



## **BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL**

### **MEETING OF THE CABINET**

**WEDNESDAY 31ST OCTOBER 2018**  
**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 5th September 2018 (Pages 1 - 8)
4. Minutes of the meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Board held on 3rd September and 1st October 2018 (Pages 9 - 18)
  - (a) To receive and note the minutes
  - (b) To consider any recommendations contained within the minutes  
Any recommendations from the meeting held on 29<sup>th</sup> October will be tabled at the meeting.
5. CCTV Short Sharp Review (Pages 19 - 26)
6. Road Safety Around Schools Task Group Report (Pages 27 - 56)

7. Corporate Peer Challenge Action Plan (Pages 57 - 88)
8. Performance Report (Pages 89 - 96)
9. Council Tax Support Scheme (Pages 97 - 110)
10. Development of the Burcot Lane Site (Pages 111 - 124)
11. Medium Term Financial Plan and Budget Framework - Presentation
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
13. 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 Section 100 I of the Local Government Act 1972, as amended, the public be excluded from the meeting during the consideration of the following item(s) of business on the grounds that it/they involve(s) the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Part I of Schedule 12A to the Act, as amended, the relevant paragraph of that part, in each case, being as set out below, and that it is in the public interest to do so:-

| <u>Item No.</u> | <u>Paragraph(s)</u> |
|-----------------|---------------------|
| 14              | 3                   |

14. Redevelopment of the Burcot Lane Site (Confidential Papers) (Pages 125 - 142)

K. DICKS  
Chief Executive

Parkside  
 Market Street  
 BROMSGROVE  
 Worcestershire  
 B61 8DA

23rd October 2018



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- Meeting Agendas
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## **BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL**

### **MEETING OF THE CABINET**

**5TH SEPTEMBER 2018, AT 6.00 P.M.**

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

Observers: Councillor L. C. R. Mallett

Officers: Mr. K. Dicks, Mrs. C. Felton, Mr. J. Godwin, Ms J. Willis,  
Mr C. Forrester, Mr. M. Dunphy, Ms. B. Houghton and Ms. A. Scarce

16/18 **APOLOGIES**

There were no apologies for absence.

17/18 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Councillor G. N. Denaro declared a pecuniary interest in Minute Item No. 25/18 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.

18/18 **MINUTES**

The minutes of the Cabinet meeting held on 27<sup>th</sup> June 2018 were submitted.

**RESOLVED** that the minutes of the Cabinet meeting held on 27<sup>th</sup> June 2018 be approved as a correct record.

19/18 **MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY BOARD HELD ON 18TH JUNE AND 3RD SEPTEMBER 2018**

The minutes of the Overview and Scrutiny Board meeting held on 18<sup>th</sup> June 2018 were noted.

The Leader welcomed Councillor L. Mallett, Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Board to the meeting and invited him to present the draft minute extract which had been tabled and which contained recommendations from the Board's meeting held on 3<sup>rd</sup> September 2018.

# Agenda Item 3

Cabinet  
5th September 2018

Councillor Mallett thanked Cabinet for the opportunity to present the recommendations and highlighted that the first was in respect of the Anti-social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014 (Implementation of Provisions) report. He explained that the Board had held a detailed discussion around this item and had been in agreement with the report. However, Members had discussed and agreed that in respect of the Scheme of Delegations, and in line with the view taken by the Constitution Review Working Group, that, where appropriate these should include in consultation with the Ward Councillor. Councillor Mallett explained that there had been some discussion around whether this was possible in light of data protection and legal restrictions and officers had agreed to look into this matter further.

The Community Safety Manager explained that she had received advice from both the Legal and Information Management Teams, who had advised that should the action taken be against an individual then that should not be shared as it may prejudice any future legal action. It was highlighted that Members were in a similar position as officers, and that the difference needed to be established. It was agreed that this would be further clarified prior to this item being considered at Council, but in principle the recommendation was accepted.

**RESOLVED** that the Council's Scheme of Delegations be amended, as detailed within the report subject to the inclusion of "in consultation with the Ward Councillor, where appropriate".

Councillor Mallett provided Cabinet Members with the Board's feedback in respect of the Council Tax Support Scheme Review and it was highlighted that the Board had raised a number of questions in relation to the modelling and the organisations which would be consulted on. It had been noted that sight of the consultation document would have been useful. Following discussion it had been agreed that a recommendation in respect of deferral would be put forward, as from the information provided, if the report were to go to the Board on 1<sup>st</sup> October and Cabinet on 3<sup>rd</sup> October, the delay in getting the consultation out would only be by a week.

Councillor B. T. Cooper, Portfolio Holder for Finance and Enabling thanked Councillor Mallett and the Board for its input and agreed that modelling in respect of 80% and 85% together with a list of the organisations to be consulted would be useful. He therefore agreed with the recommendation from the Overview and Scrutiny Board. He also confirmed that this would only delay the start of the consultation by one week.

**RESOLVED** that consideration of the proposed Local Council Tax Support Scheme for 2019/20 be deferred.

20/18

## **BROMSGROVE DISTRICT PLAN REVIEW - ISSUES AND OPTIONS CONSULTATION**

Councillor C. B. Taylor, Portfolio Holder for Planning and Strategic Housing introduced the report and in so doing explained that this was simply a consultation document as part of the process of reviewing the Local Plan. It was a cross party document which had been discussed at a series of meetings of the Strategic Planning Steering Group. It set out the issues and options and would be available to all residents and that Councillors should be aware of it and encourage people to complete it in order for their views to be considered. Whilst the document was lengthy, it was noted that a summary would be available together with separate sections, should people only wish to comment on a particular area of it.

### **RECOMMENDED:**

1. that the Council publishes the BDP Review, Issues and Options documentation for the purposes of public consultation, between 24<sup>th</sup> September and 19<sup>th</sup> November 2018 inclusive.

The content being

The BDP review Issues and Options Report  
(Appendix A)

The draft Green Belt Purposes Assessment  
Methodology (Appendix B)

The draft Site Selection Methodology (Appendix C)  
The Sustainability Appraisal (Appendix D)

2. that delegated authority is given to the Head of Planning and Regeneration Services in conjunction with the Portfolio Holder for Planning and Housing, to make any minor technical corrections and editorial changes deemed necessary to aid the understanding of the Issues and Options report prior to final publishing.

21/18

## **LOCAL COUNCIL TAX SUPPORT SCHEME 2019/20**

As detailed in Minute No. 19/18 this item was deferred until the next meeting of the Cabinet, due to be held on 3<sup>rd</sup> October 2018.

22/18

## **ANTI-SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR, CRIME AND POLICING ACT 2014 (IMPLEMENTATION OF PROVISIONS)**

Councillor P. J. Whittaker, Portfolio Holder for Leisure and Cultural Service, Community Safety and Regulatory Services introduced the report and in so doing highlighted that its purpose was to provide an overview of the Anti Social Behaviour Crime and Policing Act 2014 together with any changes in the statutory Home Office guidance which were likely to have a direct impact on the Council. It also proposed a series of amendments to the Council's Scheme of Delegations to enable

the Council to best utilise and implement the ASB tools and powers within the Act.

The Community Safety Manager confirmed that, as detailed in Minute No. 19/18, she had sought advice from both the Legal and Information Management Teams in respect of the inclusion of Ward Councillor where appropriate.

Members discussed Public Space Protection Orders (PSPOs) and how these would be used and it was confirmed that they would replace the Designated Public Place Orders (DPPOs). These were geographical areas which could restrict such things as the need to keep dogs on leads, rather than targeting an individual's behaviour. There were currently 22 DPPOs which would need to be reviewed by April 2020.

## **RECOMMENDED:**

1. that the powers available to the Council under the Anti Social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014, as amended in Dec 2017 are noted; and
2. that the Council's Scheme of Delegation is amended, in accordance with recommendations outlined in Section 3.6 of this report, to allow relevant officers to apply these tools and powers, subject to the inclusion of "in consultation with the Ward Councillor where appropriate".

23/18

## **LEISURE AND CULTURAL SERVICES STAFFING RE-STRUCTURE**

The Head of Service, Leisure and Cultural Services presented the report together with the Portfolio Holder. The report highlighted the proposed changes to the delivery model for a number of services currently forming part of the Leisure and Cultural Services Shared Service with Redditch Borough Council (RBC). Background information was provided in respect of the service and the proposed changes which were being considered by RBC at its Executive and Council meetings on 11<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> September respectively. As this impacted on Bromsgrove, the opportunity had been taken to review the service, details of which were included within the report. Details of the areas to be included in the review, together with the creation of a local trading company at RBC were also highlighted, together with the areas which would be covered by that company. This included the Palace Theatre, the Abbey Stadium, Pitcheroak Golf Course and four community centres, which were all currently funded by RBC.

**RESOLVED** that the information contained within the report and proposed structure that will be consulted upon with staff be noted.

24/18

## **FINANCE MONITORING QUARTER 1 REPORT**

Councillor B. T. Cooper, Portfolio Holder for Finance and Enabling introduced the report and in so doing highlighted that the Council was on



target for a modest underspend. The report also contained a number of recommendations to Council in respect of accounting measures. Following discussion the wording of the recommendations was slightly amended to that within the report in order to make the intentions of them clearer.

The Financial Services Manager confirmed that whilst quarter one did not show a lot of detail at this stage, further work was being undertaken in respect of those areas with the largest variance, Keep my place safe and looking good and the Corporate Financing. It was also noted that the virements referred to in the recommendations did not impact on the Council's overall financial position.

## **RECOMMENDED:**

1. The approval of an increase in the 2018-19 Capital Programme of £21k for S106 funding to be used for outdoor fitness equipment and artwork at Sanders Park. This is to be added to the existing budget already approved in 2017/18 and carried forward into 2018/19;
2. The approval for the virement of £101k from separate identified housing revenue budgets to be amalgamated into a single budget allocation, as a result of the renegotiation of the Housing contract with BDHT; and
3. The approval for the virement of £41k for budgets relating to housing advice provided by the Citizens Advice Bromsgrove and Redditch (CABR). This virement is requested to consolidate existing budgets into a single budget allocation.

25/18

## **NHB COMMUNITY GRANTS PANEL REPORT**

Councillor B. T. Cooper in his capacity as Chairman of the New Homes Bonus Community Grants panel took the opportunity to thank officers for their work in ensuring that this process once again ran smoothly. He highlighted the application process which had been followed and also thanked the applicants for their efforts.

It was confirmed that the Panel had been made up of cross party Members, Councillors Cooper, May, Colella and Shannon. It was noted that those Members who had supported an application had declared this at the beginning of the meeting of the Panel and not taken any part in the consideration of that application.

Councillor K. J. May, who had sat on the Panel, also took the opportunity to thank officers for their work and reiterated that those supporting applications had taken no part in the ensuing debates.

**RESOLVED** that the grants, as detailed in the Summary of NHB Grants Panel Recommendations attached at appendix 1 be approved.

# Agenda Item 3

Cabinet  
5th September 2018

(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 who 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).

26/18

**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**

The Leader confirmed that there had been a number of changes to the various LEP groups following a change of portfolio holder at Wyre Forest. The revised membership is detailed below:

|   | <b>2018/19</b>   |
|---|--|
| <b>Greater Birmingham and Solihull LEP</b>                | Councillor Chris Rogers (Wyre Forest)<br><br>Sub: Councillor David Bush (Redditch)                                       |
| <b>Greater Birmingham and Solihull LEP ESIF Committee</b> | Councillor Chris Rogers (Wyre Forest)<br><br>Sub: Councillor Matt Dormer (Redditch)                                      |
| <b>Worcestershire LEP</b>                                 | Councillor Karen May (Bromsgrove)<br><br>Sub: Councillor Matt Dormer (Redditch) or Councillor Chris Rogers (Wyre Forest) |

|   |  |
|---|--|
| <b>Worcestershire<br/>Local Transport<br/>Body</b>    | (Two seats, not drawn from the council supplying the “main” representative on the Worcestershire LEP)<br><br>Councillor Chris Rogers (Wyre Forest)<br><br>Councillor David Bush (Redditch) |
| <b>Worcestershire<br/>ESIF Committee</b>              | Councillor Chris Rogers (Wyre Forest)<br><br>Sub: Councillor Matt Dormer (Redditch)  |
| <b>Worcestershire<br/>Health and Well-being Board</b> | Councillor Ian Hardiman (Wyre Forest)<br><br>Sub: Councillor Gareth Prosser (Redditch)   |
| <b>Worcestershire<br/>Local Access<br/>Forum</b>      | Councillor Julian Grubb (Redditch)   |

27/18

## **CONFIDENTIAL MINUTES**

The Confidential Minute of the Cabinet meeting held on 27<sup>th</sup> June 2018 were submitted.

**RESOLVED** that the Confidential Minute of the Cabinet meeting held on 27<sup>th</sup> June 2018 be approved as a correct record.

(During consideration of this item Members did not discuss matters that necessitated the disclosure of exempt information. The press and public were therefore not excluded from the debate.)

28/18

**LEISURE AND CULTURAL SERVICES STAFFING RESTRUCTURE -  
CONFIDENTIAL**

Members did not discuss the confidential appendices to the Leisure and Cultural Services Staffing Restructure, referred to in this item.

(During consideration of this item Members did not discuss matters that necessitated the disclosure of exempt information. The press and public were therefore not excluded from the meeting.)

The meeting closed at 6.33 p.m.

Chairman

## **BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL**

### **MEETING OF THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY BOARD**

**3RD SEPTEMBER 2018, AT 6.00 P.M.**

**PRESENT:** Councillors L. C. R. Mallett (Chairman), S. A. Webb (Vice-Chairman), C. Allen-Jones, S. R. Colella, C.A. Hotham, R. J. Laight, P.L. Thomas and M. Thompson

Observers: Councillor B. T. Cooper and Councillor P. J. Whittaker

Officers: Ms. B. Houghton, Ms F. Mughal, Ms. J. Pickering, Mr D Riley, Ms. A. Scarce and Ms J. Willis

27/18 **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND NAMED SUBSTITUTES**

Apologies for absence were received on behalf of Councillors C. J. Bloore and R. J. Deeming.

28/18 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND WHIPPING ARRANGEMENTS**

Councillor L. C. R. Mallett (Chairman) declared an other disclosable interest in respect of Minute no. 32/18 Hospital Car Parking Charges, as he was involved in charity work with the hospitals. During the item being considered he took no part in the discussions or voting thereon.

Councillor C. A. Hotham declared an other disclosable interest in respect of Minute no. 32/18 Hospital Car Parking Charges, as his wife worked at the hospital. During the item being considered he took no part in the discussions or voting thereon.

29/18 **TO CONFIRM THE ACCURACY OF THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY BOARD HELD ON 18TH JUNE 2018**

**RESOLVED** that the minutes of the Overview and Scrutiny Board meeting held on the 18<sup>th</sup> June, 2018 be approved as an accurate record.

30/18 **ANTI-SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR, CRIME AND POLICING ACT 2014 (IMPLEMENTATION OF PROVISIONS)**

The Community Safety Manager presented a report in relation to the Anti-Social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014, which outlined the

implementation of provisions. The report also proposed a series of amendments to the Council's Scheme of Delegations to enable the Council to best utilise and implement the ASB tools and powers under the Act.

It was reported that the Anti-Social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014 provided the tools and powers, outlined in the report, which were relevant to the Council and supported the Strategic Purpose 'Keep My Place Safe and Looking Good'.

It was noted that the Public Space Protection Order (PSPO) (Section 59 – 75 of the Act) was used to stop individuals or groups from committing anti-social behaviour in a public space and which had or was likely to have a detrimental effect on the lives of those in the area. This tool replaced the Designated Public Place Orders, Gating Orders, and Dog Control Orders and could be either enforced by Police Officers, Police Community Support Officers or authorised Council Officers.

It was reported that the Council was responsible for making a PSPO, however, Police Officers and Police Community Support Officers could also play a role in enforcing the orders. Orders were issued after consultation with the Police, PCC and other relevant bodies.

Arising from Members' questions, the following responses were made:

- Currently there was one community trigger in Bromsgrove and that no other order was in progress. Members would be updated in relation to any community trigger raised. The Community Safety Manager stated that she would circulate more information relating to this to Members.
- it was a statutory requirement that District Councils were in consultation with Police, PCC and other relevant bodies to ensure that all relevant information was compiled in order for the appropriate process to be followed and be transparent.
- The restrictions and requirements of an order could be related to any anti-social behaviour, such as loud music. The order could be applied to both commercial and residents provision.
- Worcestershire Regulatory Services had a specific section in the guidance to tackle any ASB issues when raised.
- It was not clear which powers had the overriding guidance.
- Concerns relating to nuisance noise would be dealt by Environmental Health Services. Members were informed that the Council was taking legal advice in respect of the statutory guidance regarding nuisance noise.

Members noted the proposed amendments to the Council's Scheme of Delegations. In order to enable all relevant Council officers to utilise the powers under the Act, the following amendments to the Council's current Scheme of Delegation were recommended:

# Agenda Item 4

Overview and Scrutiny Board  
3rd September 2018

- a) That the Head of Community Services, in consultation with the Principal Solicitor be given delegated authority to seek a Civil Injunction in accordance with Sec. 1 – 21 of the Anti-Social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014.
- b) That the Head of Community Services, the Head of Environmental Services, the Head of Worcestershire Regulatory Services and the Head of Planning and Regeneration Services be given delegated authority to serve Community Protection Notices, (and Fixed Penalty Notices in the event of a breach) in accordance with Sec. 43 – 58 of the Anti-Social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014.
- c) That the Head of Community Services, Head of Environmental Services and Head of Leisure and Cultural Services be given delegated authority to initiate and implement the consultation process required to make a Public Space Protection Order in accordance with Sec. 59 – 75 of the Anti-Social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014.

As recommended in the amended statutory guidance, the decision to make a Public Space Protection Order would be put to Cabinet/Council. Members requested that Ward Members be included to the decision matrix. The Community Safety Manager advised that she would need to seek legal advice to ensure that such information could be shared with Members as it may impede on data protection requirements.

The Community Safety Manager stated that, in terms of consultation with the Police, any enforcement order put in place must have the Police's commitment to ensure the enforcement was carried through and to ensure that public safety was the prime concern.

It was reported that the Alcohol Free Zone Legislation was being replaced with the Public Space Protection Order and would be reviewed in three years.

Any financial implications would be considered during the consultation.

**RESOLVED** that the powers available to the Council under the Anti Social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014, as amended in December, 2017 be noted.

**RECOMMENDED** that the Council's Scheme of Delegations be amended, as detailed within the report subject to the inclusion of "in consultation with the Ward Councillor", where appropriate.

31/18

## **PRE-SCRUTINY - COUNCIL TAX SUPPORT SCHEME REVIEW**

The Board received a report in relation to the Local Council Tax Support Scheme (CTSS) for 2019/20. The Revenue Services Manager was present at the meeting and provided information on the work undertaken by the Customer Access and Financial Support Service to date in respect of the redesign of the CTSS for implementation by 1<sup>st</sup> April, 2019 and set out the proposals for public consultation.

The report recommended that approval be sought for the Cabinet to agree that the Council undertook a formal consultation with the major preceptors and the public on the proposed design of a revised scheme, which would take place for eight weeks from 1<sup>st</sup> October, 2018. The results of the consultation would be presented to the Overview and Scrutiny Board and Cabinet in January 2019, with any recommendations going forward to full Council in February, 2019.

The following key issues were highlighted:

- Care leavers would be provided with 100% Council Tax support up to the age of 21.
- Frequent changes to Universal Credit cases were received from the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) requiring a change to CTS entitlement. On average 40% of Universal Credit claimants had between eight and twelve changes in entitlement per annum.
- The income changes for claimants migrating to Universal Credit were unknown and therefore the profiling that had been carried out was based on existing legacy benefits across the current caseload. The predicted expenditure was therefore subject to change when claimants migrate from legacy benefits to Universal Credit.

It was proposed that the current means tested scheme was replaced by a simple income band model. The indicative example of potential Grid Model Approach was provided in the report. Members were informed that the full impact model exercise would be completed by the end of the week and an update would be provided to Members.

The Chairman raised concerns that he could not make a decision at this stage as the full information was not available and that the actual model needed to be considered rather than the indicative model. The Revenue Services Manager informed Members that the modelling may require amendment after the consultation in terms of banding. He further stated that the modelling exercise was necessary as this would determine who would and would not benefit from the proposed scheme.

Councillor B. Cooper, the Portfolio Holder for Finance and Enabling informed Members that the recommendation was to ask Cabinet to approve the consultation and was not the approval of the final document. He further clarified that the final document would be considered at the



Overview and Scrutiny Board prior to approval at Council in February, 2019.

In response to Members' question, the Revenue Service Manager stated that other authorities were also proposing to move to a banding discount scheme and that Redditch Borough Council was also proposing a similar scheme.

Clarity was sought that the proposed schemes were being modelled with a capital limit for working age claimants would be set at £6,000 and £16,000 limit for pensioners.

As the formal consultation was proposed to take place from the 1<sup>st</sup> October, 2018, it was requested that Members to be minded to approve the recommendation of the consultation in order to prevent any delays. The Chairman stressed that the final consultation document was required before any decision was endorsed.

The Chairman proposed that, as the report was not clear who would or would not benefit from the scheme, that consideration of the Local Council Tax Support Scheme be deferred pending all information being provided. It was further requested that the formal consultation commence in mid-October, 2018.

Whilst Members were conscious of the timescale, it was proposed that consideration of the Local Council Tax Support Scheme for 2019/20 be deferred to the next meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Board on 1<sup>st</sup> October, 2018, pending all information being provided and that the Cabinet consider the report on 3<sup>rd</sup> October, 2018

**RECOMMENDED** that consideration of the proposed Local Council Tax Support Scheme for 2019/20 be deferred, pending further information.

32/18

## **HOSPITAL CAR PARKING CHARGES - BOARD INVESTIGATION FINAL REPORT**

Members considered the report in relation to Hospital Car Parking Charges which outlined the findings and recommendations from the Overview and Scrutiny Board's investigation.

It was noted that at the Council meeting on 19<sup>th</sup> July, 2017, Councillor P. McDonald proposed the following motion which was seconded by Councillor M. Thompson. *"This Council calls upon all local hospitals to stop charging for parking, that in reality was financially punching people for receiving treatment or visiting loved ones"*.

Council had felt it would be appropriate to consider the matter further at the Overview and Scrutiny Board as it was an issue which had an impact on local residents.

Councillor S. R. Colella informed Members that the Board Investigation had held three meetings to consider the matter further. A representative from Worcestershire Acute Hospital Trust was invited to one of the meetings in order to clarify a number of points raised by Members.

The summary of the findings during the investigations were outlined as follows:

- Concerns were raised that a private company that maintained the parking charging system on behalf of the Worcestershire Acute Hospital Trust may be generating a profit from charging patients and their families. Clarity was sought that this was not the case as no external company received a slice of the income from car parking charges other than the money paid towards the Private Finance Initiative (PFI) costs at the Worcestershire Royal Hospital.
- The Trust operated all three car parks and other than the money paid towards the PFI costs at the Worcestershire Royal Hospital, any profit generated from parking charges goes towards the operation of the Trust.
- Concerns were raised regarding concessions and how they were advertised. Reassurance was provided that information about concessions was provided on a ward by ward basis and was linked to a patient's treatment pathway.
- It was noted that hospital car parking charges had been abolished elsewhere in the United Kingdom and that there was a Private Members Bill going through Parliament requesting the abolishment of hospital car parking charges which was sponsored by Labour and Conservative MPs.
- Members' had discussed the evidence presented and possible ways to change the system so that car parking charges did not disproportionately affect the disadvantaged. It was suggested for example that potentially those that could prove they were receiving Universal Credit could access free parking, however the possible high costs of administering such a system was referred to. It was also commented that people who found employment stopped receiving Universal Credit and therefore could have no income for a period of time and become for example reliant on pay day loans. Other people lived on low weekly incomes and did not have the budget to pay for parking. It was recognised that these people would be hit disproportionately by hospital car parking charges.

- Although it was acknowledged that abolishing charges would have a financial impact on NHS Trusts and the government would therefore need to contribute to subsidise NHS Trusts, the principle of abolishing hospital car parking charges was felt to be correct.

The Overview and Scrutiny Board therefore proposed that Full Council write to the Secretary of State to suggest that NHS Trust owned hospital car parks should be made free of charge.

The Chairman concluded by thanking everyone involved in the investigation.

**RESOLVED** that the report and the recommendation included within the report be approved.

**RECOMMENDED** that Full Council write to the Secretary of State to suggest that NHS Trust owned hospital car parks should be made free of charge.

(During consideration of this item Councillors C. R. Mallett and C. A. Hotham declared an other disclosable interest. As such during consideration of this item they took no part in the debate or voting thereon).

33/18

## **CORPORATE PERFORMANCE WORKING GROUP - UPDATE**

Councillor S. A. Webb advised Members that a meeting was scheduled to take place on 4<sup>th</sup> September, 2018 in respect of the Corporate Performance Working Group. She further stated it was prudent for the Group to concentrate on the performance of the Council's services moving forward.

Councillor Webb asked if any Members of the Overview and Scrutiny Board would like to be appointed to the Working Group.

It was recognised that a lot of work was required in respect of the Dashboard in order for Members to monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of it.

The Senior Democratic Services Officer informed Members that a performance report for each of the strategic purposes was presented at Cabinet on a quarterly basis.

Members raised concerns around the attendances and sickness record of staff. Members were informed that a report highlighting the sickness issues was being considered at the Corporate Performance Working Group tomorrow and the Portfolio Holder for Finance and Enabling was invited to the meeting to discuss this further.

34/18

## **FINANCE AND BUDGET WORKING GROUP - UPDATE**

The Chairman informed the Board that a meeting of the Finance and Budget Working Group was held on 15<sup>th</sup> August, 2018. He reported that the Fees and Charges format was discussed at the meeting and that Members had asked for a consistent approach.

Members were informed that a settlement technical consultation was being undertaken by Central Government. This was around the Tariff Adjustment (Negative Revenue Support Grant) and the New Homes Bonus. The potential impact of any changes following the consultation was highlighted and the information relating to this would be circulated to Members subsequently.

The Executive Director of Finance and Recourses stated that the Council was looking at potential risks and planning income levels in the current financial budget. It was also noted that it was reviewing the budget proposals for the current year.

Members recognised that there was an issue around the inter-relationship between the New Homes Bonus and the Budget, in particular, around building new houses and believed that this could be a challenge as the Council adopted Local Plan. Furthermore, Members felt that it was important that applications for new homes were for the benefit residential needs.

Members noted that the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) was being revised.

35/18

## **TASK GROUP UPDATES**

The Senior Democratic Services Officer informed Members that in respect of the Road Safety around Schools Task and Finnish Group, the final report which outlined the findings and recommendations would be presented to the Board on 1<sup>st</sup> October, 2018 for consideration.

Councillor S. R. Colella informed Members that the final report in respect of the CCTV Short Sharp Review which outlined the findings and recommendations would be presented to the Board on 1st October, 2018 for consideration. Councillor S. Colella thanked all Members for their contribution to the review

36/18

## **WORCESTERSHIRE HEALTH OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE - UPDATE**

The Senior Democratic Services Officer informed Members that a report in relation to the Local Maternity System was considered at the Worcestershire Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting held

on 20<sup>th</sup> July, 2018. The minutes for this meeting would be circulated to Members for information.

37/18

## **CABINET WORK PROGRAMME**

Members were circulated the Cabinet Leader's Work Programme from 1<sup>st</sup> October, 2018 to 31<sup>st</sup> January, 2019 for consideration. The Senior Democratic Services Officer informed Members that the Corporate Peer Challenge Action Plan was to be considered at Cabinet on 31<sup>st</sup> October, 2018 and that the Board was requested to give consideration to this at its meeting on 29<sup>th</sup> October, 2018.

It was noted that the Bromsgrove Local Lottery and Transport Planning Review were included in the Work Programme for consideration at Cabinet on 3<sup>rd</sup> October, 2018. Councillor B. Cooper clarified that the Local Lottery was a scheme which local charities could apply for funding from and was an alternative way of raising funds. Members were keen to pre-scrutinise this item and asked for it to be included on their Work Programme. Members also requested the item in respect of Development of the Burcot Lane Site to be added to the Work Programme.

Members raised concerns in relation to the recent issues in respect of waste collection. It was requested that the Portfolio Holder for Health and Wellbeing and Environmental Services and the Head of Environment Services be invited to the next meeting of the Board to provide an update in relation to this and any lessons to be learnt.

### **RESOLVED:**

- (a) that the Cabinet Leader's Work Programme from 1<sup>st</sup> October, 2018 to 31<sup>st</sup> January, 2019 be noted; and
- (b) that the Portfolio Holder for Health and Wellbeing and Environmental Services and Head of Environment Services be invited to the next meeting of the Board to provide an update in relation to the waste collection.

38/18

## **OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY BOARD WORK PROGRAMME**

The Senior Democratic Services Officer presented the Overview and Scrutiny Board's Work Programme for 2018/19. It was noted that the topic proposals for future consideration were as follows:

- Paperless Bromsgrove – this would be linked into the Members IT Development Working Group.
- Review of the sports hall negotiation process.

# Agenda Item 4

Overview and Scrutiny Board  
3rd September 2018

Members were reminded that the market in Bromsgrove was now run by the Council. Members requested an update in relation to the progress of this and in particular, the future plans for market improvements. It was suggested that the Deputy Leader and Portfolio Holder for Economic Development, the Town Centre and Strategic Partnerships and the Head of Leisure and Cultural Services be invited to the next meeting of the Board to provide a verbal update.

**RESOLVED:**

- (a) that the Overview and Scrutiny Board's Work Programme for 2018/19 be noted; and
- (b) that the Deputy Leader and Portfolio Holder for Economic Development, the Town Centre and Strategic Partnerships and the Head of Leisure and Cultural Services be invited to the next meeting of the Board to provide a verbal update in relation to any future plans for market improvements in Bromsgrove .

The meeting closed at 7.29 p.m.

Chairman

### CABINET

31<sup>st</sup> October 2018

#### CCTV SHORT SHARP REVIEW

|  |   |
|--|---|
| Relevant Portfolio Holder                          | Councillor P. Whittaker – Community Services                      |
| Portfolio Holder Consulted                         | Yes   |
| Relevant Head of Service for Overview and Scrutiny | Claire Felton – Head of Legal, Equalities and Democratic Services |
| Wards Affected                                     | All   |
| Ward Councillor Consulted                          | Yes   |
| Non-Key Decision                                   |   |

#### 1. SUMMARY OF PROPOSALS

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

#### 2. RECOMMENDATIONS

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

#### 3. KEY ISSUES

##### Financial Implications

- 3.1 The estimated Financial and Resource implications of the recommendations are detailed in the Summary of Recommendations of the appended report.

##### Legal Implications

- 3.2 These are detailed within the attached report.

## **CABINET**

31<sup>st</sup> October 2018

---

### **Service/Operation Implications**

- 3.3 Following the receipt of at its meeting held on 19<sup>th</sup> December 2016 the Board received an update in respect of CCTV. A number of concerns were raised by Members in respect of the allocation of CCTV cameras and how the allocation was determined. It was agreed that a short sharp review would be carried out to consider the issues which had been discussed at that meeting in more detail. The result of the ensuing investigation is attached.
- 3.4 The report and recommendations were agreed by the Overview and Scrutiny Board at its meeting on 1<sup>st</sup> October 2018 and referred to Cabinet for consideration.

### **Customer / Equalities and Diversity Implications**

- 3.5 N/A

## **4. RISK MANAGEMENT**

- 4.1 N/A

## **5. APPENDICES**

Appendix 1 – CCTV Short Sharp Review Report

## **6. BACKGROUND PAPERS**

See attached report for details.

## **7. KEY**

None

## **AUTHOR OF REPORT**

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## **BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL** **OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY BOARD**

**OCTOBER 2018**

### **CCTV Short Sharp Review**

#### **1. Background Information**

- 1.1 On the 19<sup>th</sup> December, 2016 Officers attended the Overview and Scrutiny Board to provide an update in respect of CCTV. A number of concerns were raised by Members in respect of the allocation of CCTV cameras and determining the allocation (particularly timescales and decision makers) and the Board was unanimous in its view that the matter needed further investigation to ensure that the service met the needs of residents, was fit for purpose and provided value for money.
- 1.2 With the agreement of the Board, a Short Sharp Review Group, chaired by Councillor S. Colella and including Councillors M. Thompson and S. Webb was set up to consider the issue in more detail. This Group met on seven occasions from March 2017 to September 2018 to examine CCTV provision in Bromsgrove District in more detail.

#### **2 Summary of Findings**

- 2.1 Since the outset of the Group's investigations, the matter has evolved with funding made available from the Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) and a detailed report (see Appendix 1) undertaken by an external consultant.
- 2.2 This report summarises the Group's discussions with the CCTV and Telecare Services Manager and the Head of Community Services. Members should make reference to the report attached at Appendix 1 when considering the following three recommendations.

#### **RECOMMENDED:**

- 1. That the Council's £40k capital funding be used to match-fund a bid to the Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) for CCTV funding in order to replace the current CCTV transmission infrastructure to a digital network and to purchase and resource the introduction of re-deployable cameras.**
- 2. The current camera locations be reviewed in accordance with the Surveillance Camera Commissioners guidance and using data from the Community Safety Partnership, to ensure that they still meet their purpose with cameras to be removed as appropriate; and**
- 3. That Officers' have a rolling programme target to replace the existing cameras over a 3 year period, by replacing approximately 20 cameras per year, subject to a capital bid.**

## **3 CCTV Cameras in Bromsgrove**

- 3.1 The CCTV and Telecare Services Manager was interviewed by the Group in June 2017 when the historical context for the introduction of the CCTV system in Bromsgrove District was provided. CCTV was part of the Government clamp down on anti-social behaviour and to reduce the fear of crime. A number of bids were made by the Council under a Central Government initiative. The first bid was for thirty-five cameras which were located in Bromsgrove Town Centre and Rubery, and further bids followed for local villages in 2002, with cameras being placed in Alvechurch, Barnt Green and Hagley. The Council was not successful in its third bid. Councillor Colella understood that the Parish Council had also contributed towards the cost of cameras in Hagley. A number of cameras in the Aston Fields area had been funded by British Rail and the Council had match funded a camera by the Ladybird public house. Following the Station extension cameras had been funded by Centro. Later cameras included the ones in Wythall, Alvechurch train station and at Hagley recreation ground.
- 3.2 During the course of Members' inquiries, the CCTV and Telecare Manager confirmed that over a ten year period there had been no new surveillance cameras installed. The life span of the system was ten years but it was already significantly older. There were however other local authorities throughout the country using systems that were much older.
- 3.3 No significant funding had been made available since the initial schemes and any funds from the PCC had to be bid for through specific projects. Government schemes by which cameras had been funded in the past were no longer available.

## **4 Monitoring CCTV Cameras**

- 4.1 In conversations with the CCTV & Telecare Services Manager, it was established that the shared service CCTV Team had been based in Redditch for approximately eight years. Camera recordings were digital which allowed more screens to be observed at one time. Information was retained for thirty-one days then over recorded. All staff had a license to carry out their work and were regularly tested through a classroom exercise, followed by a practical and written examination in order to understand their responsibilities.
- 4.2 In June 2017 it was reported to Members that there were twenty-two CCTV and Lifeline operators in the Monitoring Centre. In addition there were Lifeline installers and administrative officers giving a total of around thirty staff. All worked on a rota basis and were part-time, allowing availability to cover for sickness and holidays. The CCTV & Telecare Services Manager explained that following an independent cross-party review, which had taken place in 2015, display screen assessments had been carried out for everyone, with recommendations being made in respect of screens and chairs within the working environment. There were no industry guidelines, but following discussions the number of screens had been reduced and

adjustments made to the images shown. There were fifty four at any one time, with one hundred and fifty cameras overall. The Centre was manned twenty-four hours a day.

- 4.3 The CCTV & Telecare Services Manager reported that the Police did not visit as often as they had done so in previous years but a reduction in the night time economy may have impacted on this as there was not the same volume of incidents as there used to be. The data available in respect of the number of convictions which had been supported by evidence from CCTV was limited, often due to the difficulty in tracking CCTV usage at the Police side of the process, although it was noted that there had been times when this was available in the past.

## **5 Location of Cameras**

- 5.1 From the outset of the investigation, Members were keen to understand how the decision was made to locate cameras in particular locations. It had been difficult to trace original records of when the cameras were initially fitted.
- 5.2 Members considered the existing process, and reassurance was provided by the Head of Community Services and the CCTV & Telecare Services Manager that following the independent cross-party review work, an “application” form had been created which gave details of who would be consulted. This included local communities and other partners, with the final recommendation being made following collation of the information by the Community Safety, Safer Bromsgrove partnership.
- 5.3 Data protection issues and guidance from the Surveillance Commissioner had to be taken into account when considering the location of cameras and impact assessments carried out for those that would be affected by a camera in their vicinity. The aim was to capture as much information as possible in order to assess the area where the CCTV camera might be located. Final decisions were made by the Safer Bromsgrove Partnership. There were no set timescales for this process to be completed.
- 5.4 The Head of Community Services highlighted issues in Birmingham, in the past, around placing CCTV cameras which could intrude on people’s privacy, leading to the introduction of new legislation. Care was therefore needed when considering CCTV location and a Home Office protocol had to be adhered to. Bromsgrove and Redditch Councils were one of the first to be accredited through the Surveillance Camera Office Code of Practice.
- 5.5 It was confirmed by the CCTV & Telecare Services Manager that it was not practical to move existing cameras to other sites due to the costs involved. The cost of the BT Transmission was the most significant factor and this varied from site to site, depending upon for example, the other utilities in the area and access to electricity. The types of cameras used were not portable; however, with a new IP and wireless system this would become more feasible.

- 5.6 In October 2017 Members considered in more detail the role of re-deployable cameras and the signage alerting the public to the presence of CCTV. It was noted that the Environmental Services Team, through the Place Teams, used cameras to deter and identify perpetrators of fly tipping and were responsible for enforcement of this type. The use of residents own personal CCTV cameras was also queried. It was understood that if an incident was reported through the 101 phone line and an incident number allocated then this could be used by the Police as part of any future investigation.
- 5.7 Members agreed that looking to the future it could be more appropriate to invest in re-deployable cameras rather than static cameras, particularly in the outlying areas of the District. It was felt that whilst static cameras could be appropriate in the town centres, re-deployable cameras would be more effective in other areas. The potential to make re-deployable camera footage available to the Police and partners was also raised, however such work would need to be carefully considered, ensuring that it was cost effective and within the scope of the Council CCTV Code of Practice. It was noted that if a substantial amount of static cameras were to be removed then the reasoning behind these decisions would need to be communicated to those affected and a strong business case put forward.

## **6 Funding for CCTV Cameras**

- 6.1 From the outset of the Group's work, it was confirmed by the CCTV & Telecare Services Manager that funding of approximately £65k per Community Safety Partnership from the PCC could be applied for on an annual grant basis over 3 years. The CCTV service was provided across Redditch, Bromsgrove and Wyre Forest, with a contract to maintain Wyre Forest District Council's service which generated £40k in income.
- 6.2 The Monitoring Centre covered CCTV, Lifeline and the Out of Hours service and generated expenditure split 50/50 and the income from Lifeline was split 60/40 between Redditch and Bromsgrove.
- 6.3 In October 2017 the Group were advised that the West Mercia PCC had carried out a review of CCTV across the division and was making funding available. This had created a bidding opportunity for up to £65k per year for three years across the three areas covered. Initially, this opportunity was being approached with caution as it had to be procured through West Mercia's framework which was yet to be established and could be used for capital purchase only, with match funding.
- 6.4 In December 2017 it was clarified that a £1m fund would be made available to the West Mercia area and that the Community Safety Partnerships (CSPs) could apply for a maximum allocation of £65k for three years. The PCC's framework for procurement was not as rigid as initially anticipated with the possibility of rolling the funds together, which would increase the value and allow for the opportunity to consider digital or wireless systems, which would save a substantial amount with BT. Members were advised that the intention

was to future proof the system and pool funds from each of the three Councils. If the funds could be brought forward into one sum, which for The CSP would be around £195k, this would go some way towards doing that. Details of the monies from the PCC were still to be finalised and match funding was also required. It was suggested that the current capital pot of £40k set aside for the upgrading of CCTV in Bromsgrove be used as match funding.

## **7 CCTV Review**

- 7.1 In October 2017, Members discussed the estimated cost of an external consultant to review the CCTV needs of the District and questioned whether this was a worthwhile activity. Whilst the CCTV and Telecare Services Manager had the expertise to operate the current system she did not have the technical knowledge to do such a review. Undertaking the review would also be very time consuming and not something which could be undertaken lightly.
- 7.2 Following further discussion in December 2017, it was clear that there were many variables and it was a challenge for officers to keep updated with the rapid pace of advances in technology. It was also noted that each Ward had its own individual needs and that in some Wards what was currently in place may no longer be the best option, particularly in respect of fixed cameras. Members felt that a review of the current scheme would provide the opportunity to consider the best system to meet the needs of the Council, together with possible locations to ensure that cameras were placed appropriately.

## **8 CCTV Review Findings**

- 8.1 In May 2018, the external consultant presented his initial findings to Members'. The interim report considered what could be done to upgrade the system and potentially save money. It was confirmed that the biggest expenditure was on BT Fibre Costs but the Council was in its last year of a three year contract with BT.
- 8.2 The capital works required for the provision of a new wireless network for Bromsgrove town centre, Rubery, Barnt Green and Hagley were referred to and if the recommendation to procure wireless technology was carried forward there would be savings to be made on the ongoing BT Fibre Costs.
- 8.3 It was agreed that the analysis which would be undertaken by the Community Safety Partnership was needed to assist in determining the location of cameras. It was suggested that there needed to be a strategy in place for re-deployable cameras and it was highlighted that it would be important to talk to Worcestershire County Council (WCC) to discuss the potential use of lampposts for positioning re-deployable cameras as these cameras would provide the flexibility to meet local concerns.

8.4 In August 2018, the Group met for the final time and considered the draft of the consultant's report (see Appendix 1). During the meeting the following costings were discussed:

- The estimated costs for the digital infrastructure upgrade to include Bromsgrove Town Centre, Rubery, Hagley and Barnt Green were £134,250 however savings from BT after the upgrade were estimated to be around £38k per year (giving a payback period of around 3.5 years).
- The costs for the replacement of digital cameras were variable depending on the specification, make and model required, however it is likely that a camera estimated at £2k would meet the operational requirements of the scheme.
- The estimated maintenance costs once all cameras were digital was likely to be halved to around £12K, bringing a potential saving of £13K to the current BDC maintenance cost.

8.5 The group also considered the draft of the consultant's report (see Appendix 1). The findings in the report were agreed by Members and in light of the report's content and Members' investigations, the following three recommendations are being put forward.

### **RECOMMENDED:**

- 1. That the Council's £40k capital funding be used to match-fund a bid to the Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) for CCTV funding in order to replace the current CCTV transmission infrastructure to a digital network and to purchase and resource the introduction of re-deployable cameras.**
- 2. That the current camera locations be reviewed in accordance with the Camera Surveillance Commissioners guidance and using data from the Community Safety Partnership, to ensure that they still meet their purpose with cameras to be removed as appropriate; and**
- 3. That Officers have a rolling programme target to replace the existing cameras over a 3 year period, by replacing approximately 20 cameras per year, subject to a capital bid**

### **9. Background Papers**

- Review of Public-Space CCTV Systems for Bromsgrove District Council, CDC Technical Services, August 2018 (**see Appendix 1**)
- CCTV Update Briefing Paper, Overview and Scrutiny Board, Bromsgrove District Council, 19 December 2016,  
<http://svmodern.gov:9072/documents/s31606/CCTV%20O%20S%2019.12.16.pdf>

### **AUTHOR OF REPORT**

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Tel: 01527 881443

### CABINET

31<sup>st</sup> October 2018

#### ROAD SAFETY AROUND SCHOOLS TASK GROUP

|  |  |
|--|--|
| Relevant Portfolio Holder                          | Councillor P. Whittaker – Community Services / Councillor K. May – Car Parking |
| Portfolio Holder Consulted                         | Yes  |
| Relevant Head of Service for Overview and Scrutiny | Claire Felton – Head of Legal, Equalities and Democratic Services              |
| Wards Affected                                     | All  |
| Ward Councillor Consulted                          | Yes  |
| Non-Key Decision                                   |  |

#### 1. SUMMARY OF PROPOSALS

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

#### 2. RECOMMENDATIONS

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

#### 3. KEY ISSUES

##### Financial Implications

- 3.1 The estimated Financial and Resource implications of the recommendations are detailed in the Summary of Recommendations of the appended report.

##### Legal Implications

- 3.2 These are detailed within the attached report.

### CABINET

31<sup>st</sup> October 2018

---

#### Service/Operation Implications

- 3.3 Following the Council meeting held on 26<sup>th</sup> April 2017 when Councillor P. McDonald put forward a notice of motion in respect of this topic, the Board were asked to consider the matter further. At its meeting held on 26<sup>th</sup> June 2017 the matter was considered with initially officers being invited to discuss Parking Enforcement matters. Following that meeting on 18<sup>th</sup> September 2017 the Board agreed that a more in depth investigation should be carried out, this led to the formation of the Road Safety Around Schools Task Group.
- 3.4 The report and recommendations were agreed by the Overview and Scrutiny Board at its meeting on 1<sup>st</sup> October 2018 and referred to Cabinet for consideration.

#### Customer / Equalities and Diversity Implications

- 3.5 N/A

#### 4. RISK MANAGEMENT

- 4.1 N/A

#### 5. APPENDICES

Appendix 1 – Road Safety Around Schools Task Group Report

#### 6. BACKGROUND PAPERS

See attached report for details.

#### 7. KEY

None

#### AUTHOR OF REPORT

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# **OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY BOARD**

## **ROAD SAFETY AROUND SCHOOLS TASK AND FINISH GROUP REPORT**



**October 2018**



**Bromsgrove  
District Council**  
[www.bromsgrove.gov.uk](http://www.bromsgrove.gov.uk)

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**MEMBERSHIP OF THE  
TASK AND FINISH GROUP**



**Councillor Chris Bloore (Chairman)**



Councillor Rita Dent



Councillor Peter McDonald



Councillor Sean Shannon

Councillor Spencer also contributed to this Task and Finish Group however stood down following her appointment as Chairman in May 2018.

**SUPPORTING OFFICER DETAILS**

Amanda Scarce – Senior Democratic Services Officer  
[a.scarce@bromsgroveandredditch.gov.uk](mailto:a.scarce@bromsgroveandredditch.gov.uk)

## **Foreword from the Chairman**

In recent years there has been a growing consensus that there is a serious and worsening problem with safety outside our schools. In nearly every corner of the district there are reports of dangerous parking, speeding, obstructions and often parking on yellow and zig zag lines. What is clear from the plethora of evidence collected from children, parents and teachers during this Task Group is that the situation is getting worse and that there has been and continues to be near misses and dangerous incidents occurring outside schools that often go unreported.

The Task Group has sought to seek radical solutions to these problems, looking to other local authorities for examples of best practice and some of these examples are recommended in this report for serious consideration. Most notably have been car exclusion zones outside schools during peak times piloted by Solihull Borough Council and the use of a mobile CCTV van within the District that targets illegal and dangerous parking effectively and efficiently.

There are also recommendations that look to improve our partnership working with other agencies, including Worcestershire County Council and the Police to give residents the confidence that we have a strategic plan to tackle these problems. Too often it has been clear that there is little or no communication between partners, leading to an ineffective and disjointed approach. This should include re-assessing the priorities of our own parking enforcement team and if possible increasing capacity within the team with a sole focus on safety outside schools.

I would like to thank each member of the Task Group for their hard work and dedication during this process, the members of the public and teaching staff for submitting evidence to us, members of staff and partner agencies who have come to speak to us, our Democratic Services Team, Louise Morris and Amanda Scarce, for their support in the smooth running of the task group and the production of the report.

**Councillor Chris Bloore**  
**Chairman - Parking Around Schools Task and Finish Group**

## **Summary of Recommendations**

After consideration of the evidence available and interviewing a number of witnesses the Task Group have proposed the following recommendations, supporting evidence can be found under the relevant chapters within the main body of this report.

### **Chapter 1 - Local Concerns**

|  |
|--|
| <b>Recommendation 1</b>  |
| <i>That the details on the Council's website in respect of Parking Services be located in a more prominent position to encourage residents to report local parking concerns.</i> |
| <b>Financial Implications for recommendations:</b><br>There are no financial implications relating to this recommendation.   |
| <b>Legal Implications for recommendations:</b><br>There are no direct legal implications relating to this recommendation.  |
| <b>Resource Implications:</b><br>Officer time in updating the webpage.   |

### **Chapter 4 - Parking Enforcement**

|   |
|---|
| <b>Recommendation 2</b>   |
| <i>That Officers from Worcestershire County Council and this Council contact Solihull Council to look at the pilot exclusion zone scheme in order to consider it as an option in some areas within Bromsgrove district and report back any findings to Members.</i> |
| <b>Financial Implications:</b><br>There are no financial implications relating to this recommendation.  |
| <b>Legal Implications:</b><br>There are no direct legal implications  |
| <b>Resource Implications:</b><br>There would be resource implications in respect of officer time spent in researching the impact of the TRO in Solihull.  |

## **Chapter 5 - Prioritising Enforcement Activity**

### **Recommendation 3**

*That Officers investigate all options for using of mobile CCTV vehicles in Bromsgrove and report back the findings to Members.*

**Financial Implications:**

There are no direct financial implications relating to this recommendation.

**Legal Implications:**

There are no direct legal implications

**Resource Implications:**

There would be resource implications in respect of officer time spent in researching the potential for the use of mobile CCTV vehicles in the District.

### **Recommendation 4**

*That Members are provided with the contact details of the local Safer Neighbourhood Team in order that this information can be shared with residents to enable local issues to be recorded and enforcement action to be prioritised accordingly.*

**Financial Implications:**

There are no direct financial implications arising from this recommendation.

**Legal Implications:**

There are no direct legal implications.

**Resource Implications:**

Officer time in collating and circulating information to Members.

### **Recommendation 5**

*That Parking Services and the Safer Neighbourhood Team discuss and jointly prioritise enforcement action.*

**Financial Implications:**

There are no direct financial implications relating to this recommendation.

**Legal Implications:**

There are no direct legal implications.

**Resource Implications:**

Officer time in arranging and attending meetings.

## **Chapter 6 - Going Forward**

### **Recommendation 6**

*That Worcestershire County Council Highways Team, together with representatives from the Safer Neighbourhood Team and Parking Services come together to discuss a joint campaign to address parking issues around schools and ongoing collective action on this matter.*

**Financial Implications:**

There are no direct financial implications relating to this recommendation.

**Legal Implications:**

There are no direct legal implications.

**Resource Implications:**

Officer time in arranging and attending meetings.

### **Recommendation 7**

*The Officers investigate the option to employ an additional Parking Enforcement Officer whose role would be dedicated to looking at road safety around schools.*

**Financial Implications:**

Estimate cost of approximately £24,885 per annum (including on costs)

**Legal Implications:**

There are no direct legal implications.

**Resource Implications:**

Officer time in arranging and attending meetings.



## **Background Information**

At the Council meeting on the 26<sup>th</sup> April 2017 Members considered the following notice of motion proposed by Councillor P. M. McDonald and seconded by Councillor M. Thompson.

*“That this Council increases its capacity regarding Enforcement Officers to ensure that parking around our schools is safe and that our High streets stop resembling the Wild West because of a lack of enforcement.”*

Councillor P.M. McDonald explained that the Council was responsible for the enforcement of legislation in respect of on-street parking and referred to the problems caused by illegal parking, particularly around schools which included increased danger to schoolchildren and inconvenience to nearby residents. He expressed the view that this could only be effectively addressed through the regular attendance of Parking Enforcement Officers.

A number of Members’ recognised that there were often such parking issues in the vicinity of schools but suggested other ways of addressing these such as lower speed limits or education campaigns for parents, and the introduction of “walking buses.” A number of Members’ also felt that there was insufficient information before them to enable them to support the notice of motion. As an amendment to the motion it was proposed by Councillor K. J. May and seconded by Councillor R. L. Dent that;

***‘The Overview and Scrutiny Board be requested to undertake a review of all aspects of Parking Enforcement.’***

On being put to the vote the amendment was declared to be carried. As a further amendment it was proposed by Councillor P. M. McDonald and seconded by Councillor M. Thompson that;

***‘The Overview and Scrutiny Board be requested to undertake a review of all aspects of Parking Enforcement and that appropriate funding be made available to support the outcome of the review.’***

This amendment was declared to be carried and on the 26<sup>th</sup> June 2017 the Overview and Scrutiny Board considered the proposal with a number of points discussed. At the time there were a number of scrutiny reviews ongoing and limited capacity to facilitate another review until some of these had been completed. However, it was agreed that Officers be invited to attend a future meeting of the Board to discuss Parking Enforcement arrangements in the district and to respond to some of the concerns raised.

At the Overview and Scrutiny Board meeting on the 18<sup>th</sup> September 2017 the Environmental Services Manager together with a representative of Wychavon District Council’s Civil Parking Enforcement Service presented a report addressing the points raised at a meeting of the Board on 26<sup>th</sup> June 2017. During the discussion the following matters were referred to:

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- The cost of the parking service for Bromsgrove District Council was just over £202,000. This figure covered all of the parking services, not just enforcement.
- The revenue generated by parking fees. Members were advised that £49,000 were generated from fines from on street parking and over £75,000 from off street parking.
- Income to the Council from parking was just under £1 million, when parking payments that did not involve a fine were taken into account.
- Members requested a breakdown of the finances for the service.
- The work of bailiffs involved in recovering unpaid parking fees. Members were advised that any bailiffs would be selected by Bromsgrove District Council and did not form part of the contract with Wychavon District Council.
- The consultation taking place in respect of parking payment machines. Members were advised that this consultation process was due to be completed in November.
- The lengths of time vans were permitted to use to unload goods at retail premises. Members were advised that vans were permitted 10 minutes for such purposes before enforcement action would occur.
- The focus of the original Notice of Motion to Council on parking in the vicinity of schools and the potential for enforcement action to be taken in these areas.
- The potential, under the Highway Code, for drivers to stop on double yellow lines to enable children to alight or be collected and the fact that this meant enforcement action could not be taken in these circumstances.
- The problems that occurred when parents arrived early to collect their children from school. In some cases parents would park on double yellow lines and leave their engines running whilst they waited.
- The role of the schools in educating parents about parking requirements and action that had previously been taken by local schools to address this problem.
- The role of Police Officers and Police Community Support Officers (PCSOs) in respect of undertaking enforcement action close to schools. The Board was informed that only the Police could take enforcement action in relation to blocked pavements.
- The number of parking enforcement officers operating in the district.
- The potential to raise the issue of parking problems and enforcement difficulties with Worcestershire County Council which had lead responsibility for many aspects involving public highways and local authority schools.
- The number of complaints received by Members in respect of parking violations and the need for the Council to address residents' concerns.

Although it was noted that it might not be possible to launch the review until other scrutiny work had been completed, it was agreed that a Task Group be established to review parking problems around schools in Bromsgrove District and on the 30<sup>th</sup> October 2017, Councillor Bloore presented a topic proposal to the Board for consideration (see Appendix 1).

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The Task Group has met on six occasions from February to September 2018, to discuss the matter in more detail. During the course of the investigation, interviews were undertaken with representatives from Parking Services, County Highways, West Mercia Police, the Environmental Services Manager, Councillors K. May - Deputy Leader and Portfolio Holder for Economic Development, the Town Centre and Strategic Partnerships and P. Whittaker - Portfolio Holder for Leisure and Cultural Services, Community Safety and Regulatory Services.

In addition members of the public responded to a Press Release issued on behalf of the Task and Finish Group and Head Teachers from Primary, First and Middle Schools also submitted information in response to a letter sent to them from Councillor Bloore. The Task and Finish Group have also considered a best practice guide by Living Streets on 'How to get more children walking to school', the Worcestershire's Local Transport Plan (LTP) 2018-2030, examples of work undertaken in Manchester, the use and effectiveness of mobile vehicle CCTV cameras and the Solihull Council School Streets Pilot. Members also requested details of the proportion of children and young people attending Bromsgrove schools from outside the school catchment areas.

## **Chapter 1**

### **Local Concerns**

During this review a number of issues were commented on in relation to parking around schools. Members' feedback was supported by the evidence submitted by the public in response to a Press Release and in comments made by schools. Common issues included:

- Inappropriate parking, including double parking and blocking driveways and parking in bus stops and on pavements, double yellow lines, zig zags, road junctions, grass verges and on bends in the road.
- Parents/carers parking up early and waiting to pick up children.
- The impact of the number of children accessing local schools from outside the school catchment areas.
- A lack of crossing patrols and safe crossing points.
- The ability and capacity to enforce the restrictions in place.
- The poor attitude of some parents and carers parked inappropriately towards local residents and school staff when challenged.
- The availability of drop off points and the proper use of them.

A number of responses to the Press Release from the public were received concerning the parking situation around the Coppice Primary School and around Hagley Primary School. Issues were also raised about parking matters near Aston Fields Middle School, Catshill First School and Nursery and Millfields Middle School.

Councillor Colella contributed in-depth information regarding parking around Hagley Primary School and Councillor Van Der Plank referred to 'major problems' regarding parking around schools in Alvechurch and confirmed that it was something she received regular feedback about.

The Task Group Members also referred to parking matters in Aston Fields, Charford, Sidemoor, Rubery and Lickey End. In particular Councillor Dent referred to complaints received from residents and the impact of double parking and Councillor Spencer commented that in Aston Fields commuter traffic added to the problems as people did not want to pay for parking so parked on surrounding roads.

The Task Group have forwarded specific concerns highlighted during the review onto Parking Services and took the opportunity to raise an issue directly with Inspector Gareth Keyte, Safer Neighbourhood Team Inspector for Bromsgrove and District, so that immediate action could be taken to address a matter of concern.

Going forward the Task Group recommend that the Council's website is updated to confirm that people can report matters of inappropriate parking

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around schools directly to Parking Services as this is clearly a matter of ongoing public concern.

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| <b>Recommendation 1</b> |
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| <p><i>That the details on the Council's website in respect of Parking Services be located in a more prominent position to encourage residents to report local parking concerns.</i></p> |
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## **Chapter 2**

### **Interventions by Schools**

A number of schools responded to the Task Group's invitation to provide examples of how they had tried to reduce parking issues and to highlight any issues faced. Thirty-one first, middle and primary schools in the District were contacted and seven responses were received.

Concerns included;

- Parents/carers parking on lines outside the school despite being asked not to do so.
- Parents/carers driving too fast outside the school.
- Parents/carers stopping in the middle of the road to let children out.
- Double parking
- Blocked drives.
- Parking on the pavement, grass verges, double yellow lines, the corner of junctions and in a bus stop.
- Parking on both sides of the road making it harder for resident and emergency vehicles to get through.
- The potential for greater problems in the future as the school intake increases.

A number of suggestions to improve matters were put forward including;

- Losing the grass verge on the Old Birmingham Road (down the hill from Lickey Hills Primary school).
- Giving permission to park on the Parish Hall carpark at drop off and pick up time. (Lickey Hills Primary)
- Random weekly visits by Enforcement Officers/ Police Officers. (Lickey Hills Primary)
- A 20mph zone, greater bumps or a give way chicane (Lickey End First School)
- Opening a separate entrance in Forest Way. (Coppice Primary School).
- Using development money from new housing developments in the area to purchase land needed to ease the situation. (Coppice Primary School).

Solutions that had had a reported positive impact included;

- The resurfacing of Catshill Social Club carpark so that it can be used as a drop off/pick up point and setting up a reciprocal parking arrangement with the local Methodist Church, alleviating pressure on parking locally.
- A small barrier to prevent parents parking near Sidemoor First School and Nursery.
- Constant reminders to parents (Lickey End First School).
- Councillor May commented that in Hagley there had been discussion with local schools and they had agreed to have a staggered finish time at the end of the day which had proved to be helpful.
- During discussion with the Parking Services Manager and Parking Supervisor reference was made to Aston Fields Middle School where the

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school played an active role, with parking monitors who noted registration numbers and passed these on to the Headteacher.

Reference was made to a letter which had been set out by Engineering Team Leader at the Council and the Traffic Management Advisor at Warwickshire and West Mercia Police, which requested the assistance of all parents to comply with Traffic Regulation Orders (TROs) such as double yellow lines and to avoid obstructing vehicular accesses that served private properties.

Frustration was expressed that a number of interventions had not worked in the long term.

- The speed limit had been reduced to 30mph on the section of Perryfields Road by the school entrance but that this was rarely adhered to.
- It was reported that there was a big problem with parents using the Perryfields Rd car park in a morning and at the end of the day, which had become a safety nightmare so gates were closed at 8.30am - 9.15am and again at 2.45pm - 3.30pm. This had somewhat alleviated the problem but in spite of putting large signs on the gates and asking parents not to block access in case emergency vehicles needed to get down, some drivers insisted on parking there and then walking down the path at the side of school grounds.
- Parents continued to park on the lines outside Clent Parochial school despite being told not to.
- St Andrew's Cof E First School offered free parking by the Queen Victoria Pub and the Baptist Church so that parents and children could walk into school after parking up, used a 'Think Before You Park' sign which was moved about, placed regular reminders in newsletters, had road safety talks in assembly, involved the Community Support Officer and the Headteacher had stood on the pavement outside of school to monitor parking. However it was reported that none of these initiatives brought about consistent improvement in parking.

Members' considered the Worcestershire's Local Transport Plan (LTP) 2018 - 2030 which states that;

*' One of the key opportunities to tackle congestion is to encourage use of other modes of transport (travel choice), particularly for these shorter trips. Nationally and at the local level, evidence and experience consistently proves that even small shifts away from single-occupancy car use to walking, cycling, motorcycling and passenger transport can deliver significant improvements to traffic flow and wider benefits, including reduced ambient air pollution which improves public health.'*

Members' requested details of the number of children accessing Bromsgrove schools from outside the school catchment areas. It was recognised that as children maybe travelling further distances to school than previously, whilst alternatives to the car were encouraged in the Worcestershire Local Transport Plan, the bus service in Bromsgrove could not be compared to the provision of public transport in more urban areas such as Birmingham and might not be

# Agenda Item 6

the solution to the transport issues for those attending schools outside the catchment area. Members' therefore discussed walking bus schemes in the District however it was recognised that these depended on parental/governor/school support and relied on volunteers, and had in recent years diminished. Members' also commented that investment in scooter pods and cycle sheds had in the past, failed to increase the take up of alternative methods of travelling to school. It was felt that schemes to get children to walk, cycle or scoot to school were often short lived.



## **Chapter 3**

### **Speeding Around Schools**

From the outset of this work, Members' agreed that it was not necessary to impose speeding restrictions in and around schools as this was not the issue. The problems were more in respect of parking and the occupants of the car not having due regard for other road or footpath users.

Members' referred to the 20mph zone which had been piloted in Rubery and it was reported that although people did not drive as slowly as 20mph it did ensure that cars stayed within the original speed limit.

Inspector Keyte confirmed that Warwickshire Police and West Mercia Police and the Road Safety Team were responsible for speed enforcement and academic rigour had to be applied when considering action. Cables could be placed across the road to monitor the speed of traffic crossing it. If eighty five percent of all traffic was compliant then it was deemed that speeding was not an issue.

Members' discussed the possible value of child statues outside schools in slowing the traffic down however the Senior Highways Liaison Officer, Worcestershire County Council explained that the introduction of these had had to be put on hold by the County Council as there had to be consideration as to whether they could be a distraction to road users. A policy had been drafted which listed where these might be used which excluded A-roads and trunk B-roads and this was being considered by the legal team before being signed off.

During the course of the Group's investigation, the Senior Highways Liaison Officer, reported that there had been few reported near misses and accidents outside schools, although cases outside schools in Belbroughton, Romsley and Gunners Lane were referred to. Congestion outside schools during drop off and pick up times had the effect of slowing the traffic down and the incident at Romsley for example had occurred after the end of the school day, following an after school club.

## **Chapter 4**

### **Parking Enforcement**

As part of the investigation, Members' were keen to understand what parking restrictions were in place, how they were enforced and how enforcement activity was prioritised.

It was confirmed that Civil Parking Enforcement services were provided for Bromsgrove District Council by Wychavon District Council on the Council's behalf. The Council's website states that; *'It is your responsibility to always park your vehicle in accordance with relevant parking regulations. If you contravene the regulations you should expect to receive a Penalty Charge Notice (PCN). A range of parking restrictions in Bromsgrove District help to reduce the amount of illegal, dangerous and inconsiderate parking, encourage sensible and safe parking, cut congestion and improve road safety. Restrictions can include on loading bays, disabled parking bays, double yellow lines and through parking permits.'*

The website gives details of the two levels of PCNs which are determined by the severity of the contravention. As the webpage explains, *'..in certain circumstances, such as the Civil Enforcement Officer being threatened or the vehicle being driven away, there is no need for a Penalty Charge Notice to be placed on a vehicle or handed to the driver in order for it to be legally served.'*

Councillor McDonald made reference to zig zag and yellow lines in his Ward and that it had come to light that these were incorrect and therefore not enforceable. He had therefore made the necessary arrangements to have these corrected. During the course of this investigation the Senior Highways Liaison Officer explained that all yellow lines had been considered in Bromsgrove District and some were now enforceable that were not previously. Not all zig zag road markings were however enforceable as this depended on the length of the zig zags. White zig zags were of a police matter and yellow zig zags were a civil matter.

In respect of double yellow lines, the Parking Services Manager clarified that people could stop on these and drop off or pick up passengers within reasonable timescales. Officers therefore faced difficulties in dealing with these situations as once approached those contravening the regulations drove off. There were seven sets of red lines across both Redditch and Bromsgrove, which meant absolutely no parking or stopping.

Worcestershire's Local Transport Plan (LTP) 2018-2030 makes reference to decluttering the streets and removing street furniture in Malvern but Members' felt that this approach could be unhelpful in terms of safety around schools locally as fences could prevent areas becoming pupil dropping off/picking up points. Members' referred to the potential usefulness of drop off points,

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however the Senior Highways Liaison Officer explained that they would cost approximately £10k to build each time.

Members' considered parking permit schemes and it was confirmed by the Senior Highways Liaison Officer that these could only be introduced if none of the local houses had off road parking. It was however in theory possible to put in place limited waiting times and parking permit schemes at the same time.

The parking situation by Charford School was referred to and the Senior Highways Liaison Officer discussed the school's sixth form and that many students now parked on surrounding streets. This type of parking could potentially be prevented with the introduction of waiting time restrictions of one hour. Short term waiting restrictions and no return within two hours could have an impact in these types of scenarios but would need an Order to be put in place.

The Task Group established that there was a Traffic Regulation Order (TRO) outside Belbroughton CofE Primary School, which prevented stopping. This area was blocked out and there was signage with times marked on it. The Group were informed however that unless the County Council put in place a blanket TRO, little could be done locally. The Parking Services Manager commented that although local MPs and the Police had been involved the decision in respect of this matter would rest with the County Council.

Members' considered a pilot which commenced in September 2017, by Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council which introduced an experimental TRO for an initial period of eighteen months prohibiting any motor vehicle without a permit or valid exemption from using specific streets around three Solihull schools. Most vehicles, including those driven by parents and carers of children attending the three schools could not be driven into the roads covered by the restrictions to drop off or pick up children during the periods that the restriction was in force. There were however a number of exemptions to the restriction permitting certain traffic to use the roads. A 20mph speed limit for all traffic had been introduced alongside the restriction and was in operation at all times. Anyone caught driving through the restricted zones whilst the restriction was in force without a valid permit or exemption could be issued with a Fixed Penalty Notice. Councillor Bloore visited the pilot "exclusion zone" and advised that it appeared to be effective and that the road around the school was clear. However, the Pilot had created some problems, for example, if a teacher had forgotten their pass it was difficult to get access to the school. Following the introduction of the Pilot, it was reported to Councillor Bloore that the school had seen an increase in pupils walking to school and also a decrease in late attendance. This indicated that parents were starting to think about how they got to school and alternative ways of getting there. Members' noted the potential of the experimental TRO scheme but also queried if there would be an impact on streets further away from the schools and highlighted the reliance on the Police to enforce it.

## Recommendation 2

***That Officers from Worcestershire County Council and this Council contact Solihull Council to look at the pilot exclusion zone scheme in order to consider it as an option in some areas within Bromsgrove district and report back any findings to Members.***

Inspector Keyte discussed with Members' the Police's role in parking enforcement. It was clarified that a number of traffic offences were not criminal but civil issues and the Police were limited in the action that they could take as powers were devolved to local authorities. The Police Safer Neighbourhood Team had different competing demands for example anti-social behaviour matters, risk management and parking matters. Action can be taken to address obstructions on the highway and inconsiderate parking; however the teams preferred to primarily educate.

Inspector Keyte was clear that it was important for any enforcement action to be proportionate. The Safer Neighbourhood Team focussed on providing education first and on protecting people from harm. The Local Safer Neighbourhood Team' Twitter feeds' provided examples of responses to local issues. The Teams' had for example placed literature on cars parked dangerously and written letters to explain that people needed to be considerate of their neighbours when local parking issues had emerged.

Councillors Shannon, Dent and Bloore took the opportunity to go out on a visit with one of the Parking Officers but were disappointed to see the lack of respect that car users had for the Officer and gave examples of parents/carers flouting the regulations in front of them. Inspector Keyte confirmed that people were less respectful of unwarranted officers and commented that training was important for those in confrontational roles. Members' felt that as Parking Officers were working on behalf of Bromsgrove District Council, the Council had a duty of care to them and it was important that appropriate training was provided. Councillor May understood that regular training was provided in line with standard requirements to Officers.

The Parking Services Manager explained that the types of complaints received by Parking Services were usually in relation to double parking, blocking driveways and parking on a restricted area. With limited powers however the best Officers' could do was ask the culprits to consider local residents. Again in relation to parking on grass verges unless there was a double or single yellow line, Parking Services were unable to do anything. It was reported by the Parking Services Manager however that Worcestershire County Council were considering a Pavement Policy. The Senior Highways Liaison Officer also highlighted that if someone drove down a footpath then this would be a Police matter.

## **Chapter 5**

### **Prioritising Enforcement Activity**

Members' were keen to understand if Parking Officers spent more time patrolling car parks as this was an income stream for the Council rather than attending parking issues around schools.

It was confirmed that there were five Parking Officers across Bromsgrove and Redditch responsible for enforcement of the roads and pay and display and pay on foot car parks. Members' queried the formula used to establish how many Enforcement Officers were required and Councillor May confirmed that the number of Officers was agreed within the contractual agreement with Wychavon District Council.

A spreadsheet was shared with the Task Group which listed all schools and the dates and times that they had been visited by Parking Officers along with an Officer shift rota. It was explained that in certain areas Officers attended in pairs rather than as lone workers due to previous experiences of physical altercations. Members noted that it would be difficult to allocate an Officer to cover schools solely as there were so many schools within the District (around forty). A single Officer would only be able to visit each school less than once a month. The Parking Services Manager reported that when regular enforcement was in place things would improve but when Officers' stopped attending the same issues returned.

Recognising the demand on Parking Services, the Task and Finish Group considered the use of mobile CCTV vehicles. Reference was made to Sandwell Council's vehicle surveillance camera. The local authority ran the van and picked up number plates. The DVLA were then sent the information and sent tickets to the owners of the cars. The advantage of the scheme was that Officers did not have to approach offenders directly as tickets were sent out at a later date. Members' commented that these types of vehicles were used at football matches by the Police and potentially not fully utilised at other times of the day and the matter was worth investigating further.

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| <b>Recommendation 3</b>  |
| <i><b>That Officers investigate all options for using of mobile CCTV vehicles in Bromsgrove and report back the findings to Members.</b></i> |

The Parking Services Manager was clear that the Service tried to keep a balanced view but that parking around schools was not a problem that they received a high number of complaints about. Officers' were placed where needed and if complaints were received on a regular basis Officers' would visit more often. Particular hotspots where complaints were received included

Lickey First School for example. It was established however that Parking Services did not have a “planned” programme to visit particular schools as this was done on an ad hoc basis.

It was confirmed that the Safer Neighbourhood Teams do have Patrol Plans in place based on the threat and risk level. Inspector Keyte commented that Police Officers were not measured on the number of tickets issued but by the response to the Patrol Plan.

Members’ discussed particular problem areas within their Wards and it was highlighted that whilst there was awareness of the problems these were not necessarily conveyed to the Parking Services Manager or Supervisor and unless they were made aware of such areas they were unable to investigate any further. It was confirmed by the Parking Manager that of the complaints received via email not many were in respect of schools.

Inspector Keyte referred to the police’s use of smart phones and laptops and tools to communicate more efficiently with residents via social media. The contact details for the individual Safer Neighbourhood Teams in Bromsgrove were available online and Members’ and local people could contact the Teams to report concerns.

Members’ were concerned that there appeared to be no set procedure in place to deal with complaints of any type. It appeared that often a Member would pass on a complaint direct to Officers which would be dealt with on an ad hoc basis, but there did not appear to be a mechanism to record all complaints and therefore to monitor them on a regular basis.

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| <b>Recommendation 4</b> |
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| <i><b>That Members are provided with the contact details of the local Safer Neighbourhood Team in order that this information can be shared with residents to enable local issues to be recorded and enforcement action to be prioritised accordingly.</b></i> |
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Members’ questioned the communication between the Safer Neighbourhood Teams and Parking Services and Inspector Keyte confirmed that this could be improved.

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| <b>Recommendation 5</b> |
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| <i><b>That Parking Services and the Safer Neighbourhood Team discuss and jointly prioritise enforcement action.</b></i> |
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## **Chapter 6**

### **Going Forward**

Members' discussed the potential for a larger piece of work which would highlight the parking hot spots in the District and suggested a campaign involving all agencies. It was recognised that such a campaign would need support and input from the County Council, the Safer Neighbourhood Teams, Parking Services and encourage the involvement of local schools.

It was noted that occasionally a campaign would be put in place around one particular school and although this had an impact for a few weeks, people would soon returned to their old habits. Members' therefore felt that a long term partnership approach to addressing the matter was required.

During the course of the review reference made by the Parking Supervisor to work undertaken by Parking Services with the Community Safety Partnership. Inspector Keyte also referred to the successful work that had been undertaken collectively through the Community Safety Partnership to solve other issues. Members' felt that it was important to get collective action around parking enforcement to try to influence the issues raised.

#### **Recommendation 6**

***That Worcestershire County Council Highways Team, together with representatives from the Safer Neighbourhood Team and Parking Services come together to discuss a joint campaign to address parking issues around schools and ongoing collective action on this matter.***

#### **Recommendation 7**

***The Officers investigate the option to employ an additional Parking Enforcement Officer whose role would be dedicated to looking at road safety around schools.***

Whilst there was no specific recommendation arising from information Members received in respect of cycling and walking to school, Members were reminded that some areas still had in place walking buses which had at one time proved to be most successful. They wished it to be noted that any future campaigns around road safety around schools, should include the encouragement for children to both walk and/or cycle to school. It was noted that Worcestershire County Council had routes which were designated specifically as cycle friendly and routes for schools should also be included within these in the future.

## Appendix 1



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

### OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY TOPIC PROPOSAL

This form can be used for either a Task Group or a Short Sharp Review topic proposal.

Completed forms should be returned to [scrutiny@bromsgrove.gov.uk](mailto:scrutiny@bromsgrove.gov.uk) – Democratic Services, Bromsgrove District Council.

|                                       |                                   |
|---------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| <b>Name of Proposer:</b> Chris Bloore |                                   |
| Tel No: 07905 612 710                 | Email: c.bloore@bromsgrove.gov.uk |
| Date: 11/10/17                        |                                   |

|  |   |
|--|---|
| <b>Title of Proposed Topic</b><br>(including specific subject areas to be investigate)   | Investigation into problem car parking outside schools in Bromsgrove District and how it can be alleviated .  |
| <b>Background to the Proposal</b><br>(Including reasons why this topic should be investigated and evidence to support the need for the investigation.) | <p>A motion at full Council was brought forward by Cllr Peter McDonald regarding the problem of car parking outside a local school in his ward.</p> <p>Other councillors have also raised concerns over dangerous car parking, the abuse of local parking regulations such as parking on yellow lines and a general lack of enforcement action taken.</p> <p>This task group would look to identify areas of concern and how existing or further powers could be exercised to tackle the problem.</p> |
| <b>Links to national, regional and local priorities</b><br>(including the Council's strategic purposes)  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Keep my place safe and looking good.</li> <li>• National road safety standards</li> <li>• Department for Transport Local Sustainable Transport Fund (the project targeted areas where the school run is having a significant negative impact on congestion, journey times and economic growth.)</li> </ul>   |



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| <p><b>Possible Key Objectives</b></p> <p>(these should be SMART – specific, measurable, achievable, relevant and timely)</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To better coordinate enforcement activities and ensure the safety of parents, teachers and children outside our schools.</li> <li>• If required to recommend more resources are made available to ensure appropriate enforcement action is taken.</li> <li>• To improve dialogue between schools, enforcement and district and council councils about problem parking hot spots.</li> </ul> |          |                            |  |
| <p>Anticipated Timescale for completion of the work.</p>   | <p>Six months</p>  |          |                            |  |
| <p>Would it be appropriate to hold a Short Sharp Inquiry or a Task Group? (please tick relevant box)</p>                     | <p>Task Group</p>  | <p>X</p> | <p>Short Sharp Inquiry</p> |  |

## **Appendix 2**

### **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

Members' would like to thank the public who took the time to respond to the press release issued by the Task Group and sent in details of the parking issues in their local area, including in some cases photographic evidence of poor parking.

Members' would also like to thank those representatives from local first, middle and primary schools who helpfully responded to the letter sent to Head teachers by the Task Group Chairman and provided details of the parking situation by their schools, interventions that had been tried and a number of suggestions for improving the situation going forward.

The Task Group would also like to thank the Parking Enforcement Officer who they accompanied on a visit outside a local school.

Written evidence was also submitted and taken into account of from Councillors Steven Colella and Kate Van der Plank. Written information received from David Keaney, Solihull Borough Council was also considered.

### **WITNESSES**

The Task Group interviewed the following before making its recommendations:

#### **Internal Witnesses:**

- Kevin Hirons, Environmental Services Manager, Bromsgrove District Council
- Glenn Hobbs, Parking Supervisor, Bromsgrove District Council
- Councillor Karen May, Deputy Leader and Portfolio Holder for Economic Development, the Town Centre and Strategic Partnerships

#### **External Witnesses:**

- Christine Baxter, Parking Services Manager, Wychavon District Council
- Richard Clewer, Senior Highways Liaison Officer, Worcestershire County Council
- Inspector Gareth Keyte, Safer Neighbourhood Team Inspector for Bromsgrove.

## Appendix 3

### **BACKGROUND PAPERS**

The following documents were considered by the Task Group in the course of the investigation.

Road Safety around Schools. Agreeing a Manchester City Council Approach to Supporting Schools, Manchester City Council, 27 June 2017

[http://www.manchester.gov.uk/download/meetings/id/23156/1\\_road\\_safety\\_around\\_schools\\_%E2%80%93\\_agreeing\\_an\\_mcc\\_approach\\_to\\_supporting\\_schools](http://www.manchester.gov.uk/download/meetings/id/23156/1_road_safety_around_schools_%E2%80%93_agreeing_an_mcc_approach_to_supporting_schools)

How to get children walking to school: A best practice guide by Living Streets

<http://wolverhampton.moderngov.co.uk/documents/s56945/Living%20Streets%20walk-to-school-outreach-best-practice-report.pdf>

Report to the Cabinet Member for Highways and Environment  
31 March 2014. Proposed Introduction of a CCTV Vehicle for Parking,  
Sandwell Council, 31 March 2014

<https://bit.ly/2MAZrtN>

Report to Sandwell Cabinet regarding the proposed introduction of a second CCTV vehicle in July 2017, Sandwell Council, 26 July 2017

<https://bit.ly/2BIKoTD>

Worcestershire's Local Transport Plan (LTP) 2018-2030 (Pages 19-20),  
Worcestershire County Council

[http://www.worcestershire.gov.uk/download/downloads/id/9024/worcestershire\\_s\\_local\\_transport\\_plan\\_ltp\\_2018\\_-\\_2030.pdf](http://www.worcestershire.gov.uk/download/downloads/id/9024/worcestershire_s_local_transport_plan_ltp_2018_-_2030.pdf)

Example of a Parking Services rota.

List of schools in Bromsgrove.

Numbers of children attending Bromsgrove schools from outside the catchment area, Worcestershire County Council, June 2018

**Legal, Equalities and Democratic Services**  
Bromsgrove District Council, Parkside, Market Street,  
Bromsgrove, Worcestershire B61 8DA  
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Email: [scrutiny@bromsgrove.gov.uk](mailto:scrutiny@bromsgrove.gov.uk)

### Corporate Peer Challenge – Bromsgrove DC and Redditch BC 2018

#### OPEN

|                                 |   |
|---------------------------------|---|
| Relevant Portfolio Holder       | Councillor Geoff Denaro (Leader of the Council) |
| Portfolio Holder Consulted      | √   |
| Relevant Head of Service        | Kevin Dicks, Chief Executive                    |
| Ward(s) Affected                | N/A   |
| Ward Councillor(s) Consulted    | N/A   |
| Key Decision / Non-Key Decision | Non key decision                                |

#### 1. SUMMARY OF REPORT

- 1.1 To inform members about the outcome and next steps resulting from the Local Government Association Corporate Peer Challenge which took place 22-24th January and 23rd February 2018

#### 2. RECOMMENDATION(S)

- 2.1 Members are asked to discuss and note the attached letter and action plan following the Local Government Association Corporate Peer Challenge which took place in January and February 2018.

#### 3. KEY ISSUES

##### Financial Implications

- 3.1 The cost of the corporate peer challenge is included within the authorities' annual subscription to the LGA. Other costs are internal ones related to officer time. The cost of implementing the CPC action plan will be met from current budgets (unless separate specific reports are required).
- 3.2 There are no direct financial implications arising from this report.

##### Legal Implications

- 3.3 None arising directly from this report.

#### **Service / Operational Implications**

#### **Background**

- 3.4 Since 2012 the Local Government Association (LGA) has provided, as part of its support to the sector, the facilitation of Corporate Peer Challenge (CPC) reviews whereby senior members and officers from other local authorities, supported by LGA staff, visit the Councils with the objective to inform their improvement plans and how to develop corporate learning. It is designed to be forward looking, and to facilitate reflection on issues and how they may be resolved. While it can be used as an external 'health check' on the authorities corporate governance, the peer challenge is not a form of inspection.
- 3.5 The CPC was an opportunity to pause and reflect on what the Partnership (Bromsgrove District and Redditch Borough Council) has achieved so far and to reflect on its future direction of travel and the issues the Councils will face.
- 3.6 The peer team considered the following five questions which form the core components looked at by all Corporate Peer Challenges. These are the areas we believe are critical to councils' performance and improvement:
- Understanding of the local place and priority setting: Does the council understand its local context and place and use that to inform a clear vision and set of priorities?
  - Financial planning and viability: Does the council have a financial plan in place to ensure long term viability and is there evidence that it is being implemented successfully?
  - Capacity to deliver: Is organisational capacity aligned with priorities and does the council influence, enable and leverage external capacity to focus on agreed outcomes?
  - Political and managerial leadership: Does the council provide effective political and managerial leadership through its elected members, officers and constructive relationships and partnerships with external stakeholders?
  - Governance and decision-making: Is political and managerial leadership supported by good governance and decision-making arrangements that respond to key challenges and enable change to be implemented?
- 3.7 In addition to these questions the Councils asked the peer team to consider: "Whether the Councils' and partnership's direction of travel is the right one?"
- 3.8 The CPC team comprised of:
- Matt Prosser, Chief Executive, Dorset Councils Partnership Serving: North Dorset DC , West Dorset DC and Weymouth & Portland Borough Council
  - Cllr Paul James, Leader, Gloucester City Council
  - Cllr Tudor Evans, Leader, Labour Group, Plymouth City Council
  - Bindu Arjoon, Director, Exeter City Council

- Claire Taylor, Director Customers and Service Development, Cherwell and South Northants Councils
- Karen Iveson, Chief Finance Officer Selby DC and Assistant Director North Yorkshire CC
- Raj Khera, LGA programme support
- Clare Hudson, LGA Peer Challenge Manager

#### **The Process**

- 3.9 The peer team were based at both the Bromsgrove and Redditch offices during the four day review. There was an initial 'scene setting' and 'checking the brief' discussion with the Chief Executive and Leader. These were done separately for each Council.
- 3.10 Meetings and discussion sessions then took place with a range of officers, members and other stakeholders/partners enabling the peer team to explore the issues relevant to the purpose, scope and suggested terms of reference for the peer review.
- 3.11 At the end of the initial on-site activity (22nd – 24th January) there was a feedback session and members of the Executive (Redditch), Cabinet (Bromsgrove) and Corporate Management Team were invited to attend and presented with the findings of the initial 3 day review. A further day (23rd February) was then held for the team to review their initial findings based upon further discussions and investigations. Again the Executive (Redditch), Cabinet (Bromsgrove) and Corporate Management Team were invited to attend.
- 3.12 This has been followed by a written feedback report (Appendix 1), summarising the peer team's feedback with their recommendations for improvement. This report was received just prior to the "purdah" period (for the Redditch Borough Council elections) and the Leaders of both Councils agreed that due to this that the publication of the report should be delayed.
- 3.13 Following consideration by the Senior Management Team and Leaders of both Councils, these have been pulled together into an Action Plan (appendix 2). Due to the change of political control in Redditch this report has been delayed in order to allow the new leader and Executive in Redditch to discuss this with their counterparts in Bromsgrove.

#### **Customer / Equalities and Diversity Implications**

- 3.14 None directly associated with this report.

**4. RISK MANAGEMENT**

4.1 No risks have been identified arising directly from this report.

**5. APPENDICES**

Appendix 1 – Corporate Peer Challenge Feedback Report  
Appendix 2 – Corporate Peer Challenge Action Plan

**6. BACKGROUND PAPERS**

Peer Review for Bromsgrove District and Redditch Borough Councils position  
Statement

**AUTHOR OF REPORT**

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# Corporate Peer Challenge Bromsgrove DC and Redditch BC

*22-24<sup>th</sup> January and 23<sup>rd</sup> February 2018*

## Feedback Report

## 1. Executive Summary

Bromsgrove DC and Redditch BC generally provide good and valued services to their communities. The councils are well regarded by partners having invested significantly in their ability to influence within the sub-region and beyond. Bromsgrove DC (BDC) and Redditch BC (RBC) are open to new ideas and approaches and this has allowed them to meet financial challenges to date. They have retained a focus on meeting customer needs despite falling funding. The councils now need to consider how they will structure and position themselves into the future in order to better understand and pre-empt customer needs going forward and continue to deliver services within their future budget constraints.

Bromsgrove and Redditch are very different communities facing very different challenges. It is a testament to the pragmatism of their leadership that they came together in 2008 to share a chief executive and then management team. The majority of service areas have subsequently become shared services whilst retaining their individual identities. Whilst Bromsgrove has remained Conservative controlled, since 2008, there have been several changes of council leader. Redditch although currently Labour, has also had changes of political control as well as leadership, but supported by a single chief executive they have remained steady in their support for sharing services and the benefits it has bought to each council individually.

Through working together the councils have delivered over £7.5m of savings across the two councils since 2010/11 and are continuing to deliver around £1.5m per annum. There remains scope for further efficiencies and service improvements. Members in both councils are engaged and committed and able to clearly articulate what they view as their councils' ambition and role within the community. In delivering this vision members are supported by an experienced and dedicated workforce loyal to improving their communities within a largely traditional workforce structure.

In order to meet the challenges ahead and maximise their strengths within the region the peer team suggest that the councils should focus on ensuring improved corporate ownership of financial management with tighter control of budget savings, and guarantee that expenditure is directed only towards agreed priority areas. More rigour should be introduced into developing and analysing business cases, and to their impact on priority setting. The councils should also be clearer about how they will track progress on key projects and savings and report against them. This should include identifying the consequences and mitigation if delivery does not progress as planned.

The councils also need to re-assess what they are seeking to achieve from the shared services partnership moving forward. Whilst it has delivered savings, resilience and a greater opportunity to lever influence it has not established a single workforce or culture. This means that siloes and duplication remain deeply entrenched and, combined with a need to invest in IT systems and digital solutions, all of which act as a barrier to greater efficiencies and innovation.

## 2. Overall messages

The peer team has significant experience of working in shared services partnership and it was striking to us that whilst the vast majority of colleagues work across both councils there is very little sense of partnership identity. A decade into sharing services the peer team would have expected a seamless workforce delivering services through a culture of collaboration to two sovereign councils operating in a single structure that would be more streamlined than two separate workforces.

The peer team found councils led by members who are extremely passionate about their communities, the role of the council, and are highly regarded by partners. Yet, we would question whether you have been able to maximise the benefits of joint working and truly embrace the benefits it could bring. We frequently heard reference to ‘that’s the Bromsgrove way’ or ‘the Redditch way’ meaning staff are expending unnecessary time and energy navigating a structure and governance system that is more complex than it needs to be.

The peer team refer to this needless complexity and in some cases out of date and inferior systems and approaches as the foundations of shared services throughout this report. Our contention is that if you could improve these core services (ICT, HR and finance) that are the foundation of shared services and make them genuinely efficient and supportive you could free up space for innovation, creativity and collaboration. This could give you the opportunity to redefine your shared ambition.

## 3. Key recommendations

There are a range of suggestions and observations within the main section of the report that will inform some ‘quick wins’ and practical actions, in addition to the conversations onsite. The following are the peer team’s key recommendations to the Councils:

- Pause and reflect on the shared service journey to date – celebrate your success – use the 10 year anniversary as a moment to do this
- Prioritise the work on tightening financial processes so that they provide the most up to date profiling, model the best in the sector and support strong decision making
- Spend more time together – introduce more joint informal meetings at political level
- Create space to have conversations about the future with your valued partners
- Redefine the shared future journey and ambition
- Define a new shared culture from the bottom up – with input from officers and members
- Share this emerging culture with partners and collectively shape the future community leadership role for the councils and partners
- Establish a single workforce and reduce duplication and time spent navigating two structures and systems of governance
- Having established the above use this re-energised culture to enable officers and members to design services to meet and pre-empt customer needs within your financial envelope.

Further recommendations can be found throughout the various sections of the report and a summary of recommendation are in Annex I.

## **4. Summary of the Peer Challenge approach**

It is important to stress that this was not an inspection. Peer challenges are improvement-focused and tailored to meet individual councils' needs. They are designed to complement and add value to a council's own performance and improvement plans. The peers used their experience and knowledge of local government to reflect on the information presented to them by people they met, things they saw and material that they read.

This report provides a summary of the peer team's findings. In presenting this report the peer challenge team has done so as fellow local government officers and members, not professional consultants or inspectors. It builds on the feedback presentation provided by the peer team at the end of their on-site visit 22-24<sup>th</sup> January 2018, and a subsequent visit to explore recommendations on 23<sup>rd</sup> February 2018. Our findings, unless clearly stated, refer to both Bromsgrove DC and Redditch BC. By its nature, the peer challenge is a snapshot in time.

Peers reviewed a range of information to ensure we were familiar with the Councils, the challenges it is facing and its plans for the future. We have spent 4 days onsite at Bromsgrove and Redditch councils during which we have:

- Spoken to 120 people including a range of council staff together with councillors and external stakeholders
- Gathered information and views from 50 meetings, visits to key sites and additional research and reading
- Collectively spent more than 300 hours to determine our findings – the equivalent of one person spending around 8 ½ weeks in Bromsgrove and Redditch

Feedback was provided to an invited audience of staff and councillors on day three of our visit and again on day four and this report will be accompanied with the offer of bespoke follow up. We appreciate that some of the feedback may be about things you are already addressing and progressing.

### **The peer team**

Peer challenges are delivered by experienced elected member and officer peers. The make-up of the peer team reflected your requirements and the focus of the peer challenge. Peers were selected on the basis of their relevant experience and expertise and agreed with you. The peers who delivered the peer challenge were:

- Matt Prosser, Chief Executive, Dorset Councils Partnership Serving: North Dorset DC, West Dorset DC and Weymouth & Portland Borough Council
- Cllr Paul James, Leader, Gloucester City Council
- Cllr Tudor Evans, Leader, Labour Group, Plymouth City Council
- Bindu Arjoon, Director, Exeter City Council

- Claire Taylor, Director Customers and Service Development, Cherwell and South Northants Councils
- Karen Iveson, Chief Finance Officer Selby DC and Assistant Director North Yorkshire CC
- Raj Khera, LGA programme support
- Clare Hudson, LGA Peer Challenge Manager

## **Scope and focus**

The peer team considered the following five questions which form the core components looked at by all Corporate Peer Challenges. These are the areas we believe are critical to councils' performance and improvement:

1. Understanding of the local place and priority setting: Does the council understand its local context and place and use that to inform a clear vision and set of priorities?
2. Financial planning and viability: Does the council have a financial plan in place to ensure long term viability and is there evidence that it is being implemented successfully?
3. Capacity to deliver: Is organisational capacity aligned with priorities and does the council influence, enable and leverage external capacity to focus on agreed outcomes?
4. Political and managerial leadership: Does the council provide effective political and managerial leadership through its elected members, officers and constructive relationships and partnerships with external stakeholders?
5. Governance and decision-making: Is political and managerial leadership supported by good governance and decision-making arrangements that respond to key challenges and enable change to be implemented?

In addition to these questions the Councils asked the peer team to consider:

**Whether the Councils' and partnership's direction of travel is the right one?**

## **5. Feedback**

### **5.1 Reflections on the Councils' progress**

The two Councils have demonstrated that they are willing to respond to their customer needs and flex their service offers appropriately. To do this both Councils are willing to consider new ideas and approaches and recognise that they can best deliver for their communities by working strongly in partnership, within their own areas and beyond. The workforce is extremely long serving with considerable experience. Staff have responded to challenges by developing and introducing new methods of service delivery,

particularly guided by a systems thinking approach. The Chief Executive has been instrumental in driving forward change and is clearly the guiding voice on transformation within the Councils.

Despite this drive for change the peer team heard time and again that the councils consistently adopt too many priorities and then take too long to implement them. This has led some colleagues to fear 'initiative fatigue' and whilst there is excitement about the potential income that the new focus on commercialisation can bring there is also a weariness that 'this is the latest thing' and an 'add-on' to the day job.

Business cases are now an accepted form of developing and introducing change but they should be closer linked to financial reporting. Whilst business cases are routinely used to develop new areas it was not clear to the peer team what the approach is for de-prioritisation. This is resulting in the organisations not being able to focus in on what is most important to them, and has the highest likelihood of delivery.

This is amplified by inconsistencies in financial reporting, which has been highlighted by external auditors. Greater corporate ownership of financial management is needed. Members 'do not trust the numbers', and as a result can be unwilling to take decisions that might impact on service provision.

## **5.2 Reflections on the shared services partnership**

***'Shared services has allowed us to sharpen our skills'***

Since 2008 the Councils have come to share most services resulting in efficiencies and greater resilience. The peer team heard of many cases of improved customer outcomes as a result. For staff it has presented opportunities to sharpen and deepen their skills and explore new ways of working. There are many positives to the shared work, but there appears to still be a legacy of two separate organisations as opposed to one partnership serving two sovereign councils.

Shared services partnerships are most successful when partners are viewed as equitable with a fair system of apportioning costs. Bromsgrove and Redditch are different size organisations with varying size of workforce and they rightly agreed at the outset to apportion costs and recharge accordingly. Since then the issue of recharges has been revisited at various moments, but without an agreed corporate approach. This has resulted in a consistent 'poking of the wasps nest' with recharges being viewed as an opportunity to seek to redress the balance if it is felt that one Council is paying 'less than its fair share'. The partnership should adopt a transparent policy to review recharges at certain points or times – or more fundamentally move to a single workforce.

Bromsgrove and Redditch are two Councils operating two models seeking to deliver services under one partnership. The partnership itself has very limited identity. Whilst this may be entirely appropriate from the customer perspective by having very little shared identity and culture the shared services partnership has not been able to evolve from sharing services to a truly shared partnership.

As you move forward there is an opportunity to maximise the benefits of shared working by establishing more of a joint culture and identity, and a single workforce. In the peer team's experience customers and partners are not concerned whether they speak to someone from Bromsgrove or Redditch or Bromsgrove and Redditch/Redditch and Bromsgrove. Indeed one of the most valued services highlighted to the peer team was recycling and waste collection which is one of the few services branded 'Bromsgrove and Redditch'.

## 6. Understanding of the local context and priority setting

***'We don't stop doing one thing before we move on to the next'***

The Councils have generally strong relationships with their partners and use these to inform their priority setting. This is often acquitted through well regarded projects and programmes, the Connecting Families approach was consistently praised for its impact. Community groups welcome the support provided to them and feel they are able to make a significant contribution to the community through working with the Councils. Both Bromsgrove and Redditch are viewed as highly committed and valued partners. Engagement with the youth sector appeared varied across the two Councils and the Councils should identify opportunities to share practice.

These partnerships are increasingly looking towards economic development and growth. Bromsgrove DC are widely regarded to be making good progress on economic development, following a change of policy emphasis which has been evidenced by expert analysis. There is a sense of excitement about the regeneration of Redditch town centre and plans for a potential business improvement district. The Councils must ensure that they are clear what they want to achieve with economic development and do not seek to take on new priority work streams without first considering what they will no longer pursue.

Partnership working is broad and valued but it was often difficult for the peer team to understand what the vision and ambition of those partnerships is. The vision of partnership working could be clearer and communicated more consistently internally and externally. As part of clarifying this vision the peer team would encourage the Councils to regularly appraise the added value that partnership working brings. In doing so do not be afraid to make changes to the way you work with partners.

Both Councils share six 'strategic purposes' which provide a rational for the delivery of services, but the broad nature of them means doing almost anything can be justified by them. Consequently it is difficult to identify what is a priority and what it isn't. Both Councils need to take time to consider what their priorities are, to articulate them clearly and to decide a process for deprioritisation. Resources should then be allocated against them, and regularly reviewed.

### **Recommendations – Corporate**

- Be clear about how you identify when something is no longer a corporate priority – and what it means

- When change is introduced guarantee that it is introduced with greater pace and rigour – with clear lines of accountability at the officer and political level
- Invest more time in considering what role all levels of the organisation contribute towards corporate aims – transformation is everyone’s role. Ensure that transformation is adequately resourced with clear programme and project governance, and appropriate skills.
- Management approaches need more consistency to support the development of a single corporate culture
- Establish greater consistency in the foundations of shared services – ICT, HR, Finance should all be enablers of change

## **Signpost – Adur and Worthing Councils**

These two councils operated shared management and services including a single digital strategy. They have taken a radical approach to creating a technology platform which enables rapid ‘self-build’ of applications, enabling design and prototyping of new approaches at pace and with low risk. Other partners such as the county council, health and the community and voluntary sector can build their own applications on the same platform, holding all the local data in one place. The benefits of doing this across two councils, rather than one, include being able to target shared resources more effectively across a broader area. It has also created opportunities for generating revenue streams.

## **7. Leadership of place**

***‘The councils are proactive in making changes for residents’***

The political and managerial leadership of Bromsgrove and Redditch Councils is perceived as positive and leaders are viewed as voices committed to improving their communities. The leaders and Chief Executive have been instrumental in ensuring that the Council’s voices are heard, and valued. There is a refreshing honesty about the relationships with the county, with all partners recognising the strengths and weaknesses in this. It was not clear to us how this relationship could be rebalanced and where and when the strategic conversations that are needed about the future of local government in Worcestershire are taking place.

The implementation of a systems thinking approach and development of strategic purposes for each council has helped to facilitate an outward focus in officers and members alike. This transformation has also impacted on partners who in turn have begun to question and appraise their own strategic purposes. The systems thinking approach has allowed members and officers to explore openly options for change – however it has not always led to change being actually delivered.

Both Councils have invested time and resource in understanding the needs of their localities, including their differences and similarities. Leaders now need to capitalise on this to drive appropriate regeneration and development. The introduction of Place Teams has established greater flexibility in responding to customer need in localities and is seen as having a positive impact. This more flexible approach to identifying and meeting customer need, and working closely with customers to shape future demand could be further explored.



The Councils have a broadly positive relationship with the local media, and the Councils' proactive approach to external communications has been critical to maintaining this. Building on this the peer team would encourage the Councils to consider what more could be done to maximise communications channels and outreach. The Councils do make some use of social media, but this can come across as a broadcast approach to communications. There is potential for the Councils to explore what greater role communications can play in their partnership working and development of the future vision of town centres.

## Recommendations

- Re-examine your existing commitments and have an honest conversation about whether they are sustainable, relevant or appropriate
- Evaluate the opportunities for maximising your influence – and focus your energy and leadership on where you can be most effective

### Signpost – Suffolk Coastal and Waveney Councils

In Suffolk Coastal and Waveney they have developed shared capacity with their local clinical commissioning group (CCG) to develop a joint approach to public health. By co-funding a key senior post, and having them co-located with council and health partners, they are able to reduce duplication, more closely align strategies and delivery and collectively agree a vision for improved health outcomes that they can each understand their role in.

## 8. Organisational leadership and governance

**'We need to stop letting political posturing get in the way' - Bromsgrove**  
**'We have seats at the table, we now need to turn that to influence' - Redditch**

There are clear examples of positive working relationships between members and senior officers. However, the team were struck by numerous instances where the tone of debate has resulted in criticism of individual officers. This is not acceptable and needs to be addressed. This relates solely to Bromsgrove DC, but it has a resulting impact on Redditch.

There are strong and positive relationships between senior leaders and Trade Unions. There is a significant opportunity to capitalise on these relationships by actively engaging Trade Unions in workforce planning, and Organisational Development strategy development, evaluation and implementation.

The peer team found some evidence that systems thinking and transformation has prompted officers to think and act more responsively – though this is not universal. The peer team would encourage leaders to consider how to spread the pockets of transformation throughout the Councils and beyond with partners.

Colleagues understand that the councils' financial outlooks are challenging and that delivering transformation efficiencies and income from commercial activities is critical to securing a sustainable future. To drive this forward a clearer articulation of the ambition and expectation of service areas is needed and should be regularly revisited. Support services have not been able to consistently underpin transformation and the systems thinking approach. The quality and breadth of support has hampered implementation.

This is amplified by being two separate workforces and in some cases distinct HR policies which causes confusion.

Lines of accountability for key programmes and projects need to be clearer, from officer level to portfolio holder. Too often the response was that major projects are the responsibility of the Chief Executive. This invests too much in one role and could expose the Councils to significant risk. Progress on project delivery should be regularly reported on – not simply to committees but also internally to colleagues and externally to partners. Lines of accountability for the delivery of transformation also need to be clearer, and understood by all. This would provide an opportunity to critically challenge, celebrate success, define when projects are completed, and gives licence to de-prioritise.

Scrutiny plays a vital and active role in challenging and probing the Councils' plans and actions. Having the Leader of the Opposition chairing the Scrutiny and Overview Committee in Bromsgrove is valued. There is also a long and valued history (in Redditch) of Opposition colleagues chairing Overview and Scrutiny, Audit and Governance Committees and having places on the Council Executive. Indeed scrutiny provides the opportunity to engage positively with members to inform decision making, including agreeing when something is no longer a priority. The peer team would encourage the Councils to more proactively use scrutiny as a forum for discussing and helping to define the future of the partnership.

During our time onsite the peer team routinely heard about the negative impact that political discourse has had on delivering ambitions in Bromsgrove. The distinctive role of officers and members needs to be clarified and the agreed boundaries adhered to, both in terms of political debate and operational decision-making. An understanding on all sides of what is appropriate behaviour must be established and enforced. The role of the Monitoring Officer is key here, and must be strongly supported by senior officers and leaders.

It is felt by some members that mistakes contained within reports to council and how this impacts on conduct during debate of those reports both act as triggers for confrontational and negative debate. This must be remedied at the most senior level.

## **Recommendations – governance**

- Take action at Bromsgrove District Council to raise the conduct of political debate so that it is constructive and does not undermine the council's reputation, as well as the local government sector
- Review processes for supporting members at council meetings, and where necessary, implement change to ensure members are well supported
- Ensure that boundaries between officers and members are publicly clarified and that their implementation is regularly reviewed
- Review Council Procedures to ensure that they can support constructive debate
- Ensure that report proofing procedures are 'watertight' and errors are not published
- Establish clearer lines of accountability for the leadership and delivery of major programmes and projects – that is appropriately dispersed throughout the organisation to mitigate potential risk in investing too much in one role.

## **Signpost – Dorset Councils Partnership**

Since the establishment of the three councils partnership serving West Dorset, North Dorset and Weymouth and Portland Councils in 2015 senior leaders have placed great emphasis on regular, shared dialogue between members and officers on strategic issues. The senior management team meets weekly with the leaders and deputy leaders of the three councils to understand the issues they have common views on, and those they don't.

## **9. Financial planning and viability**

***'Finance is not given the importance it should be'***

Shared services have delivered sustained savings for both councils. The emerging plans for commercialisation are an encouraging opportunity. In Bromsgrove specifically the £20m investment and acquisition strategy provides a base for future income streams. Having developed the strategy it must be adequately resourced and reported against. These recommendations would apply equally to Redditch should they proceed with emerging plans for an investment fund. Acknowledging the inherent risks of a borrowing backed strategy, investments must be supported with sound business cases and subject to robust due diligence - ensuring risks and opportunities are clearly understood in the context of the councils longer term financial outlook, and benefits fully realised within the required timescales. Both councils have now adopted Commercialisation Strategies and the plans for implementation and the move away from a traditional budgeting approach towards one with a more defined risk appetite now needs to be better and more widely communicated within the Councils.

Budget planning and monitoring needs to be strengthened. Senior leaders have recognised this and some improvements in financial processing are already underway including more senior finance resource. This needs to be matched with consistent opportunities for financial and budget management – at every level of the organisation. The development of a business case to introduce a new financial system that can underpin future change is urgently needed and should be hastened and delivered within the next financial year. This is critical for both officers and members to have more confidence in financial planning as well as providing an adequate response to concerns raised by external auditors.

Financial management is the responsibility of the Leadership Team and managers but the peer team found limited evidence of truly corporate ownership. Budget planning takes place within directorates but it is not clear how the corporate budget and spend is matched to agreed priorities. As a result the peer team were not assured that budget planning is adequately focused on the overall financial challenge, instead it appears to focus on meeting service needs and demands over a relatively short term horizon. A clearer focus on corporate level budgeting will enable a more strategic, long term approach to financial management. This should include more overt and regular probing of the levels of reserves and capital expenditure to ensure these are directed towards priorities and sufficient to manage the risks the Councils are facing. The councils should continually question how their resources can deliver services but can also contribute to place shaping and longer term ambitions.

## Recommendations – finance

- Financial accountability needs greater ownership across the organisation
- Budget planning needs to be more focused on future financial sustainability and not simply meeting service needs and short term demands
- Be clearer about how you track progress and manage risk – on delivering savings and key projects
- Establish a transparent, regularised and proportionate system of reviewing and amending recharges between the two councils – rather than leaving it to specific service areas
- Expedite the business case and implementation of a new finance system

### **Signpost – 21<sup>st</sup> century councillor and public servant**

These two major pieces of research explore the types of leadership roles and behaviour that are needed in a time of austerity and where the provision of local services and place shaping is more complex than ever. Councillors and officers need to move out of their traditional roles to become municipal entrepreneurs, system architects, commissioners and place shapers in order to deliver good outcomes, alongside partners, with limited resources.  
<https://21stcenturypublicservant.wordpress.com/>

## 10. Capacity to deliver

***'We don't agree to stop one thing before we agree to do something else'***

Change is a constant in local government and staff have welcomed the opportunity to try new things. Staff have also been engaged in shaping the way that they work – and a tribute to this is the longevity of service of many colleagues. Staff appreciate the efforts put into communicating with them through staff briefings. However change has not been adequately supported by core services such as HR, ICT and Finance. These core services needed to be more consistent and better engaged to deliver and support change.

Performance management is recognised as vital but there are inconsistencies in its implementation – both in terms of delivering services and managing people. Energy is still wasted within both councils in navigating varying approaches to HR and people management. This drains the momentum from the partnership and means that HR is not viewed as an enabler. Performance management is not used routinely enough as an effective tool for learning. There is limited evidence that staff feel the organisation learns from its past experiences, evidenced in the low response rate to the staff survey. The councils should consolidate and invest in these core services and use these refreshed services to invest in leadership development opportunities for all colleagues at all levels – political, managerial, operational.

Similarly ICT provision is mixed but more fundamentally neither council has explored the potential for digital design and delivery. Bromsgrove and Redditch have separate ICT strategies, but this is a 'foundation' service and greater economies of scale and impact could be realised by singularly defining ambition and delivering against it.

## Recommendations – transformation

- Consider how to meet customer need and expectation within your financial options using the systems thinking approach. This will help you identify what matters to the customer and design efficient processes to meet this need, removing service boundaries where required.
- Consider how to re-align your customer strategy to most effectively meet customer need within your identified priorities.
- Consider the impact that digital transformation of services can have, releasing capacity whilst improving the customer experience – develop and implement a single digital strategy.
- Develop a clear plan to assess what high volume low complexity transactions can be directed towards more cost effective channels. There is no tension between this and a systems thinking approach - many customers expect and are happy to access council services by means other than face- to-face- as indeed they do for services from other public and private organisations.

### Signpost – Breckland and South Holland

Breckland and South Holland councils have a shared management model and a single transformation programme. In 2015 through the LGA's Digital Experts Programme they launched a digitalisation programme to enable customers to 'access the right services at the right time and in the right way'. Since then a new online book and pay service for garden waste in Breckland has been introduced – the number of bookings have increased by 25% and 35% of all bookings are completed online. Similar growth and savings have been realised in South Holland. Customer service centres have been transformed with 'floorwalkers' using tablet devices engaging with customers and manage and channel their queries reducing the need for waits and meeting rooms. Customer self-service access points allow customers to manage their own accounts with the council and feed data to allow the council to reform their services.

## 11. Looking to the future

Bromsgrove and Redditch have delivered ten years of shared services despite changes in political control and austerity. Throughout this time the Councils have remained highly valued partners and delivered a wide range of valued services. The Councils have focused on moving onto the next thing without necessarily agreeing how they will finish existing projects and priorities.

The peer team suggest that the Councils need to create space to reflect, celebrate success and have open collective conversations about the future. The peer team encourage Bromsgrove DC and Redditch BC to:

**Be bold... create space to celebrate success and have collective conversations about the future**

**Be focused...on delivering what you say you will**

**Be confident...develop and deliver a shared ambition with a single workforce**

## 12. Next steps

### Immediate next steps

We appreciate the senior managerial and political leadership will want to reflect on these findings and suggestions in order to determine how the organisation wishes to take things forward.

As part of the peer challenge process, there is an offer of further activity to support this. The LGA is well placed to provide additional support, advice and guidance on a number of the areas for development and improvement and we would be happy to discuss this. Helen Murray, Principal Adviser is the main contact between your authority and the Local Government Association. Her contact details are, email: [helen.murray@local.gov.uk](mailto:helen.murray@local.gov.uk), Telephone: 07884312235.

In the meantime we are keen to continue the relationship we have formed with the Council throughout the peer challenge. We will endeavour to provide signposting to examples of practice and further information and guidance about the issues we have raised in this report to help inform ongoing consideration.

### Follow up visit

The LGA Corporate Peer Challenge process includes a follow up visit. The purpose of the visit is to help the Council assess the impact of the peer challenge and demonstrate the progress it has made against the areas of improvement and development identified by the peer team. It is a lighter-touch version of the original visit and does not necessarily involve all members of the original peer team. The timing of the visit is determined by the Council. Our expectation is that it will occur within the next 2 years.

### Next Corporate Peer Challenge

The current LGA sector-led improvement support offer includes an expectation that all councils will have a Corporate Peer Challenge or Finance Peer Review every 4 to 5 years. It is therefore anticipated that the Council will commission their next Peer Challenge before 2022.

On behalf of the peer team:

- Matt Prosser, Chief Executive, Dorset Councils Partnership Serving: North Dorset DC , West Dorset DC and Weymouth & Portland Borough Council
- Cllr Paul James, Leader, Gloucester City Council
- Cllr Tudor Evans, Leader, Labour Group, Plymouth City Council
- Bindu Arjoon, Director, Exeter City Council
- Claire Taylor, Director Customers and Service Development, Cherwell and South Northants Councils
- Karen Iveson, Chief Finance Officer Selby DC and Assistant Director North Yorkshire CC
- Raj Khera, LGA programme support
- Clare Hudson, LGA Peer Challenge Manager

February 2018

## **Annex I**

### **Key Recommendations**

- Pause and reflect on the shared service journey to date – celebrate your success – use the 10 year anniversary as a moment to do this
- Prioritise the work on tightening financial processes so that they provide the most up to date profiling, model the best in the sector and support strong decision making
- Spend more time together – introduce more joint informal meetings at political level
- Create space to have conversations about the future with your valued partners
- Redefine the shared future journey and ambition
- Define a new shared culture from the bottom up – with input from officers and members
- Share this emerging culture with partners and collectively shape the future community leadership role for the councils and partners
- Establish a single workforce and reduce duplication and time spent navigating two structures and systems of governance
- Having established the above use this re-energised culture to enable officers and members to design services to meet and pre-empt customer needs within your financial envelope.

### **Further Recommendations**

1. Be clear about how you identify when something is no longer a corporate priority – and what it means
2. When change is introduced guarantee that it is introduced with greater pace and rigour – with clear lines of accountability at the officer and political level
3. Invest more time in considering what role all levels of the organisation contribute towards corporate aims – transformation is everyone's role. Ensure that transformation is adequately resourced with clear programme and project governance, and appropriate skills.
4. Management approaches need more consistency to support the development of a single corporate culture
5. Establish greater consistency in the foundations of shared services – ICT, HR, Finance should all be enablers of change
6. Re-examine your existing commitments and have an honest conversation about whether they are sustainable, relevant or appropriate
7. Evaluate the opportunities for maximising your influence – and focus your energy and leadership on where you can be most effective

# Agenda Item 7

8. Take action at Bromsgrove District Council to raise the conduct of political debate so that it is constructive and does not undermine the council's reputation, as well as the local government sector
9. Review processes for supporting members at council meetings, and where necessary, implement change to ensure members are well supported
10. Ensure that boundaries between officers and members are publicly clarified and that their implementation is regularly reviewed
11. Review Council Procedures to ensure that they can support constructive debate
12. Ensure that report proofing procedures are 'watertight' and errors are not published
13. Establish clearer lines of accountability for the leadership and delivery of major programmes and projects – that is appropriately dispersed throughout the organisation to mitigate potential risk in investing too much in one role.
14. Financial accountability needs greater ownership across the organisation
15. Budget planning needs to be more focused on future financial sustainability and not simply meeting service needs and short term demands
16. Be clearer about how you track progress and manage risk – on delivering savings and key projects
17. Establish a transparent, regularised and proportionate system of reviewing and amending recharges between the two councils – rather than leaving it to specific service areas
18. Expedite the business case and implementation of a new finance system
19. Consider how to meet customer need and expectation within your financial options using the systems thinking approach. This will help you identify what matters to the customer and design efficient processes to meet this need, removing service boundaries where required.
20. Consider how to re-align your customer strategy to most effectively meet customer need within your identified priorities.
21. Consider the impact that digital transformation of services can have, releasing capacity whilst improving the customer experience – develop and implement a single digital strategy.
22. Develop a clear plan to assess what high volume low complexity transactions can be directed towards more cost effective channels. There is no tension between this and a systems thinking approach - many customers expect and are happy to access council services by means other than face- to-face- as indeed they do for services from other public and private organisations.



**Bromsgrove District Council and Redditch Borough Council – Corporate Peer Challenge Action Plan****Key Recommendations**

| <b>Recommendation</b>   | <b>Response / Action</b>   | <b>Lead Officer</b>   | <b>Timescale</b>  |
|---|--|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Pause and reflect on the shared service journey to date – celebrate your success – use the 10 year anniversary as a moment to do this</li> </ul>                                     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>As a Management Team we recognise that we don't take enough time to celebrate our successes very often and we need to be more proactive of this generally. We will address this moving forward by developing and keeping under review a communications plan to ensure we address this (internally and externally as appropriate).</li> <li>The next set of staff briefings and staff forum will be used as an opportunity to reflect on the journey to date and to celebrate how far we have come.</li> </ul> | <p>Kevin Dicks /<br/>Communications<br/>Team</p> <p>Kevin Dicks</p> | <p>September<br/>2018 and<br/>ongoing</p> <p>September<br/>2018</p> |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Prioritise the work on tightening financial processes so that they provide the most up to date profiling, model the best in the sector and support strong decision making</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The external auditors have recognised significant improvements (in both Councils) as part of their review of the Statement of Accounts. Much remains to be done and this will be mostly addressed through the implementation of the new Enterprise System – the business case for which has been approved by both Councils.</li> <li>Specification has been drawn up to ensure that all feedback from both</li> </ul>   | Jayne Pickering   | October<br>2019   |

|  |   |  |  |
|--|---|--|--|
|  | <p>internal customers and auditors has been taken into account</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>We will ensure that the improvements in our financial processes will be based on our systems thinking approach.</li> </ul>  |  |  |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Spend more time together – introduce more joint informal meetings at political level</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Collaborative working does exist across the County through the Worcestershire Leaders although it is accepted more needs to be made of this given the ongoing financial challenges faced by all councils.</li> <li>6 weekly meetings are in place for the Leaders and Deputy Leaders of both Councils to meet with the Chief Executive.</li> <li>Regular informal meetings of the Executive / Cabinet to be introduced from November.</li> </ul> | <p>Leaders / Kevin Dicks</p> <p>Leaders / Kevin Dicks</p> <p>Leaders</p> | <p>Ongoing</p> <p>Ongoing</p> <p>November 2018</p> |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Create space to have conversations about the future with your valued partners</li> </ul>        | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>This will predominantly be undertaken with the Leaders of the other Worcestershire Local Authorities at the Worcestershire Leaders Board and through Partnership Executive Group.</li> <li>Discussions to be held with Clinical Commissioning Group through the Alliance Board as to further transformation work with a focus on prevention.</li> </ul>  | <p>Leaders</p> <p>Kevin Dicks</p>  | <p>November 2018</p> <p>November 2018</p>          |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Redefine the shared future journey and ambition</li> </ul>                                      | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Each Council will be reviewing their</li> </ul>  | <p>Leaders</p>   | <p>November</p>                                    |

|   |   |                                     |   |
|---|---|-------------------------------------|---|
|   | <p>strategic purposes as part of their annual refresh of the council plan. This will help clarify the direction of travel for each council which will then lead to review of shared future journey.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• This will lead on to portfolio holder joint discussions (across both councils) under strategic purposes</li> <li>• Agreed by the Leaders (notwithstanding the above) that we should look to expand the shared services arrangements and expand them to take in other partners and using this as a basis for further transformation of services and ability to look at things more commercially.</li> </ul> | <p>Portfolio Holders</p> <p>CMT</p> | <p>2018</p> <p>December 2018</p> <p>December 2018</p> |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Define a new shared culture from the bottom up – with input from officers and members</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Work has been going on since the last but one staff survey around the culture of the organisation seeking input from all staff as to what the culture of the council(s) need to be going forward. Whilst there have been improvements in the last staff survey there is still more to do and an action plan will be developed to move this forward.</li> </ul>   | <p>Sue Hanley</p>                   | <p>November 2018</p>                                  |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Share this emerging culture with partners and collectively shape the future community leadership role for the councils and partners</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Our priority has to be internally to staff / members. We will focus on our principles and share / discuss them</li> </ul>  | <p>Sue Hanley</p>                   | <p>December 2018</p>                                  |

|  |  |                                   |   |
|--|--|-----------------------------------|---|
|  | <p>with partners as appropriate.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Discussions will be held at Worcestershire Leaders Board around community leadership role.</li> </ul>  | Leaders                           | December 2018   |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Establish a single workforce and reduce duplication and time spent navigating two structures and systems of governance</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Corporate Management Team does not feel there is a significant benefit to moving to a single organisation at this point in time for the following reasons: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Work is ongoing around the harmonisation of policies and procedures which will address some of the issues that gave rise to this recommendation. This will include delegations (particularly in Redditch) around the HR delegations.</li> <li>Work is ongoing around the harmonisation of the Job Evaluation schemes and the potential costs associated with this – dependent on this consideration will be given to the pros and cons of moving to a single employer.</li> <li>The culture work is ongoing (covered above).</li> </ul> </li> </ul> | <p>Deb Poole</p> <p>Deb Poole</p> | <p>September 2018 and ongoing</p> <p>January 2019</p> |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Having established the above use this re-energised culture to enable officers and members to design services to meet and pre-empt customer needs within your financial envelope.</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ensure departments adopt a systems thinking approach to designing and improving delivery of services: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Link the use of a systemic</li> </ul> </li> </ul>  | Deb Poole / CMT                   | January 2019  |

|  |  |                  |               |
|--|--|------------------|---------------|
|  | <p>approach to commercial plans where appropriate</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Support staff to enable them to know how to redesign services to meet customers needs</li> <li>○ Customer strategy – statement of intent</li> </ul> | Amanda Singleton | December 2018 |
|--|--|------------------|---------------|

### Further Recommendations

| Recommendation  | Response / Action   | Lead Officer         | Timescale      |
|---|---|----------------------|----------------|
| 1. Be clear about how you identify when something is no longer a corporate priority – and what it means   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Will be addressed as part of corporate and budget planning for 2018/19 – this will cover both budget and also key projects / initiatives</li> </ul>  | Leader / Kevin Dicks | February 2019  |
| 2. When change is introduced guarantee that it is introduced with greater pace and rigour – with clear lines of accountability at the officer and political level | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Business case proforma, using the five case model, is used for all business cases</li> <li>• All major initiatives will be subject to a business case with clear lines of accountability assigned (at officer and political level).</li> <li>• Regular monitoring of these will be included as part of performance reports (adopting a risk based approach) to ensure they are delivered with greater pace and rigour. Heads of Service will ensure initiatives are monitored using the Councils adopted approach to project governance</li> </ul> | CMT                  | In place       |
|   |   | Cabinet / CMT        | September 2018 |
|   |   | Cabinet / CMT        | December 2018  |

|   |   |   |  |
|---|---|---|--|
| <p>3. Invest more time in considering what role all levels of the organisation contribute towards corporate aims – transformation is everyone’s role. Ensure that transformation is adequately resourced with clear programme and project governance, and appropriate skills.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure that systems thinking approach is embraced / adopted in everything that we do</li> <li>• Culture programme to focus on identified priorities supported by leadership and team development and support</li> <li>• Transformation programme to be refocused and widely shared and understood and embraced throughout the organisation</li> <li>• Clarify direction of travel for the organisations and the way we operate</li> <li>• Project governance approach to be implemented and used across the Council</li> </ul> | <p>Deb Poole</p> <p>Sue Hanley/<br/>CMT</p> <p>Kevin Dicks/<br/>Deb Poole</p> <p>Kevin Dicks/<br/>CMT<br/>Deb Poole</p> | <p>December 2018</p> <p>March 2019</p> <p>December 2018</p> <p>December 2018<br/>November 2018</p> |
| <p>4. Management approaches need more consistency to support the development of a single corporate culture</p>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Work is being undertaken with regard to the review of the HR policies and procedures. Training and guidance documentation relating to the revised policies will be made available to all managers</li> </ul>   | <p>Deb Poole</p>  | <p>November 2018</p>   |
| <p>5. Establish greater consistency in the foundations of shared services – ICT, HR, Finance should all be enablers of change</p>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Enabling services have all been an integral part of the project groups in relation to Leisure Company establishment, HRA business case and development of an Housing Company</li> <li>• Workshops to be held with customer groups (e.g. managers forum) to understand what is required to enable</li> </ul>  | <p>Deb Poole /<br/>Jayne Pickering</p>  | <p>November 2018</p>   |

|   |  |                                      |                                     |
|---|--|--------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
|   | <p>a fundamental change in the approach and culture of enabling services to ensure they proactively support change based on systems thinking principles</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consider how services can ensure the enablers can provide them with the support and advice they need</li> </ul> |                                      |                                     |
| 6. Re-examine your existing commitments and have an honest conversation about whether they are sustainable, relevant or appropriate   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All partnership activity to be reviewed to ensure they are appropriate, relevant and sustainable following review of our clarified strategic priorities</li> </ul>  | CMT                                  | December 2018                       |
| 7. Evaluate the opportunities for maximising your influence – and focus your energy and leadership on where you can be most effective   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• As a result of 6 above review where the focus will be and where there is capacity</li> </ul>  | Leaders                              | January 2019                        |
| 8. Take action at Bromsgrove District Council to raise the conduct of political debate so that it is constructive and does not undermine the council's reputation, as well as the local government sector | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Responsibility of all Councillors to support and act in accordance with codes of practice and community leadership principles. If this doesn't happen Group Leaders to challenge and resolve.</li> </ul>  | Group Leaders                        | November 2018                       |
| 9. Review processes for supporting members at council meetings, and where necessary, implement change to ensure members are well supported  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fundamental review of the Constitution at Redditch to ensure decisions taken at the most appropriate level</li> <li>• Further development of Cabinet / Exec members to ensure they are fully</li> </ul>   | Leader / Claire Felton<br><br>Leader | September 2018<br><br>November 2018 |

|  |  |                         |                |
|--|--|-------------------------|----------------|
|  | <p>briefed on their portfolios / reports on the agenda (ownership)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reconsider the position in BDC to allow officers to speak to clarify points of detail in order to make informed / speedier decisions</li> </ul>  | Group Leaders           | December 2018  |
| 10. Ensure that boundaries between officers and members are publicly clarified and that their implementation is regularly reviewed   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Point 9 refers</li> <li>• Undertaken as part of the review of the Constitution</li> </ul>   | Leader / Claire Felton  | September 2018 |
| 11. Review Council Procedures to ensure that they can support constructive debate  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Point 9 refers</li> <li>• Undertaken as part of the review of the Constitution</li> </ul>   | Leader / Claire Felton  | September 2018 |
| 12. Ensure that report proofing procedures are 'watertight' and errors are not published   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Report writing training to be provided to all managers.</li> <li>• Portfolio Holders and HoS to ensure reports are discussed and signed off at regular briefing sessions to ensure greater ownership</li> </ul>   | Claire Felton           | December 2018  |
|  |  | Portfolio Holders / CMT | September 2018 |
| 13. Establish clearer lines of accountability for the leadership and delivery of major programmes and projects – that is appropriately dispersed throughout the organisation to mitigate potential risk in investing too much in one role. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To be clearly identified within business cases</li> <li>• Project management and monitoring will be undertaken as part of performance report on a risk based approach</li> <li>• Responsibility will be dispersed around portfolio holders and CMT</li> </ul> | Deb Poole / CMT         | December 2018  |



|   |   |                       |               |
|---|---|-----------------------|---------------|
| 14. Financial accountability needs greater ownership across the organisation  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Training sessions to be held at Managers Forum</li> <li>• Enterprise system implementation will include a full training package for staff</li> <li>• Finance Officers attending DMT meetings to support the change in approach and culture and to clarify the understanding of where the accountability sits</li> <li>• Clear message to be passed on to managers as to responsibility for budgets</li> <li>• Managers to understand potential consequences if accountability not taken</li> </ul> | Jayne Pickering / HOS | November 2018 |
| 15. Budget planning needs to be more focused on future financial sustainability and not simply meeting service needs and short term demands | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 4 year budget planning to include more scenario and forecasting of potential impact of change</li> <li>• Aim to remove unidentified savings to ensure all funding is identified within the 4 year plan</li> <li>• Assess savings achievement based on risk assessment</li> <li>• Reporting to be presented against MTFP</li> </ul>   | Jayne Pickering / HOS | November 2018 |
| 16. Be clearer about how you track progress and manage risk – on delivering savings and key projects  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Savings to be shown against a risk assessment of delivery</li> <li>• Highlight key projects and risks associated to CMT</li> </ul>   | Jayne Pickering       | November 2018 |

|  |   |   |  |
|--|---|---|--|
| 17. Establish a transparent, regularised and proportionate system of reviewing and amending recharges between the two councils – rather than leaving it to specific service areas  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fundamental review of basis for sharing costs of overheads / charges</li> <li>• Cost recovery to be reviewed to ensure overheads do not include any direct costs to teams</li> </ul>   | Jayne Pickering                                     | February 2019                              |
| 18. Expedite the business case and implementation of a new finance system  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The business case for the Enterprise System has been approved by both Councils. Implementation by October 2019.</li> <li>• Tender out to suppliers</li> </ul>  | Jayne Pickering                                     | October 2019                               |
| 19. Consider how to meet customer need and expectation within your financial options using the systems thinking approach. This will help you identify what matters to the customer and design efficient processes to meet this need, removing service boundaries where required. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Refocus the transformation programme and commercialisation programme</li> <li>• Development of a Customer and Digital Strategy as part of the ongoing transformation programme. Publish “statement of intent” – enable people to do business on line in order to release resources to focus on understanding and delivering against customer need (in line with our principles)</li> </ul> | <p>Deb Poole</p> <p>Amanda Singleton /Deb Poole</p> | <p>September 2018</p> <p>December 2018</p> |
| 20. Consider how to re-align your customer strategy to most effectively meet customer need within your identified priorities.  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• As 19 above</li> </ul>   | As 19 above   | As 19 above                                |
| 21. Consider the impact that digital transformation of services can have, releasing capacity whilst improving the customer experience – develop and implement a single digital strategy.   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• As 19 above</li> </ul>   | As 19 above   | As 19 above                                |

|   |   |                    |                    |
|---|---|--------------------|--------------------|
| <p>22. Develop a clear plan to assess what high volume low complexity transactions can be directed towards more cost effective channels. There is no tension between this and a systems thinking approach - many customers expect and are happy to access council services by means other than face- to-face- as indeed they do for services from other public and private organisations.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>As 19 above</li> </ul> | <p>As 19 above</p> | <p>As 19 above</p> |
|---|---|--------------------|--------------------|

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### CORPORATE PERFORMANCE REPORT

|                                 |  |
|---------------------------------|--|
| Relevant Portfolio Holder       | Councillor G N Denaro, Leader of the Council (Governance/Policy & Performance and HR) and Councillor B T Cooper (Finance and Enabling) |
| Portfolio Holder Consulted      |  |
| Relevant Head of Service        | Deb Poole, Head of Transformation & OD   |
| Ward(s) Affected                | All wards  |
| Ward Councillor(s) Consulted    | N/A  |
| Key Decision / Non-Key Decision | No   |

#### 1. **SUMMARY OF PROPOSALS**

To review performance information relating to a set of key corporate measures and the strategic purpose 'Provide me good things to see, do and visit'.

#### 2. **RECOMMENDATIONS**

Cabinet is asked to note the contents of the report and associated appendix (Appendix 1).

#### 3. **KEY ISSUES**

##### **Financial Implications**

- 3.1 Effective performance management will enable the Council to use limited resources in a more targeted manner, maximising the value of Council services and allowing the Council to be even more responsive to our customers' needs.

##### **Legal Implications**

- 3.2 There are no legal implications arising from this report.

##### **Service / Operational Implications**

- 3.3 Using performance data enables the Council to understand if it is working towards the strategic purposes and delivering the priority actions set out in the Council Plan.

##### **Customer / Equalities and Diversity Implications**

- 3.4 The strategic purposes are from a customers' perspective, so relevant and robust performance data will enable the Council to understand if it is delivering what matters to customers, as identified through the Council Plan.

There are no equality and diversity implications arising directly from this report; however, the importance of understanding how the Council performs for all residents is important.

#### **4. RISK MANAGEMENT**

- 4.1 Using data to ensure the Council meets the strategic purposes and delivers on the priority actions in the Council Plan will support the management of risks identified around the delivery of those strategic purposes. The reviewing of performance data also contributes to a robust and effective decision making process.

#### **5. APPENDICES**

Appendix 1 - Corporate Performance Report: 'Provide me good things to see, do and visit' – 31<sup>st</sup> October 2018

#### **AUTHOR OF REPORT**

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Tel.: 01527 548247

## BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL

### CORPORATE PERFORMANCE REPORT: 'PROVIDE GOOD THINGS FOR ME TO SEE DO AND VISIT' – 31 OCTOBER 2018

#### **1. INTRODUCTION**

- 1.1 This bi-monthly report highlights the key areas for the strategic purpose 'Provide good things for me to see, do and visit'.
- 1.2 The key corporate measures suite contains a number of measures used by the organisation to better understand the corporate picture. The full suite is reported 3 times each year, with the exception of sickness absence, which is contained in each report. This report contains just the sickness absence. The full suite will be included in the next report.

#### **2. CONTEXT**

##### **2.1 Bromsgrove Sport and Leisure Centre**

The quarter started strongly with April seeing the highest monthly footfall to date. This has been a direct impact from the growth in swimming lessons and memberships. In May and June there has been a decrease in the centre footfall. Although this is a common theme as people start to train outside, it is believed this has been increased due to the prolonged period of good weather, with people choosing not to participate in pay as you go activities like climbing and swimming, but rather spending the leisure time in parks and other outdoor facilities.

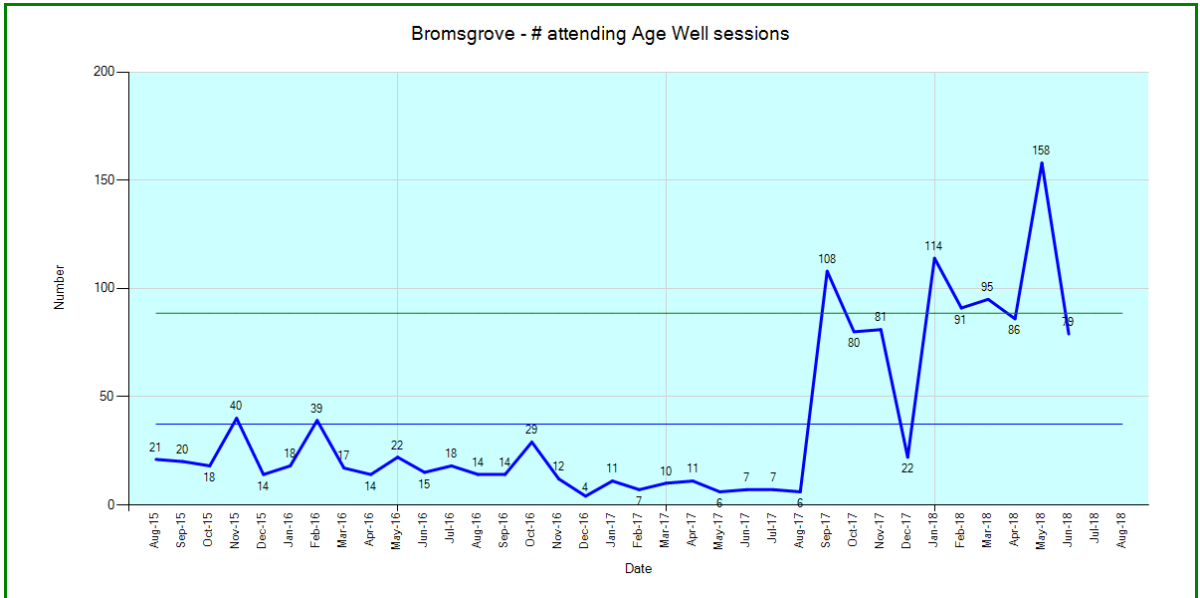
The climbing wall has proven to be a real success, and the Easter holiday seeing 1002 visits in the 2 week period.

Fitness membership continues to grow, and we have reflected this by increasing the amount of group exercise classes we hold. We are currently at 75 classes (increase by 10 since December). These additional classes have included a climbing fitness class, and the introduction of EA30 workouts, 30 minute classes that can be help in the gym and the studios. We have also re-introduced the line dancing class.

As the centre has started to settle and our programmes and 'teething' issues have been resolved, we have been able to start looking at our community impact and further developments to our programme. We are currently holding an NHS Shape programme, and the GP referral scheme is up and running after a few minor changes, and we are now in the process of developing this further so we can take referrals with more complex issues.

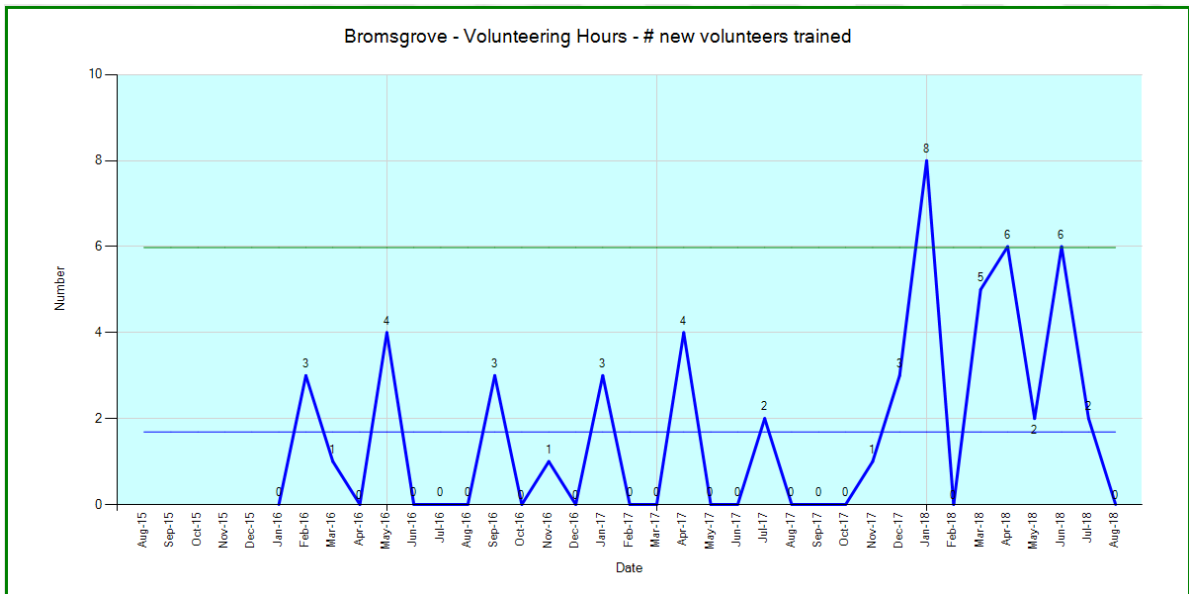
##### **2.2 Age Well Sessions Bromsgrove – Specialised Health Programs**

There has been an increase in Age Well sessions and this has been through greater engagement with medical practitioners and also an increase in qualified instructors to put on a wider range of activities. There is also a spike shown in May 2018 through the provision of a new Escape Pain course that is a specialist 6 week course for arthritis sufferers and these courses will run 4 times over the next 12 months.



**2.3 New Volunteers Trained**

The volunteer incentive scheme has increased the recruitment, but has also created security in delivery hours from training provided to volunteers. These two factors have contributed to an increase in the number of volunteers trained which is helping to support sports development delivery.



**2.4 Bromsgrove Parks and Green Spaces**

**2.4.1 Sanders Park - Project Management of Severn Trent works on removing the concrete channel and realigning of the Battlefield Brook.** An eight month project delivery to naturalise the Battlefield Brook was completed in June 2018. Phase 2 of the project will commence in February 2019 with minimal/minor works to improve the area upstream (Whitford Road) of the existing naturalised brook.

Catering Contractor is scheduled to carry out additional modifications to the building to open up access to the café from the bandstand side of the building. This will enable easier access and provide additional outdoor seating nearer the bandstand. Details and timings are yet to be confirmed.



Project Management and consultation support for the NPIF Worcestershire County Council cycle and pedestrian routes through Sanders Park; commencement dates to be agreed for next financial year which include potential widening of bridge, footpaths, new footpaths and improved access.

## 2.4.2 Section 106 Capital Spend:

- Hagley Outdoor fitness – Work alongside the Parish Council for consultation with local people and delivery of outdoor fitness in Hagley Park. Installation August 2018.
- Alvechurch Teenage Risk play/skate– Work alongside the Parish Council for consultation with local people and the delivery of risky play and outdoor fitness of Wiggin Memorial.
- Sanders Park Fitness – Tender process and consultation completed and installation scheduled for Winter 2018/19.

## 2.5 Bromsgrove Arts and Culture Consortium

2.5.1 In 2018 the Bromsgrove Arts and Culture Consortium convened, and facilitated by the District Council. The Consortium is made up of Avoncroft Museum, Artrix, Bromsgrove Festival, Bromsgrove Arts Alive, Severn Arts & Bromsgrove International Music Competition. Funding was successfully sourced from the Elmley Foundation, Worcestershire County Council, the Bromsgrove Society, Bromsgrove Rotary Club and most significantly an award of £49,000 from Arts Council England towards a 12 month action research project entitled “Tell me what you want”.

The “Tell me what you want” project contributes significantly to identifying future actions required in order to provide a sustainable and vibrant future for the cultural sector locally. It contributes directly to the Bromsgrove Council Plan’s stated aim to “Work with partners to develop a diverse range of arts and cultural activities”. The Consortium have commissioned the Beatfrees Collective to carry out the project, a yearlong research project to identify under-engaged groups in Bromsgrove and to understand why those groups aren’t engaging and what Bromsgrove needs to do to connect with them. The project will culminate in the creation of an action plan, toolkit and most notably a funding plan co-created with arts and culture organisations and local residents and a final celebration event in May 2019.

The consortium has already attracted attention regionally and nationally as an example of good quality partnership working. The Arts Council have taken interest in this as an R & D project, to establish a funding template for similar comparable communities. Also a GBSLEP commission, managed by Culture Central based in Birmingham, engaged the partnership as part of regional commission to explore how best culture contributes to driving economic change through developing local distinctiveness in Towns and Local Centres.

## 2.6 Bromsgrove Town Centre Market

2.6.1 In December 2017, CJ Events served a 6 month notice to terminate the management of the Bromsgrove Market to NWedR who produced a report. The report recommended to bring the management and operation of the Bromsgrove Town Centre Market back in house, with authority to be delegated to the Chief Executive in consultation with the Deputy Leader and Portfolio Holder for Economic Development, Regeneration and Town Centre. It was agreed that

management of the market should sit within L&CS Facilities team on a temporary basis until a permanent position was found.

Work was undertaken to ensure the seamless transition of the market back under BDC Control which included the following:

- Audit of equipment currently owned by BDC to be handed over.
- Review and re-write of all relative documents and issue to market traders
- early engagement meetings set up with traders and BDC
- Job Descriptions and Person Specifications for each of the market posts (Market Operative, Senior Market Operative and Market Manager)
- Set up the payroll and payment process for market staff

Whilst the first few months have been a settling in period for the market, the next 6 months begin the development work which includes the measures for Bromsgrove Market which are currently being set up by the Policy Team. Reporting will commence in October by the new Market Manager, Johnathan Smith. Initial agreed measures are:

1. Total % occupancy of market stalls (monthly)
  - a) % Occupancy of market stalls per day (Monthly)
2. New stalls booked per month
  - a) New 'one off' single day traders.
  - b) New regular traders
3. Additional market/High Street Events (Quarterly)

New measures may be agreed once the new Market Manager is in place.

### **3. KEY CORPORATE MEASURES SUITE**

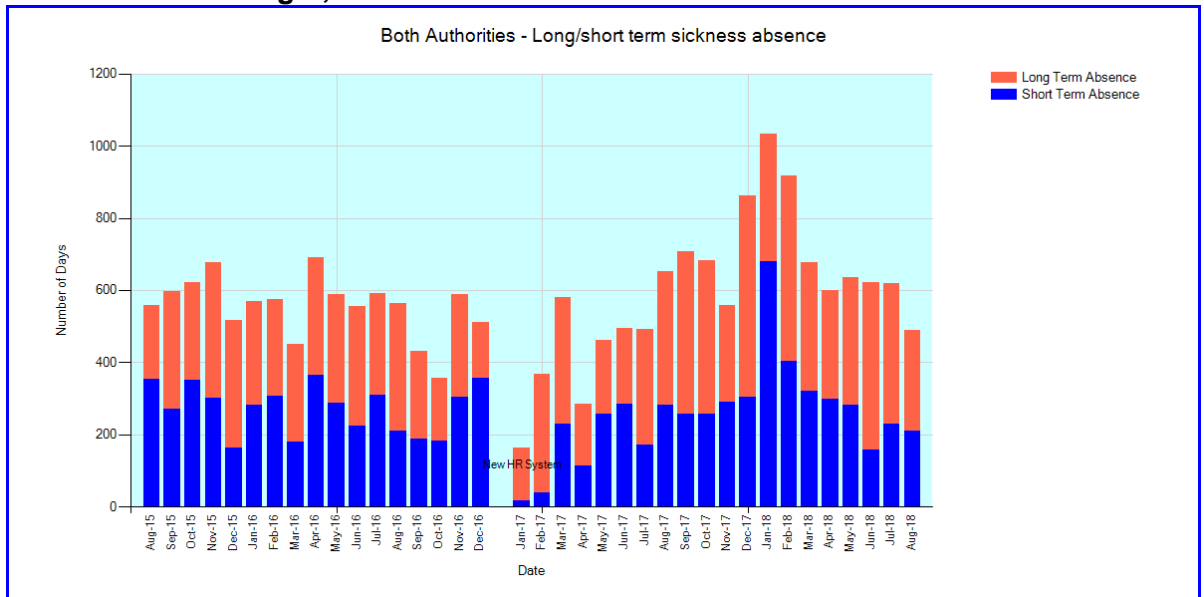
- 3.1 The key corporate measures suite contains a number of measures used by the organisation to better understand the corporate picture. The full suite is reported on 3 times each year, with the exception of sickness absence, which is contained in each report.

#### **Sickness Data**

- 3.1.1 In order to support the organisation to capture as comprehensive a set of sickness data as possible, a new online self-serve module was implemented in March 2017 as part of the HR21 system; this has now been rolled out to all service areas. HR continues to monitor sickness absence data and offer support and advice to managers when managing sickness absence in their teams.
- 3.1.2 Following an initial dip in sickness data, sickness absence figures have increased overall with a spike of sickness absence in December 2017 and January/February 2018. This might be attributed to the implementation of the new online self-service recording system and/or normal winter illnesses. The system for recording has been internally audited and all recommendations have been met, this included corporate messages regarding the responsibility of managers in recording sickness.

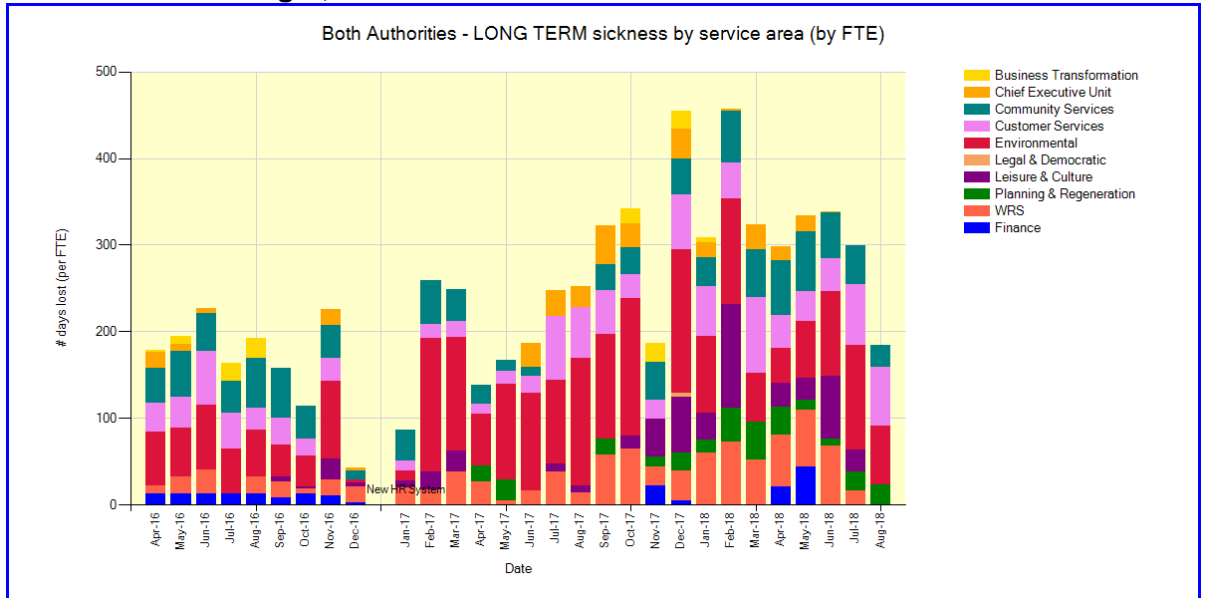
- 3.1.3 As part of a sickness absence working group an internal issue log is monitored and maintained relating to sickness, these can then be used to assist in future development of absence management. The issue log is divided into four main sections policy, process, training, and communication, each being tackled individually. The HR team are also actively working with the managers to look at the application of the sickness policy and are currently in the process of drafting a policy in line with the recommendations. We anticipate that the draft policy will be sent for approval in September, with mandatory training to support managers.
- 3.1.4 Future planned self-service system development also includes managers having access to sickness reports and a return to work interview facility.

**Long/Short Term Sickness Absence**  
**Contact: Nicola Wright, Assistant HR & OD Advisor**



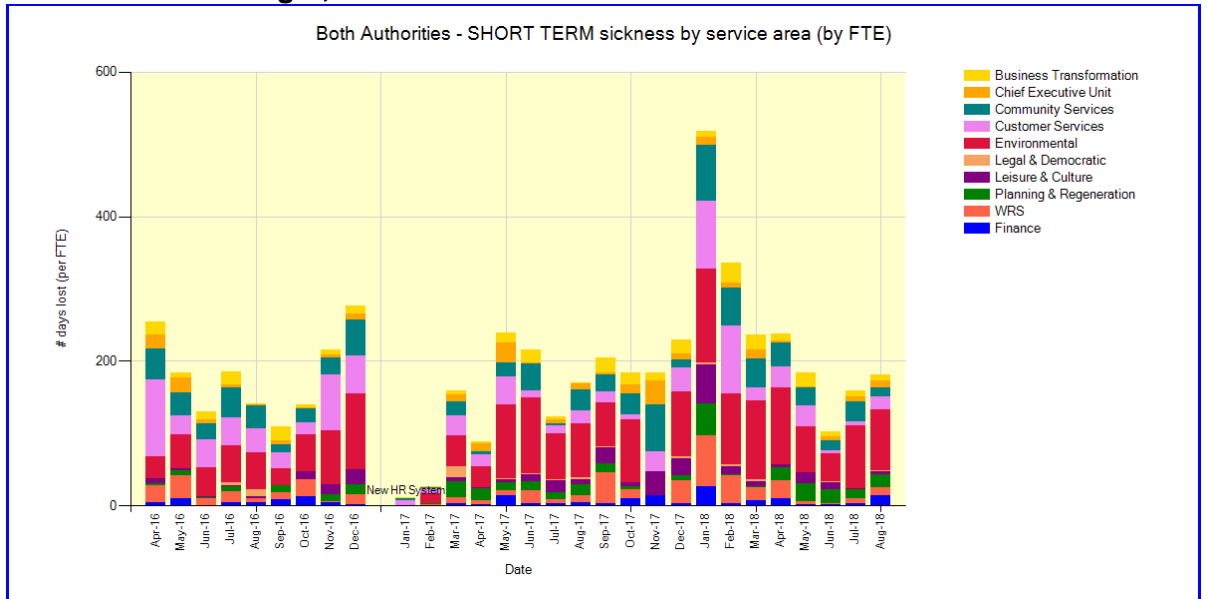
- 3.1.5 Short term compared to long term sickness has remained fairly static, however December 2017, January and February 2018 saw a spike in absence which might be due to the normal Winter illnesses; absences levels has since returned to previous levels. The HR team continue to monitor and assist managers in tackling both types of sickness, as well as using the data to make informed interventions where required, such as review of sickness absence policy, occupational health services and the employee assistance programme. Following the review of employee assistance programme (EAP), a new provider has been introduced enabling all employees assist to support. The issues log told us that staff were not aware of or didn't fully utilise the services available with the EAP, this has been included in the recent employee benefits days for staff; initial feedback on the day from staff was excellent and we would hope to see employee engagement levels rise within teams by utilising such strategies; it is recognised that a rise in employee engagement levels could have a positive effect on sickness levels.

**Long Term Sickness Absence by service area (by FTE)**  
**Contact: Nicola Wright, Assistant HR & OD Advisor**



3.1.6 Long term sickness has risen overall in comparison to the sickness period of 16/17; however we have attributed this to the implementation of a more efficient recording system. Work will continue within HR to research, implement and monitor effective methods of dealing with long term sickness.

**Short Term Sickness Absence by service area (by FTE)**  
**Contact: Nicola Wright, Assistant HR & OD Advisor**



3.1.7 Short Term Sickness was much higher in January and sickness data suggested the reason for this was a combination of stress/depression/anxiety and infections such as flu. The HR team will be able to use this data to make recommendations to reduce sickness absence in the same period next year, by a variety of interventions.

#### LOCAL COUNCIL TAX SUPPORT SCHEME 2019/20

|                                 |                   |
|---------------------------------|-------------------|
| 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 (CTSS) for working age applicants must be reviewed annually.
- 1.2 This report provides information on the work undertaken by the Customer Access and Financial Support Service to date amendments to the CTSS for implementation by 1<sup>st</sup> April 2019 and sets out proposals for public consultation.

#### 2. RECOMMENDATIONS

**The Cabinet is asked to RESOLVE:**

**to undertake a formal consultation with the major preceptors and the public on the proposed design of a revised scheme to take place for 8 weeks from 1<sup>st</sup> October. The results of the consultation will be presented to Overview and Scrutiny and Cabinet in January when it will consider any recommendations that will go to full Council in February.**

#### 3. KEY ISSUES

- 3.1 The CTSS replaced Council Tax Benefit with effect from 1 April 2013.
- 3.2 Under the Government's Council Tax Reduction provisions, the scheme for Pensioners is determined by Central Government and the scheme for working age applicants is determined by the Council. Pensioners broadly receive the same level of support that was previously available under the Council Tax Benefit scheme.
- 3.3 The scheme has also been amended each year for general changes in applicable amounts and for non-dependant deductions.
- 3.4 Council has previously agreed a minimum council tax contribution from working age claimants as 20%. Further to this members agreed to consider reducing the minimum contribution to 15% with effect from 2019. This change will require formal consultation as it is an amendment to the existing scheme.

- 3.6 Consultation is also required to implement 100% discount for care leavers, which the authority has previously committed to considering, subject to consultation, from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2019.

#### **Financial Implications**

- 3.7 The financial impacts for existing claimants will continue to be profiled and the final scheme presented following the consultation period.
- 3.8 Based on the initial financial modelling that has been undertaken, a revised scheme to increase support to 85%, would result in an estimated cost of £100k. Initial information provided by County Council and cross referenced to Council Tax information indicates that the cost of 100% for care leavers will be approximately £11k.  
A share of the cost would be attributable to the precepting bodies and discussions would have to be held to address any concerns they had in meeting additional costs.
- 3.9 The estimated current level of expenditure for the support provided to working age claimants only is approximately £1.7m

#### **Legal Implications**

- 3.10 On 1 April 2013 Council Tax Benefit was abolished and replaced by a new scheme discount scheme. 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
- 3.11 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)
- 3.12 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.
- 3.13 The Authority must adopt its scheme, and make any revisions, no later than 11<sup>th</sup> March in the financial year preceding the one when it will take effect.
- 3.14 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.
- 3.15 In addition, where there are changes to the scheme which has the effect of reducing or removing a reduction to which any class of persons is entitled then the authority is

obliged, under paragraph 5(4) of Schedule 1A, to include such transitional provision relating to that reduction or removal as the authority thinks fit.

#### **Service / Operational Implications**

- 3.16 The changes will present minor procedural amendments to the operation of the Council Tax Reduction scheme. The maximum level of support will be increased to 85% and a separate class of persons to include care leavers will be inserted into the scheme, this will allow a different level of support to be provided to care leavers, as opposed to ordinary working age claimants.

#### **Customer / Equalities and Diversity Implications**

##### **Hardship Policy**

- 3.17 The current CTSS scheme contains provision for taxpayers to make an application for additional discount where they experience exceptional hardship. It is proposed that the scheme continues to include the same provisions to protect individuals who experience exceptional hardship. Where any group of person is likely to experience hardship, this will be addressed as part of the overall scheme design. The Hardship Policy will continue to be an integral part of the scheme for the foreseeable future.

In 2017/18 79 CTSS claimants were provided with support through the CTSS Hardship Fund.

##### **Consultation**

The result of the consultation will be included in the report to Overview and Scrutiny and Cabinet, setting out the final recommendation

- 3.19 Under the Public Sector Equality Duty (section 149 of the Equality Act 2010) the Council must have due regard to (i) eliminating unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Equality Act 2010, (ii) advancing equality of opportunity between people from different groups, and (iii) fostering good relations between people from different groups. To this end an equality impact assessment (Appendix 1) has been carried out to inform the final recommendations.
- 3.20 The consultation will be sent to all working age Council Tax Support claimants and a sample of council tax payers. In addition it will be our precepting bodies, stakeholders, landlord forum and voluntary sector agencies. It will be available on line and hard copies in the customer service centre.

#### **4. RISK MANAGEMENT**

- 4.1 Any changes to council tax support can have financial implications for the Council and the major preceptors as well as for our residents and therefore extensive

financial modelling has been carried out to understand the implications of the proposals.

- 4.2 Officers ensure that support on managing finances and advice on other potential benefits is made available to anyone experiencing financial hardship.
- 4.3 Any changes to the CTSS must be consulted on. The consultation must be meaningful and allow an appropriate period of time as failure to do so could result in a challenge.

**5. APPENDICES**

Appendix 1 – Equality Impact Assessment  
Appendix 2 – Current discounts and disregards.

**6. BACKGROUND PAPERS**

Held in Revenues Service

**AUTHOR OF REPORT**

Name: David Riley  
email: [d.riley@bromsgroveandredditch.gov.uk](mailto:d.riley@bromsgroveandredditch.gov.uk)  
Tel: 01527548418



## Equality Assessment Record

**1. What is the name of the service, policy, procedure or project being assessed?**

Council Tax Support Scheme (CTSS)

**2. Briefly describe the aim of the service, policy, procedure or project. What needs or duties are it designed to meet?**

The CTSS provides assistance to people on low incomes to help them pay their council tax.

When council tax benefit was abolished and replaced by localised council tax schemes in 2013, central government protected pensioners with a view that they are unable to take advantage of employment and unable to alter their financial situation.

The proposed alterations to the scheme will continue to protect pensioners who will get the same level of council tax support as they do now.

The proposals to change the CTRS from 2019/20 are as follows:

Increase support for working age claimants from a maximum of 80% to 85%.

Provide Council Tax Support of 100% for care leavers under the age of 21 and additional support for care leavers up to their 25<sup>th</sup> birthday

**3. Indicate which of the following applies:-**

This is a current service or policy and should be equally accessible to all sections of the Community or all employees

No

A decision is likely to be made to change, reduce or stop providing this service.

No

A new initiative or service is being considered or proposed.

Yes

# Agenda Item 9

**4. List your known customers and stakeholders (e.g. partner organisations, community groups)**

People of working age on low incomes.

**5. Describe simply how you know who they are?**

The Local Government Finance Act prescribes details of the scheme to be used for pension age applicants under the Council Tax Reduction Scheme (Prescribed Requirements) Regulations 2012.  
 Certain aspects of the scheme for working age applicants are also included within those regulations.

**6. How relevant is the General Equality Duty to this service, policy or procedure?**

Rate as H, M, L (high, medium or low) or No relevance. If all answers are “low” or “no” relevance go straight to question 10. When considering relevance for each protected group, use professional judgment and experience, previous Equality Impact Assessments, or any other information that you have to hand which demonstrates how relevant a service is to a particular protected group.

| Protected Group                | Indicate H/M/L or No Relevance | Evidence used   | Further evidence needed Yes/No |
|--------------------------------|--------------------------------|---|--------------------------------|
| Age                            | L                              | The changes will provide additional support for all working age claimants. Pensioner claimants will unaffected.<br><br>An automatic entitlement to discount with no income test for care leavers will mean that they are treated more favourably than other young people. | N                              |
| Disability                     | N                              | The proposed changes to the scheme continues to disregard disability benefits   | N                              |
| Transgender (Gender Dysphoria) | N                              | No impact   | N                              |
| Marriage and Civil Partnership | N                              | No impact   | N                              |
| Pregnancy and Maternity        | N                              | No impact   | N                              |
| Race                           | N                              | No impact   | N                              |
| Religion or Belief             | N                              | No impact   | N                              |
| Sex (Male/ Female)             | N                              | No impact   | N                              |

|                    |          |           |          |
|--------------------|----------|-----------|----------|
| Sexual Orientation | <b>N</b> | No impact | <b>N</b> |
|--------------------|----------|-----------|----------|

**7. Is there evidence of actual or potential unfairness for the following equality groups?**

| Protected Group                  | Indicate<br>Yes or No | Evidence of unfairness  | Further<br>Evidence<br>Needed<br>Yes/No |
|----------------------------------|-----------------------|---|---|
| Age                              | <b>N</b>              | <p>When creating the local scheme, the Council have given due regard to central government's stipulation that people of pension age must be protected.</p> <p>In previous public consultation the principle of 'Every household with working age claimants should pay something' was agreed.</p> <p>This principle ensures a degree of fairness as it applies across all groups who are of working age.</p> <p>The scheme is devised to incentivise working age people to seek employment.</p> <p>The changes to treatment of care leavers are supported by organisation's such as the Children's society.</p> <p>For those young people and working age people who are in severe hardship or unable to increase their income, the Council manages a discretionary hardship fund to support them following a detailed review of the individual's and household's circumstances.</p> | <b>N</b>                                |
| Disability                       | <b>N</b>              | The proposed changes to the scheme continues to disregard disability benefits   | <b>N</b>                                |
| Transgender ( Gender Dysphoria ) | <b>N</b>              | n/a   | <b>N</b>                                |
| Marriage and Civil               | <b>N</b>              | n/a   | <b>N</b>                                |

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|                         |          |     |          |
|-------------------------|----------|-----|----------|
| Partnership             |          |     |          |
| Pregnancy and Maternity | <b>N</b> | n/a | <b>N</b> |
| Race                    | <b>N</b> | n/a | <b>N</b> |
| Religion or Belief      | <b>N</b> | n/a | <b>N</b> |
| Sex (Male/ Female)      | <b>N</b> | n/a | <b>N</b> |
| Sexual Orientation      | <b>N</b> | n/a | <b>N</b> |

**If all answers are “No”, go straight to Question 10.**

**8. What is the justification for any actual or potential unfairness identified in question 7, for example, disproportionate cost? Describe briefly your reasons.**

| Protected Group                  | Justification for actual or potential unfairness |
|----------------------------------|--|
| Age                              | <b>N/A</b>                                       |
| Disability                       | <b>N/A</b>                                       |
| Transgender ( Gender Dysphoria ) | <b>N/A</b>                                       |
| Marriage and Civil Partnership   | <b>N/A</b>                                       |
| Pregnancy and Maternity          | <b>N/A</b>                                       |
| Race                             | <b>N/A</b>                                       |
| Religion or Belief               | <b>N/A</b>                                       |
| Sex (Male/ Female)               | <b>N/A</b>                                       |
| Sexual Orientation               | <b>N/A</b>                                       |

**9. If you have identified any area of actual or potential unfairness that cannot be justified, can you eliminate or minimise this?**

Hardship Fund is available to people of any age to apply for additional support and their need would be assessed on a case by case basis.

**10. Describe simply or list the additional information used to complete this assessment including professional judgment and how that was used in your decisions.**

Research and financial modelling by Policy in Practice, along with professional judgement, data and evidence of Council Tax support claimants, and feedback from FIT Officers has been used to consider whether this proposal is fair and equitable.

**11. What plans do you have to monitor any changes identified?**

The following will be will be monitored each year.  
 Claim numbers  
 Cost of the scheme  
 Applications for hardship and/or transitional relief

12. The actions required to address these findings are set out below.

| Action Required              | By Whom | By When       | Signed when completed | Priority | Expected outcomes |
|------------------------------|---------|---------------|-----------------------|----------|-------------------|
| Agree consultation on scheme | Council | October 2018  |                       |          |                   |
| Agree final scheme           | Council | February 2019 |                       |          |                   |

13. **Equality assessment undertaken by Amanda Singleton, Head of Customer Access and Financial Support**

**7<sup>th</sup> August 2018**

When you have completed this assessment, retain a copy and send an electronic copy to the Policy Team (Equalities) attaching any supporting evidence used to carry out the assessment.

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Appendix Two

Format and Questions - Council Tax Support Scheme Consultation

## **Bromsgrove District Council**

### **Council Tax Support Scheme Consultation 2019**

Background to the consultation

#### **What is the consultation about?**

Each year Bromsgrove District Council has to decide whether to change the Local Council Tax Support Scheme for working age people in its area. This year, we are deciding whether changes should be made to increase the maximum level of support we give to working age claimants and deciding whether young people leaving care should pay Council Tax.

#### **What is Local Council Tax Support?**

Council Tax Support is a Council Tax discount. The level of the discount awarded is based on the income of the household. The maximum discount that a working age household can receive is currently 80%, a discount of up to 100% is available for pensioners.

#### **Why is a change to the Council Tax Support Scheme being considered?**

Until April 2013 there was a national scheme called Council Tax Benefit. Local Councils became responsible for Local Council Tax Support Schemes from 1st April 2013. The Council aims to keep its Council Tax Support Scheme aligned with welfare benefits such as Housing Benefit and Universal Credit to assist in administration. As those benefits change, similar changes need to be made to the Council Tax Support Scheme. The Local Council Tax Support schemes also allow more support to be given to groups of people that we identify as vulnerable or in need of greater levels of support.

There are three reasons why we are proposing changes to our Council Tax support scheme, these are

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1. To maintain a link between Local Council Tax Support and national welfare benefits.

We make changes to personal allowances and income disregards so that the Council Tax Support Scheme is determined in line with national benefits.

2. To consider increasing the level of Council Tax Support to a maximum of 85%

At present working age claimants receive a maximum level of support of 80%, we are asking whether this maximum amount of support should be increased to 85%.

3. To provide support to young people leaving local authority care.

All Local Authorities have a special responsibility for the wellbeing of Children in Care and Care Leavers. This role is known as being a Corporate Parent, and as Corporate Parents, Bromsgrove District Council, wants to support all children and young people to achieve the best in their childhood, adolescence and adulthood.

We understand that young people leaving care rarely have the support that families can offer to help them become independent. The Government and The Children's Society agree that care leavers need additional support and that all local authorities have a role to play in providing this support.

Care leavers who live in their own homes are liable for the full Council Tax, and at present can receive up to 80% Council Tax Support which is reduced as their income increases. We are asking whether Care Leaver under 21 should receive 100% Council Tax support, regardless of income, and whether care leavers aged 21 to 25 should have a tapered level of support.

## Questions

I have read the background information about the Council Tax Support Scheme and the reasons for consultation?

Yes       No

I agree that the Council Tax Support Scheme should be amended so that personal allowances remain in line with national benefits?

Yes       No



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The Current Council Tax support scheme allows working age claimants a maximum level of support of 80% - as their income increases they lose support. For every £1.00 that their income increases the level of support is reduced by 20p. Increasing the maximum level of support to 85% of liability would have an estimated cost of £100,000

Should the Council keep the current Council Tax support scheme?

Yes       No

Should the Council increase the level of support to 85%?

Yes       No

## Extra Support for Care Leavers

Young people leaving care and moving into their own homes will be liable for Council Tax. If they are not working or they are on a low income then the maximum amount of Council Tax support they can receive at present would be 80% of their liability.

We are asking whether you agree that care leavers, because they do not have the same family support networks as other young people, should receive additional support.

Do you agree that Care Leavers under 21 years of age should receive 100% Council Tax Support?

Yes       No

Should this support to young care leavers be reduced as their income increases?

Yes       No

Should care leavers aged 21 to 25 continue to receive Council Tax support regardless of their income?

Yes       No

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Should support for care leavers aged 21 to 25 be provided up to a maximum of 100% and reduced as their income increases?

Yes       No

At what age do you think care leavers should be treated in the same way as other young people?

18       19       20

21       22       23

24       25

Do you receive Local Council Tax Support?

Yes       No

Do you pay Council Tax to Bromsgrove District Council?

Yes       No

### BURCOT LANE REPORT

|  |                                     |
|--|-------------------------------------|
| Relevant Portfolio Holder  | Councillor Kit Taylor               |
| Portfolio Holder Consulted   | Yes                                 |
| Relevant Head of Service   | Sue Hanley – Deputy Chief Executive |
| Ward(s) Affected   | All                                 |
| Ward Councillor(s) Consulted   |                                     |
| Non-Key Decision   |                                     |
| This report contains exempt information as defined in Paragraph 3 of Part I of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972, as amended |                                     |

#### 1. SUMMARY OF PROPOSALS

This report follows the Cabinet report on 6<sup>th</sup> September 2017 providing members with an updated position regarding the funding applications for the Burcot Lane site as shown at appendix 1. It identifies the funding conditions and the development opportunity for the site in the context of these restrictions.

#### 2. RECOMMENDATIONS

**Cabinet is asked to RESOLVE that**

- 2.1 The indicative plans and projected financial outcomes for the development project be approved and that provided the minimum financial projections are maintained, authority be delegated to the Section 151 Officer to agree the final details when these have been signed off by external advisors when appointed, and after consultation with the Group Leaders**
- 2.3 Agreement in principle is given to establishing a Housing Company to manage retained housing stock subject to the business case for the company being brought to Cabinet for approval;**
- 2.4 Officers proceed to implement the pre-development steps on the site, to include planning and building control applications, demolition of the existing building and the appointment of a Project Development Manager.**

#### 3. KEY ISSUES

##### Background Information

- 3.1 At the Cabinet meeting on 6 September 2017 members considered the options available to the Council regarding the 1.47 ha (3.64 acres) development site at Burcot Lane being the former Council House and Burcot Hostel site.
- 3.2 At the meeting members considered disposal through an open market sale thereby securing a capital receipt (option 1) , developing the site in partnership

with a Housing Provider (option 2) , or the retention of the site whereby its redevelopment might achieve a medium/long term revenue stream for the council (option 3). Each of these options will deliver housing, but the number of affordable homes delivered, financial risk/returns and level of council involvement varies considerably across the three options. However, the outcome of the Homes England bid now reduces the level of risk in option 3.

- 3.3 In summary option 1 means selling on the open market, replicating the traditional developer led model which focuses primarily on home ownership, and where the proceeds of this activity go to the developer. In this context the report explored detailed professional appraisals from Place Partnership and Harris Lamb Property Consultants that indicated a top-end gross land value in the region of £k per acre (£m). This price reducing in the context of an affordable housing scheme to circa £k at best (£m)
- 3.4 The professional advice received confirmed that it would be 'best practice' and in line with market standards for the site to be offered with the building demolished and with the benefit of planning and building regulations approval. It is estimated that these costs would equate to approximately £m. Therefore the capital receipt would reduce to £m for market (in addition the grant funding would fall away) or £k for 100% affordable provision.
- 3.5 In option 2 discussions with Registered Social Providers have indicated their requirements would be a concentration of a high volume of shared ownership in order to be viable and generate an ongoing revenue stream from the site. This is a product that's beyond many households on low incomes.
- 3.6 In addition within this option the Council would essentially lose control of the letting arrangements on the site and the ongoing revenue stream would be limited to the extent to which a partnership arrangement could be found.
- 3.7 Whilst it may be possible for members to consider the option of entering into a development agreement/partnership with a registered housing provider this may be more difficult to achieve in the context of the challenging timescales that have been identified in the Funding Agreement with Homes England.
- 3.8 Option 3 identified that this model achieved the most properties for rent and keeps outright sales down to a minimum. The table attached as Appendix 4 summarises the variations contained within the three options originally set out in the September 2017 report to cabinet.
- 3.9 The report went on to outline that whilst there was no certainty in this context that officers had registered an expression of interest to the Homes and Community Agency (now Homes England) for financial assistance of £m, which was submitted to the Accelerated Construction Fund in February 2017. Officers had also lodged a bid for financial assistance with the Department of Communities and Local Government (now MHDCLG) via the Land Release Fund.

- 3.10 As the likelihood was that grant funding would come with conditionality and that until the outcome of the bidding was known it would not be possible for members to properly consider the option outlined it was agreed at the meeting that the decision with regard to the future for the site be deferred until the outcome of the funding applications was known.
- 3.11 Members are advised that whilst the Councils bid for Land Release Funding was unsuccessful the application to Homes England for support from the Accelerated Construction Fund has been confirmed.
- 3.12 As members will appreciate the achievement of grant funding for the site significantly influences the possibilities available to the Council in the scope of its development.
- 3.13 In addition the provision of the funding also comes with conditionality that the Council will be bound by in the context of its chosen development scheme.
- 3.14 It will be necessary for the Council to enter into a Funding Agreement to confirm acceptance of the funding offer, this is a legally binding contract which sets out the terms on which the Homes England funding is made available to the Council and it is important that this is set out for members consideration as part of this report.
- 3.15 The Funding Agreement contains a number of conditions precedent which need to be satisfied before the funding from Homes England can be drawn down and these include:
- the provision of evidence regarding the Council's constitution;
  - the satisfactory appointment or proposed appointment of suitable contractors;
  - the issue of a title report by the Council;
  - the registration of appropriate title restrictions and supply of the relevant office copies to Homes England; and
  - the achievement of any milestones that have been pre-agreed to be complete prior to draw-down.
- 3.16 Importantly the funding offer is predicated on the assumption of accelerated construction and as a consequence the focus for the Councils scheme will have to be the speed of delivery and the Funding Agreement contains termination rights in favour of Homes England should certain pre-agreed milestones/outputs not be achieved in the agreed timescale.
- 3.17 In addition the Funding Agreement contains a clawback mechanism where elements of funding can be clawed back by Homes England and will be available to Homes England in the event that certain pre-agreed levels of profit are achieved.

- 3.18 In short for the Council to take advantage of the benefits that the additional funding affords it will be necessary for a more focussed delivery model to be considered and agreed on this site.
- 3.19 Therefore, in the context of option 3 it is still possible for the Council to develop the site within the funding arrangements, and the Council can, in accordance with previous considerations, develop the whole site and then dispose of some or all of the units. Although it should be noted that 30% of the units would have to be affordable housing units and that in order to achieve economic viability on the scheme a number of higher value properties would need to be disposed of on the open market.
- 3.20 It is also important to note at this point that in addition to the provision of housing within the district, at the Cabinet meeting in September 2017 members also considered the importance of exploring the possibility of identifying a scheme that could deliver an ongoing revenue stream for the Council moving forward.
- 3.21 Again in the context of option 3 members are advised that it would be possible for the site to be developed in accordance with the Homes England requirements listed above and for the Council to create a Company into which the residual properties could be transferred.
- 3.22 As members are aware the Worcestershire Strategic Housing Market Assessment (WSHMA) analyses the current housing market and assesses future demand and need for housing within each local authority across the County. In determining the potential housing requirement for Bromsgrove a range of scenarios have been tested and have identified a net dwelling requirement for the period 2011-2030 of 6,980. At the end of September 2018, there were 2591 households currently registering an interest in affordable housing in Bromsgrove.
- 3.23 The WSHMA shows that Bromsgrove and the district has the smallest private rented sector in Worcestershire at only 8.8% compared with the national average of 16.8% and the highest levels of home ownership in the county. Given the above and the ability for a Company to set its own rent levels it would be possible for the Council to develop the site and create a company to manage the residual properties as a way of contributing towards tackling the imbalance of private rented accommodation in the housing market, and support the council's longer term sustainability agenda.
- 3.24 With this in mind officers have worked through a development model which would enable the Council to meet the funding requirements whilst continuing to deliver against the Councils wider strategic purposes for members' consideration and provide an alternative to a freehold disposal of the site and the uncertainty that exists with a partnership with a registered provider. Therefore taking both the financial information (Appendix 3) and the detail outlined in Appendix 4 – the option that offers best value for money is to set up a housing company.

- 3.25 As the site is currently identified as a housing site within the Council's Local Plan officers have considered the things that a planning application would require in this context and these include:
- a) Transport impact assessment
  - b) Arbocultural survey
  - c) Protected species and habitat surveys including brook dwellers.
  - d) Flood risk assessment and drainage strategy
  - e) Design drawings for dwellings
  - f) Engineering design drawings for all site development works
  - g) Contaminated land and site investigation
  - h) Demolition method statement
  - i) Design access statement
  - j) Planning statement
  - k) Residential travel plan.
  - l) Statement of Community Involvement
  - m) Statement of Significance (All Saints Church and Crabmill PH)
  - n) Utilities report
- 3.26 In the context of developing the site and in addition to obtaining planning permission it is likely that pre-contract works will be required including a building regulations application, demolition of the existing building and the appointment of a Development Manager. For this reason a recommendation is included for members to agree that these pre-development steps can commence on approval of the recommendation.
- 3.27 In addition, due to the complexity of the project, the appointment of a professional Development Project Manager is considered essential to its successful delivery and again members are being asked to approve this as part of the funding allocation relating to professional fees.

### **Financial Implications**

- 3.28 Officers have undertaken financial modelling associated with each of the proposals detailed above with the financial implications associated with these detailed within appendix 3. These financial projections are based on the current indicative drawings with 61 properties on the site as set out in appendix 2 to this report). The remainder of the assumptions are driven from information provided from a combination of Place Partnership, council expertise and support from officers at Stafford and Rural Homes. All of these figures require more detailed work and investigation as the project is developed to ensure that the council is not exposed to undue financial risks as part of the delivery of this project.
- 3.29 Whilst it is expected that this project will achieve income opportunities, for the Council to ensure that the project does not become a financial liability, any designs drawn up must ensure that the project is effectively self-sufficient as a minimum, and is able to fund all necessary expenditure from future cash flows.

- 3.30 There is also scope for the company once set up to expand its operations, developing further sites or acquiring already built properties. As such, it would begin to achieve economies of scale and be able to generate greater surpluses, if the new properties were acquired at the “right” prices.
- 3.31 As per appendix 3, using the assumptions highlighted in it, the current financial models suggest that the project is financially viable. In scenario 1 a surplus of £k is generated over the 50 year life of the scheme and in scenario 2 a surplus of £m is generated. Further professional advice is being sought to try and increase the number of units on the site as well as reviewing that the assumptions being used in the model are robust as possible. Any increase in units on the site will increase the viability of the scheme, as long as costs are in line with current assumptions and units are not being sold at a loss. The model suggests that flats offer the lowest return on expenditure due to the relatively lower sale price in relation to initial capital cost. Advice about increasing the number of units beyond 61 is also being sought from Homes England. This is because doing so could lead to depreciation in clean land value, which could in turn reduce the level of grant being offered by Homes England.
- 3.32 The rents figures used for the retained properties are currently 100% of the market rent as seen in Redditch. This was used as the council has significant information about these rents, and they are lower than the current market rents in Bromsgrove. As such, they are at a discount to current market levels in Bromsgrove, with any increase in them bringing them closer to the actual market rent levels in the area again increasing the financial viability of the scheme.
- 3.33 Were the council to manage the properties itself, it would further “gain” as it is assumed that existing officers would be able to absorb these management duties therefore gaining a “new income stream” from the project (executive support and management lines in the tables in appendix 3), improving the councils yield on the project.
- 3.34 At present the affordable properties to be built are modelled as being sold at less than they cost to build. This is to enable the social landlord to ensure the future rental levels sustain the initial cost. It is worth stating that officers will negotiate this position with potential purchasers of the affordable properties. Were they to be sold for at least cost; this would improve the financial strength of the model.
- 3.35 The Council tax and potential New Homes Bonus generated are considered external to this model, so do not contribute to the viability of the scheme, they are there to demonstrate the total impact on the council.
- 3.36 The £m grant and all capital receipts generated from sales are to be used to reduce the borrowing costs of the project.

### **Capital considerations**



- 3.37 The costs associated with the redevelopment are summarised in the table below. Should the final scheme not be delivered any fees already spent would be chargeable to revenue. Officers consider this to be of low risk as the overall redevelopment is financially beneficial to the Council.

It is proposed that approval is given to increase the capital programme by £m over the 3 year period as detailed in the table. The associated funding is recommended as £m from the approved grant funding with £m borrowed Public Works Loans Board. The financial projections have included the borrowing costs resulting from the project and have been offset by the potential capital receipt of £m from the sale of units as detailed in the Appendix 3.

#### Legal Implications

##### Best Value

- 3.38 The Council is required to comply with its overarching Best Value obligations in terms of income, capital receipt and social benefit. This Best Value duty must be factored into any decision regarding the preferred delivery model.

##### Funding Agreement

- 3.39 There are a number of risks associated with the Funding Agreement which members should be aware of:
- the conditions precedent referred to above which need to be satisfied prior to drawdown;
  - termination rights in favour of Homes England that crystallise if pre-agreed milestones are not achieved by the Council; and
  - a clawback mechanism where elements of funding can be clawed back by Homes England if certain pre-agreed levels of profit are achieved.

Members are advised that the formula for any claw-back is still in development with Homes England.

#### **Procurement**

- 3.40 The build element of the scheme would be subject to the Council's Contract Procedure Rules and Procurement Law.

#### **Corporate Governance**

- 3.41 Should the housing company be the agreed delivery model, the recommendation is that the Company is established as a company limited by shares with the Council as sole shareholder. This is a flexible, widely used and well understood vehicle that means that the Council can benefit from income.

**Company Business Case**

- 3.42 If it is established that the establishment of a Housing Company is the preferred model, a business case will need to be approved for the purposes of the Company.

**Service / Operational Implications**

- 3.43 These are outlined in the report and appendices.

**Customer / Equalities and Diversity Implications**

- 3.44 Increasing the supply of affordable housing in the district helps households on low incomes by providing them with good quality and secure accommodation options. Improvement in the market rent sector will help rebalance the private rented sector in the district.

**4. RISK MANAGEMENT**

- 4.1 It should be noted that the financial proposals are indicative at this stage and will require further work in order to satisfy the funding requirements. This is usual for a project of this nature.
- 4.2 The legal risks associated with the housing company delivery model have been set out above and include:
- Satisfaction of conditions precedent to enable drawdown of funds;
  - The triggering of termination rights by Homes England if milestones are not achieved ;
  - The availability of clawback rights to Homes England if certain levels of profit are reached.”

- 4.3 The project will be subject to planning approval and for this reason site plan included in this report is indicative only, as they may require to be changed on architectural / planning recommendation.

- 4.4 The Council will need to follow the Contract Procedure Rules and Procurement Law in building out the scheme.

**5. APPENDICES**

1. Site Plan
2. Indicative layout
3. Financial Modelling – *confidential appendix*
4. Options considerations

**6. BACKGROUND PAPERS**

Report to Cabinet Site Disposal Burcot Lane, Bromsgrove 6<sup>th</sup> September 2017

**7. KEY**

N/A

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Appendix 1

O.S Site Plan



**APPENDIX 2 – Indicative layout**



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**APPENDIX 4  
OPTIONS TABLE:**

| <b>Option</b>                        | <b>Financial implications</b>  | <b>Council involvement</b>                                | <b>Risks/threats</b>   | <b>Opportunities</b>   | <b>Anticipated Delivery</b>   | <b>Strategic Purpose</b>   |
|--------------------------------------|--|---|--|--|---|--|
| Option 1 –<br>Dispose on open market | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Limited assuming successful disposal of site</li> <li>Estimated £m required to make site ready</li> <li>Cost of demolition to council</li> <li>Marketing and legal</li> </ul> | Limited and short term - getting the site clean and green | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Unknown impediments on site and demolition costs as a whole</li> <li>Changes in economy affecting appetite amongst developers</li> <li>Reduction in affordable housing on viability grounds</li> </ul>          | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Capital receipt</li> <li>Reduce existing debt</li> <li>Overall, low financial risk to council assuming successful disposal</li> </ul>   | Predominantly open market housing - small proportion of affordable units - estimate<br><br>43 open market sale<br><br>18 affordable for purchase by housing association | Help me find somewhere to live in my locality  |
| Option 2 -<br>Housing Company        | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Costs in setting up housing company and business plan</li> <li>Significant cost of demolition Planning and S106 requirements</li> <li>Cost of development</li> </ul>          | Significant and long term                                 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Unknown impediments on site and demolition costs as a whole</li> <li>Securing a development agent</li> <li>Changes in economy affecting appetite to purchase on open market</li> <li>Complexities of</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Catalyst for wider development role in district - opportunities for local businesses/constructors</li> <li>Projected ongoing revenue stream</li> <li>Council retains assets</li> <li>Rebalance the local housing market - first step</li> <li>Identify other local</li> </ul> | 6 open market sale<br><br>18 affordable for purchase by housing association and<br><br>37 market rent retained  | Help me find somewhere to live in my locality<br><br>Help me run a successful business<br><br>Help me be financially |

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|   |   |                        |  |  |  |   |
|---|---|------------------------|--|--|--|---|
|   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>agent and build</li> <li>• Subsequent marketing and sales/legal</li> <li>• Ongoing management</li> </ul> |                        | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>company governance/tax arrangements</li> <li>• New area/limited expertise</li> <li>• Large financial investment</li> <li>• Is there an ongoing programme</li> <li>• Delivery of 30% affordable housing by RP to be factored in</li> </ul>                   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>opportunities for development</li> <li>• Not required to be a Registered Provider<sup>1</sup></li> <li>• Homes England assistance available via grant</li> </ul>  |  | independent                                   |
| Option 3 - Partnership with a Registered Provider | Minimal - RP takes these on from the outset but still costly to RP  | Limited and short term | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Scale of demolition costs/unknowns may negatively impact on final revenue stream</li> <li>• Income stream time-limited</li> <li>• RP may pull out</li> <li>• Lack of guarantees about income for council</li> <li>• Public procurement process</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ongoing revenue stream</li> <li>• Maximises New Homes Bonus</li> <li>• Tried and tested method of delivery</li> <li>• RP can access HCA funding</li> <li>• Reduces s.106 obligations as all affordable housing</li> </ul> | 100% affordable housing on site - RP modelling produced a mix of up to 50% shared ownership with remaining units going for open market sale or affordable rent | Help me find somewhere to live in my locality |

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By virtue of paragraph(s) 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972.

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