDERS/QUOTATIONS**
- 16.1 Potential suppliers must be given an adequate period in which to prepare and submit a proper *quotation* or *tender*, consistent with the complexity of the contract requirement. Normally at least four weeks should be allowed for submission of tenders. *The EU procedure* lays down specific time periods.
- 16.2 **Receipt and safe custody of tenders**
- The Council's electronic tendering system will receive, receipt and store (via a secure online portal) all the Council's tenders.
- Receipt of tenders will be logged electronically on the system and a full audit trail evidenced, including dates and times of receipt and opening.
- 16.3 **Opening tenders and Register of tenders**
- (i) The e-tendering system shall be maintained by the Procurement Department to show for each set of competitive tender invitations despatched:
- The name of all firms' individuals invited;
 - The names of firms individuals from which tenders have been received;
 - The date the tenders were received and opened;

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- The person(s) opening the 'Tender Box';
 - The price shown on each tender.

17. CLARIFICATION PROCEDURES AND POST-TENDER NEGOTIATION

- 17.1 Providing clarification of an *invitation to tender* to potential or actual tenderers, or seeking clarification of a *tender*, whether in writing or by way of a meeting, is permitted. However, discussions with tenderers after submission of a *tender* and before the award of a contract with a view to obtaining adjustments in price, delivery or content (i.e. post-*tender* negotiations) must be the exception rather than the rule. In particular, they must not be conducted in an *EU procedure* where this might distort competition, especially with regard to price.
- 17.2 If post-tender negotiations are necessary, then such negotiations shall only be undertaken with tenderer(s) identified as having submitted the best *tender(s)*. During negotiations tendered rates and prices shall only be adjusted in respect of a corresponding adjustment in the scope or quantity included in the tender documents. *Authorised Officers* appointed to carry out post-tender negotiations should ensure that there are recorded minutes of all negotiation meetings and that both parties agree actions in writing.
- 17.3 Whenever it is proposed to enter into post-tender negotiation, the *Director of Finance and Resources* must be consulted for advice. Negotiations must be conducted by a team of at least two Officers.
- 17.4 Where post-tender negotiation results in a fundamental change to the specification (or contract terms) the contract must not be awarded but retendered.

18. TENDER EVALUATION, AWARD OF CONTRACT, AND DE-BRIEFING TENDERERS

- 18.1 Apart from the debriefing required or permitted by these contract procedure rules, the confidentiality of quotations, *tenders* and the identity of tenderers must be preserved at all times and information about one tenderer's response must not be given to another tenderer.
- 18.2 Tenderers must complete all tender documentation. Any omissions may render a tender null and void, with no further consideration given.
- 18.3 *Tenders* must be evaluated impartially in accordance with the award criteria. At least the most competitive tender received will be evaluated. Particular attention will be given to rates and prices, percentage adjustments, balancing items, ambiguities, qualifications and alternative offers. The following must also be included in the evaluation:
- comparison of submitted *tender* prices with pre-tender estimates, and resolution of any discrepancies;

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- overall *value for money* assessment;
 - quality of performance on any previous Council contracts;
 - previous experience;
 - views of referees;
 - financial standing;
 - capability of EU compliance, where appropriate;
 - proposals for health and safety, equality and diversity, and dealing with complaints;
 - any significant environmental features of goods and services such as life expectancy, energy efficiency, recyclability.
 - Contribution to delivering the priorities and goals in our corporate strategy.
- 18.4 Compliant *tenders* must be checked for arithmetic accuracy, including the correct extension and summation of rates tendered in the bill of quantities. If arithmetical errors are found they should be notified to the tenderer, who should be requested to confirm or withdraw their *tender*. Alternatively, if the rates in the tender, rather than the overall price, were stated within the *tender* invitation as being dominant, an amended tender price may be requested to accord with the rates given by the tenderer.
- 18.5 No amendments to *tender* rates after submission of tenders will be permitted. If a tenderer withdraws or the revised tender is no longer the most competitive, the next most competitive will be examined and dealt with in the same way.
- 18.6 *Authorised Officers* may accept quotations and tenders received in respect of proposed contracts, provided they are within the approved estimate and have been sought and evaluated fully in accordance with these contract procedure rules. In respect of proposed High Value and EU contracts, the approval of the relevant *Head of Service* will be obtained, and the awarding of the contract will be reported to the next Cabinet and minuted.
- 18.7 For EU contracts, the *Authorised Officer* must notify all tenderers simultaneously and as soon as possible of the intention to award the contract to the successful tenderer. The *Authorised Officer* must provide unsuccessful tenderers with a period of at least ten calendar days (Standstill Period) in which to challenge the decision before awarding the contract. If the decision is challenged by an unsuccessful tenderer then the *Authorised Officer* shall not award the contract and shall immediately seek the advice of the *Director of Finance and Resources*.

18.8 Once the contract has been let, all unsuccessful tenderers will be notified of the results, and may be informed of the successful price on request. The letter of acceptance will not seek to qualify the terms and amounts previously tendered by the contractor.

18.9 If a tenderer requests in writing the reasons for a contracting decision, the *Authorised Officer* must give the reasons in writing within reasonable time frame of the request.

CONTRACT AND OTHER FORMALITIES

19. CONTRACT DOCUMENTS

19.1 Relevant contracts

19.1.1 All *relevant contracts* that exceed the High Value threshold shall be in writing.

19.1.2 All *relevant contracts*, irrespective of value, shall clearly specify:

- what is to be supplied (i.e. the work, goods, materials or services to be delivered or undertaken);
- a defined quality of provision, requiring where appropriate that all works carried out or goods supplied will conform to current British Standards or Codes of Practice;
- the provisions for payment (i.e. the price to be paid and when, including details of any discounts or deductions, and where appropriate a means of defining price adjustments for any subsequent amendment of requirements);
- the time, or times, within which the contract is to be performed, and any other conditions and terms as may be agreed between the parties;
- the provisions for the Council to terminate the contract.

19.1.3 The Council's ordering procedures, as laid down in Financial Regulations, must be used wherever possible.

19.1.4 The formal advice of the *Director of Finance and Resources* must be sought in the following instances:

- where the *total value* exceeds £50,000;
- those involving leasing arrangements;
- where it is proposed to use a supplier's own terms;
- those that are complex in any way.

19.1.5 Every relevant contract over the High Value threshold must, where applicable, also state clearly:

- any insurance requirements. This will include, where appropriate, Professional Indemnity insurance, which will protect the Council's interests and cover any potential losses. An adequate level of insurance will be determined in consultation with the Council's insurers;
- health and safety requirements;
- performance and complaints monitoring requirements;
- data protection requirements, if relevant;
- any professional, quality or EU standards that must be met;
- any Council expectations regarding environmentally sustainable working practices;
- equalities and diversity requirements;
- freedom of information requirements;
- that when *agents* are used to let contracts, they must comply with the Council's contract procedure rules;
- a right of access to relevant documentation and records of the contractor for monitoring and audit purposes;
- that the contractor may not assign or sub-contract without prior written consent from the Council's *Authorised Officer*.

19.2 Contract formalities

19.2.1 Agreements shall be completed by the following as a minimum:

Total Value (Rule 11.1.1)	Method of Completion	By
Low value	Signature	Authorised Officer
Medium value	Signature	Service Unit Manager
High value	Signature/Sealing	See Rule 19.3.1

19.2.2 The contract letting process must allow sufficient time for the legal documentation to be completed prior to the start of the contract. All contracts should be concluded in writing before the supply, service or construction work begins, except in exceptional circumstances where it is essential that the contract starts before formal contract signing. In such cases reasons will be clearly noted on the contract file.

19.2.3 The *Authorised Officer* responsible for securing signature of the contract must ensure that the person signing for the other contracting party has authority to bind it.

19.3 Sealing

19.3.1 Where it is appropriate for contract documents to be sealed by the Council, this will be done in accordance with the Council's constitution.

19.3.2 Copies all contracts entered should be stored with the Legal Section.

19.3.3 Details of all contracts should be added to and maintained on the Contracts Register maintained by the Legal Section.

20. BONDS, PARENT COMPANY GUARANTEES AND LIQUIDATED DAMAGES

20.1 *Authorised Officers* must consult the *Head of Service* about whether a parent company guarantee is necessary when it is proposed to appoint a contractor who is a subsidiary of a parent company and:

- the *total value* of the proposed contract exceeds £1 million; or
- award is based on evaluation of the parent company; or
- there is concern about the stability of the contractor.

20.2 *Authorised Officers* must consult the *Head of Service* about whether a bond is needed:

- where the total value of the proposed contract exceeds £1 million; or
- where it is proposed to make stage or other payments in advance of receiving the whole of the subject matter of the contract and there is concern about the stability of the contractor.

20.3 If a *bond* is deemed necessary, the amount will be at least 10% of the contract sum (or its annual value where the contract relates to continuing service). Any decision not to require a bond will be recorded on the appropriate file.

20.4 Provision should be made for liquidated damages to be paid by the contractor if the contract is not completed within the time specified. This will normally be the case for contracts over £500,000 but may also be appropriate for lesser value contracts. The amount of liquidated damages will be determined by the appropriate *Service Unit Manager* in consultation with the *Head of Service*.

20.5 In certain circumstances, both a *parent company guarantee* and a *bond* may be required.

21. PREVENTION OF CORRUPTION

21.1 Officers and Members must not invite or accept any gift or reward in respect of the award or performance of any contract. High standards of conduct are obligatory. Corrupt behaviour will lead to dismissal in the case of Officers and a reference to the Standards Committee in the case of Members. Where appropriate a matter may be referred to the Police.

21.2 The following clause must be put in every written Council contract:

“The Council may terminate this contract and recover all its loss if the Contractor, its employees or anyone acting on the Contractor’s behalf do any of the following things:

- (i) offers, gives or agrees to give to anyone any inducement or reward in respect of this or any other Council contract (even if the Contractor does not know what has been done); or
- (ii) commits an offence under the Prevention of Corruption Acts 1889 to 1916 or Section 117(2) of the Local Government Act 1972; or
- (iii) commits any fraud in connection with this or any other Council contract whether alone or in conjunction with Council members, contractors or employees.

Any clause limiting the Contractor’s liability shall not apply to this clause.”

22. BRIBERY ACT 2010

22.1 The Bribery Act 2010 sets out a number of prohibited acts which, if committed, carry criminal sanctions. Specifically the Council is covered by the offences in the following sections of the Act:

- Section 1: the offence of bribing another person;
- Section 2: the offences relating to being bribed;
- Section 6: the offence of bribing a foreign public official.

22.2 Government guidance highlights as the main example of how an employee of a public authority may commit an offence under the Act is if they accept a payment in return for manipulating the process or outcome of a public procurement in favour of a particular bidder.

22.3 The Council has an overriding duty to prevent and eliminate bribery not only in the way that it affects employees but also by ensuring that no contractors have been involved in any bribery offences. The Government has confirmed that a conviction for an offence under the Act will trigger discretionary not mandatory exclusion from

competing for public contracts under regulation 23 of the Public Contracts Regulation 2015.

- 22.4 If you have any concerns in respect of bribery by another *officer* and/or a contractor/tenderer then please inform *Head of Service* or the *Director of Finance and Resources* immediately. Failure to do so could result in criminal proceedings against you personally.

23. DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

- 23.1 Officers and Members must have regard to their relevant codes of conduct.
- 23.2 Officers must declare to their *Service Unit Manager* any interests which could bring about conflict with the Council's interests.
- 23.3 Members must disclose all relevant interests on their register of interest forms, and at any meetings they attend.

CONTRACT MANAGEMENT

24. MANAGING CONTRACTS

- 24.1 All contracts must have a named Council *contract manager* for the entirety of the contract. This will normally be the appropriate *Service Unit Manager* or a named deputy.
- 24.2 All contract managers will comply with these *Contract Procedure Rules* and any associated Council guidance.

25. RISK ASSESSMENT AND CONTINGENCY PLANNING

- 25.1 A business case must be prepared for all procurements with a potential value over the *EU threshold*. Provision for resources for the management of the contract, for its entirety, must be identified in the business case.
- 25.2 For all High Value contracts, contract managers must:
- maintain a risk register during the contract period;
 - undertake appropriate risk assessments;
 - for identified risks, ensure contingency measures are in place;
 - undertake and record such checks as are necessary to ensure that the contractor's insurance policies remain in force for the duration of the contract.

26. CONTRACT MONITORING, EVALUATION AND REVIEW

26.1 During the life of a contract, the *contract manager* must monitor the contractor in respect of:

- performance;
- risk management;
- compliance with specification and contract;
- cost;
- any value for money requirements;
- user satisfaction.

26.2 In the case of High Value contracts, the *Head of Service* will be responsible for budget monitoring and reporting any particular areas of concern to the Senior Management Team and the appropriate Cabinet member.

DEFINITIONS APPENDIX

Agent

A person or organisation acting on behalf of the Council, or on behalf of another organisation.

Approved list

A list drawn up in accordance with Rule 7.2.

Authorised Officer

The Officer designated to deal with the contract in question. This is usually the Service Unit Manager or their nominated deputy.

Award criteria

The criteria by which the successful quotation or tender is to be selected (see Rules 10 and 11.2e).

Award procedure

The procedure for awarding a contract as specified in Rules 8, 10 and 15.

Best value

The duty, which Part I of the Local Government Act 1999 places on local authorities, to secure continuous improvement in the way in which functions are exercised, having regard to a combination of economy, efficiency and effectiveness as implemented by the Council.

This terminology has now in many instances been superseded by value for money.

Bond

An insurance policy intended to protect the Council against a level of cost arising from the contractor's failure. If a contractor does not fulfil their contractual obligations, the Council can claim the sum of money specified in the bond (often 10% of the contract value).

Cabinet

See Cabinet.

Chief Finance Officer

The Head of Service or such other Officer as may be designated by him.

Chief Officer

The Officers defined as such in the constitution.

Code of conduct

The code regulating conduct of Officers. See Council Personnel Policy C4 on the Council Intranet. A national code of conduct is also in the course of preparation.

Committee

A Committee which has power to make decisions for the Council, for example a joint Committee with another local authority, but not a Scrutiny Committee.

Constitution

The constitutional document approved by the Council which:

- allocates powers and responsibility within the Council and between it and others;
- delegates authority to the Cabinet, Committees, Portfolio Holders and Officers;
- regulates the behaviour of individuals and groups through rules of procedure, codes and protocols.

Consultant

Someone engaged for a specific length of time to work to a defined project brief with clear outcomes to be delivered, who brings specialist skills or knowledge to the role, and where the Council has no ready access to employees with the skills, experience or capacity to undertake the work.

Contract Manager

The named Council officer, usually a Service Unit Manager, who is responsible for sponsoring a contract from inception to completion.

Contracting decision

Any of the following decisions:

- composition of approved lists;
- withdrawal of invitation to tender;
- whom to invite to submit a quotation or tender;
- Shortlisting;

-
- award of contract;
 - any decision to terminate a contract.

Corporate contract

A contract let to benefit all sections of the Council, to support the Council's aim of achieving value for money.

Head of Service

As defined in the constitution.

EU procedure

The procedure required by the EU where the total value exceeds the EU threshold.

EU threshold

The contract value at which the EU public procurement directives apply. The values usually change every 2 years. As at 1.1.16 these were:

£4,104,394 (works contracts)

£164,176 (supplies and services contracts)

European Economic Area

(EEA) provides for the free movement of persons, goods, services and capital through three of the four member states of the European Free Trade Association (EFTA) – Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway – and 27 of the 28 member states of the European Union (EU).

Cabinet

The Council's Cabinet as defined in the constitution.

Financial Regulations

The financial regulations outlining Officer responsibilities for financial matters issued by the Head of Service in accordance with the constitution.

Framework Agreement

An agreement between one or more authorities and one or more economic operators, the purpose of which is to establish the terms governing contracts to be awarded during a given period, in particular with regard to price and, where appropriate, the quantity envisaged.

Government Procurement Agreement

The successor agreement to the General Agreement on Trade and Tariffs. The main signatories other than those in the European Economic Area are the USA, Canada, Japan, Israel, South Korea, Switzerland, Norway, Aruba, Hong Kong, China, Liechtenstein and Singapore.

Director of Finance and Resources

As identified in the constitution.

High profile

A high-profile purchase is one that could have an impact on functions integral to Council service delivery should it fail or go wrong.

High risk

A high-risk purchase is one which presents the potential for substantial exposure on the Council's part should it fail or go wrong.

High Value contract

Where the value exceeds the threshold as stated in the summary of essential requirements in the introduction to these contract procedure rules. Formal written tenders are required. See also EU threshold.

Invitation to tender

Invitation to tender documents in the form required by these contract procedure rules.

Key decision

Decisions that are defined as key decisions in the constitution.

Line Manager

The Officer's immediate superior or the Officer designated by the Service Unit Manager to exercise the role reserved to the line manager by these contract procedure rules.

Low Value contract

As defined in the summary of essential requirements in the introduction to these contract procedure rules. Verbal estimates are required, confirmed in writing over a particular value.

Managing Director

The Council's Chief Executive Officer, as defined in the constitution.

MEA

Most Economically Advantageous.

Medium Value contract

As defined in the summary of essential requirements in the introduction to these contract procedure rules. Written quotations are required.

Nominated suppliers and sub-contractors

Those persons specified in a main contract for the discharge of any part of that contract.

Non-commercial considerations

- (a) The terms and conditions of employment by contractors of their workers or the composition of, the arrangements for the promotion, transfer or training of or the other opportunities afforded to, their workforces ('workforce matters').
- (b) Whether the terms on which contractors contract with their sub-contractors constitute, in the case of contracts with individuals, contracts for the provision by them as self-employed persons of their services only.
- (c) Any involvement of the business activities or interests of contractors with irrelevant fields of government policy.
- (d) The conduct of contractors or workers in industrial disputes between them or any involvement of the business activities of contractors in industrial disputes between other persons ('industrial disputes').
- (e) The country or territory of origin of supplies to, or the location in any country or territory of the business activities or interests of, contractors.
- (f) Any political, industrial or sectarian affiliations or interests of contractors or their directors, partners or employees.
- (g) Financial support or lack of financial support by contractors for any institution to or from which the authority gives or withholds support.
- (h) Use or non-use by contractors of technical or professional services provided by the authority under the Building Act 1984.

Workforce matters and industrial disputes, as defined in paragraphs (a) and (d), cease to be non-commercial considerations to the extent necessary or expedient to comply with best value; or where there is a transfer of staff to which the Transfer of undertakings (Protection of Employment) Regulations 1981 (TUPE) may apply.

Parent company guarantee

A contract which binds the parent of a subsidiary company as follows: if the subsidiary company fails in its contractual obligations, the Council can require the parent company to rectify the situation.

Portfolio Holder

A member of the Cabinet to whom political responsibility is allocated in respect of specified functions.

Potential Tenderer

Any person who asks or is invited to submit a quotation or tender.

Priority services

Those services required to be tendered as defined in the EU public procurement directives.

Procurement strategy

The document setting out the Council's approach to procurement and key priorities for the next few years.

Quotation

A quotation of price and any other relevant matter (without the formal issue of an invitation to tender).

Relevant contract

Contracts to which these contract procedure rules apply (see Rule 4).

Senior Management Team

Collective name for Managing Director and Heads of Service.

Service Unit Manager

Heads of Service who report directly to the Managing Director, collectively known as the Senior Management Team.

Shortlisting

The process of selecting potential suppliers or contractors who are to be invited to quote or bid or to proceed to final evaluation.

Statutory basis

The Local Government Act 1972 (section 135) requires Local Authorities to introduce and implement standing orders (procedure rules) for contracts made “by them or on their behalf for the supply of goods and materials or for the execution of works”.

The Local Government Act 1988 (Part II) lays down general rules as to contracting practice. All contracts let by the Council will comply with these rules.

The Local Government Act 1999 and associated guidance requires local authorities to make arrangements to secure best value and continuous improvement in exercising current functions and also when considering procurement options for future service delivery.

Tender

A formal proposal submitted in response to an invitation to tender.

Tenderer

Any person who submits a formal quotation or tender in response to an invitation to tender.

Tender register

The register kept by the Director of Finance and Resources to record details of tenders (see Rule 16.5).

Total value

The whole of the value or estimated value (in money or equivalent value) for a single purchase or disposal calculated as follows:

- (a) where the contract is for a fixed period, by taking the total price to be paid or which might be paid during the whole of the period;
- (b) where the purchase involves recurrent transactions for the same type of item, by aggregating the value of those transactions in the coming 12 months;
- (c) where the contract is for an uncertain duration, by multiplying the monthly payment by 48;
- (d) for feasibility studies, the value of the scheme or contracts which may be awarded as a result;
- (e) for nominated suppliers and sub-contractors, the total value shall be the value of that part of the main contract to be fulfilled by the nominated supplier or sub-contractor.

TUPE

Transfer of Undertakings (Protection of Employment) Regulations 2006 (SI 2006 No. 246)

Subject to certain conditions, these regulations apply where responsibility for the delivery of works or services for the authority is transferred from one organisation (e.g. private contractor, local authority in-house team) to another (e.g. following a contracting-out or competitive tendering process) and where the individuals involved in carrying out the work are transferred to the new employer. These regulations seek to protect the rights of employees in such transfers, enabling them to enjoy the same terms and conditions, with continuity of employment, as existed with their former employer. Broadly, TUPE regulations ensure that the rights of employees are transferred along with the business.

Value for Money

Value for money is not just the lowest possible price: it combines goods or services that fully meet your needs, with the level of quality required, delivery at the required time, and at an appropriate price.

Section 1 - Financial Procedure Rules APPENDIX 2

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APPENDIX A Responsibilities under the Financial Procedure Rules

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PART A FINANCIAL REGULATION POLICY (1.0)

Background

- 1.1 Section 151 of the Local Government Act 1972 *requires that “Every local authority shall make arrangements for the proper administration of their financial affairs and shall secure that one of their Officers has responsibility for the administration of those affairs”.*
- 1.2 The person with overall responsibility for Bromsgrove District Council financial affairs under the act, the Chief Financial Officer (CFO) or Section 151 Officer is the Director of Finance and Resources. Bromsgrove District Council uses the Chartered Institute of Public Finance (CIPFA) guidance in defining the role of their Director of Finance and Resources:
- is a key member of the leadership team, helping it to develop and implement strategy and to resource and deliver the authority’s strategic objectives sustainably and in the public interest;
 - must be actively involved in, and able to bring influence to bear on, all material business decisions to ensure immediate and longer term implications, opportunities and risks are fully considered, and alignment with the authority’s financial strategy; and
 - must lead the promotion and delivery by the whole authority of good financial management so that public money is safeguarded at all times and used appropriately, economically, efficiently and effectively.
- 1.3 To deliver these responsibilities the Director of Finance and Resources:
- must lead and direct a finance function that is resourced to be fit for purpose; and
 - must be professionally qualified and suitably experienced.
- 1.4 The 1988 Local Government Act makes a requirement to have a designated qualified Deputy S151 Officer to act on their behalf in his/her absence or if requested by the Director of Finance and Resources to do so. The role designated as Deputy S151 Officer is the Financial Services Manager.
- 1.6 The Financial Procedure Rules apply to every Member and Officer of the Council and anyone acting on its behalf.

Purpose

- 1.7 The purpose of the Financial Procedures Rules are:
- Promote best value and improve service delivery;
 - Set out procedures for employees and members to meet the Council’s expected standards;

- Demonstrate that controls are in place.

Controls

- 1.8 The Financial Procedure Rules consist of this policy, the Financial Regulations and the financial guidance. All employees and Members are required at all times when engaged on Council activities to comply with these documents as applicable.

PART B FINANCIAL REGULATIONS (2.0)

- 2.1 All Members and Officers must comply with these Financial Procedure Rules all times as applicable.
- 2.2 All Members and Officers must at all times when engaged on Council activities act in the interest of the Council.
- 2.3 All activities must comply with legislation, approved service plans and other Council policies or procedure documents.
- 2.4 All activities must seek to achieve value for money.
- 2.5 Managers must ensure that there are controls in place for every system under their management.
- 2.6 Adequate records must be kept for all transactions in all systems.
- 2.7 Members and Officers have a general responsibility for taking reasonable action to provide for the security of assets under their control and for ensuring that the use of these resources is legal, properly authorised, provide value for money and achieves best value.
- 2.8 The Chief Executive, Directors, Auditors and other Officers designated by them should have unrestricted access to all assets and records held on behalf of the Council.
- 2.9 Members, Officers and others acting on behalf of the Council are required to have proper regard to the advice and guidance issued by the Director of Finance and Resources on the Financial Procedure Rules.
- 2.10 Every report to Members require approval by the Director of Finance and Resources, or a nominee designated by the Director of Finance and Resources, setting out the financial implications of the recommendation(s) proposed.
- 2.11 The Council's expectation of propriety and accountability is that Members and staff at all levels shall lead by example in ensuring adherence to financial and legal requirements, rules, procedures and practices.
- 2.12 Members and staff at all levels shall act in accordance with the Council's anti-fraud and anti-corruption policies.
- 2.13 The Council also expects that individuals and organisations (e.g. suppliers, contractors, service providers) that it comes into contact with, shall act towards the Council with integrity and without thought or actions involving fraud or corruption.
- 2.14 The Council's Scheme of Delegation is the formal record of delegation of financial decision making.

PART C FINANCIAL GUIDANCE

3.0 Urgent decisions

- 3.1 In accordance with the Council's Scheme of Delegation to Officers the Chief Executive and in his absence the Directors, are empowered to take all necessary decisions in cases of emergency.
- 3.2 Any decisions made under the 'urgent decision' arrangements shall be reported to Council.
- 3.3 Nothing in these finance procedure rules shall prevent expenditure required to meet immediate needs caused by a sudden emergency to which the Civil Contingencies Act 2004 applies, provided that such expenditure shall be reported as soon as possible to the appropriate Cabinet member and the Cabinet.

4.0 Income charging policy

- 4.1 Local authorities have a wide discretion to levy charges for services. Where charges can be set at the discretion of the Council Directors should comply with the income and charging principles, including:
- a) The Council should aim to charge for all services where it is appropriate to do so, unless there are conflicting policies or legal reasons not to do so.
 - b) The Council should (subject to market conditions) aim to maximise income from fees and charges by ensuring that the full cost of provision and enforcement is recovered, unless there are contrary policies, legal or contractual reasons.
 - c) Decisions to subsidise services, or to not make a charge for a service should be clearly linked to Council objectives, and the potential income that is not earned must be a consideration in the decision.
 - d) Where the Council continues to subsidise the cost of services provided to customers, the level of subsidy should be clearly understood by the Service unit.
 - e) Charges must be linked to both service and strategic objectives and must be clearly understood.
 - f) The direct implications of charging for residents, and the indirect implications for public, private and voluntary sector partners should be clearly understood.
 - g) Any concessionary scheme should be based on ability to pay and be applied in a consistent and transparent approach across all Council services.
 - h) Where appropriate annual inflationary uplifts will be applied through the budget setting process, this will be agreed by Members as part of the budget setting process.

5.0 Income collection

5.1 The Director of Finance and Resources shall agree arrangements for the collection of all income and approve procedures and systems. In order to achieve this, the following controls must be followed:

- a) All income due to the Council is identified, charged correctly and billed promptly.
- b) All money received by an employee on behalf of the Council is paid without delay to the Director of Finance and Resources or to a nominated Officer or into the Council's specified bank account and is properly recorded.
- c) All receipts given for money should be on an official receipt form.
- d) All income is collected from the correct person, at the right time using the correct procedures and appropriate stationery and effective recovery action to pursue outstanding sums is taken within defined timescales.
- e) A formal approval process for write-offs of uncollectable debts should be followed using the criteria detailed below.
- f) Personal cheques shall not be cashed out of money held on behalf of the Council.
- g) All income received shall be receipted immediately.
- h) Officers shall record all cash received immediately; its use for either personal or official purposes is strictly forbidden.
- i) All paying in records shall be retained securely in line with the Council's policies on the retention of documents.

5.2 The Director of Finance and Resources has determined the following authorisations for writing off uncollectable debt:

Value	Recommendation	Examined/ Approved	Authorised
Credit balances	Income Officer Rent & Welfare Officer Locality Officer Housing Database Officer Revenue Officer Benefits Overpayments Officer	Appropriate Service Supervisors/ Team Leaders	Appropriate Service Managers
Debts up to £100	Income Officer Rent & Welfare Officer Locality Officer	N/A	Appropriate Service Supervisors/ Team Leaders.

Value	Recommendation	Examined/ Approved	Authorised
	Revenue Officer Benefits Overpayments Officer		
£101 - £2,000	Income Officer Rent & Welfare Officer Locality Officer Revenue Officer Benefits Overpayments Officers	N/A	Appropriate Service Managers
Debts over £2,000	Income Officer Rent & Welfare Officer Locality Officer Revenue Officer Benefits Overpayments Officers	Service Managers	Director o Finance and Resources - Section 151 Officer Financial Services Manager (Deputy Section 151 Officer). Head of Customer Access and Financial Support
Debts remitted by Magistrates or where a term of imprisonment has been served	Income Officer Rent & Welfare Officer Locality Officer Revenue Officer Benefits Overpayments Officer	N/A	Appropriate Service Managers
Insolvency proceedings Administration Order (where claim has been formally acknowledged	Income Officer Rent & Welfare Officer Locality Officer Revenue Officer Benefits Overpayments Officer	N/A	Appropriate Service Managers
Debtor is deceased no prospect of dividend from estate	Income Officer Rent & Welfare Officer Locality Officer Revenue Officer Benefits Overpayments Officer	N/A	Appropriate Service Managers
Debt matching agreements	Appropriate Service Managers		Director of Finance and Corporate Resources

Value	Recommendation	Examined/ Approved	Authorised
Cases of hardship or discretionary write offs	Appropriate Service Managers		Director of Finance and Corporate Resources in conjunction with the Portfolio Holder for Finance and Enabling.

6.0 Orders for goods, works and services

- 6.1 Orders shall not be issued for goods, work or services unless the cost is covered by an approved budget. No payment will be made without an authorised order, unless otherwise agreed by the Director of Finance and Resources or Financial Services Manager.
- 6.2 All orders given on behalf of the Council shall be approved in electronic or written form in accordance with signatory limits. All orders are to be authorised by Officers nominated by the appropriate Head of Service who shall be responsible for official orders issued from his or her Service.
- 6.3 The key controls for ordering and paying for work, goods and services are:
- a) All works, goods and services are ordered only by appropriate persons and recorded.
 - b) All works, goods and services shall be ordered in accordance with the Contracts Procedure rules unless they are purchased from internal sources within the Council.
 - c) Works, goods and services received are checked to ensure they are in accordance with the order.
 - d) Payments are authorised by Officers who can certify that goods have been received to price, quantity and quality.
 - e) All payments are made to the correct person, for the correct amount and are properly recorded, regardless of the payment method.
 - f) All appropriate payment documents are retained and stored for the defined period in accordance with the Bromsgrove District Council Records Management Policy'.
 - g) All expenditure is accurately recorded against the right budget and any exceptions corrected.
 - h) That processes are in place to maintain the security and integrity of data for transacting business electronically.

7.0 Payments

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- 7.1 Individual Officers shall ensure that payments are authorised by appropriate Officers who can certify that goods and services have been received and that price, quantity and quality are in accordance with the initial order.
 - 7.2 Heads of Service shall maintain for their area a list of Authorised Officers showing their signing levels with specimen signatures, this is to be held on the Council intranet. This list should be reviewed at intervals to ensure is up to date and accurate and any changes being reported promptly.
 - 7.3 Where an electronic file contains multiple payments, an Officer may authorise the whole file with one signature if his or her authorised limit is at least the value of the highest individual amount within that file.
 - 7.4 References to certification and authorisation are deemed to include those made online within a system where the identity of the user is verified using the system's identification protocols.
 - 7.5 Once certified, all accounts paid through the centralised payment system must be passed to the Payments Section that shall ensure that the required payment is made to the correct person by the agreed method of payment and that all expenditure including VAT is accurately recorded against the correct budget.
 - 7.6 Requests for payment shall be rejected by the Senior Payments Officer unless certified by an Officer who has the appropriate level of authority.
 - 7.7 The use of feeder systems to generate payments will only be allowed if the Director of Finance and Resources is satisfied that the data integrity of the corporate financial system would not be compromised and that the feeder system works in accordance with these financial procedures.
 - 7.8 Invoices do not need specific authorisation for payment in an electronic system where the invoice matches the authorised order and goods receipt, and all three are correctly entered into the system.
 - 7.9 In accordance with the Public Contract Regulations 2015 and the Late Payment of Commercial Debts Regulations 2013, and to maximise performance under the contract; the Council has to process all undisputed invoices within 30 days of receipt. The same shall apply to contractors in respect of any subcontractor arrangements applied under the applicable Council contract(s). All Council contracts shall contain provisions to this effect. All accounts received must be date stamped with the day of receipt. In the event of a claim for damages/interest for late payment, the amount will be charged to the budget of the Directorate responsible.
 - 7.10 The Director of Finance and Resources shall ensure that all appropriate payment documentation is retained for the required period of time in accordance with the Bromsgrove District Council Records Management Policy.

8.0 Salaries, wages, pensions, travel and subsistence

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- 8.1 Heads of Service shall maintain for their area a list of Authorised Officers showing their signing levels with specimen signatures, this is to be held on the Council intranet. This list should be reviewed at intervals to ensure is up to date and accurate and any changes being reported promptly.
- 8.2 All claims for payment of allowances, subsistence, travelling and expenses must be submitted within two months of the period they relate to on the approved form, duly certified in a form approved by the Director of Finance and Resources with all required supporting evidence including receipts for expenses where appropriate. Any exceptions shall require individual certification by both the Director and the Head of Service.
- 8.3 The certification of claims by or on behalf of a Director or Head of Service shall be taken to mean that the Certifying Officer is satisfied that the journeys and the expenses incurred were necessary and authorised as being in line with the council's policies on travel and subsistence claims.
- 8.4 The Senior Payroll Officer shall ensure that all appropriate payroll documents are retained for the required period of time in accordance with the Council Records Management Policy.

9.0 Imprest accounts

- 9.1 The Financial Services Manager will authorise provision of a cash or bank imprest account to meet minor expenditure on behalf of the Council.
- 9.2 The Financial Services Manager will maintain a record of all advances made and reconcile to the Council's main financial system.

In summary Officers operating an imprest account will comply with the following procedures:

- a) Obtain and retain vouchers to support each payment from the imprest account including official VAT receipts where appropriate.
- b) Make adequate arrangements in their office for the safe custody of the account including vouchers and any other supporting documentation.
- c) Produce upon demand by the Financial Services Manager cash and all vouchers to the total value of the imprest account.
- d) Record transactions promptly.
- e) Reconcile and balance the account at least monthly with reconciliation sheets to be signed and retained by the imprest holder.
- f) Provide the Financial Services Manager with a certificate of the value of the account held at 31st March each year.
- g) Ensure that the imprest is never used to cash personal cheques or to make personal loans.

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- h) Ensure that the only payments into the account are the reimbursement payments and any notes/coinage relating to purchases made by a cash advance from the imprest account.
 - i) Ensure income due to the Council is collected and banked as provided in accordance with the Council's Financial Procedure Rules and not through an imprest account.
 - j) On leaving the Council's employment, ceasing to be entitled to hold an imprest advance or no longer requiring an imprest advance, Officers must request that the Financial Services Manager close the account. All funds and account documentation should be returned to the Financial Services Manager.
 - k) A bank imprest account cannot become overdrawn.
 - l) Submit a claim for reimbursement at least monthly or return a nil claim.

10.0 Banking arrangements and Government Procurement cards

- 10.1 All arrangements with the Council's bank concerning the Council's bank accounts and for the ordering and issue of cheques shall be made by, or under arrangements approved by, the Director of Finance and Resources. The Director of Finance and Resources shall be authorised to open and operate such banking accounts, as he or she may consider necessary. This authority shall include the power to give the necessary directions to the bank as to signatures for withdrawals.
- 10.2 Apart from payments from Government Procurement cards, petty cash, imprest accounts, the normal method of payment due from the Council shall be by BACS or cheque. Direct debit and periodical payment arrangements shall require the prior agreement and authorisation of the Director of Finance and Resources.
- 10.3 All cheques and cheque stationery shall be ordered only on the authority of the Director of Finance and Resources who shall be satisfied that proper arrangements are in place for their safe custody. Where the signature is printed on the cheque by a Council system, the signature shall be that of the Director of Finance and Resources.
- 10.4 The Director of Finance and Resources shall be responsible for authorising the issue of Government Procurement cards and determining spending limits. Cardholders are required to comply with the policy issued by the Director of Finance and Resources regulating the use of corporate credit cards as shown in Appendix B. Purchases must be made in accordance with the Contract Procedure rules. This policy will include the requirement for cardholders to provide the Senior Payments Officer with a receipt and complete the online system with details of all items purchased including the general ledger code this is due by 17th of each month.

11.0 Preventing financial irregularities

- 11.1 All Officers are required under their contractual obligation to report financial irregularities at the earliest opportunity to their Manager or Director of Finance and Resources. The Director of Finance and Resources will report financial irregularities to the Chief Executive, Cabinet and the Audit, Standards and Governance

Committee. Providers of services are required to highlight financial irregularities immediately as stipulated under the contract procedure rules.

- 11.2 The Director of Finance and Resources, in conjunction with audit, will determine the scope of any internal enquiries or investigations, subject to consultation with the relevant member of the Management Team.
- 11.3 The Director of Finance and Resources, in consultation with the relevant member of the Management Team, will decide whether any matter under investigation should be referred for Police investigation and take recovery action as appropriate on such matters.
- 11.4 The Director of Finance and Resources will inform the Chief Executive and Monitoring Officer if a suspected irregularity occurs involving staff who are his or her responsibility.
- 11.5 All staff and members must report financial irregularities to the Director of Finance and Resources.
- 11.6 The Director of Finance and Resources will advise the relevant Director if the outcome of an audit investigation indicates improper behaviour by a member of staff; or the Monitoring Officer if the outcome of an audit investigation indicates improper behaviour by an Elected Member. The Director or Monitoring Officer will then instigate the relevant disciplinary/standards procedure.

12.0 Money laundering

- 12.1 The Director of Finance and Resources is appointed as the Money Laundering Reporting Officer (MLRO). This Officer shall ensure that all staff likely to receive payments from the public, businesses or professions are aware of the authority's responsibilities under the Proceeds of Crime Act 2002, the Money Laundering Regulations 2007 and any other relevant acts and regulations, such as the Terrorism Act 2000 and Anti-terrorism, Crime and Security Act 2001.
- 12.2 The MLRO shall receive reports from staff about suspicious payments of any value for any purpose and payments in cash in excess of £10,000 including in aggregate.
- 12.3 The MLRO shall report any instance of suspected money laundering to the serious organised crime agency.

13.0 Asset management

Introduction

- 13.1 The asset management section of the Council's Financial Procedure Rules provides a framework of principles, minimum requirements, levels of authority and delegations to ensure that the Council's asset portfolio is managed effectively to achieve maximum value for money.

Overarching principles

13.2 A set of overarching principles govern the operation of this section of the Council's Financial Procedure Rules.

13.3 These are:

Property

- a) All property owned or leased by Bromsgrove District Council is held corporately.
- b) The Director of Finance and Resources, in conjunction is responsible for ensuring that the occupation of all Bromsgrove District Council property by Directorates or other tenants is in the interests of the Council as a whole.
- c) The Director of Finance and Resources has the authority to intervene in property matters to protect Bromsgrove District Council's overall interests.
- d) Resolution of disputes on property matters is overseen by the Chief Executive.
- e) All property transactions should be referred to the Director of Finance and Resources who shall seek the comments of all interested parties, including relevant Cabinet members, Directorates and local members, before the decision is taken to proceed. All decisions must be taken in accordance with the delegations set out in this section of the Council's Financial Procedure Rules, the functions scheme, and the decision making procedures set out in the Council's Constitution.
- f) Occupation of property is subject to health and safety legislation provided to employees through mandatory training.

General

- g) Capital investment on assets must be linked to priorities identified through the corporate planning process using a clear and objective prioritisation policy.
- h) Capital investment must be directed to obtain maximum benefit from available resources, taking account of economy, efficiency and effectiveness.
- i) Revenue implications of capital investment must be considered, including the revenue costs of any borrowing required, and spend to save funding may be available to pump prime investment that can demonstrate a clear financial pay back.

Acquisitions and improvements to assets

13.4 Before an asset is acquired or improved the need for investment must be clearly identified and appraised.

13.5 Prior to allocation of resources a business case must be prepared and approved by the relevant Director.

13.6 The Director of Finance and Resources will present the scored business case to the Management Team. Where the acquisition proposed is part of the annual budget setting process the Management Team will make recommendations to Cabinet for inclusion in the Medium Term Financial Strategy. Where the proposal is outside of the budget setting process the approval will follow the Council's virement procedures provided that the capital budget approved by Council is not exceeded.

13.7 The use of compulsory purchase powers must be approved by Cabinet.

Property

13.8 Property is to be used efficiently, effectively and economically with due regard to legislative requirements.

13.9 The occupation and use of property by a Directorate is subject to the Director of Finance and Resources approving all material changes to property, including change of use, appropriations, granting/taking of interests, alterations or additions. Such changes must then be reported to the Financial Services Manager for correct accounting treatment and apportionment of charges.

13.10 The Director of Finance and Resources has the authority to undertake reviews of the property portfolio, or parts of it, to determine if it is optimised in terms of its utilisation, cost and value and within this to challenge the retention or use of existing properties occupied by Directorates or other tenants.

Disposals

13.11 Land, property and any other assets which are surplus to operational need are either to be reallocated to meet alternative needs or disposed of in line with statutory requirements and/or Bromsgrove District Council policies.

13.12 Directorates shall notify the Director of Finance and Resources of:

a) Any property (or part) that is:

- Vacant.
- Held against a future operational need.
- Not used for the principal purpose for which it is held.
- Likely to be surplus to requirements (with estimated timescale).

b) Any statutory/process issues relevant to its disposal (e.g. prescribed consultation processes, reference to the Secretary of State, etc.).

c) Any other issues which need to be considered prior to disposal.

13.13 The Cabinet must be informed of any surplus property to enable it to declare as surplus, and further agree to the marketing of any surplus assets.

Treatment of capital receipts

- 13.14 All capital receipts from disposals are deemed to be a corporate capital resource available for allocation in line with corporate priorities.

Financial Procedure Rules

- 13.15 All of the protocols set out in the Council's Financial Procedure Rules and the Financial Guidance (Part 3) and Chief Executive Schemes of Delegation must be adhered to. No transaction should be approved unless specific budgetary provision is identified, except where the purchase is approved under the authority given in Paragraph 3.0 for urgent decisions.

14.0 Audit

- 14.1 The Director of Finance and Resources has responsibility for maintaining an adequate and effective internal audit service. This service has been delegated to the Worcestershire Internal Audit Shared Services (WIASS).
- 14.2 The Director of Finance and Resources shall maintain strategic and annual audit plans that take account of the relative risks of the activities involved. He/she shall liaise with the Management Team on the audit strategy and plan.
- 14.3 WIASS is responsible for providing the Audit, Standards and Governance Committee with regular assurance reports that highlight any areas of concern regarding the effectiveness or level of compliance with agreed systems of internal control.
- 14.4 WIASS shall submit an annual report to the Audit, Standards and Governance and Standards Committee detailing internal audit activity for the previous year and reporting significant findings and areas of concern.
- 14.5 WIASS shall provide a regular summary to the Leader, Chairman of Audit, Standards and Governance Committee and relevant Cabinet Member(s) of audit review reports following sharing of the detailed reports with Directors before hand.
- 14.5 The Director of Finance and Resources is responsible for producing an Annual Governance Statement for inclusion with the annual Statement of Accounts based on assurances provided by WIASS and also on risks and areas for improvement identified by Management Team.
- 14.7 Officers shall ensure that internal and external auditors are provided with:
- a) Access at reasonable times to premises or land used by the Council.
 - b) Access at reasonable times to any employee or employees.
 - c) Access to all assets, records, documents, correspondence and control systems relating to any matter or business of the Council.
 - d) Any information and explanation considered necessary concerning any matter under examination.

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- 14.8 Officers must account for cash, stores or any other Council property under their control and produce such items for inspection if required by WIASS.
- 14.9 Officers are required to consider and respond to audit reports and audit recommendations within two weeks.
- 14.10 Officers must ensure that any agreed actions arising from audit recommendations are carried out in a timely and efficient manner.
- 14.11 Where an appropriate response to audit recommendations has not been made within the agreed period, the Director of Finance and Resources shall refer the matter to the Chief Executive and/or the Audit, Standards and Governance Committee.
- 14.12 Officers are responsible for notifying the Director of Finance and Resources or WIASS immediately in writing/electronic medium of any suspected or alleged fraud, theft, irregularity, improper use or misappropriation of Council property or resources. Pending investigation, all necessary steps should be taken to prevent further loss and secure records and documents against removal, destruction or alterations.
- 14.13 The Director of Finance and Resources is to investigate promptly all apparent, suspected or reported irregularity or fraud he/she becomes aware of. He/she shall report his/her findings to the Chief Executive to discuss and agree appropriate legal proceedings and/or disciplinary action, consulting with the relevant member(s) of the Management Team as appropriate.
- 14.14 Officers are responsible for ensuring that new systems for maintaining financial records, or records of assets, or changes to such systems are discussed and agreed with the Director of Finance and Resources prior to implementation.
- 14.15 Officers are responsible for ensuring that all paperwork and systems are up to date, kept securely and are made available for inspection by audit.
- 14.16 Officers shall ensure that all fundamental systems and other financial systems are reconciled on a regular basis and that records are up to date and available for audit inspection when required.

15.0 Revenue budget management

- 15.1 The Financial Services Manager shall prepare and review annually a long term financial plan and strategy to provide an estimate of resources available to the Council and identify budget pressures.
- 15.2 Proposed budgets over periods of one year or longer shall be prepared by Directors, in consultation with the Director of Finance and Resources, for consideration by the Cabinet, having regard to the views of the Overview and Scrutiny Committees, before submission to Council.
- 15.3 The Cabinet shall recommend an annual budget to Council that includes the following:
- a) Annual capital and revenue budget.

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- b) Proposed contingencies, general reserves and specific reserves.
 - c) Council Tax requirement.
 - d) Treasury Management Policy and borrowing limits.
 - e) The Director of Finance and Resources statutory declaration on budget setting.
- 15.4 Budget management ensures that resources allocated by Members are used for their intended purposes and that these resources are properly accounted for. Budgetary control is a continual process enabling the Council to review and adjust its budget targets during the financial year. It also provides the mechanism to call to account Managers responsible for defined elements of the budget.
- 15.5 The structure and format of the revenue budget should be sufficient to permit effective financial management.
- 15.6 The overall budget setting process for both revenue and capital is controlled by the Director and Finance and Resources.
- 15.7 Budgets will be distributed to budget holders for consultation. Budget holders will work with Finance staff to prepare detailed income and expenditure estimates for the forthcoming year taking into account known service level changes, contractual commitments and financial constraints.
- 15.8 Budget holders should provide information on any legislative changes, statutory duties, demographic changes, which impact upon service trends and activity levels to inform the financial planning and budget setting process.
- 16.0 Capital budget management**
- 16.1 The Cabinet shall, following the submission of proposals by the Management Team, recommend to Council:
- a) A capital programme for each financial year.
 - b) A future indication of a capital programme over a four-year period.
 - c) The recommended funding method for each capital project (including the use of prudential borrowing, capital receipts, revenue or other financing methods).
- 16.2 Following the approval of a capital programme, and subject to any conditions specified in that programme, or specified by the relevant Cabinet member, the relevant Director shall take all appropriate action to carry into effect the approved schemes, within the budget and timescale agreed in the capital programme. Any material variation in cost or timescale shall be reported to the Cabinet.
- 16.3 Cabinet Members will monitor capital expenditure once budgets are approved by Council.

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- 16.4 If a project has not started within the specified timeframe, being two years behind the intended start date it will require resubmitting before proceeding.
- 16.5 Any report for a project or policy of a capital nature shall include details of:
- a) The estimated cost of the proposal.
 - b) Any phasing of the capital expenditure.
 - c) The proposed method of financing, whether by loan, revenue or otherwise.
 - d) The effect on the revenue estimates in the first and subsequent years.
 - e) The additional staff and grades required both initially and ultimately.
 - f) An assessment and measurement of the need for the scheme and the benefits it will produce.
 - g) A technical and financial appraisal of the alternative approaches to meeting the need. (larger projects only)

17.0 Budgetary Control

- 17.1 Each Director shall be responsible for monitoring the revenue and any capital budget relevant to his/her Directorate to ensure that such budgets are properly spent and not exceeded.
- 17.2 Any new proposal or variation which would materially affect the finances of the Council shall require approval by the Cabinet. Any budget virements must comply with the Council's scheme of budget virement
- 17.3 The Council operates within an overall annual cash limit. As a result all individual budgets are cash limited. Each budget holder is required to operate within the cash limit.
- 17.4 Directors shall monitor spend and income against budgets monthly and ensure, so far as practicable, that expenditure in excess of their net approved budgets is not incurred without prior approval. If actual income is expected to be below budget, this must also be actively managed.
- 17.5 If it appears to a Director that his/her overall cash limited budget may be exceeded, he/she shall report the details as soon as practicable and identify mitigating action. The overall position is then reported to the Cabinet.
- 17.6 Action plans must be put in place by each Directorate at an early stage in the financial year in order to manage potential overspendings (e.g. due to additional spending or below target income). Directors must ensure Officers adhere to the savings targets and take mitigating action if delivery is deemed to be at risk.
- 17.7 It is the duty of Directors to ensure that responsibility for budgetary control is clearly allocated to appropriate Officers in their Directorates. Directors shall nominate a Budget Manager for each cost centre. As a general principle budget responsibility

should be aligned as closely as possible to the decision-making processes that commits expenditure.

- 17.8 Budget Managers are accountable for their budgets and the level of service to be delivered and must understand their financial responsibilities. Budget Managers should be responsible only for income and expenditure that they can influence.
- 17.9 Budget Managers are required to;
- a) Follow an approved process for all expenditure.
 - b) Ensure that income and expenditure are properly recorded and accounted for.
 - c) Ensure that expenditure is committed only against an appropriate budget head.
 - d) Monitor performance levels/levels of service in conjunction with the budget and necessary action is taken to align service outputs and budget.
 - e) Monitor and control the gross expenditure budget position.
 - f) Investigate and report significant variances from approved budgets.
- 17.10 The Director of Finance and Resources shall establish an appropriate framework of budgetary control, monitored and reported through the financial system.
- 17.11 The Director of Finance and Resources shall provide Directors, budget holders and Cabinet members with monthly financial management information reports in line with the Forward Plan.
- 17.12 The Director of Finance and Resources shall ensure that each Director has available timely information on receipts and payments on each budget which is sufficiently detailed to enable managers to fulfil their budgetary responsibilities.
- 17.13 The head of management accounts and corporate finance shall provide financial management training courses that all budget managers must attend.

18.0 Virement

- 18.1 The Council operates a scheme of budget virement. This enables budget holders to manage budgets with a degree of flexibility within the overall policy framework determined by the Council.
- 18.2 Head of Service have authority to vire expenditure between individual budget heads in accordance with the virement policy.
- 18.3 Key controls for the virement policy are:
- a) Any variation from this policy requires the approval of Council.
 - b) That the overall budget is developed by Cabinet and approved by Council. Directors and budget holders are authorised to incur expenditure in accordance with the estimates contained within the annual budget. The rules

below cover virement; that is switching resources between budget heads. For the purposes of these rules a budget head is considered to be the standard service sub-division as defined by CIPFA. The scheme applies equally to a reduction in income as to an increase in expenditure.

- 18.4 All virements must be entered onto the finance system for approval by an authorised Officer. There will be no virements below £5,000 unless authorised by the Director of Finance and Resources or Financial Services Manager.
- 18.5 All virements below £20,000 and within a single Cabinet Member Portfolio and a single Directorate budget must be approved by the Head of Service and the Financial Services Manager. Capital and corporate budgets up to £20,000 will require the approval of the Financial Services Manager. All virements above £20,000 and up to £40,000 must be approved by the Director of Finance and Resources following consultation with the relevant Director and Portfolio Cabinet Member. All virements of above £40,000 shall be reported in the budget monitoring report provided to Cabinet.
- 18.6 There will be no virements from salary budget to other types of expenditure without approval from Cabinet.

19.0 Insurance and risk management

- 19.1 All organisations, whether they are in the private or public sector, face risks to people, property and continued operations. Risk is defined as the chance or possibility of loss, damage or injury caused by an unwanted or uncertain action or event. Risk management is the planned and systematic approach to the identification, evaluation and control of risk.
- 19.3 Insurance has been the traditional means of protecting against loss, but this cannot be seen as the complete answer. By reducing or even preventing the incidence of losses (whether they result from crime or accident), the Council shall benefit from reduced costs of providing insurance cover and shall also avoid the disruption and wasted time caused by losses and insurance claims.
- 19.3 Through half yearly performance monitoring Audit, Standards and Governance Committee should be kept informed of items listed on the corporate risk registers
- 19.4 The key controls for risk management and insurance are:
- a) Robust systems are in place to identify, assess, prevent or contain significant operational risks on an integrated basis and these systems are promoted throughout the organisation.
 - b) Acceptable levels of retained risk are identified and evaluated and arrangements are in place for their funding, either by internal provision or external insurance as appropriate.
 - c) Managers know that they are responsible for managing relevant risks and are provided with appropriate and timely information on claims experience and risk management initiatives relating to their areas of responsibility.

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- d) Procedures are in place to investigate and process claims within required timescales.
- e) A monitoring process is in place to review regularly the effectiveness of risk reduction strategies and the operation of these controls. The risk management process should be conducted on a continuing basis.
- 19.5 The Director of Finance and Resources shall effect all insurance cover and negotiate all claims in consultation with the relevant Officer where appropriate.
- 19.6 Heads of Service shall give prompt notification to the Director of Finance and Resources of all new risks, properties, vehicles and other assets that are required to be insured or any alterations affecting existing insurances.
- 19.7 Heads of Service shall promptly notify the Director of Finance and Resources in writing of any actual or potential loss, liability or damage or any event likely to lead to an insurance claim by or against the Council.

20.0 Loans, leasing and investments

- 20.1 The Director of Finance and Resources shall report to Cabinet, on an annual basis, with recommendations to Council to determine the limits for the borrowing of monies.
- 20.2 The Director of Finance and Resources shall borrow as necessary to finance the approved capital programme and deal with all matters in connection with the raising or repayment of loans and is authorised to borrow for meeting expenses pending the receipt of revenues.
- 20.3 All investments and all borrowing shall be made in the name of the Council.
- 20.4 Directors/Heads of Service shall not enter into financial leasing arrangements except with the consent of the Director of Finance and Resources. Before entering into any lease agreement Directors shall submit details to the Financial Services Manager to enable a financial appraisal to be undertaken, including alternative financing options and implications for accounting treatment.
- 20.5 Loans to third parties will only be made in exceptional circumstances, and having followed the Council's decision making process.
- 20.6 The Director of Finance and Resources shall arrange the borrowing and investment activities of the Council in such a manner as to comply with the CIPFA Code of Practice on Treasury Management and the authority's Treasury Management Policy Statement.
- 20.7 The Director of Finance and Resources shall prepare an annual strategy with regard to investments, borrowing and the repayment of external debt. These are set out in the Treasury Management Strategy approved by full Council before the start of the new financial year.
- 20.8 The Treasury Management Strategy will include the following:
- Prospects for the economy and for interest rates;

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- Borrowing requirement and strategy;
 - Investment policy and strategy;
 - MRP statement;
 - Prudential indicators for the next three years providing assurance that the Council's capital plans are affordable, prudent and sustainable; and
 - The Treasury Management Policy Statement.

20.9 In addition, Cabinet will receive an annual treasury management report after the end of the financial year and will recommend to full Council for approval.

20.10 Cabinet will also receive treasury management reports as part of the budget monitoring updates.

21.0 Trust funds

21.1 The Director of Finance and Resources shall:

- a) Arrange for all trust funds to be held wherever possible in the name of the authority. All Officers acting as trustees by virtue of their official position, as declared in register of interest, shall deposit securities, etc. relating to the trust with the Director of Finance and Resources unless the deed otherwise provides.
- b) Arrange where funds are held on behalf of third parties for their secure administration approved by the Director of Finance and Resources and to maintain written records of all transactions.
- c) Ensure that trust funds are operated within any relevant legislation and the specific requirement for each trust.

22.0 Inventories and stocks and stores

22.1 The Director of Finance and Resources shall:

- a) Advise on the form, layout and content of inventory records to be maintained by the Council.
- b) Advise on the arrangements for the care and custody of stocks and stores in Directorates.

22.2 Heads of Service shall:

- a) Maintain inventories in a form approved by the Director of Finance and Resources to adequately record and describe all furniture, fittings and equipment, plant and machinery under their control.

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- b) Carry out an annual check of all items on the inventory in order to verify location, review condition, ensure insurance cover is adequately provided and to take action in relation to surpluses or deficiencies.
 - c) Ensure attractive and portable items, such as computers, cameras and mobile technology devices are identified with security markings as belonging to the Council and appropriately controlled and secured.
 - d) Make sure that property is only used in the course of the Council's business unless the Director concerned has given permission otherwise.
 - e) Directors have discretion to write off redundant equipment up to the value of £5,000, but must seek Cabinet member approval for write-offs in excess of £5,000. Directors shall seek independent quotations where it is not immediately obvious what the market value of the redundant item is.
 - f) Make arrangements for the care, custody and recording of stocks and stores in Directorates.
 - g) Ensure that assets are identified, their location recorded and that they are appropriately marked and insured.
 - h) Ensure stocks are maintained at reasonable levels and subject to a regular independent physical check. All discrepancies should be investigated and pursued to a satisfactory conclusion.
 - i) Write-off discrepancies of up to £5,000 and seek advice from audit on discrepancies above this limit.
 - j) Record the reasons for the chosen method of disposing of redundant stocks and equipment if not by competitive quotation or auction.

23.0 Working for third parties

- 23.1 Current legislation enables the Council to provide a range of services to certain other bodies. Such work may enable the Directorate to maintain economies of scale and existing expertise. Arrangements must be in place to ensure that any risk associated with this work is minimised.
- 23.2 All proposals for the Council to undertake work for a third party shall be properly costed in accordance with guidance provided by the Director of Finance and Resources. Financial advice should be obtained from the Financial Services Manager on the cost of providing the service.
- 23.3 All decisions for the Council to undertake work for a third party shall be made in accordance with the Council's formal decision making processes and as set out in the Council's functions scheme and before any negotiations to work for third parties are concluded.
- 23.4 Officers must obtain legal advice on the implications of providing the proposed service to the third party. All contracts for providing work for a third party shall be drawn up using guidance provided by the Council's Legal Services team.

23.5 Officers shall ensure that:

- a) All contracts are properly documented and a register of all contracts to supply goods and services to third parties is maintained by each Directorate.
- b) Appropriate identity checks on the third party are carried out in accordance with the Council's Anti-Money Laundering Policy and Guidance.
- c) Appropriate insurance arrangements are in place for the third party work.
- d) The Council is not put at any risk of bad debts as a result of any third party work.
- e) Wherever possible, payment is received in advance of the delivery of the service under a third party contract.

Appendix A

Responsibilities under the Financial Procedure Rules

This Appendix provides details of responsibilities under the Financial Procedure Rules. It lists in a single place responsibilities that would otherwise be repeated in various sections of the Financial Procedure Rules. It confirms the overall responsibilities of the Council's Director of Finance and Resources, the Audit, Standards and Governance Committee and Members of the Management Team within the Financial Procedure Rules.

A1 Audit, Standards and Governance Committee responsibilities

- A1.1 Day to day responsibility for the Council's finances rests with Directors and their Managers as set out in these Financial Procedure Rules with some functions delegated to the Audit, Standards and Governance Committee.
- A1.2 Audit, Standards and Governance Committee shall oversee compliance with the Council's Financial Procedure Rules for those functions within their Terms of Reference. Management Team are responsible for ensuring those functions within their Terms of Reference operate within the Council's Financial Procedure Rules.

A2 Chief Financial Officer (Director of Finance and Resources) responsibilities

- A2.1 The Director of Finance and Resources has been appointed under Section 151 of the Local Government Act 1972 as the Officer with responsibility for the proper administration of the Council's financial affairs.
- A2.2 Reference in these Financial Procedure Rules to the Director of Finance and Resources shall be taken to include any Officer nominated by the Director of Finance and Resources to act on his/her behalf.
- A2.3 The Director of Finance and Resources shall be entitled to attend a meeting of any body on which Members are represented where matters affecting the financial affairs of the Council are being discussed.
- A2.4 The Director of Finance and Resources, under the general direction of Cabinet, is responsible for determining the basis for all accounting procedures and financial records for the Council and for exercising a check over all financial matters.
- A2.5 The Director of Finance and Resources is responsible for maintaining a continuous review of the Financial Procedure Rules and advising the Audit & Governance Committee and Council of any additions or changes necessary.
- A2.6 The Director of Finance and Resources is responsible for reporting, where appropriate, breaches of the Financial Procedure Rules or any other element of the Constitution that relates to the proper administration of the Council's financial affairs to the Council and/or Audit, Standards and Governance Committee.
- A2.7 The Director of Finance and Resources is responsible for issuing advice and guidance to underpin the Financial Procedure Rules.

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- A2.8 The Director of Finance and Resources is responsible for maintaining adequate and effective audit arrangements for the Council and for ensuring that audit services complies with the public sector internal audit standards.
- A2.9 The Director of Finance and Resources is responsible for ensuring, in conjunction with the relevant member of the Management Team, that the Council's disciplinary procedures are followed where the outcome of an audit or other investigation indicates fraud or irregularity.
- A2.10 The Director of Finance and Resources is responsible for ensuring that any case of fraud or loss or financial irregularity or bribery or corruption discovered or suspected to exist which involves the Council's interest shall be dealt with in accordance with the Council's Anti-Fraud and Anti-Corruption Policy.
- A2.11 The Director of Finance and Resources is responsible for appointing Senior Officers to be the Council's Money Laundering Reporting Officer and Deputy to the Council's Money Laundering Reporting Officer.
- A2.12 The Director of Finance and Resources has overall responsibility for making payments on behalf of the Council.
- A2.13 The Director of Finance and Resources has overall responsibility for the Council's income and collection functions although this will be carried out by Hoople Ltd who will ensure the effective collection and recording of all monies due to the Council.
- A2.14 The Director of Finance and Resources is responsible for making payments to employees, former employees and Members on behalf of the Council.

A3 Corporate Management Team responsibilities

- A3.1 Members of the Management Team are responsible for ensuring that all employees are aware of the content of the Financial Procedure Rules and other internal regulatory documents and that they are complied with.
- A3.2 Members of the Management Team are responsible for consulting with the Director of Finance and Resources on any matter within their area of responsibility that is liable to materially affect the finances of the Council before any provisional or other commitment is incurred or before reporting the matter to a Cabinet member.
- A3.3 Members of the Management Team are responsible for supplying the Director of Finance and Resources with all information necessary for the proper administration of the Council's affairs.
- A3.4 Members of the Management Team shall allow the Director of Finance and Resources and his/her authorised representatives access to all documents and records on demand.
- A3.5 Members of the Management Team shall maintain a sound system of internal control.

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- A3.6 Members of the Management Team are responsible for ensuring those functions within their Terms of Reference operate within the Council's Financial Procedure Rules.
- A3.7 Members of the Management Team are responsible for informing Cabinet members promptly if the Council's Financial Procedure Rules are not being complied with.

Appendix B

GOVERNMENT PROCUREMENT CARDS (GPC)

GUIDANCE FOR CARDHOLDERS

Contact Details

RBS Cardholder Helpline

Telephone: 0870 909 3702
Mon - Fri 8.00 a.m. - 6.00 p.m.
Sat 9.00 a.m. - 1.00 p.m.

Fax: 01702 278312

Lost or Stolen Cards

The Royal Bank of Scotland Card Loss Centre

Telephone: 0870 6000 459

Open 24 hours, 7 days a week.

Introduction

You have been selected to participate in the Government Procurement Card scheme (GPC). This scheme is designed to make it easier and more cost effective for employees to make low value purchases of goods and services for Council use. A low value purchase is not likely to exceed £250 and is likely to be substantially less. Using GPC you can purchase goods and services from suppliers who accept Mastercard.

We are implementing this new purchasing concept for lower value purchases because we feel it will help you to more quickly and easily obtain the goods and services you need to get your job done. It will reduce paperwork associated with the traditional purchase order process resulting in cost savings for the Council and a saving in time for you.

Your feedback will help us to fine-tune the scheme as we integrate it into our purchasing processes. If you have any comments or questions about the GPC scheme, please contact your Administrator who is:

Jordan Smith on 01527 64252 ext 2161
or
Payments on 01527 64252

You should contact immediately if your card is

- **Lost or Stolen**
- **Changes to current limits required**
- **Changes to Merchant Category Codes**
- **You are leaving us**
- **You Change your name or address**
- **You have a change of job**
- **You no longer require a GPC Card**

If your card is lost or stolen please also contact:

The Royal Bank of Scotland Card Loss Centre
Telephone: 0870 6000 459
24 hours, 7 days a week

What We Expect From You

- Your Purchasing Card is personal to you, no one else is authorised to use your card. Do not allow any other employee to use your card or quote its number when ordering.
- The card number should always be kept confidential.
- Do not share your PIN number with anyone.
- The card must be used in accordance with this user/procedure guide, and the Employee Agreement.
- It is to be used for business related purchases only, where there is not a more cost-effective way of making the purchase.
- The types and values of purchases must be within the limits set. You are responsible for achieving best value for money.
- You are responsible for ensuring the security of the card.
- The card must not be used to obtain cash back facilities offered when making authorised purchases.
- You are responsible for reporting its loss, theft or misuse to The Royal Bank of Scotland Card Loss Centre Telephone 0870 6000 459 and your Administrator as soon as you notice your card is missing.
- You will be asked to sign an Employee Agreement to this effect.
- Misuse of the card as determined by non-compliance with this cardholder guide may result in action being taken under the Council's disciplinary procedures. In such circumstances the Card Administrator has authorisation to cancel your card without further notice.
- Under no circumstance must the Card be used for paying an invoice.
- You will be responsible for keeping a record and receipts for all your transactions these must be entered onto the online system each time you use your card completing all of the fields including the Cost Centre and Account Code information. Failure to complete this will result in your card being cancelled.
- Full training and a user name password will be given to you so that you can use the online system to record any purchases you make utilising the card. If you forget your password please contact the Card Administrator.

What is a Purchasing card?

GPC cards is an alternative method to the current buying process of paying for low value, high volume goods or services. By simplifying transaction processing it assists purchasing efficiency and will save RBC time and money. The current indicated savings from the Audit Office equate to £28 per transaction however this does not include the paper and other associated print/environmental savings when the need not to produce orders, delivery note and invoices is taken into account.

The Purchasing card looks like any normal debit/credit card, but is a procurement card, which means your total balance on your monthly statement must be settled in full.

It also means that the supplier is paid much more quickly (typically 3 to 5 days) rather than waiting for us to settle their invoice.

The card can be used at any establishment displaying the Mastercard symbol, in the UK. But we are looking for you to use suppliers who are capable of providing VAT reporting to level 3, this to facilitate further efficiency savings as the banks monthly returns of purchases made can be used to reclaim VAT from HMC&R. We are currently working with the Bank and the Suppliers we most commonly use to increase their VAT reporting capabilities to level 3. Embossed on the card is the following:

Bromsgrove District Council
Your Name
Expiry Date
Card Number

Your Purchasing card offers the opportunity to improve both the focus and flexibility of purchasing procedures whilst reducing the volume of purchase orders, invoices and associated paperwork for small value purchases, improving the cost effectiveness of processing these types of transactions.

Your card is to be used for business expenditure only.

Controls

Each card has a maximum monthly expenditure limit and individual transaction limit.

Monthly Expenditure limit

The total amount you can spend on your card each month.

Transaction Limit

The total amount you can spend on any single purchase.

Both of these limits are inclusive of VAT and any carriage.

The limits were set on your card application form based upon your estimated spend pattern.

Merchant Category Group code blocking

A further control has been applied to your Purchasing card.

Each supplier capable of accepting your GPC card will be classified by a certain Merchant Category Group code. By the way of an additional control, any number of these codes can be blocked or left unblocked to ensure compliance with business policies and to mirror each cardholder's buying profile.

Please make a note of these limits/controls.

If you try to purchase goods and services that are outside of these limits, your transaction will be declined and could lead to embarrassment. If you can prove that your limits are unrealistic to your work or the purchases you have to regularly make using the card please discuss with your line manager prior to requesting any increase in same

As detailed above, if you try to use your card with a supplier whose Merchant Category Group code has been blocked on your Purchasing card, this will also lead to your card being declined.

If this occurs, please contact the Administrator immediately to discuss how your card can be updated to reflect your requirements.

Queries on Goods

Faulty or damaged goods supplied

If the cardholder rejects the goods purchased as unsatisfactory he/she should inform the supplier immediately, and try to reach an agreement to return the goods and obtain a refund. The Royal Bank of Scotland is unable to become involved in any disputes between purchaser and supplier over the quality or suitability of goods purchased.

The supplier should arrange for a credit (refund) to be made to The Royal Bank of Scotland Purchasing Card Account which will then appear on a subsequent statement. To aid reconciliation, we suggest the cardholder retains a record of the credit at the time the goods are returned, rather than waiting for the statement to arrive.

Please note that refunds from abroad may vary from the original transaction amount due to exchange rates.

Goods not supplied/wrong goods supplied

If an item is charged to the cardholder's account but the goods or services ordered have not been received or are incorrect, the cardholder should contact the supplier to confirm that the goods have been supplied or the correct goods are being despatched.

A refund can be claimed from the supplier only after allowing 60 days from the transaction date for delivery of the correct goods.

APPENDIX 1

Employee Agreement

- a) I, Hereby accept a Purchasing Card. As a cardholder I agree to comply with the terms of the attached policy regarding my use of the Card.
- b) I have received and understood that I am being entrusted with a corporate charge card and will be making financial commitments on behalf of the company. I understand that the RBC is liable to the card provider for all the charges made on the card.
- c) I agree to use this card for business purchases only and agree not to charge personal purchases. I understand that the RBC will audit the use of this card and report and take appropriate action on any discrepancies.
- d) I will follow the established procedures for the use of the card. Failure to do so will result in cancellation of my card and disciplinary actions, including termination of employment.
- e) I have been given a copy of the Purchasing Card Policy and User Guide and understand the requirements for the Card's use.
- f) I agree to return the Card immediately upon request or upon termination of employment (including retirement). Should there be any organisational change, which cause my purchasing requirements to change, I agree to return my card and arrange for a new one, if appropriate.
- g) If the card is lost or stolen I agree to notify Royal Bank of Scotland immediately by telephone and the Card Administrator as soon as possible thereafter.

Employees Signature..... Date.....

Card Number.....

Card Administrators Signature..... Date.....

Appendix C

Glossary of terms

In the Financial Procedure Rules the words and phrases in the left hand column have the meaning given in the right hand column;

Asset	Something the Council owns that has value, such as premises, vehicles, equipment or cash.
Audit	A specialist team that examines, evaluates and reports on the adequacy of internal control systems.
Budget	A statement of the authority's plans for revenue and capital expenditure and income over a specified period of time.
Capital	Spending, usually on major assets like a building, where the benefit of the asset lasts for more than one year.
Capital Programme	A budget generally covering a 3-5 year period relating to items of capital expenditure.
Capital receipts	Proceeds from the sale of fixed assets, such as land or buildings.
Cash Limit	The most that can be spent in an area in one year.
CIPFA	The Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy is the leading professional accountancy body for public services in the UK. CIPFA has responsibility for setting good practice accounting standards for local government.
Gross Expenditure	The total cost of providing the Council's services before taking into account income from government grants and fees and charges for services.
Imprests	Bank and petty cash floats.
Internal Control	The systems of control that help ensure the Council's objectives are achieved in an economical, efficient and effective way and consistent with safeguarding the Council's assets.
Inventory	A list of equipment and furniture.
Money Laundering	The practice of engaging in financial transactions in order to conceal the identity, source, and/or destination of money.
Officer	A person employed or appointed as a member of staff.
Revenue budget	Budget relating to the day-to-day expenses associated with the provision of services.
Treasury Management	Management of the Council's cash balances on a daily basis, to obtain the best return while maintaining an acceptable level of risk.
Treasury Management Strategy	A document stating how the Council plans to borrow and optimise its return on its cash and investments in the coming financial year whilst ensuring the over-riding criterion of security of public money.
Virement	Transfers of budgets between one area and another.

Clarification of Post titles

Chief Executive	The Council's Head of Paid Service
Director of Finance and Resources	The Council's Chief Financial Officer (CFO) or Section 151 Officer
Financial Services Manager	The Council's Deputy Section 151 Officer

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