



BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL

MEETING OF THE CABINET

WEDNESDAY 15TH JANUARY 2020
AT 6.00 P.M.

COMMITTEE ROOM, PARKSIDE SUITE - PARKSIDE

MEMBERS: Councillors K.J. May (Leader), G. N. Denaro (Deputy Leader),
A. D. Kent, M. A. Sherrey, P.L. Thomas and S. A. Webb

AGENDA

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

To invite Councillors to declare any Disclosable Pecuniary Interests or Other Disclosable Interests they may have in items on the agenda, and to confirm the nature of those interests.
3. To confirm the accuracy of the minutes of the meeting of the Cabinet held on 4th December 2019 (Pages 1 - 6)
4. Minutes of the meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Board held on 2nd December 2019 (Pages 7 - 12)
 - (a) To receive and note the minutes
 - (b) To consider any recommendations contained within the minutes

Any recommendations arising from the Overview and Scrutiny Board meeting held on 13th January 2020 and in relation to pre-scrutiny work, will be tabled at the meeting.

5. Cofton Hackett & Lickey and Blackwell Neighbourhood Plan (Pages 13 - 56)

Due to the size of the document Appendix 1 has been published as a supplementary agenda. Paper copies of the appendix will be available upon request.
6. BDC Response to South Worcs Development Plan (Pages 57 - 62)
7. South Staffs Local Plan Preferred Options (Pages 63 - 70)
8. Homelessness Grant and Flexible Homelessness Support Grants Awards 2020/21 (Pages 71 - 76)
9. North Worcestershire Economic Growth Strategy (Pages 77 - 104)
10. Market Hall Site - Meanwhile Uses (Pages 105 - 120)
11. Members ICT Policies (Pages 121 - 144)
12. WRS Joint Board Recommendations (Pages 145 - 162)
13. Essential Living Fund Policy Report (Pages 163 - 184)
14. Council Tax Base 2020/21 (Pages 185 - 188)
15. Quarter 2 Finance Monitoring Report (Pages 189 - 202)
16. Medium Term Financial Plan (Pages 203 - 230)
17. Management Review (Pages 231 - 252)
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

K. DICKS
Chief Executive

Parkside
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7th January 2020



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BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL

MEETING OF THE CABINET

4TH DECEMBER 2019, AT 6.00 P.M.

PRESENT: Councillors K.J. May (Leader), G. N. Denaro (Deputy Leader),
M. A. Sherrey, P.L. Thomas and S. A. Webb

Observers: Councillor M. Thompson

Officers: Ms. J. Pickering, Mr. M. Bough and Ms. A. Scarce

42/19 **TO RECEIVE APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

There were no apologies for absence.

43/19 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest on this occasion.

44/19 **MINUTES**

The minutes of the Cabinet meeting held on 23rd October 2019 were submitted.

RESOLVED that the minutes of the Cabinet meeting held on 23rd October 2019 be approved as a correct record.

45/19 **MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY BOARD HELD ON 21ST OCTOBER AND 13TH NOVEMBER 2019**

Councillor M. Thompson as Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Board attended the meeting to present the minutes. It was noted that there was a recommendation in the Minutes for the meeting held on 21st October, for consideration by Cabinet.

Councillor Thompson also drew Members attention to the tabled document, which included a number of recommendations from the Finance and Budget Working Group, in respect of Fees and Charges. Councillor Thompson briefly summarised the recommendations and the Board's reasoning for them.

In respect of the recommendation regarding the interment in a grave of children aged under 1 year and children aged 1 year to 17 years – both non resident. The Working Group had felt it was not appropriate to

make this charge and further information had been provided which showed that the cost to the Council of removing this charge was minimal.

The increase in respect of Primary Sports Projects, which was suggested at 20% and the Working Group, recommended that this would be better as an incremental increase of say 5 to 6% initially. The Working Group had requested information as to why such a large increase had been proposed and had been advised that an increase had not been made for some years, which was not felt to be an adequate answer to justify a 20% increase. The Working Group believed that any large increase or decrease should be made over a number of years rather than in one go, particularly in cases like this when the Council was keen to encourage its residents to improve their health and wellbeing.

In respect of Outdoor Fitness Sessions it was suggested that an increase of 2% should be included as this was organisations using the Council's facilities and an appropriate charge should be made to cover the overheads and often those organisations were making a significant profit from the events they organised.

The Leader confirmed that these would be considered in detail during the relevant item on the Cabinet meeting agenda, but she did not see that there was a problem with any of them. She also took the opportunity to thank Councillor Thompson and the Board for its work.

RESOLVED that

- a) the minutes of the Overview and Scrutiny Board meetings held on 21st October and 13th November 2019 be noted; and
- b) Cabinet consider a business case in respect of the Council Tax Support Scheme be brought forward for 2021/22 to include 100% Council Tax support.

46/19

ASSET OF COMMUNITY VALUE - THE VICTORIA GROUND

Members considered a report in respect of the listing of the Victoria Ground as an Asset of Community Value. Councillor A. Kent as Portfolio Holder for Planning and Regulatory Services explained that this was merely a renewal of a nomination that was already in place and he saw no reason for it not to be renewed.

Through the Chairman, Councillor M. Thompson explained that he was currently chairing an Overview and Scrutiny Board Task Group in respect of Bromsgrove Sporting and questioned whether this would impact on the work of that Group. The Executive Director, Finance and Resources confirmed that this would not. The length of the current lease for the Ground was noted and it was confirmed that this was one area that the Task Group were considering.

RESOLVED that Cabinet, as a consultee, support the listing of the Victoria Ground as an Asset of Community Value.

47/19

WORCESTERSHIRE MINERAL PLAN - STATEMENT OF COMMON GROUND

Members received a report in respect of the Statement of Common Ground for the Worcestershire Minerals Local Plan. Councillor A. Kent, as Portfolio Holder for Planning presented the report and in so doing highlighted the Council's involvement in the Mineral Local Plan and that it should be noted that the Plan did not continue any new mineral site allocations. It was noted that the issues raised at previous stages of the process had now been addressed where necessary. The policies in the Plan did not hamper the ability of the Council to progress with its District Plan review and it presented a robust set of policies for use by Worcestershire County Council in order to determine mineral applications.

Whilst the Plan did not need to go to Council, it was suggested that it did, for transparency, as both Councillor Kent and the Leader were County Councillors.

The Leader questioned the statement made at paragraph 3.7 of the report as it appeared to be in conflict with the recommendation and whilst this did not impact on the actual Plan, it was agreed that Councillor Kent would seek clarification on this matter.

RECOMMENDED that Council agrees to the statement of common ground with regards to the Worcestershire Minerals Local Plan and delegates authority to the Leader of the Council to sign and send the agreement to Worcestershire County Council on behalf of the Council.

48/19

HOUSING ALLOCATION POLICY - OUTCOMES OF CONSULTATION

Members considered the Home Choice Plus Allocations Policy Permission to Consult report, which was presented by Councillor S. Webb, Portfolio Holder for Strategic Housing and Health and Wellbeing and the Housing Development and Enabling Manager.

In debating the proposed changes Members highlighted the following:

- Reference in paragraph 3.7 of the report to qualification criteria. On checking this, the wording appeared to be unclear it what was required. Officers agreed to amend this.
- It was confirmed that paragraph 3.10 of the report, in respect of terminal illness or domestic violence, was in line with statutory guidance.
- Section 106 payments – it was explained that this was to meet the needs of rural communities and did not impact on other areas,
- Legislation in respect of pregnancy terminations and it was confirmed that the data in the policy followed current legislation.

RESOLVED that the consultation responses be noted and the changes to the Allocation Policy be agreed and the Policy (attached to the report at Appendix 1) be adopted.

49/19

FEES AND CHARGES REPORT

Councillor g. Denaro, portfolio holder for Finance and Enabling introduced the report and highlighted to Members the following:

- Page 159 of the report – street numbering. There had been a significant increase the previous year, following a recommendation from the Finance and Budget Working Group and therefore this year no increase was proposed.
- Page 173 – Other fees, major land sales showed 100% and this should in fact be 1.7%.
- There were a number of other areas where 100% had been included, this was an error and these should be zero.

Councillor Denaro spoke to the tabled recommendations from the Finance and Budget Working Group and confirmed that he was happy for these to be included.

The Executive Director, Finance and Resources confirmed to Members that where increases had been applied officers had been mindful of those that would be affected by any increase, but also conscious of the need to create income streams for the Council and to ensure cost recovery wherever possible. This was particularly relevant in respect of the recommendations from the Finance and Budget Working Group, where they had suggested an incremental increase for the Primary Ports Project and no charge for the interment of children.

Members also discussed the Finance and Budget Working Group's recommendation in respect of Primary Sports Projects, as Councillor Thomas, portfolio Holder for Leisure was keen to ensure that this did not impact on the cost of the service too significantly. It was explained that Members were concerned that these activities were very often aimed at some of the most vulnerable in residents and it was felt important that they were not discouraged from attending these activities due to the cost. Similarly in respect of the suggested increase for Outdoor Events Hire, the Finance and Budget Working Group were keen for the Council to be able to benefit from those activities, where it was clear that the organisers profited from the use of the Council's facilities.

During the debate that followed, Members discussed a number of areas in more detail:

- Figures were rounded up to the nearest 10p, so the percentage increase would differ slightly.
- The overall cost of the Sports Development projects, including staffing and equipment costs. This was estimated at £200k.

- Regulatory Services fees and charges were not able to generate income, but must merely cover the costs of providing the service.
- The rationale for those fees and charges which had not been increased.
- Page 177 of the report – a new pricing structure had been increased to reflect the actual requirement needed and in line with the current market for Football pitches.
- Fairs and circuses – there was one free day for the setting up and taking down of such activities.

RESOLVED that

- a) the recommendations from the Finance and Budget Working Group as agreed by the Overview and Scrutiny Board, tabled at this meeting and attached to these minutes, be included in the Fees and Charges update report, to be presented to Council on 22nd January 2020;
- b) discretion on Leisure Services fees and charges throughout the financial year of 20% for increase or decrease be approved; and
- c) all fees and charges that are included in Appendix 1 of the report be charged commencing 1st February 2020.

RECOMMENDED:

- c) that Council approve all fees and charges that are included within Appendix 1 of the report; and
- d) that Council approve the recommendations from the Finance and Budget Working Group, as detailed at Appendix 1 to the minutes.

50/19

MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL PLAN - PRESENTATION

The Executive Director Finance and Resources gave a presentation (attached at appendix 2 to these minutes) which covered the following areas:

- Changes to the budget gap for 2020/21 and how these were made up. This included the pay increase being originally estimated at 1% but now was expected to be 2%. Utility inflation had been estimated at 4% but was more likely to be between 6-7%. However, there was a reduction in the pension deficit and back funding, which was good news.
- It was noted that it would not be possible to increase Council Tax by more than 2% without a referendum. However, it had been confirmed that there would be a payment in respect of New Home Bonus which had not been expected.
- Pressures – there were four main areas, which were included in the presentation, New Homes Bonus – in relation to grants to the community, the Plan Review costs (including costs for independent Highways advice, development costs for Parks and Green Space and Land Charges project which was to be transferred to Central Government.

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- Savings – there had been a review of the insurance contract, which had resulted in a significant saving and service reviews in enabling services was also expected to produce a saving. Income from the garden waste service was also included.
- The Quarter 2 Finance Monitoring report would be presented at the January meeting of Cabinet and it was expected to show a number of savings that had already been achieved.
- It was highlighted that whilst a balanced budget for 2020/21 was shown, there was still a significant gap to be met in the following three years, which were detailed on the final slide of the presentation.
- Whilst the Council had significant funds in balances to cover the gap, it still needed to make significant savings.
- Heads of Service would continue to be asked to make savings and to review their services and any reserves which had not been used would be returned to balances and not carried over unless absolutely necessary.

The Leader thanked the Executive Director, Finance and Enabling and her team for their hard work.

RESOLVED that the Medium Term Financial Plan update 2020/21 to 2023/24 be noted.

51/19

FEES AND CHARGES REPORT

RESOLVED that the Fees and Charges confidential Appendix 1, as detailed on page 199 of the main agenda pack, be noted.

The meeting closed at 6.55 p.m.

Chairman

BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL

MEETING OF THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY BOARD

2ND DECEMBER 2019, AT 6.00 P.M.

PRESENT: Councillors M. Thompson (Chairman), J. Till (Vice-Chairman), A. J. B. Beaumont, S. R. Colella, R. J. Deeming, S. P. Douglas, M. Glass, C.A. Hotham, S. A. Hughes, A. D. Kriss and C. J. Spencer

Observers: Councillors G. Denaro and M. Sherrey

Officers: Mr M. Austin, J Gresham, Ms. J. Pickering and Ms. A. Scarce

58/19 **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND NAMED SUBSTITUTES**

Apologies were received from Cllr. P. McDonald with Cllr S. Douglas attending as his substitute.

Members discussed the number of substitutes allowed over each municipal year at Overview and Scrutiny Board. Members requested that the number of substitutes was re-visited and perhaps increased from the number permitted, which was two. Officers explained that this number was determined as part of The Council's Constitution and therefore this request would need to be taken to the Constitution Review Working Group to be considered there.

RECOMMENDED that the Constitution Review Working Group would review the number of substitutions that are permitted by each Member during a municipal year for Overview and Scrutiny Board.

59/19 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND WHIPPING ARRANGEMENTS**

There were no declarations of interest.

60/19 **TO CONFIRM THE ACCURACY OF THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY BOARD HELD ON 13TH NOVEMBER 2019**

The minutes of the meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Board held on 13th November 2019 were submitted for Members' consideration.

It was noted by Members that there was an omission from the last set of minutes regarding the Validity of Traffic Regulation Orders discussion. Members confirmed that this had been missed and Officers agreed that this item would be added to the minutes. Members also noted that in the item Worcestershire Health and Overview Scrutiny Committee – Update, the acronym should read CAMHS rather than CAMS.

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Board held on 21st October 2019 be approved as a true record.

61/19

RECYCLING - PRESENTATION

The Chairman welcomed the Portfolio Holder for Environmental Services and Environmental Services Manager, to the meeting.

The Environmental Services Manager presented first on Recycling and in doing so highlighted the following:

- Communications to residents regarding the bin collection days and what can be recycled in the green bin including leaflets, tagging for bins and social media campaigns.
- Bromsgrove District Council had the second highest level for recycling for a Council in Worcestershire for and last year 42.1% of total waste collected was recycled.
- Contamination of recycling was a growing concern and Bromsgrove District Council was working closely with Worcestershire County Council on their Joint Municipal Waste Plan.

Following the presentation, Members discussed a number of areas with the officers present in more detail, this included:

- Initiatives regarding new home owner leaflet deliveries of recycling and waste information.
- The importance of using 'brown water' instead of clean water when cleaning bins and recycling waste and encouraging the washing recyclable waste for Public Health reasons.
- The importance of consistent messaging and enforcement.

RESOLVED that the Recycling update be noted.

62/19

DOG MESS AND LITTER - A CAMPAIGN (PRESENTATION)

The Environmental Services Manager presented on the item Dog Mess and Litter and in doing so highlighted the following:

- The initiatives that are being undertaken are mostly centred around educating residents about litter including 'Adopt an Area'.
- There are low numbers of dog fouling in the District.

Following the presentation, Members discussed a number of areas with the officers present in more detail, this included:

- Place teams were responsible for monitoring the levels of dog fouling in the District and if there were any 'hot spots' they would put up the signage.
- Officers discussed that residents were encouraged to help with litter picking and that the Council were grateful for residents who took ownership of their area.
- An initiative whereby dog fouling bags were provided in the area to encourage residents to pick up after their dog.
- Enforcement of litter and what activities were currently undertaken to ensure businesses took responsibility for any litter that was generated from their business. Officers resolved to ask the Environmental Services Enforcement Officer to attend the local business referred to, to ask for continuing engagement in litter prevention in their area.
- Officers resolved to provide Members with the details on how to report a dog fouling incident.

RESOLVED that the update in respect of dog mess and litter be noted.

63/19

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY - SELECT COMMITTEE FINDINGS AND GOVERNMENT GUIDANCE

Members considered the Select Committee Findings and Government Guidance. The points were covered by exception as Bromsgrove District Council already undertook some of the recommendations.

Point 3

Ensuring Early and Regular Engagement between the Executive and Scrutiny (page 9 of the statutory guidance document) and the importance of formalising the engagement between the Leader and Overview and Scrutiny Board Chairman. Most Members were in favour of the more formal meetings however there was discussion regarding a more informal ad-hoc approach. Officers explained that as it was a clause in the Bromsgrove District Council Constitution it would need to be implemented. Members also discussed the large number of Motions that were received at Full Council and how these meetings could provide a genuine mechanism to manage this process more effectively. Members agreed to formalise the meeting to discuss the Cabinet and Overview and Scrutiny Board's Work Programme as per the guidelines.

Point 9.

Communicating Scrutiny's Role to the Public (page 11 of the statutory guidance document). Members showed an interest in communicating to

residents about the role of the Overview and Scrutiny function. Officers confirmed that they would work with the Communications team to ensure the message got out there by social media, website and other communication channels.

Point 13

Conflicts of interest including familial links (page 15 of the statutory guidance document). Members agreed that this point should go to the Constitution Review Working Group and be formalised through the constitution.

Point 15

Selecting a Chair (page 16 of the statutory guidance document) Members agreed with the suggested action that the Constitution Review Working Group should review the requirements in relation to the Chairman not presiding over the scrutiny of their relatives. They did not agree however that the election of The Chairman should be carried out by secret ballot as suggested in the guidance.

Point 18

Access to Information, including Exempt Information (page 18 of the statutory guidance document). Officers expressed that there was no need to consider this point as there had never been an instance where information has been denied as Cabinet had always been flexible in the past.

Point 20

Seeking Information from external Organisations (page 19-20 of the statutory guidance document). Members expressed that it would be a good idea to be represented on the Scrutiny exercises at Worcestershire County Council which had relevance or impact on the District. Officers agreed that they would prepare a letter on behalf of The Chairman to send to the Overview and Scrutiny Board at Worcestershire County Council requesting to attend future meetings. Councillor A. Kriss agreed to attend the meeting on behalf of the Overview and Scrutiny Board.

Members agreed that it was important to guard the Board's independence and that the white nameplates ensured the Board remained non-political therefore should remain in place.

64/19

FINANCE AND BUDGET WORKING GROUP - UPDATE

The Chairman advised that the Working Group had met once since the last meeting and considered Fees and Charges. The recommendations were tabled at this meeting and were accepted by Members.

It was discussed that as Councillor S. Douglas no longer sat on the Finance and Budget Working Group no longer sits on the group that there needed to be another member appointed. The Chairman nominated Councillor S. Colella and this was seconded by Councillor C. Hotham.

RESOLVED that Councillor S. Colella be appointed to the Finance and Budget Working Group.

65/19

TASK GROUP UPDATES

It was noted that currently there was only one task group being undertaken and that this was drawing to its conclusion. Councillor Thompson confirmed that the Bromsgrove Sporting Task Group would hopefully bring its final report and recommendations to the February meeting of the Board.

As Officers would have capacity to undertake a further task group in the new year, it was noted that following the training and work programme planning event held at the beginning of the municipal year, there were a number of areas, which had been suggested for task groups, this included the Public Transport / Bus Routes / Community Transport and Affordable and Social Housing..

As some of these areas had been covered in previous task group exercises, Members requested that reports for Previous Task Group be revisited and circulated for Members to consider before making a decision on taking these matters further. Officers agreed to action this.

66/19

WORCESTERSHIRE HEALTH OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE - UPDATE

Councillor J. Till, the Council's representative on the Worcestershire Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee (HOSC) confirmed that a meeting took place on 25th November which she attended. Councillor J. Till reported that there was a focus on smoking whilst pregnant and carbon monoxide consumption in infants. It was requested that the minutes from this meeting be circulated to the Overview and Scrutiny Board.

67/19 **CABINET WORK PROGRAMME - TO BE TABLED AT THE MEETING**

Officers that the majority of items in this would either be considered by the Finance and Budget Working group or were already on the Board's work programme.

68/19 **OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY BOARD WORK PROGRAMME**

Councillor S. Colella requested that bus stops be put on the Overview and Scrutiny Work Programme. This was seconded by Councillor S. Hughes. Officers will put this on the Work Programme for the next meeting.

Members expressed that they would like a refresh of the LTP4 task group scope, and it was agreed that Councillor S. Colella would speak to officers in this regard. Reference was also made to the Old Market Hall site. Councillor G. Denaro advised that a report in respect of this would be received in due course.

The meeting closed at 7.50 p.m.

Chairman

Cabinet

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Lickey & Blackwell and Cofton Hackett Neighbourhood Plan

Relevant Portfolio Holder	Cllr Adam Kent
Portfolio Holder Consulted	Yes
Relevant Head of Service	Ruth Bamford
Wards Affected	Cofton Hackett, Lickey Hills and Marlbrook
Ward Councillor Consulted	Yes

1. SUMMARY OF PROPOSALS

- 1.1 The Lickey & Blackwell and Cofton Hackett Neighbourhood Development Plan, which is attached at Appendix 1, was submitted by Lickey & Blackwell Parish Council and Cofton Hackett Parish Council ('the qualifying body') to the District Council in March 2018.
- 1.2 Following Cabinet approval (February 2019), the plan was subject to a statutory six week representations period from 14th February – 28th March 2019 and was subsequently examined by an independent neighbourhood plan examiner.
- 1.3 The final examiner's report, attached at Appendix 2, was received in September 2019 and recommended that the Lickey & Blackwell and Cofton Hackett Neighbourhood Development Plan met the 'basic conditions'¹, subject to a some modifications, and should therefore proceed to a public referendum.
- 1.4 A referendum into the Lickey & Blackwell and Cofton Hackett Neighbourhood Development Plan was held on Thursday 12th December 2019 within Lickey & Blackwell Parish. The 'Notice of Result' is attached at Appendix 3, and shows a Yes vote to the referendum question posed.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 **That Cabinet notes the result of the referendum on the Lickey & Blackwell and Cofton Hackett Neighbourhood Development Plan held on 12th December 2019**

¹ As defined at paragraph 8(2) Schedule 4B of the 1990 Town and Country Planning Act.

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- 2.2 That Cabinet recommends to Council that the Lickey & Blackwell and Cofton Hackett Neighbourhood Development Plan be 'made' (formally adopted) immediately, in accordance with the relevant legislation².

3. KEY ISSUES

Financial Implications

- 3.1 Work already carried out by BDC Officers in assisting the Lickey & Blackwell and Cofton Hackett Parish Council's in preparing the plan has been incorporated in to continuing workloads for the Strategic Planning and Conservation team.
- 3.2 Following the setting of the Lickey & Blackwell and Cofton Hackett Neighbourhood Development Plan referendum date, the District Council became eligible for funding of £20,000 from the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government's (MHCLG) neighbourhood planning grant. The application for this funding will be submitted as soon as the next claims window opens.

Legal Implications

- 3.3 The Lickey & Blackwell and Cofton Hackett Neighbourhood Development Plan has been produced in accordance with the relevant neighbourhood planning legislation arising from the Localism Act 2011 and the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012 (as amended).
- 3.4 Following submission of the Lickey & Blackwell and Cofton Hackett Neighbourhood Development Plan to the District Council in December 2018, officers reviewed all the Neighbourhood Plan submission documents and were satisfied that, with the approval of Cabinet, the neighbourhood plan was able to proceed to a statutory representation period, independent examination, and referendum, should the plan be deemed to meet the basic conditions. Subsequently, the independent examination into the Lickey & Blackwell and Cofton Hackett Neighbourhood Development Plan confirmed that the basic conditions were met subject to some modifications to the plan.

² As set out in the 'Legal Implications' (paragraph 3.3-3.11) section of this report.

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3.5 An information statement was published on 16th October 2019 declaring that a referendum on the Neighbourhood Plan was to be held. This ensured that no fewer than 28 days', excluding weekends and bank holidays, notice was provided as required by Regulation 4(1) of the Neighbourhood Planning (Referendums) Regulations 2012.

3.6 The question asked in a Neighbourhood planning referendum is standardised as set out in Schedule 1(1) of the Neighbourhood Planning (Referendums) Regulations 2012. To comply with this legislation, the question therefore posed for the referendum was:

Do you want Bromsgrove District Council to use the Neighbourhood Plan for Lickey & Blackwell and Cofton Hackett to help it decide planning applications in the neighbourhood area?

3.7 The referendum area, on the advice of the independent examiner, was identical to the designated neighbourhood area of the Lickey & Blackwell and Cofton Hackett Neighbourhood Development Plan; that is, coterminous with the boundary of both the parishes of Lickey & Blackwell and Cofton Hackett. As a result eligibility to vote in the referendum consisted of anyone who was 18 years of age or above on the date of the referendum, and who was registered to vote within the referendum area.

3.8 From a total of 5,382 eligible voters, 3372 ballot papers were received (with 33 rejected) (a turnout of 63%) with the result of the referendum as follows: Yes – 2911 (86%); No – 427 (13%). The 'Notice of Result' for the referendum is included at Appendix 3 for information.

3.9 Within a previous report to Cabinet in February 2019, with reference to the Lickey & Blackwell and Cofton Hackett Neighbourhood Development Plan process, it was stated "*Should a referendum result in a 'Yes' vote that the Lickey & Blackwell and Cofton Hackett Neighbourhood Plan be made, it is proposed that the Lickey & Blackwell and Cofton Hackett Neighbourhood Development Plan be brought back to meetings of both Bromsgrove District Cabinet and Full Council to approve the adoption of the Lickey & Blackwell and Cofton Hackett Neighbourhood Development Plan*".

3.10 In light of the above, this report seeks a recommendation from Cabinet that the next meeting of Full Council on 22nd January 2020 approves

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the Lickey & Blackwell and Cofton Hackett Neighbourhood Development Plan to be 'made' in accordance with the relevant legislation, in particular Section 38A paragraph 4(a) of the 2004 Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act, which states that, "*A local planning authority to whom a proposal for the making of a neighbourhood development plan has been made...must make a neighbourhood development plan to which the proposal relates if in each applicable referendum under that Schedule (as so applied) more than half of those voting have voted in favour of the plan*".

- 3.11 It should also be noted that the meeting of Full Council occurs 5 weeks after the date of the Lickey & Blackwell Neighbourhood Development Plan referendum. Regulation 18A of the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012 (as amended) states that the prescribed date for making a neighbourhood plan following a referendum being held "*...is the date which is the last day of the period of 8 weeks beginning with the day immediately following that on which the last applicable referendum is held.*"

Service / Operational Implications

- 3.12 Despite the Lickey & Blackwell and Cofton Hackett Neighbourhood Development Plan belonging to the Parish Council, the District Council has worked closely with the neighbourhood plan steering group in the preparation of the plan, both prior to and since designation of the neighbourhood area in October 2014.
- 3.13 In subsequent years, considerable officer time has been spent advising and supporting members of the neighbourhood plan steering group. In particular, officers have advised on matters concerning technical planning regulations and provided information to help comply with other legal requirements such as strategic environmental assessment (SEA) and habitat regulation assessment (HRA).
- 3.14 Once the Lickey & Blackwell and Cofton Hackett Neighbourhood Development Plan is 'made' (adopted), the plan will form part of the statutory development plan, and therefore planning decisions in the parishes of Lickey & Blackwell and Cofton Hackett will need to be made in accordance with the Lickey & Blackwell and Cofton Hackett Neighbourhood Development Plan as well as the Bromsgrove District Plan (BDP).

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15th January 2019

Customer / Equalities and Diversity Implications

3.17 The production of the Lickey & Blackwell and Cofton Hackett Neighbourhood Development Plan was subject to numerous events and public meetings to publicise the preparation of the plan and contribute to its development. A pre-submission public consultation was undertaken to enable further community engagement and allow changes to the plan to be made prior to its submission to the District Council. The District Council's statutory representation period also enabled further engagement on the content of the plan by interested parties.

4. RISK MANAGEMENT

4.1 The Lickey & Blackwell and Cofton Hackett is not a plan that has been produced directly by the District Council, however once 'made' it will become part of the development plan, and thus hold statutory power, in the determination of planning applications within the Parishes of Lickey & Blackwell and Cofton Hackett.

4.2 The District Council has met its duty to support the progression of the Lickey & Blackwell and Cofton Hackett Neighbourhood Development Plan, including publicising the statutory consultation and arranging independent examination and referendum. It now has a duty to formally 'make' the neighbourhood plan as outlined at paragraph 3.10 above.

4.3 Implementation of the Lickey & Blackwell and Cofton Hackett Neighbourhood Plan will make a positive contribution to the achievement of sustainable development within the parishes of Lickey & Blackwell and Cofton Hackett. It will provide a complementary part of the development plan alongside the BDP for planning decisions taken within the designated neighbourhood area.

5. APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Lickey & Blackwell and Cofton Hackett Neighbourhood Development Plan referendum version, October 2019

Appendix 2: Lickey & Blackwell and Cofton Hackett Neighbourhood Development Plan Examiner's Report, October 2019

Appendix 3: Declaration of Result of Poll, December 2019

Cabinet

15th January 2019

6. BACKGROUND PAPERS

Lickey & Blackwell and Cofton Hackett Neighbourhood Development Plan Basic Conditions Statement, December 2018

Lickey & Blackwell and Cofton Hackett Neighbourhood Development Plan Consultation Statement, December 2018

Lickey & Blackwell and Cofton Hackett Neighbourhood Development Plan Sustainability Appraisal, December 2018

Lickey & Blackwell and Cofton Hackett Neighbourhood Development Plan – SEA and HRA Screening Report, 2018

Bromsgrove District Plan 2011-2030

7. KEY

BDP – Bromsgrove District Plan

NPPF – National Planning Policy Framework

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LICKEY & BLACKWELL AND COFTON HACKETT NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN 2018 - 2030

**The Report of the Independent Examiner to Bromsgrove District Council on
the Lickey & Blackwell and Cofton Hackett Neighbourhood Plan**

**Andrew Matheson MSc MPA DipTP MRTPI FCIH
Independent Examiner
12th September 2019**

Summary

I was appointed by Bromsgrove District Council, in agreement with the Lickey & Blackwell and Cofton Hackett Parish Councils, in April 2019 to undertake the Independent Examination of the Lickey & Blackwell and Cofton Hackett Neighbourhood Plan.

The Examination has been undertaken by written representations. I visited the Neighbourhood Area on 18th July 2019.

The Neighbourhood Plan proposes a local range of policies and seeks to bring forward positive and sustainable development in the Lickey & Blackwell and Cofton Hackett Neighbourhood Area. There is an evident focus on safeguarding the very distinctive, largely rural character of the area whilst accommodating future change and growth.

The Plan has been underpinned by extensive community support and engagement. The social, environmental and economic aspects of the issues identified have been brought together into a coherent plan which adds appropriate local detail to sit alongside the Bromsgrove District Plan.

Subject to a series of recommended modifications set out in this Report I have concluded that the Lickey & Blackwell and Cofton Hackett Neighbourhood Plan meets all the necessary legal requirements and should proceed to referendum.

I recommend that the referendum should be held within the Neighbourhood Area.

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Introduction

This report sets out the findings of the Independent Examination of the Lickey & Blackwell and Cofton Hackett Neighbourhood Plan 2018 - 2030. The Plan was submitted to Bromsgrove District Council by Lickey & Blackwell and Cofton Hackett Parish Councils in their capacity as the 'qualifying bodies' responsible for preparing the Neighbourhood Plan.

Neighbourhood Plans were introduced into the planning process by the Localism Act 2011. They aim to allow local communities to take responsibility for guiding development in their area. This approach was subsequently incorporated within the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) in 2012 and this continues to be the principal element of national planning policy. A new NPPF was published in July 2018 (and updated in February 2019) but the transitional arrangements in para 214 Appendix 1 on Implementation apply and thus this Examination is unaffected by the changed NPPF; accordingly all references to the NPPF in this Report are to the original 2012 NPPF document (unless otherwise indicated).

This report assesses whether the Lickey & Blackwell and Cofton Hackett Neighbourhood Plan is legally compliant and meets the 'basic conditions' that such plans are required to meet. It also considers the content of the Plan and, where necessary, recommends modifications to its policies and supporting text. This report also provides a recommendation as to whether the Lickey & Blackwell and Cofton Hackett Neighbourhood Plan should proceed to referendum. If this is the case and that referendum results in a positive outcome, the Lickey & Blackwell and Cofton Hackett Neighbourhood Plan would then be used in the process of determining planning applications within the Plan boundary as an integral part of the wider Plan.

The Role of the Independent Examiner

The Examiner's role is to ensure that any submitted Neighbourhood Plan meets the legislative and procedural requirements. I was appointed by Bromsgrove District Council, in agreement with Lickey & Blackwell and Cofton Hackett Parish Councils, to conduct the examination of the Lickey & Blackwell and Cofton Hackett Neighbourhood Plan and to report my findings. I am independent of both Bromsgrove District Council and Lickey & Blackwell and Cofton Hackett Parish Councils. I do not have any interest in any land that may be affected by the Plan.

I possess the appropriate qualifications and experience to undertake this role. I have over 40 years' experience in various local authorities and third sector bodies as well as with the professional body for planners in the United Kingdom. I am a Chartered Town Planner and a panel member for the Neighbourhood Planning Independent Examiner Referral Service (NPIERS). I am a Member of the Royal Town Planning Institute.

In my role as Independent Examiner I am required to recommend one of the following outcomes of the Examination:

- the Lickey & Blackwell and Cofton Hackett Neighbourhood Plan is submitted to a referendum; or
- the Lickey & Blackwell and Cofton Hackett Neighbourhood Plan should proceed to referendum as modified (based on my recommendations); or
- the Lickey & Blackwell and Cofton Hackett Neighbourhood Plan does not proceed to referendum on the basis that it does not meet the necessary legal requirements.

As part of this process I must consider whether the submitted Plan meets the Basic Conditions as set out in paragraph 8(2) of Schedule 4B of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990. If recommending that the Neighbourhood Plan should go forward to referendum, I

must then consider whether or not the referendum area should extend beyond the Neighbourhood Area to which the Plan relates.

In examining the Plan, I am also required, under paragraph 8(1) of Schedule 4B to the Town and Country Planning Act 1990, to check whether:

- the policies relate to the development and use of land for a designated Neighbourhood Area in line with the requirements of Section 38A of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004;
- the Neighbourhood Plan meets the requirements of Section 38B of the 2004 Act (the Plan must specify the period to which it has effect, must not include provision about development that is excluded development, and must not relate to more than one Neighbourhood Area);
- the Neighbourhood Plan has been prepared for an area that has been designated under Section 61G of the Localism Act and has been developed and submitted for examination by a qualifying body.

These are helpfully covered in the submitted Basic Conditions Statement and, subject to the contents of this Report, I can confirm that I am satisfied that each of the above points has been properly addressed and met.

In undertaking this examination I have considered the following documents:

- Lickey & Blackwell and Cofton Hackett Neighbourhood Plan 2018 - 2030 as submitted
- Lickey & Blackwell and Cofton Hackett Neighbourhood Plan Basic Conditions Statement (Autumn 2018)
- Lickey & Blackwell and Cofton Hackett Neighbourhood Plan Consultation Statement with Appendices (Autumn 2018)
- Strategic Environmental Assessment and Habitat Regulation Assessment Screening Opinion Lickey & Blackwell and Cofton Hackett Neighbourhood Development Plan (March 2018)
- Content at: www.lickeyandblackwellpc.org/neighbourhood-plan/ and <https://coftonhackettpc.org/neighbourhood-plan/>
- Content at: www.bromsgrove.gov.uk/council/policy-and-strategy/planning-policies/neighbourhood-plans/lickey-blackwell-and-cofton-hackett-neighbourhood-plan.aspx
- Representations made to the Regulation 16 public consultation on the Lickey & Blackwell and Cofton Hackett Neighbourhood Plan
- Bromsgrove District Plan 2011 - 2030 adopted in January 2017
- National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (2012, 2018 & 2019)
- Neighbourhood Planning Regulations (2012)
- Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) (March 2014 and subsequent updates)

I carried out an unaccompanied visit to the Neighbourhood Area on 18th July 2019. I looked at the settlements and countryside within the Lickey & Blackwell and Cofton Hackett Parishes. I also viewed the part of the Barnt Green Conservation Area that is within the Neighbourhood Area and all the various sites and locations identified in the Plan document.

The legislation establishes that, as a general rule, Neighbourhood Plan examinations should be held without a public hearing, by written representations only. Having considered all the information before me, including the representations made to the submitted plan which I felt made their points with clarity, I was satisfied that the Lickey & Blackwell and Cofton Hackett Neighbourhood Plan could be examined without the need for a public hearing. The Qualifying Bodies and the Local Planning Authority have helpfully responded to my enquiries so that I may have a thorough understanding of the facts and thinking behind the Plan, and

the correspondence has been shown on the Bromsgrove District Council Neighbourhood Planning website for the Lickey & Blackwell and Cofton Hackett Neighbourhood Plan.

Lickey & Blackwell and Cofton Hackett Neighbourhood Area

A map showing the boundary of the Lickey & Blackwell and Cofton Hackett Neighbourhood Area has been provided within the Neighbourhood Plan. Further to an application made by Lickey & Blackwell and Cofton Hackett Parish Councils, Bromsgrove District Council approved the designation of the Neighbourhood Area on 13th October 2014. This satisfied the requirement in line with the purposes of preparing a Neighbourhood Plan under section 61G(1) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended).

Consultation

In accordance with the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012, the Qualifying Bodies have prepared a Consultation Statement to accompany the Plan.

The Planning Practice Guidance says:

“A qualifying body should be inclusive and open in the preparation of its Neighbourhood Plan [or Order] and ensure that the wider community:

- is kept fully informed of what is being proposed
- is able to make their views known throughout the process
- has opportunities to be actively involved in shaping the emerging Neighbourhood Plan [or Order]
- is made aware of how their views have informed the draft Neighbourhood Plan [or Order].” (Reference ID: 41-047-20140306)

The Consultation Statement submitted alongside the Plan notes that several initial consultation opportunities were organised to engage local residents and stakeholders. These included: July 2013 - 2015 informal public consultation including Blackwell Festivals mainly asking the question “What do you like and dislike about your neighbourhood?”; in April 2014 a questionnaire was distributed to Lickey & Blackwell residents followed in Summer 2014 by the same questionnaire to Cofton Hackett residents; October 2014 and 2015 residents’ meetings including a simple questionnaire; October 2016 three residents’ consultation meetings which over 80 residents attended and more than 40 completed questionnaires were returned; June - July 2017 consultation meetings on the First Draft Plan which was placed on the Parish Councils’ websites and hard copies were available on request with comments invited in writing or by using a comments form; March 2018 informal open Q&A session and update. Publicity for events and activities were provided by a combination of leaflet distribution, Parish Newsletters, posters and website entries.

The Draft Neighbourhood Development Plan was published for 6 weeks formal public consultation (Regulation 14) from Monday 4th June 2018 to Friday 19th July 2018. During the consultation period several open drop in consultation events were held in the two Parishes. Statutory consultation bodies and other consultees were contacted by email or letter. Tables setting out the complete list of responses, together with the Parish Councils’ consideration of these and any resulting changes to the Draft Plan have been provided as an accompanying document to the Consultation Statement.

I am therefore satisfied that the consultation process accords with the requirements of the Regulations and the Practice Guidance and that, in having regard to national policy and guidance, the Basic Conditions have been met. In reaching my own conclusions about the specifics of the content of the Plan I will later note points of agreement or disagreement with Regulation 16 representations, just as the Qualifying Bodies have already done for earlier consultations. That does not imply or suggest that the consultation has been inadequate, merely that a test against the Basic Conditions is being applied.

Representations Received

Consultation on the submitted Plan, in accordance with Neighbourhood Planning Regulation 16, was undertaken by Bromsgrove District Council from Tuesday 6th November until Tuesday 18th December 2018. I have been passed the representations – 15 in total – which were generated by the consultation and which have now been included alongside the details of the Plan on the Bromsgrove District Neighbourhood Planning website. I have not mentioned every representation individually within the Report but this is not because they have not been thoroughly read and considered in relation to my Examiner role, rather their detail may not add to the pressing of my related recommendations which must ensure that the Basic Conditions are met.

The Neighbourhood Plan

Lickey & Blackwell and Cofton Hackett Parish Councils are to be congratulated on their extensive efforts to produce a Neighbourhood Plan for their area that will guide development activity over the period to 2030. I can see that a sustained effort has been put into developing a Plan with a vision “to sustainably maintain and enhance the life of our community, retaining its rural character and building on its heritage to shape its future”. The Plan document is well presented with a distinctive combination of text, images and Policies that are, subject to the specific points that I make below, well laid out and helpful for the reader. The Plan has been kept to a manageable length by not overextending the potential subject matter and the coverage of that.

It is an expectation of Neighbourhood Plans that they should address the issues that are identified through community consultation, set within the context of higher level planning policies. There is no prescribed content and no requirement that the robustness of proposals should be tested to the extent prescribed for Local Plans. Where there has been a failure by the Qualifying Bodies to address an issue in the round, leading to an inadequate statement of policy, it is part of my role wherever possible to see that the community’s intent is sustained in an appropriately modified wording for the policy. It is evident that the community has made positive use of “direct power to develop a shared vision for their neighbourhood and shape the development and growth of their local area” (Planning Practice Guidance Reference ID: 41-001-20140306).

Individually I can see that the Policies address legitimate matters for a Neighbourhood Plan as identified with the community. I will later look at the Policies in turn so as to ensure that the Basic Conditions are met, which include an obligation to have regard to Local Plan strategic policies.

Having considered all the evidence and representations submitted as part of the Examination I am satisfied that the submitted Plan has had regard to national planning policies and guidance in general terms. It works from a positive vision for the future of the Neighbourhood Area and promotes policies that are, subject to amendment to variable degrees, proportionate and sustainable. The Plan sets out the community’s priorities whilst seeking to identify and safeguard Lickey & Blackwell and Cofton Hackett’s distinctive features and character. The plan-making had to find ways to reconcile the external challenges that are perceived as likely to affect the area with the positive vision agreed with the community. All such difficult tasks were approached with transparency, with input as required and support from Bromsgrove District Council.

However, in the writing up of the work into the Plan document, it is sometimes the case that the phraseology is imprecise, not helpful, or it falls short in justifying aspects of the selected policy. This is not uncommon in a community-prepared planning document and something that can readily be addressed in most instances. Accordingly I have been obliged to recommend modifications so as to ensure both clarity and meeting of the ‘Basic Conditions’. In particular, Plan policies as submitted may not meet the obligation to “provide a practical framework within which decisions on planning applications can be made with a high degree of predictability and efficiency” (NPPF para 17). I bring this particular reference to the fore because it will be evident as I examine the policies individually and consider whether they meet or can meet the ‘Basic Conditions’.

Basic Conditions

The Independent Examiner is required to consider whether a Neighbourhood Plan meets the “Basic Conditions”, as set out in law following the Localism Act 2011; in December 2018 a fifth Basic Condition was added relating to the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017. In order to meet the Basic Conditions, the Plan must:

Lickey & Blackwell and Cofton Hackett Neighbourhood Plan Independent Examiner’s Report

- have regard to national policies and advice contained in guidance issued by the Secretary of State;
- contribute to the achievement of sustainable development;
- be in general conformity with the strategic policies of the Plan for the area;
- be compatible with European Union (EU) and European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR) obligations;
- not breach the requirements of Chapter 8 of Part 6 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017(d).

The submitted Basic Conditions Statement has very helpfully set out to address the issues in relation to the first four of these requirements in the same order as above and, where appropriate, has tabulated the relationship between the policy content of the Plan and its higher tier equivalents. I note that the Local Plan is the Plan for Bromsgrove District adopted in January 2017. At the time of Neighbourhood Plan submission the fifth Basic Condition had not been added but as the Plan does not allocate land for development and is supportive of Lickey & Blackwell and Cofton Hackett's rural features, I am satisfied that the making of the Plan will not breach the Basic Condition relating to the Habitats and Species Regulations 2017.

I have examined and will below consider the Neighbourhood Plan against all of the Basic Conditions above, utilising the supporting material provided in the Basic Conditions Statement and other available evidence as appropriate.

The Plan in Detail

I will address the aspects of the Neighbourhood Plan content that are relevant to the Examination in the same sequence as the Plan. Recommendations are identified with a bold heading and italics, and I have brought them together as a list at the end of the Report.

Front cover

A Neighbourhood Plan must specify the period during which it is to have effect. I note that there is a reference to the Plan dates 2018 – 2030 prominently and helpfully on the front cover. However, the additional titling relating to 'submission' and 'presented by' will no longer be applicable.

Recommendation 1:

Remove from the front cover wording relating to the submission status of the Plan.

Contents

The Contents list will need to be reviewed once the text has been amended to accommodate the recommendations from this Report. For clarity it would be helpful to add on this page a note to the effect that references to the NPPF are to the 2012 version.

Recommendation 2:

2.1 Review the "Contents" pages once the text has been amended to accommodate the recommendations from this Report.

2.2 Add after the content listing:

'References to the NPPF within this Plan are to the 2012 version.'

Foreword

This introductory section has now served its purpose and can be removed.

Recommendation 3:

Remove the section titled "Foreword" on page 3.

Map of the Neighbourhood Area (page 4)

On my paper copy at least the key omits the shading colours which identify each of the Parish areas; if this distinction is felt to be important then the key details need to be rechecked. Also, although the map numbering assumes that this map is Map1, that does not actually appear as a title.

Recommendation 4:

Recheck the reproduction of the key details and the title on the map on page 4.

1. Introduction & Background

Like the “Foreword”, paragraph 1.1 and paragraph 1.5 second sentence have served their purpose and can now be omitted. An amendment is also required within paragraph 1.17.

Recommendation 5:

5.1 Delete paragraph 1.1 and the second sentence of paragraph 1.5; renumber subsequent paragraphs accordingly; move the initial use of “Neighbourhood Development Plan (NDP)” from paragraph 1.1 to paragraph 1.2.

5.2 In the final sentence of paragraph 1.17 replace “has been” with ‘was’.

2. A Portrait of Lickey & Blackwell and Cofton Hackett

This is a helpful and brief “portrait”.

3. NDP for Lickey & Blackwell and Cofton Hackett

Paragraph 3.1 refers to Appendix 1 and as I will later recommend, this is not needed for a Plan about to become part of the Development Plan, not least because the NPPF references are already out of date.

Recommendation 6:

Replace the second and subsequent sentences of paragraph 3.1 with: ‘The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and the Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) provide the primary national context.’

4. Vision and Objectives

A representation has noted the discrepancy in dates between the Vision statement and the Plan period on the front cover.

It is not appropriate for a document on the verge of becoming part of the Development Plan to assert a position on a strategic matter such as the Green Belt. Another concern is the use of the “We” opening to each Objective; these are the Plan objectives not ones personal to any one body or group. Looking at some of the Objectives individually:

Objective 1: Even though a “where possible” has been included, Objective 1 seeks to protect the Green Belt, which is beyond the scope of a NDP. Further a representation notes that the review of the Green Belt will be looking at its compliance with the 5 purposes of the Green Belt and none of these is about protecting the rural feel of places.

Objective 2: How the Parish Councils engage with the Green Belt Review is entirely at their own discretion, but the Plan cannot be used to engage in strategic matters which are beyond the scope of a NDP.

Objective 5: I believe that the Objective inverts what the Policies are worded to achieve; the Qualifying Bodies have confirmed that it was the intention to ensure that infrastructure is provided appropriately for planned development and growth, not the other way around.

Objective 8: This seems to be a restatement of the Vision in different words. The Qualifying Bodies however have noted that this is an overarching objective and refers to "local distinctiveness and contributes to a sense of place and well-being" which the Vision statement does not.

Recommendation 7:

Under the "Vision and Objectives" heading:

7.1 In the "Vision" on page 16 amend the dates to read '2018 – 2030'.

7.2 Amend Objective 1 to read: 'The built, historical and natural environment, and important green spaces will be appropriately protected.'

7.3 Amend Objective 2 to read: 'Where possible open land will be retained between individual settlements.'

7.4 Amend Objective 3 to read: 'Nature conservation will be promoted and areas of special environmental value protected.'

7.5 Amend Objective 4 to read: 'Residential developments will be supported where they are of modest size, in scale with the character of the area.'

7.6 Amend Objective 5 to read: 'Infrastructure should be provided appropriately for planned development and growth and existing constraints considered and addressed within new proposals.'

7.7 Amend Objective 6 to read: 'Sustainable economic and social growth will be supported and facilities for all local people will be enhanced in order that the community can take full advantage of a full social and active lifestyle.'

7.8 Amend Objective 7 to read: 'The local economy will be supported to expand by encouraging suitable small business and employment opportunities for people of all ages.'

7.9 Amend Objective 8 to read: 'The concept of local distinctiveness will be embraced to contribute to a sense of place and well-being for the community and future generations.'

5. Key Issues and NDP Planning Policies

As with the Contents list, section 5 will need to be reviewed once the Plan policies have been amended to accommodate the recommendations from this Report.

Recommendation 8:

Review section 5 in the light of changes to the Policies as recommended in this Report.

6. Natural Environment

Within paragraph 6.8, for a Development Plan document, the "our" references need to be replaced. Within paragraph 6.10 the source reference for the first mention of the Lickey & Blackwell Village Design Statement is omitted. Within paragraph 6.13 there is mention of "Appendix 2" which will need to be reviewed in the light of later recommendations. More than one representation objects to the assertion in paragraph 6.16 of the Plan that "The NDP provides robust evidence for the forthcoming Green Belt Review about to be prepared by Bromsgrove District Council". It may be considered reasonable for this part of the text to

record the concerns of residents, as in paragraph 6.15, but it is not appropriate for a document on the verge of becoming part of the Development Plan to assert a position on a strategic matter, as in paragraph 6.16.

Recommendation 9:

Within the section headed “6. Natural Environment”:

9.1 Provide the sources for the data on Maps 2 & 3.

9.2 In paragraphs 6.8 and 6.22 replace the use of “our” with ‘the’.

9.3 Move the source reference for the ‘Lickey & Blackwell Village Design Statement’ from paragraph 6.13 to 6.10.

9.4 Amend the Appendix reference in paragraph 6.13 in the light of later recommended amendments to the Appendices.

9.5 Delete paragraph 6.1 and amend the subsequent paragraph numbers accordingly.

Policy NE1 Local Landscape

Whilst its nature and purpose is clear, little of Policy NE1 adds to rather than potentially confuses the guidelines already contained within the Worcestershire Landscape Character Assessment Supplementary Guidance and the Lickey and Blackwell Village Design Statement; only guidelines 5, 6 & 7 appear to relate to matters specific to the Neighbourhood Area. The Qualifying Bodies have responded that “We have taken from the [Worcestershire Landscape Character Assessment] (WLCA) to create this policy. We would like to keep this because many of those who could be voting on the NDP at referendum will not have read the original WLCA document or other associated documents.” But the audience for the Policy is not the voters at the referendum but the prospective developers who expect quickly to get to the nub of issues. The Qualifying Bodies have suggested an approach to “re-number [guidelines] 5, 6, 7 as 1, 2, 3 whilst retaining the other guidelines and renumbering accordingly” but I feel the amendment ought to go further and take the general guidance into a single sub-paragraph.

In guideline 6 there may be many potential interpretations of the term “impacts”. The Qualifying Bodies have agreed that if ‘and addressed’ is added to guideline 5 after “considered” then the need for the largely repetitious guideline 6 falls away.

Recommendation 10:

Within Policy NE1 Local Landscape:

10.1 Rewrite the opening paragraph as:

‘Landscaping within development proposals should demonstrate that they have taken appropriate account of the current Worcestershire Landscape Character Assessment Supplementary Guidance ^[footnote reference] in accordance with Bromsgrove District Plan Policy BDP21.1.’

10.2 Rewrite the second sentence of paragraph 2 as:

‘Where appropriate, the following should be considered and addressed:’

10.3 Renumber guideline 5 as bullet point 1; delete from this bullet point “should be considered”; delete viewpoint A and renumber the subsequent viewpoints accordingly.

10.4 Delete guideline 6.

10.5 Renumber guideline 7 as bullet point 2.

10.6 Introduce a bullet point 3 as follows:

'The following particular guidance is derived from the Worcestershire Landscape Character Assessment Supplementary Guidance:'

10.7 Renumber guideline 1 as bullet point 3.1; delete "and native berberis and pyracantha"; replace "grows to an appropriate scale" with 'grow to a scale appropriate to the character of the area'.

10.8 Renumber guideline 2 as bullet point 3.2 and guideline 3 as bullet point 3.3.

10.9 Renumber guideline 4 as bullet point 3.4; amend the words "of settlements. Historic field" to 'of settlements and historic field'.

10.10 Renumber guideline 8 as bullet point 3.5, guideline 9 as bullet point 3.6 (and delete the stray inverted comma and add in its place a footnote reference for the Farmsteads Characterisation Project), and guideline 10 as bullet point 3.7.

10.11 Amend the title of the adjacent Map 4 as 'Viewpoint Locations' and bring the entries into line with the amended listing within the Policy.

As amended Policy NE1 meets the Basic Conditions.

Wildlife

I note that "Wildlife Importance Areas" are divided into two categories: Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs) and Local Wildlife Sites (LWSs) but on Map 5 the key, confusingly, shows the latter as "Areas of Wildlife Importance" and the Policy refers to these as "local wildlife and habitats" and later "biodiversity networks and wildlife corridors"; because of the shifting terminology it is difficult to interpret whether these all mean the same thing or not. I note that the collective term used in Bromsgrove District Plan Policy BDP21.2 is "sites of wildlife importance" and for consistency that is the term that should be carried over into the detailing of Neighbourhood Area sites.

In paragraph 6.29 it is suggested that "it is important for our [the] NDP to protect the reservoirs and surrounding Green Belt area from development as required in the NPPF"; but as is clear from the quotation from the NPPF and representations, there is no absolute protection from all development and accordingly 'inappropriate' is needed immediately before "development".

Some of the preamble to Policy NE2 seems to have strayed beyond the Policy itself. Paragraph 6.30 is repeated at paragraph 6.33.

Recommendation 11:

Under the heading "Wildlife":

11.1 *At the beginning of paragraph 6.23 replace "Areas" with 'Sites'.*

11.2 *In the first sentence of paragraph 6.29 replace "our" with 'the' and insert 'inappropriate' before "development".*

11.3 *On Map 5 on page 35 replace "Areas of Wildlife Importance" with 'Local Wildlife Sites'; add the source reference for the map data.*

11.4 *Move Policy NE2 to after paragraph 6.35.*

11.5 Delete paragraph 6.33 (since it duplicates paragraph 6.30) and renumber subsequent paragraphs.

Policy NE2 Protecting and Enhancing Biodiversity

The Policy topic has regard for national policy and the District Plan. However, the Policy and text terminology must be made compatible. As noted in paragraph 6.30, “Distinctions should be made between the hierarchy ofdesignated sites”; therefore ‘according to their significance’ needs to be added to the first paragraph of Policy NE2. The third paragraph of the Policy says “Ponds are protected” but it is unclear whether this is intended to suggest that higher level policies already protect all “ponds” – not the case - or whether it is intended that Policy NE2 “protects” ponds; absolute “protection” should not be implied. A representation notes that a “where possible” needs to be added to the second sentence of paragraph 3.

Recommendation 12:

Within Policy NE2 Protecting and Enhancing Biodiversity:

12.1 In paragraph 1 replace “local wildlife and habitats” with ‘sites of wildlife importance’; after “should” add ‘, according to their significance,’.

12.2 In paragraph 3 in the first sentence replace “Ponds are protected” with ‘Existing ponds should be retained’ and in the second sentence before “the watercourse” add ‘where possible’.

12.3 In paragraph 4 after “should” add ‘, where possible,’ and replace “existing biodiversity networks and wildlife corridors” with ‘existing sites of wildlife importance’.

As amended Policy NE2 meets the Basic Conditions.

Green Infrastructure

The Policy topic has regard for national policy and the District Plan. Paragraph 6.42 says that “Policy NE3 supports a GI approach to new development....with a higher level of detail relevant to the Neighbourhood Area”; I question whether there is actually any *additional* detail provided and therefore this sentence may mislead.

Recommendation 13:

Under the heading “Green Infrastructure”, in paragraph 6.42 delete “new” and “with a higher level of detail relevant to the Neighbourhood Area”.

Policy NE3 Green Infrastructure (GI)

The target audience for Paragraph 2 is unclear. Paragraph 6.41 notes the Bromsgrove DC commitment to a GI network but paragraphs 2 & 4 of Policy NE3 appear, inappropriately, to expect the network to be created and sustained by developers.

Recommendation 14:

Rewrite Policy NE3 Green Infrastructure as follows:

‘Development proposals should where applicable:

- 1. Ensure the protection and enhancement of the existing green infrastructure assets;*
- 2. Contribute to the extension of multi-functional green infrastructure;*
- 3. Contribute to ecological enhancements and the management of flood risk and water quality; and*
- 4. Respect the landscape and historic character of the Neighbourhood Area.’*

As amended Policy NE3 meets the Basic Conditions.

Geology of the Lickey Hills

I note that the headline here suggests a Policy applicable to a specific, significant part of the Neighbourhood Area. Whilst the geology of the area is described, no mapped detail is included or referenced (although the Qualifying Bodies have subsequently provided references). The Policy NE4 wording appears to be non-area specific and it is difficult to see how the development for which the Plan provides is likely to affect or be affected by geodiversity; I note that the area referenced in the headline is already the subject of significant higher level protections.

Recommendation 15:

Under the heading “Geology of the Lickey Hills”:

15.1 Add suitable source references where applicable within the text.

15.2 Delete Policy NE4 and paragraph 6.48.

7. Built Heritage and Design

Whilst the context for Policy BD1 is well described, the purpose of the Policy and its wording are much less clear.

Recommendation 16:

In the first sentence of paragraph 7.1 delete “our”.

Policy BD1 Barnt Green Conservation Area

The Policy needs to be clear that it is applicable only to the part of the Conservation Area that sits within the Neighbourhood Area. The issues addressed by paragraphs 1 & 2 appear to be addressed with greater clarity within the NPPF and the Qualifying Bodies have agreed that the reference to the NPPF is paragraph 7.16 is sufficient. The Qualifying Bodies have also agreed that the reference to “Character Appraisals” within paragraph 3 is inappropriate.

Recommendation 17:

Rewrite Policy BD1 Barnt Green Conservation Area as follows:

‘Within the part of the Conservation Area that sits within the Neighbourhood Area:

1. Development proposals should reflect the scale, massing, height and form of the characteristic buildings and the detailing and materials should be chosen to be harmonious with neighbouring properties.

2. Contemporary and sustainable designs will be acceptable where they are of exceptional quality and where it is demonstrated that they have appropriate regard for their context.’

Promoting High Quality Design Across the Neighbourhood Area

Paragraph 7.19 notes that the “character appraisal” for the Blackwell, Lickey and Cofton Hackett settlements is available as an unreferenced “background document”; however the wording of several paragraphs of Policy BD2 binds developers to “take into consideration” the appraisal. Despite the prominence afforded to the appraisal, at the start of my Examination the Neighbourhood Plan website showed a link to an “unfinished joint Character Appraisal for Lickey and Blackwell and Cofton Hackett”; subsequently, the Qualifying Bodies provided links to two documents - separate Character Appraisals of Lickey and Blackwell – which are in addition to the Cofton Hackett Character Appraisal dated January 2019. The status of the character appraisal(s) and the use of multiple references therefore need clarification.

Recommendation 18:

Under the heading “Promoting High Quality Design Across the Neighbourhood Area”, in the first paragraph, replace “a character appraisal” with ‘Character Appraisals’.

Policy BD2 Encouraging High Quality Design

Policy BD2 does appear to have regard for the NPPF expectation (para 59) that Plans should “avoid unnecessary prescription or detail and should concentrate on guiding the overall scale, density, massing, height, landscape, layout, materials and access of new development in relation to neighbouring buildings and the local area more generally”. However the wording of the Policy does have shortcomings (beyond the character appraisal issue noted above):

Principle 1 inappropriately seeks to bind Bromsgrove DC to a particular approach in their review of the Green Belt. Principle 2 needs to be worded positively and “significant and unacceptable increases” is open to a wide interpretation. The NPPF says (para 58), whilst acknowledging that policies “should be based on stated objectives for the future of the area and an understanding and evaluation of its defining characteristics”, policies should “optimise the potential of the site to accommodate development”. It should therefore be sufficient for reliance to be placed on an assessment of the “character of the surrounding area”. In principle 3 it is inappropriate that regard should only be had for the WCC Parking Standards “where possible”. In principle 5 I am uncertain that every development at whatever scale will be able to “identify and include opportunities for positive change”; a “where possible” is needed. In principle 6 it is unclear why the opening reference to the character appraisals is insufficient and why the “Victorian and Edwardian properties” have been singled out for mention, particularly since this sits uneasily with principle 7 which says that “proposals need not imitate earlier architectural periods or styles”. In principle 7 it is said that “New buildings should follow a consistent design approach”; I believe this is meant to relate to ‘each development’ rather than ‘every development’ but even then it is difficult to see a justification for this requirement when the “character of the surrounding area” is unlikely to demonstrate “a consistent design approach”.

As noted later with Policy INF2, the Qualifying Bodies have agreed that reference to age and dementia-friendly environments should more appropriately be included within Policy BD2.

Recommendation 19:

Within Policy BD2 Encouraging High Quality Design:

19.1 Reword paragraph 1 as:

‘Development proposals for new buildings and extensions should have appropriate regard for the character of the area in which they are located, as illustrated in the Character Appraisals of Lickey, Blackwell and Cofton Hackett ^[footnote reference].’

19.2 In paragraph 2 replace “are required to respond positively” with ‘should respond sympathetically’.

19.3 In principle 1 delete the second sentence.

19.4 Reword principle 2 as:

‘Subdivision of plots and infill development must have appropriate regard for characteristic plot densities at their location.’

19.5 In the second sentence of principle 3 delete “provision of” and “wherever possible”.

19.6 In principle 5 replace “as described in the local character appraisals” with ‘as illustrated in the Character Appraisals’; add ‘where possible’ between “and” and “identify”. Add to principle 5 from principle 6: ‘The many Victorian and Edwardian properties are a distinctive feature across all the Character Appraisals.’

19.7 *In principle 6 delete the first sentence and from the third sentence delete “consider the character appraisal undertaken by the Neighbourhood Development Plan steering group) and clearly”.*

19.8 *In principle 7 delete the third sentence commencing “New buildings should ...”; separate out the last sentence as principle 8.*

19.9 *Add a principle 9 as follows:*

‘Large residential developments should incorporate age- and dementia-friendly features such as circular pathways in parks and open spaces, appropriate surfaces and street furniture and facilities for rest stops and social interaction.’

As amended Policy BD2 meets the Basic Conditions.

Garden and Backland Development

A representation notes that Policy BD3 could be self-defeating since it will frustrate the delivery of a sufficient quantum of housing thus making the need for the release of Green Belt land the more likely. However, as the preamble notes (subject to the comments below), the policy topic has regard to national policy and is compatible with Bromsgrove District Plan. The Qualifying Bodies have reconfirmed that they feel that this is an important issue but suggest that the Policy is renamed as ‘Residential Development in Gardens’.

Paragraph 7.26 quotes an Appeal that illustrates why it is difficult to frame a Policy that has regard to the many factors that are relevant to individual development proposals, and why language such as “unwanted garden grabbing” is unhelpful.

Paragraph 7.28 quotes a “recently published” 2017 Government White Paper which was a statement of intention rather than policy. The 2019 NPPF (para 70) repeats the content quoted from the 2012 version. As paragraph 8.198 of the Bromsgrove District Plan notes: “This does not mean that all development on garden land should be refused, but rather that careful consideration should be given to any proposals and whether there are any mitigating factors. One of the most important considerations for determining applications on garden land will be the retention of the existing character of residential areas. Development which significantly increases the proportion of ground coverage by buildings, or the scale of proposed buildings, is likely to be out of keeping with its surroundings and therefore is likely to be unacceptable and will be refused.” This approach is therefore more appropriate to quote and should therefore be the basis for Policy BD3.

Recommendation 20:

Under the heading “Garden and Backland Development”:

20.1 Replace the heading with ‘Residential Development in Gardens’.

20.2 In paragraph 7.26, in the first sentence of insert ‘Policy’ between “in” and “H1” and delete “(page 54)”, “rear” and “(“backland development” or “unwanted garden grabbing”)”; delete the second sentence.

20.3 In paragraph 7.28 delete the second sentence (and the related footnote); at the end of the third sentence add “; paragraph 8.198 says “One of the most important considerations for determining applications on garden land will be the retention of the existing character of residential areas. Development which significantly increases the proportion of ground coverage by buildings, or the scale of proposed buildings, is likely to be out of keeping with its surroundings and therefore is likely to be unacceptable and will be refused.””

Policy BD3 Garden and Backland Development

Paragraph 1 of Policy BD3 says that the Policy is concerned about the loss of “mature trees, hedges and shrubbery” but paragraph 3 requires that “buildings should be sited and designed to protect existing mature trees and hedgerows on the site”. It is also unclear at what point the loss of back garden amounts to a “substantial increase in the density of built form”. Paragraph 2 appears to extend to all “private gardens” not just rear gardens; there is also a lack of clarity as to how a developer could “support the need for higher density development” other than to show that there is an acknowledged housing requirement for the Neighbourhood Area and Policy H1 supports the provision of additional housing within existing settlements. The protection of “the residential amenity and privacy of neighbouring occupiers” referenced in paragraph 3 only apparently becomes an issue after “such development schemes are considered acceptable”. Some rewording is therefore required.

Recommendation 21:

Within Policy BD3 Garden and Backland Development:

21.1 Replace the title with ‘Residential Development in Gardens’.

21.2 Reword Policy BD3 as:

‘Development proposals on garden land will only be appropriate if they are in keeping with their surroundings and retain the existing character of the residential area at their location. Factors that must therefore be considered and addressed include openness, mature trees, hedges and shrubbery, townscape and density of the built form. The amenity and privacy of residential neighbours are also key considerations.’

As amended Policy BD3 meets the Basic Conditions.

8. Housing

New Housing Development

It should not be assumed, as in paragraph 8.3, that the Green Belt Review will have been completed by 2021. A Neighbourhood Plan, particularly one on the verge of becoming part of the Development Plan, should not be used as a campaigning document. Accordingly the references to the Parish Council activities around the Green Belt Review, as included in paragraphs 8.8 and 8.9, should be omitted.

Recommendation 22:

Under the heading “New Housing Development”:

22.1 Reword the first sentence of paragraph 8.3 as:

‘Once the Green Belt Review is completed further sites will be allocated to contribute approximately 2,300 dwellings towards the 7,000 targets required by the District Council.’

22.2 In paragraph 8.8, in the second sentence replace “our” with ‘the’; delete the third and fourth sentences. In footnote 17 replace “please remember that this document is evidence for plan preparation and” with ‘it’; delete the comma after “itself”.

22.3 In paragraph 8.9, in the first sentence replace “our area” with ‘the Neighbourhood Area’; delete the third and fourth sentences.

22.4 In paragraph 8.10, in the first sentence replace “will not” with ‘does not’.

Policy H1 New Housing within Existing Settlements

I note that Policy H1 is titled “New Housing within Existing Settlements” but the Policy wording provides also for “Development of previously developed land in the Green Belt”. The NPPF (section 9) does not provide for unconstrained development in the Green Belt even of previously developed land; accordingly I believe that Policy H1 should keep within the range

described in the title. Within Policy H1 criterion 3 I doubt that “odour” should be a factor for residential development. Criterion 4 seems irrelevant if all the sites are within existing settlements and the Qualifying Bodies have agreed that it should be deleted.

Recommendation 23:

Within Policy H1 New Housing within Existing Settlements:

23.1 Reword the opening sentence as:

‘Development proposals within existing settlements and built up areas will be supported in line with Bromsgrove District Plan BDP2.1 provided that:’.

23.2 In criterion 1 replace “meets the criteria set out in our” with ‘addresses related’.

23.3 In criterion 3 replace “odour” with ‘privacy’.

23.4 Delete criterion 4.

As amended Policy H1 meets the Basic Conditions.

Local Housing Needs

This section provides helpful background to Policy H2 although it is rather lengthy given its dependence on data which is quite old.

Recommendation 24:

In paragraph 8.20 replace “our” with ‘the’ and in paragraph 8.21 delete “in our area,”.

Policy H2 Housing Mix

The first paragraph of Policy H2 uses the future tense whereas ‘is encouraged’ would be more appropriate. The evidence from which the approach of paragraph 2 is drawn is all quite old – 2010 - 2012. A representation points out that smaller dwellings are vacated as families grow and move into larger family dwellings. The best that Policy H2 can do is to require developers to evidence regard for current, local housing requirements and the needs of older and younger households in particular.

Recommendation 25:

Reword Policy H2 Housing Mix as:

“The mix of housing within residential development proposals should be informed by the most recent evidence and should have regard for current, local housing requirements including the needs of older and younger households.”

As amended Policy H2 meets the Basic Conditions.

Energy Efficiency

I note that the heading has been omitted from this section.

Recommendation 26:

Before paragraph 8.23 add the heading ‘Energy Efficiency’.

Policy H3 Energy Efficiency

Whilst I can see that Policy H3 is based on some evidence of need, unfortunately a Written Ministerial Statement of March 2015 said: “From the date the Deregulation Bill 2015 is given Royal Assent, local planning authorities and qualifying bodies preparing neighbourhood plans should not set in their emerging Local Plans, neighbourhood plans, or supplementary planning documents, any additional local technical standards or requirements relating to the

construction, internal layout or performance of new dwellings". Accordingly whilst the Policy might 'encourage' an approach it cannot make it an obligation.

Recommendation 27:

Within Policy H3 Energy Efficiency replace "All new housing should" with 'Development proposals for new housing are encouraged to'.

As amended Policy H3 meets the Basic Conditions.

9. Infrastructure

Transport and Parking

Maps 8 & 9 lack a source reference for the data. I note that within paragraph 9.6 there is a repetition of the sentence regarding the popularity of cycling. The Policies INF 1-3 precede rather than follow paragraphs 9.13 – 9.19.

Recommendation 28:

Under heading "Transport and Parking":

28.1 In paragraph 9.3 replace "our parishes" with 'this area'.

28.2 In paragraph 9.5 replace "our" with 'the' in four places.

28.3 In paragraph 9.6 replace "our" with 'the' in three places and delete the second sentence.

28.4 Add a source reference to Maps 8 & 9.

28.5 Ensure that the Policies follow their preamble text.

Policy INF1 Supporting Walking and Cycling and Improvements in Local Transport Infrastructure

Within Policy INF1 paragraph 2 it is unclear what "measures" to be provided might imply particularly since they must be land use ones; an obligation re traffic speeds that extends to the whole Plan area is both unreasonable and unrealistic.

As a representation notes, the obligation regarding electric charging points might more appropriately be expressed as an infrastructure requirement. The representation from the County Council notes that all developments must meet the requirements of the Council's Streetscape Design Guide, which could be referenced here or within Policy BD2.

Recommendation 29:

Within Policy INF1 Supporting Walking and Cycling and Improvements to Local Transport Infrastructure:

29.1 Reword paragraph 2 as:

'Development proposals should show regard for the Worcestershire Streetscape Design Guide ^[footnote] and, where appropriate, should ensure links to safe and accessible walking and cycling routes, and to public transport, within a safe speed road environment.'

29.2 Reword paragraph 3 as:

'Residential and commercial development should include or enable electric vehicle charging.'

As amended Policy INF1 meets the Basic Conditions.

Policy INF2 Providing Safe and Accessible Environments for All

As recommended at Policy B2 above, the Qualifying Bodies agreed that the intent of Policy INF2 would be more appropriately incorporated with the Plan's design policy. The very specific requirements of Policy INF2 are not peculiar to the Neighbourhood Area and largely relate to larger scale developments incorporating open space for which the Plan does not provide.

Recommendation 30:

Delete Policy INF2 and paragraph 9.13; amend the subsequent Policy and paragraph numbering accordingly.

Communication Technologies

The preamble to Policy INF3 does not make mention of the Bromsgrove District Plan.

Recommendation 31:

Under the heading "Communication Technologies" add a new paragraph 9.19 (and renumber the existing 9.19) as follows:

'Bromsgrove District Plan Policy BDP1.4 says that "In considering all proposals for development in Bromsgrove District regard will be had to [inter alia] ... The provision of communication technology infrastructure to allow for future technological enhancements e.g. fibre optic ducting."

Policy INF3 Communications Technologies

Within Policy INF3 there is no purpose in saying that telecoms infrastructure will be "actively" encouraged since such an obligation cannot be put on the officers of Bromsgrove District Council. The expectation that "any new development" will have a superfast broadband connection cannot realistically extend to small infill developments; the expectation may be more realistic for larger developments.

Recommendation 32:

Within Policy INF3 Communication Technologies

32.1 Renumber the Policy as INF2.

32.2 Reword the opening sentence as:

'New mobile telecommunication infrastructure will be supported provided that:.'

32.3 Reword the second and third sentences of paragraph 2 as:

'Wherever possible and appropriate development proposals should provide for connections to superfast broadband (fibre optic); as a minimum suitable ducting should be provided to allow for future technological enhancements.'

As amended the new Policy INF2 meets the Basic Conditions.

10 Community Facilities

The Qualifying Bodies have agreed that it would avoid repetition and duplication if Policies CF1 and CF2 were merged. Accordingly there will be two preamble sections – Community Facilities and Open Space – before the new merged Policy CF1.

Recommendation 33:

Under the heading "Community Facilities" combine the Policy preambles to Policies CF1 & CF2 and delete Policy CF1; in paragraph 10.14 replace "CF2" with 'CF1' and add a second sentence: 'The Parish Councils will work with Worcestershire County Council on highway and traffic management issues arising from proposals.'

Policy CF2 Protecting Existing Open Space and Recreational Facilities and Supporting Investment in New Facilities

As a result of merging the two Policies CF1 and CF2 some rewording is required. The fourth criterion of Policy CF1 is not primarily a land use issue and therefore the traffic management aspect ought to be omitted from the merged Policy; the Qualifying Bodies have suggested that a commitment from the Parish Councils to work with Worcestershire County Council on highway and traffic management should be included in the supporting text – see above. In relation to Map 11 I note that Barnt Green Sailing and Fishing Club is indicated as being outside the Neighbourhood Area and that needs correction.

Recommendation 34:

Within Policy CF2 Protecting Existing Open Space and Recreational Facilities and Supporting Investment in New Facilities:

34.1 Renumber as Policy CF1 and retitle as ‘Protecting Community Facilities and Supporting Investment in New Facilities’.

34.2 Word the new Policy CF1 as:

‘Existing community, recreation and public open space facilities, as shown on Maps 9 & 10, should be retained unless:

- (i) It can be demonstrated that an existing facility is no longer economically viable; or*
- (ii) An equivalent or better replacement facility is provided either on the site or in an equally or more accessible location.*

Development proposals to enhance and improve an existing facility will be supported provided that:

- (1) The siting, scale and design are appropriate to the location and respect the character of the surrounding area, including any historic and natural assets; and*
- (2) [take in 2 from Policy CF2]*
- (3) [take in 3 from Policy CF2]’*

34.3 Correct Map 11 to indicate a location for Barnt Green Sailing and Fishing Club within the Neighbourhood Area.

As amended the new Policy CF1 meets the Basic Conditions.

Local Green Spaces

Whilst the Plan appropriately addresses the NPPF designation criteria, I had three reservations about the areas selected for designation as Local Green Space (LGS):

- a) Planning Practice Guidance notes, “If land is already protected by designation, then consideration should be given to whether any additional local benefit would be gained by designation as Local Green Space” (Paragraph: 011 Reference ID 37-011-20140306). No details were provided on this issue and in particular the grounds of the listed building St Catherine’s Church would benefit from that designation for the Church.
- b) The map showing the designated spaces did not allow (in the paper version at least) for the boundaries to be identified with clarity, in one particular instance because the map needed an update and in another because the space was omitted.
- c) Once the boundaries were clarified I had reservations about the boundary selected for two spaces.

On the first two points the Qualifying Bodies and the Local Planning Authority have responded helpfully to my request for clarification. On the third point I make recommendations below.

Recommendation 35:

Under the heading “Local Green Spaces”:

35.1 Amend the boundary of the “Grounds of St Catherine’s Church” LGS to omit the Church buildings and amend the boundary of the “St Catherine’s Road Playing Field” LGS to omit the car park to the south of the space.

35.2 On Map 12 ensure that the “Myhill Field Play Area” LGS is included and add a note the effect that ‘LGS boundaries can be identified with clarity by enlarging the online map to street level’.

Policy CF3 Local Green Spaces

Since the Plan “designates” spaces as Local Green Spaces that is what the Policy should say.

Recommendation 36:

Within Policy CF3 Local Green Spaces reword the third line as ‘The eight designated Local Green Spaces are:’.

As amended the new Policy CF3 meets the Basic Conditions.

11. Commercial & Business Interests

Supporting Appropriate Local Enterprise

This section provides helpful background to Policy B1 but, for clarity, paragraph 11.2 needs some appropriate rewording.

Recommendation 37:

Under the heading “Supporting Appropriate Local Enterprise”, in paragraph 11.2, replace “The NDP believes that our neighbourhood should be a good place to do business and that encouraging” with ‘Encouraging’.

Policy B1 Supporting Appropriate Local Enterprise

For clarity I feel that the first part of Policy B1 ought to start with the stipulation that it applies to certain parts of the Neighbourhood Area only, rather than leave it until criterion 4 for this to be revealed.

Recommendation 38:

Within Policy B1 Supporting Appropriate Local Enterprise:

38.1 Reword the opening sentence as:

‘Development of new, small-scale employment and service related business facilities will be supported within the existing built-up areas that are part of the large settlement of Barnt Green (where that lies within the Neighbourhood Area) and within the small settlements of Blackwell Blackwell and Cofton Hackett (as set out in Bromsgrove District Plan Policy BDP2 Settlement Hierarchy) provided that:’.

38.2 Delete criterion 4.

As amended the new Policy B1 meets the Basic Conditions.

Home Working

Paragraph 11.10 appropriately notes that much home working is undertaken without the need for a planning consent, but this ought to be noted also in the Policy.

Policy B2 Supporting Home Working

In Policy B2 the opening words before the colon do not match with the wording of criterion 2. It is unclear whether Policy B2 is to apply across the Neighbourhood Area but paragraph 90 of the NPPF is potentially more restrictive on the reuse of buildings in the Green Belt.

Recommendation 39:

Within Policy B2 Supporting Home Working:

39.1 Rework the opening paragraph as:

'Where a planning consent is required, alterations and extensions to accommodate home working will be supported in principle when:

- 1. With an existing dwelling, the extension is subordinate to the original building; or*
- 2. An existing building is being brought back into use; and*
- 3. Regard is demonstrated, as appropriate, for the amenity of neighbours, built heritage, the natural environment, landscape character and Green Belt Policy.'*

39.2 Delete paragraph 3.

As amended the new Policy B2 meets the Basic Conditions.

12. Next Steps

The Qualifying Bodies have agreed that the content here has served its purpose but the Plan would benefit from a commitment to review the Plan at intervals. Representations note that a commitment to review the Plan following the adoption of the new Bromsgrove Local Plan would be appropriate.

Recommendation 40:

Replace the section "12. Next Steps" with a new section titled 'Monitoring and Review' as follows:

'The Parish Councils will monitor the impact and effectiveness of the Neighbourhood Plan and, as necessary, will review the content with a minimum interval of every five years. A particular point for review might arise once Bromsgrove District Council has adopted the new Local Plan that will replace the present District Plan.'

Appendix 1 National Planning Policy Context

This section has also served its purpose (and is now out of date) and should be deleted.

Recommendation 41:

Delete Appendix I.

Appendix II Lickey and Blackwell Tree Leaflets

These leaflets help to add some further insight into the character of the area but it would be appropriate to have web addresses for them.

Recommendation 42:

Renumber Appendix II as Appendix I and provide web addresses for on-line copies of the leaflets.

Other matters raised in representations

Some representations have suggested additional or expanded content or sites that the Plan might include. However, given that the Neighbourhood Plan sits within the Development Plan documents as a whole, keeping content pertinent to Lickey & Blackwell and Cofton Hackett identified priorities is entirely appropriate. As noted within the body of this Report it is a requirement that a Neighbourhood Plan addresses only the "development and use of land". Even within this restriction there is no obligation on Neighbourhood Plans to be comprehensive in their coverage – unlike Local Plans - not least because proportionate supporting evidence is required.

Many representations indicate support for all or parts of the draft Plan and this helps in a small but valuable way to reassure that the extensive public consultation has been productive.

I have not mentioned every representation individually but this is not because they have not been thoroughly read and considered in relation to my Examiner role, rather their detail may not add to the pressing of my related recommendations which must ensure that the Basic Conditions are met.

European Union (EU) and European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR) Obligations

A further Basic Condition, which the Lickey & Blackwell and Cofton Hackett Neighbourhood Plan must meet, is compatibility with European Union (EU) and European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR) obligations.

There is no legal requirement for a Neighbourhood Plan to have a sustainability appraisal. The Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) and Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) Screening Report carried out by Bromsgrove District Council for the Lickey & Blackwell and Cofton Hackett Neighbourhood Plan (March 2018) considered whether or not the content of the Plan required a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) in accordance with the European Directive 2001/42/EC and associated Environmental Assessment of Plan and Programmes Regulations 2004. In accordance with Regulation 9 of the SEA Regulations 2004, Bromsgrove District Council determined that “it is concluded that the Lickey & Blackwell and Cofton Hackett Neighbourhood Plan will not have significant effects in relation to any of the criteria set out in Schedule 1 of the SEA Regulations and therefore does not need to be subject to an SEA report.” Also: “HRAs to date have typically considered European sites with (*sic*) a 10-15km radius around the plan area. Using this approach of 15km radius, it is concluded that the Lickey & Blackwell and Cofton Hackett Neighbourhood Plan will not have an adverse effect on the integrity of internationally designated sites either on its own or in combination with other plans and therefore does not require a Habitat Regulation Assessment to be undertaken.” In making this determination, the District Council had regard to Schedule 1 of the Regulations and carried out consultation with the relevant public bodies who concurred with the screening opinion. Particularly in the absence of any adverse comments from the statutory bodies or the Local Planning Authority (either at the Screening or the Regulation 16 Consultation) I can confirm that the Screening undertaken was appropriate and proportionate, and that the Plan has sustainability at its heart.

The Basic Conditions Statement submitted alongside the Lickey & Blackwell and Cofton Hackett Neighbourhood Plan confirms as regards the European Convention on Human Rights that the Qualifying Bodies have “developed the policies and proposals within the Plan in full consultation with the community and wider stakeholders to produce as inclusive a document as possible. In general, the policies and proposals will not have a discriminatory impact on any particular group of individuals.”

I therefore confirm that the Lickey & Blackwell and Cofton Hackett Neighbourhood Plan has regard to fundamental rights and freedoms guaranteed under the ECHR and complies with the Human Rights Act 1998. No evidence has been put forward to demonstrate that this is not the case.

Taking all of the above into account, I am satisfied that the Lickey & Blackwell and Cofton Hackett Neighbourhood Plan is compatible with EU obligations and that it does not breach, nor is in any way incompatible with, the ECHR.

Conclusions

This Independent Examiner's Report recommends a range of modifications to the Policies, as well as some of the supporting content, in the Plan. Modifications have been recommended to effect corrections, to ensure clarity and in order to ensure that the Basic Conditions are met. Whilst I have proposed a significant number of modifications, the Plan itself remains fundamentally unchanged in the role and direction set for it by the Qualifying Bodies.

I therefore conclude that, subject to the modifications recommended, the Lickey & Blackwell and Cofton Hackett Neighbourhood Plan:

- has regard to national policies and advice contained in guidance issued by the Secretary of State;
- contributes to the achievement of sustainable development;
- is in general conformity with the strategic policies of the Plan for the area;
- is compatible with European Union (EU) and European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR) obligations;
- does not breach the requirements of Chapter 8 of Part 6 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017(d).

On that basis I *recommend* to the Bromsgrove District Council that, subject to the incorporation of modifications set out as recommendations in this report, it is appropriate for the Lickey & Blackwell and Cofton Hackett Neighbourhood Plan to proceed to referendum.

Referendum Area

As noted earlier, part of my Examiner role is to consider whether the referendum area should be extended beyond the Plan area. I consider the Neighbourhood Area to be appropriate and no evidence has been submitted to suggest that this is not the case. I therefore ***recommend*** that the Plan should proceed to referendum based on the Neighbourhood Area as approved by the Bromsgrove District Council on 8th December 2015.

Recommendations: (this is a listing of the recommendations exactly as they are included in the Report)

Rec	Text	Reason
1	Remove from the front cover wording relating to the submission status of the Plan.	For clarity
2	2.1 Review the “Contents” pages once the text has been amended to accommodate the recommendations from this Report. 2.2 Add after the content listing: 'References to the NPPF within this Plan are to the 2012 version.'	For clarity and accuracy
3	Remove the section titled “Foreword” on page 3.	For clarity
4	Recheck the reproduction of the key details and the title on the map on page 4.	For clarity
5	5.1 Delete paragraph 1.1 and the second sentence of paragraph 1.5; renumber subsequent paragraphs accordingly; move the initial use of “Neighbourhood Development Plan (NDP)” from paragraph 1.1 to paragraph 1.2. 5.2 In the final sentence of paragraph 1.17 replace “has been” with ‘was’.	For clarity
6	Replace the second and subsequent sentences of paragraph 3.1 with: 'The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and the Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) provide the primary national context.'	For clarity and accuracy
7	Under the “Vision and Objectives” heading: 7.1 In the “Vision” on page 16 amend the dates to read ‘2018 – 2030’. 7.2 Amend Objective 1 to read: ‘The built, historical and natural environment, and important green spaces will be appropriately protected.’ 7.3 Amend Objective 2 to read: ‘Where possible open land will be retained between individual settlements.’ 7.4 Amend Objective 3 to read: ‘Nature conservation will be promoted and areas of special environmental value protected.’ 7.5 Amend Objective 4 to read: ‘Residential developments will be supported where they are of modest size, in scale with the character of the area.’ 7.6 Amend Objective 5 to read: ‘Infrastructure should be provided appropriately for planned development and growth and existing constraints considered and addressed within new proposals.’	For clarity and to meet Basic Condition 1

	<p>7.7 Amend Objective 6 to read: ‘Sustainable economic and social growth will be supported and facilities for all local people will be enhanced in order that the community can take full advantage of a full social and active lifestyle.’</p> <p>7.8 Amend Objective 7 to read: ‘The local economy will be supported to expand by encouraging suitable small business and employment opportunities for people of all ages.’</p> <p>7.9 Amend Objective 8 to read: ‘The concept of local distinctiveness will be embraced to contribute to a sense of place and well-being for the community and future generations.’</p>	
8	Review section 5 in the light of changes to the Policies as recommended in this Report.	For clarity and accuracy
9	<p><i>Within the section headed “6. Natural Environment”:</i></p> <p><i>9.1 Provide the sources for the data on Maps 2 & 3.</i></p> <p><i>9.2 In paragraphs 6.8 and 6.22 replace the use of “our” with ‘the’.</i></p> <p><i>9.3 Move the source reference for the ‘Lickey & Blackwell Village Design Statement’ from paragraph 6.13 to 6.10.</i></p> <p><i>9.4 Amend the Appendix reference in paragraph 6.13 in the light of later recommended amendments to the Appendices.</i></p> <p><i>9.5 Delete paragraph 6.1 and amend the subsequent paragraph numbers accordingly.</i></p>	For clarity
10	<p>Within Policy NE1 Local Landscape:</p> <p>10.1 Rewrite the opening paragraph as: ‘Landscaping within development proposals should demonstrate that they have taken appropriate account of the current Worcestershire Landscape Character Assessment Supplementary Guidance [footnote reference] in accordance with Bromsgrove District Plan Policy BDP21.1.’</p> <p>10.2 Rewrite the second sentence of paragraph 2 as: ‘Where appropriate, the following should be considered and addressed:’</p> <p>10.3 Renumber guideline 5 as bullet point 1; delete from this bullet point “should be considered”; delete viewpoint A and renumber the subsequent viewpoints accordingly.</p> <p>10.4 Delete guideline 6.</p> <p>10.5 Renumber guideline 7 as bullet point 2.</p> <p>10.6 Introduce a bullet point 3 as follows: ‘The following particular guidance is derived from the Worcestershire Landscape Character Assessment Supplementary Guidance:’</p>	For clarity and to meet Basic Condition 1

	<p>10.7 Renumber guideline 1 as bullet point 3.1; delete “and native berberis and pyracantha”; replace “grows to an appropriate scale” with ‘grow to a scale appropriate to the character of the area’.</p> <p>10.8 Renumber guideline 2 as bullet point 3.2 and guideline 3 as bullet point 3.3.</p> <p>10.9 Renumber guideline 4 as bullet point 3.4; amend the words “of settlements. Historic field” to ‘of settlements and historic field’.</p> <p>10.10 Renumber guideline 8 as bullet point 3.5, guideline 9 as bullet point 3.6 (and delete the stray inverted comma and add in its place a footnote reference for the Farmsteads Characterisation Project), and guideline 10 as bullet point 3.7.</p> <p>10.11 Amend the title of the adjacent Map 4 as ‘Viewpoint Locations’ and bring the entries into line with the amended listing within the Policy.</p>	
11	<p>Under the heading “Wildlife”:</p> <p>11.1 At the beginning of paragraph 6.23 replace “Areas” with ‘Sites’.</p> <p>11.2 In the first sentence of paragraph 6.29 replace “our” with ‘the’ and insert ‘inappropriate’ before “development”.</p> <p>11.3 On Map 5 on page 35 replace “Areas of Wildlife Importance” with ‘Local Wildlife Sites’; add the source reference for the map data.</p> <p>11.4 Move Policy NE2 to after paragraph 6.35.</p> <p>11.5 Delete paragraph 6.33 (since it duplicates paragraph 6.30) and renumber subsequent paragraphs.</p>	For clarity and accuracy
12	<p>Within Policy NE2 Protecting and Enhancing Biodiversity:</p> <p>12.1 In paragraph 1 replace “local wildlife and habitats” with ‘sites of wildlife importance’; after “should” add ‘, according to their significance,’.</p> <p>12.2 In paragraph 3 in the first sentence replace “Ponds are protected” with ‘Existing ponds should be retained’ and in the second sentence before “the watercourse” add ‘where possible’.</p> <p>12.3 In paragraph 4 after “should” add ‘, where possible,’ and replace “existing biodiversity networks and wildlife corridors” with ‘existing sites of wildlife importance’.</p>	For clarity and to meet Basic Condition 1
13	<p>Under the heading “Green Infrastructure”, in paragraph 6.42 delete “new” and “with a higher level of detail relevant to the Neighbourhood Area”.</p>	For clarity and accuracy
14	<p>Rewrite Policy NE3 Green Infrastructure as follows: ‘Development proposals should where applicable: 1. Ensure the protection and enhancement of the existing green</p>	For clarity and to meet Basic

	<p>infrastructure assets;</p> <p>2. Contribute to the extension of multi-functional green infrastructure;</p> <p>3. Contribute to ecological enhancements and the management of flood risk and water quality; and</p> <p>4. Respect the landscape and historic character of the Neighbourhood Area.'</p>	Condition 1
15	<p><i>Under the heading "Geology of the Lickey Hills":</i></p> <p><i>15.1 Add suitable source references where applicable within the text.</i></p> <p><i>15.2 Delete Policy NE4 and paragraph 6.48.</i></p>	For clarity and to meet Basic Condition 1
16	In the first sentence of paragraph 7.1 delete "our".	For clarity
17	<p>Rewrite Policy BD1 Barnt Green Conservation Area as follows:</p> <p>'Within the part of the Conservation Area that sits within the Neighbourhood Area:</p> <p>1. Development proposals should reflect the scale, massing, height and form of the characteristic buildings and the detailing and materials should be chosen to be harmonious with neighbouring properties.</p> <p>2. Contemporary and sustainable designs will be acceptable where they are of exceptional quality and where it is demonstrated that they have appropriate regard for their context.'</p>	For correction
18	Under the heading "Promoting High Quality Design Across the Neighbourhood Area", in the first paragraph, replace "a character appraisal" with 'Character Appraisals'.	For clarity and accuracy
19	<p>Within Policy BD2 Encouraging High Quality Design:</p> <p>19.1 Reword paragraph 1 as: 'Development proposals for new buildings and extensions should have appropriate regard for the character of the area in which they are located, as illustrated in the Character Appraisals of Lickey, Blackwell and Cofton Hackett [footnote reference].'</p> <p>19.2 In paragraph 2 replace "are required to respond positively" with 'should respond sympathetically'.</p> <p>19.3 In principle 1 delete the second sentence.</p> <p>19.4 Reword principle 2 as: 'Subdivision of plots and infill development must have appropriate regard for characteristic plot densities at their location.'</p> <p>19.5 In the second sentence of principle 3 delete "provision of" and "wherever possible".</p> <p>19.6 In principle 5 replace "as described in the local character appraisals" with 'as illustrated in the Character Appraisals'; add 'where possible' between "and" and "identify". Add to principle 5 from principle 6: 'The many Victorian and Edwardian properties are a distinctive feature across all the Character Appraisals.'</p>	For clarity and to meet Basic Condition 1

	<p>19.7 In principle 6 delete the first sentence and from the third sentence delete “consider the character appraisal undertaken by the Neighbourhood Development Plan steering group) and clearly”.</p> <p>19.8 In principle 7 delete the third sentence commencing “New buildings should ...”; separate out the last sentence as principle 8.</p> <p>19.9 Add a principle 9 as follows: ‘Large residential developments should incorporate age- and dementia-friendly features such as circular pathways in parks and open spaces, appropriate surfaces and street furniture and facilities for rest stops and social interaction.’</p>	
20	<p>Under the heading “Garden and Backland Development”: 20.1 Replace the heading with ‘Residential Development in Gardens’.</p> <p>20.2 In paragraph 7.26, in the first sentence of insert ‘Policy’ between “in” and “H1” and delete “(page 54)”, “rear” and “(“backland development” or “unwanted garden grabbing”)”; delete the second sentence.</p> <p>20.3 In paragraph 7.28 delete the second sentence (and the related footnote); at the end of the third sentence add “; paragraph 8.198 says “One of the most important considerations for determining applications on garden land will be the retention of the existing character of residential areas. Development which significantly increases the proportion of ground coverage by buildings, or the scale of proposed buildings, is likely to be out of keeping with its surroundings and therefore is likely to be unacceptable and will be refused.””</p>	For clarity and accuracy
21	<p>Within Policy BD3 Garden and Backland Development: 21.1 Replace the title with ‘Residential Development in Gardens’.</p> <p>21.2 Reword Policy BD3 as: ‘Development proposals on garden land will only be appropriate if they are in keeping with their surroundings and retain the existing character of the residential area at their location. Factors that must therefore be considered and addressed include openness, mature trees, hedges and shrubbery, townscape and density of the built form. The amenity and privacy of residential neighbours are also key considerations.’</p>	For clarity and correction and to meet Basic Condition 1
22	<p>Under the heading “New Housing Development”: 22.1 Reword the first sentence of paragraph 8.3 as: ‘Once the Green Belt Review is completed further sites will be allocated to contribute approximately 2,300 dwellings towards the 7,000 targets required by the District Council.’</p> <p>22.2 In paragraph 8.8, in the second sentence replace “our” with ‘the’; delete the third and fourth sentences. In footnote 17 replace “please remember that this document is evidence for plan preparation and” with ‘it’; delete the comma after “itself”.</p> <p>22.3 In paragraph 8.9, in the first sentence replace “our area” with ‘the Neighbourhood Area’; delete the third and fourth sentences.</p>	For clarity and accuracy

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	22.4 In paragraph 8.10, in the first sentence replace “will not” with ‘does not’.	
23	<p>Within Policy H1 New Housing within Existing Settlements:</p> <p>23.1 Reword the opening sentence as: ‘Development proposals within existing settlements and built up areas will be supported in line with Bromsgrove District Plan BDP2.1 provided that:’.</p> <p>23.2 In criterion 1 replace “meets the criteria set out in our” with ‘addresses related’.</p> <p>23.3 In criterion 3 replace “odour” with ‘privacy’.</p> <p>23.4 Delete criterion 4.</p>	For clarity and to meet Basic Condition 1
24	In paragraph 8.20 replace “our” with ‘the’ and in paragraph 8.21 delete “in our area,”.	For clarity
25	Reword Policy H2 Housing Mix as: “The mix of housing within residential development proposals should be informed by the most recent evidence and should have regard for current, local housing requirements including the needs of older and younger households.’	For clarity and to meet Basic Condition 1
26	Before paragraph 8.23 add the heading ‘Energy Efficiency’.	For clarity
27	Within Policy H3 Energy Efficiency replace “All new housing should” with ‘Development proposals for new housing are encouraged to’.	For clarity and to meet Basic Condition 1
28	<p>Under heading “Transport and Parking”:</p> <p>28.1 In paragraph 9.3 replace “our parishes” with ‘this area’.</p> <p>28.2 In paragraph 9.5 replace “our” with ‘the’ in four places.</p> <p>28.3 In paragraph 9.6 replace “our” with ‘the’ in three places and delete the second sentence.</p> <p>28.4 Add a source reference to Maps 8 & 9.</p> <p>28.5 Ensure that the Policies follow their preamble text.</p>	For clarity
29	<p>Within Policy INF1 Supporting Walking and Cycling and Improvements to Local Transport Infrastructure:</p> <p>29.1 Reword paragraph 2 as: ‘Development proposals should show regard for the Worcestershire Streetscape Design Guide [footnote] and, where appropriate, should ensure links to safe and accessible walking and cycling routes, and to public transport, within a safe speed road environment.’</p> <p>29.2 Reword paragraph 3 as:</p>	For clarity and to meet Basic Condition 1

	'Residential and commercial development should include or enable electric vehicle charging.'	
30	Delete Policy INF2 and paragraph 9.13; amend the subsequent Policy and paragraph numbering accordingly.	For clarity
31	Under the heading "Communication Technologies" add a new paragraph 9.19 (and renumber the existing 9.19) as follows: 'Bromsgrove District Plan Policy BDP1.4 says that "In considering all proposals for development in Bromsgrove District regard will be had to [inter alia] ... The provision of communication technology infrastructure to allow for future technological enhancements e.g. fibre optic ducting."	For clarity
32	Within Policy INF3 Communication Technologies 32.1 Renumber the Policy as INF2. 32.2 Reword the opening sentence as: 'New mobile telecommunication infrastructure will be supported provided that:'. 32.3 Reword the second and third sentences of paragraph 2 as: 'Wherever possible and appropriate development proposals should provide for connections to superfast broadband (fibre optic); as a minimum suitable ducting should be provided to allow for future technological enhancements.'	For clarity and to meet Basic Condition 1
33	Under the heading "Community Facilities" combine the Policy preambles to Policies CF1 & CF2 and delete Policy CF1; in paragraph 10.14 replace "CF2" with 'CF1' and add a second sentence: 'The Parish Councils will work with Worcestershire County Council on highway and traffic management issues arising from proposals.'	For clarity
34	Within Policy CF2 Protecting Existing Open Space and Recreational Facilities and Supporting Investment in New Facilities: 34.1 Renumber as Policy CF1 and retitle as 'Protecting Community Facilities and Supporting Investment in New Facilities'. 34.2 Word the new Policy CF1 as: 'Existing community, recreation and public open space facilities, as shown on Maps 9 & 10, should be retained unless: (i) It can be demonstrated that an existing facility is no longer economically viable; or (ii) An equivalent or better replacement facility is provided either on the site or in an equally or more accessible location. Development proposals to enhance and improve an existing facility will be supported provided that: (1) The siting, scale and design are appropriate to the location and respect the character of the surrounding area, including any historic and natural assets; and (2) [take in 2 from Policy CF2] (3) [take in 3 from Policy CF2]'	For clarity and to meet Basic Condition 1

	34.3 Correct Map 11 to indicate a location for Barnt Green Sailing and Fishing Club within the Neighbourhood Area.	
35	<p>Under the heading “Local Green Spaces”:</p> <p>35.1 Amend the boundary of the “Grounds of St Catherine’s Church” LGS to omit the Church buildings and amend the boundary of the “St Catherine’s Road Playing Field” LGS to omit the car park to the south of the space.</p> <p>35.2 On Map 12 ensure that the “Myhill Field Play Area” LGS is included and add a note the effect that ‘LGS boundaries can be identified with clarity by enlarging the online map to street level’.</p>	For clarity and accuracy
36	Within Policy CF3 Local Green Spaces reword the third line as ‘The eight designated Local Green Spaces are:’.	For clarity and to meet Basic Condition 1
37	Under the heading “Supporting Appropriate Local Enterprise”, in paragraph 11.2, replace “The NDP believes that our neighbourhood should be a good place to do business and that encouraging” with ‘Encouraging’.	For clarity
38	<p>Within Policy B1 Supporting Appropriate Local Enterprise:</p> <p>38.1 Reword the opening sentence as: ‘Development of new, small-scale employment and service related business facilities will be supported within the existing built-up areas that are part of the large settlement of Barnt Green (where that lies within the Neighbourhood Area) and within the small settlements of Blackwell Blackwell and Cofton Hackett (as set out in Bromsgrove District Plan Policy BDP2 Settlement Hierarchy) provided that:’.</p> <p>38.2 Delete criterion 4.</p>	For clarity and to meet Basic Condition 1
39	<p>Within Policy B2 Supporting Home Working:</p> <p>39.1 Reword the opening paragraph as: ‘Where a planning consent is required, alterations and extensions to accommodate home working will be supported in principle when:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. With an existing dwelling, the extension is subordinate to the original building; or 2. An existing building is being brought back into use; and 3. Regard is demonstrated, as appropriate, for the amenity of neighbours, built heritage, the natural environment, landscape character and Green Belt Policy.’ <p>39.2 Delete paragraph 3.</p>	For clarity and to meet Basic Condition 1
40	<p>Replace the section “12. Next Steps” with a new section titled ‘Monitoring and Review’ as follows: ‘The Parish Councils will monitor the impact and effectiveness of the Neighbourhood Plan and, as necessary, will review the content with a minimum interval of every five years. A particular point for review</p>	For clarity

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	might arise once Bromsgrove District Council has adopted the new Local Plan that will replace the present District Plan.'	
41	Delete Appendix I.	For clarity
42	Renumber Appendix II as Appendix I and provide web addresses for on-line copies of the leaflets.	For clarity

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DECLARATION OF RESULT OF POLL

Bromsgrove District Council

Neighbourhood Planning Referendum

I Kevin Dicks, being the Counting Officer at the above referendum held on Thursday 12 December 2019, do hereby give notice that the results of the votes cast is as follows:

Question		
Do you want Bromsgrove District Council to use the Neighbourhood Plan for Lickey & Blackwell and Cofton Hackett parishes to help it decide planning applications in the neighbourhood area?		
	Votes Recorded	Percentage
Number cast in favour of a Yes	2911	86.35 %
Number cast in favour of a No	427	12.66 %

The number of ballot papers rejected was as follows:	Number of ballot papers
A want of an official mark	0
B voting for more answers than required	3
C writing or mark by which voter could be identified	0
D being unmarked or wholly void for uncertainty	30
E rejected in part	0
Total	33

Electorate: 5382

Ballot Papers Issued: 3372

Turnout: 62.6500

And I do hereby declare that more than half of those voting have voted **in favour of** the Neighbourhood Plan.

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BDC Response - South Worcestershire Development Plan Preferred Option

Relevant Portfolio Holder	Councillor Adam Kent
Portfolio Holder Consulted	Yes
Relevant Head of Service	Ruth Bamford
Wards Affected	All Wards
Ward Councillor Consulted	No
Non-Key Decision	Yes

1. SUMMARY OF PROPOSALS

- 1.1 The South Worcestershire Development Plan (SWDP) is the development plan which covers the local authorities of Worcester City, Malvern Hill and Wychavon. The Councils published the preferred option for a 6 week consultation period ending on the 16th December 2019.
- 1.2 At this stage in the process officers are content to offer qualified support for the SWDP, although as with other plans there remains unanswered questions as the evidence base supporting the plan has not been finalised. This approach in responding is consistent with other responses BDC has submitted.
- 1.3 A key point to note is that there are other opportunities available to BDC to further understand and influence the content of the SWDP. It is also important to note the commitment of BDC to engage constructively, actively and on an ongoing basis as per the Duty to Cooperate (DtC) with the South Worcestershire Councils.

2. RECOMMENDATION

- 2.1 **That cabinet endorses the officer response to the South Worcestershire Development Plan Preferred option (as attached at Appendix A)**
- 2.2 **That Cabinet recommends to Council, that the officer response to the South Worcestershire Development Plan Preferred option consultation be approved by Council as its formal response, and that it is confirmed with the South Worcestershire Councils as such.**

3. KEY ISSUES

Financial Implications

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

Legal Implications

- 3.2 There are no direct legal implications associated with this report, although it is important that the Bromsgrove District Council respond to relevant consultations from other Local planning authorities, to ensure the Councils views are fed into all stages of the plan making process. In due course as part of the Duty to Cooperate the Council will be required to agree a statement of Common Ground with the South Worcestershire Councils over the content of their plan.

Service / Operational Implications

Summary of the SWDP

- 3.3 The South Worcestershire Development Plan (SWDP) is jointly prepared by the three South Worcestershire Councils (SWCs) – Malvern Hills; Worcester City and Wychavon. The SWCs have agreed to work together to roll the Plan forward to cover the period 2016-2041. The Preferred Options Consultation sets out where the SWCs consider new growth should be located, and the changes needed to the policies of the Adopted Plan to ensure they reflect the updated evidence base and national planning policy. The consultation document also considers what infrastructure is required to support new development.
- 3.4 The Preferred Options Document identifies a net additional housing target for South Worcestershire for 13,957 dwellings and for 295 hectares of employment land. It identifies a Spatial Development Strategy and Settlement Hierarchy (Policy SWDPR2) to direct new growth to until 2041. Section 17 identifies a number of new strategic site allocations to which the majority of new development will be directed. These include Worcester Parkway which will deliver 5,000 dwellings and 50 hectares of employment land; land at Throckmorton Airfield for 2,000 dwellings and 20 hectares of employment land and an expanded settlement at Rushwick to deliver 1,000 dwellings and 10 hectares of employment land.

Summary of the SWDP Response –

The full response can be viewed at Appendix A, in summary

- The possible need for the SWDP to consider the wider housing needs of the Birmingham HMA
- Stress the requirements of para 137 of the NPPF in relation to the demonstration of exceptional circumstances for any Green Belt releases, and the need for BDC and South Worcestershire Councils to consider this under the DtC
- The importance of the need to align housing and jobs growth.

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- The need to share infrastructure / transport evidence as early in the process as possible, and the ongoing commitment to working on robust Strategic Transport Assessments across Worcestershire.

Customer / Equalities and Diversity Implications

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

4. RISK MANAGEMENT

4.1 The risks associated with not submitting a representation is that BDCs views will not be taken into account by the South Worcestershire Council when preparing the next version of their plan.

5. APPENDICES

Appendix A – BDC response to SWDP

6. BACKGROUND PAPERS

South Worcestershire Development Plan Preferred Option

<https://www.swdevelopmentplan.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/11/SWDPR-PO-Web-Version-Final.pdf>

AUTHOR OF REPORT

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South Worcestershire Development Plan – Preferred Options

Response from Bromsgrove District Council

1 Bromsgrove District Council welcomes the opportunity to comment on the Preferred Options Document. Please note that these comments represent the views of Officers only at this stage and have not been subject to Member endorsement. It is planned to take this response to the meeting of Bromsgrove’s Cabinet on 15th January 2020 for approval and then to full Council on the 22nd January, and we will update you after this time. Whilst the Council does not have any initial significant concerns due to the location of the sites identified for future development, and any potential cross boundary impacts in the SWDP, we wish to raise a number of observations and comments as follows:

2 The Council considers that it may be necessary to further discuss the housing needs arising from the Greater Birmingham Housing Market Assessment (GBHMA) ahead of finalising the publication version of the South Worcestershire Development Plan. Bromsgrove District Council is currently reviewing its own Development Plan, which will include the requirement to potentially accommodate some of the wider housing needs of the GBHMA which have yet to be determined and apportioned. This is an issue which will need to form part of the engagement under the Duty to Cooperate.

3 The Adopted Bromsgrove Development Plan states that the District’s housing need will be met within Bromsgrove District through the Green Belt Review. However, the NPPF (2019) Paragraph 137 states that before concluding that exceptional circumstances exist to justify changes to Green Belt boundaries, local authorities should be able to demonstrate that they have fully examined all other reasonable options for meeting their development needs. In particular Paragraph 137 c) states that this should be informed by discussions with neighbouring authorities about their ability to potentially accommodate some of the identified need for development.

4 Bromsgrove District Council has not yet tested any land within the Green Belt to assess its suitability for development. This is the process which will be taking place over in the coming months. It will be necessary for the Bromsgrove DC to demonstrate that it has satisfied these requirements through further engagement with the South Worcestershire Authorities under the duty to cooperate and with the production of a Statement of Common Ground.

5 The Council generally supports the Draft Vision. However, it is considered that in order to reflect Duty to Co-operate requirements that paragraph 3.5 may need to refer to the wider Housing Market Area rather than “South Worcestershire Residents” with regard to housing needs.

6 We generally support the Strategic Objectives, although in order for Worcester’s sub regional role to be promoted, the South Worcestershire Councils will also need to ensure that adequate housing supply is provided to match jobs growth through their plan review.

7 It is noted that under the Housing Issues and Options consultation summary, there is no further explanation as to why those respondents felt that there is a strong case for planning for more dwellings than the standard methodology suggests across South Worcestershire. It would be useful for this to be addressed through further evidence base work on the overall housing requirements.

8 We note that the net additional housing target for South Worcestershire is for 13,957 dwellings and for 295 hectares of employment land.

9 The settlement hierarchy and the planned approach to sustainable development are supported. In particular we note that Worcestershire Parkway and Throckmorton airfield have been identified as stand-alone settlements under Urban Area (2) category.

10 Policy SWDPR3: Strategic Transport Links is generally supported and in particular the intention to provide additional transport infrastructure. However, we would remind the South Worcestershire Councils it was agreed that the South Worcestershire authorities would share any outputs from County wide transport modelling. This is particularly important where proposals and new infrastructure provision may affect the A38; M5 or rail connections to the conurbation.

11 The policy for a new and expanded settlement at Worcestershire Parkway for 5,000 dwellings and 50 hectares of employment land, with the potential for further delivery beyond 2041 is noted. This includes many potential infrastructure requirements which are still to be established to support the level of development proposed. Transport requirements and improvements to the strategic road network will require further transport modelling to identify potential impacts on the surrounding strategic road network. The Council wishes to request early sight of this information prior to the development of the publication stage Plan in order to establish whether there would be any cross boundary implications arising. We will continue to work With Worcestershire County Council and all the Worcestershire authorities on securing a robust strategic Transport Assessment to inform all future development plans

12 Under the Duty to Cooperate BDC will shortly contact the South Worcestershire Council to discuss the content of this representation, and also the progress it is making on its own Plan making. The aim of this engagement being working up a Statements of Common Ground to support both the SWDP and the BDC plan review in due course.

BDC Response - South Staffordshire Spatial Housing Strategy and Infrastructure Delivery

Relevant Portfolio Holder	Councillor Adam Kent
Portfolio Holder Consulted	Yes
Relevant Head of Service	Ruth Bamford
Wards Affected	All Wards
Ward Councillor Consulted	No
Non-Key Decision	Yes

1. SUMMARY OF PROPOSALS

- 1.1 South Staffordshire Council published Spatial Housing Strategy and Infrastructure Delivery (SHSID) The SHSID was published for an 8 week consultation period ending on the 12th December 2019. This follows on from an earlier Issues and Options consultation in Winter 2018 and precedes the Preferred Option which is currently scheduled for Spring 2020.
- 1.2 At this stage in the process officers are content to offer qualified support for the SHSID, although as this is not a full draft plan with some significant elements such as employment provision not Included there does remain issues to be addressed as the plan progresses. This approach in responding is consistent with other responses BDC has submitted.
- 1.3 A key point to note is that there are other opportunities available to BDC to further understand and influence the content of the South Staffordshire Local Plan of which the SHSID will be part of. It is also important to note the commitment of BDC to engage constructively, actively and on an ongoing basis as per the Duty to Cooperate (DTC) with South Staffordshire Council.

2. RECOMMENDATION

- 2.1 **That cabinet endorses the officer response to the Spatial Housing Strategy and Infrastructure Delivery (as attached at Appendix A)**
- 2.2 **That Cabinet recommends to Council, that the officer response to the Spatial Housing Strategy and Infrastructure Delivery consultation be approved by Council as its formal response, and that it is confirmed with the South Staffordshire Council as such.**

3. KEY ISSUES

Cabinet

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Financial Implications

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

Legal Implications

- 3.2 There are no direct legal implications associated with this report, although it is important that the Bromsgrove District Council respond to relevant consultations from other Local planning authorities, to ensure the Council's views are fed into all stages of the plan making process as part of the DtC. In due course the Council will be required to agree a statement of Common Ground with the South Staffordshire Council.

Service / Operational Implications

Summary of the SHSID

- 3.3 South Staffordshire Council's current Local Plan Review consultation: 'Spatial Housing Strategy and Infrastructure Delivery', follows on from their Issues and Options consultation in autumn 2018. This consultation sets out a number of strategic approaches to new housing development, including potential broad locations and areas of search for development. It does not deal with matters such as employment, retail or other general policy approaches. South Staffordshire set out their commitment to plan to meet their own housing needs, together with a contribution of up to 4,000 dwellings towards the wider needs of the Greater Birmingham housing market area. By applying the Government's standard methodology for housing need, South Staffordshire's need for their proposed plan period of 2018-2037 is 4,845 dwellings. Taken together with the contribution to the needs of the wider HMA, the Local Plan review is planning for 8,845 dwellings to 2037.
- 3.4 Within the consultation, seven different spatial options are presented for the distribution of housing across the council area. Each spatial option broadly follows a strategic theme, such as; maximising open countryside release (non-Green Belt land), continuing with the existing Core Strategy distribution, addressing local affordability issues and an infrastructure led development strategy. All but one of the options would be able to deliver the Council's preferred housing target of 8,845 dwellings. South Staffordshire Council identify the infrastructure led development strategy as their preferred option. This preferred option also includes an area of search for a garden village to be provided beyond the plan period, along the A449 corridor from the M54 north towards Stafford. Five of the spatial options include an area of search for an urban extension along South Staffordshire's border with the Black Country, with the area of search extending down to the border

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with Bromsgrove district. Indicative numbers suggest the urban extension in this broad area could deliver from 600-1100 dwellings.

Summary of the BDC SHSID Response –

The full response can be seen at Appendix A in summary

- Support for the intention to meet Local housing needs.
- Support the need to meet wider housing needs, although cannot endorse the figures at this stage.
- Highlight that the housing shortfall is not a fixed issue and may require a change to the plan as further housing supply information becomes available.
- Question the lack of more detailed housing assessment work, particularly in relation the level of employment growth which remains an outstanding issue.
- Stress the requirements of para 137 of the NPPF in relation to the demonstration of exceptional circumstances for any Green Belt releases, and the need for BDC and South Staffordshire Council to consider this under the DtC
- Request early engagement when more becomes known on possible sites, particularly those in the 'areas of search' close to Bromsgrove.
- Request further discussions under the DtC on emerging employment issues.

Customer / Equalities and Diversity Implications

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

4. RISK MANAGEMENT

4.1 The risks associated with not submitting a representation is that BDCs views will not be taken into account by South Staffordshire when preparing the next version of their plan.

5. APPENDICES

Appendix A – BDC response to SHSID

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Local Plan Review Consultation Response Form

Part A: Your Details (Please Print)		
Please ensure that we have an up to date email address wherever possible, or postal address, at which we can contact you.		
	Your Details	Agent's Details (if applicable)
Title	Mr	
First Name	Mike	
Last Name	Dunphy	
E-mail Address	m.dunphy@bromsgroveandredditch.gov.uk	
Job Title (if applicable)	Strategic Planning & Conservation Manager	
Organisation (if applicable)	Bromsgrove District Council	
Address	Town Hall Walter Stranz Square Redditch	
Post Code	B98 9AH	
Telephone Number	01527 881325	

The South Staffordshire Local Plan review **Spatial Housing Strategy & Infrastructure Delivery** document is being consulted on for a period of 8 weeks from Thursday 17 October until 5pm Thursday 12 December 2019. For advice on how to respond to the consultation form please email localplanreview@sstaffs.gov.uk or call 01902 696000.

Please note:

- Comments must be received by **5pm on Thursday 12 December 2019**. Late comments will not be duly made under the Regulations.
- Please fill in a separate Part B for each paragraph/table/topic you are commenting on
- Please explain your response where necessary

Representations cannot be kept confidential and will be available for public scrutiny, including your name and/or organisation (if applicable). However your contact details will not be published.

Part B: Please complete a new Part B for each representation you wish to make.

Name: Mike Dunphy

Organisation: Bromsgrove District Council

1. Which part of the Local Plan review Spatial Housing Strategy and Infrastructure Delivery consultation paper does this representation relate to?

Chapter	
Paragraph	
Table	
Question (if applicable)	
Other document eg SA, HRA	

2. Please set out your comments below

Bromsgrove District Council welcomes the opportunity to comment on South Staffordshire’s Spatial Housing Strategy and Infrastructure Delivery consultation. Please note that these comments represent the views of Officers only at this stage and have not been subject to Member endorsement. It is planned to take this response to the meeting of Bromsgrove’s Cabinet on 15th January 2020 for approval and then to full Council on the 22nd January, and we will update you after this time.

We welcome South Staffordshire Council’s continued commitment to plan for not only its own housing needs, but also to make a contribution of **up to 4,000 dwellings** towards unmet needs in the wider HMA (para 2.2). However, we do note the subtle change in wording from the Issues and Options consultation which stated the Council’s preferred option at this stage was to provide “*a **minimum** of an additional 4,000 dwellings towards the wider housing shortfalls from the HMA*” (I&O Option C). As with our previous comments, it is not possible to fully endorse this level of contribution at this stage, without an up to date understanding of the shortfall and how the remainder will be dealt with. We do however support South Staffordshire’s positive efforts so far in their Local Plan Review on working to address the HMA shortfall.

The final sentence of para 2.2 states that if there is evidence that the shortfall across the HMA has significantly reduced prior to Submission of the Local Plan Review, then South Staffordshire Council will reduce its contribution to meeting unmet needs proportionately. Until an up-to-date level of shortfall has been quantified and agreed across the HMA, it is premature to make this assumption, particularly given that the 2018 GBHMA Strategic Growth Study focused on the shortfall to 2031, which falls midway through the proposed Local Plan Review plan period. Given that many local authorities have commenced plan reviews which extend beyond the timeframe of the GBHMA SGS, it is possible that there will be further unmet needs which the HMA constituent authorities will need to address. The wording at para 2.2 could therefore be altered in future versions of the Local Plan Review to acknowledge that the opposite is also possible.

We note at para 2.3 that in response to the Government’s standard methodology, South Staffordshire’s housing requirement for the period 2018-2037 has fallen from the level of 9,130 dwellings in the 2018 Issues and Options consultation to 8,845 dwellings in this consultation. Apart from local affordability data which has been used to inform the housing options, Gypsy and Traveller work which is ongoing, no **Page 68** made to any further evidence base work in relation to housing needs. Given that the standard methodology gives a minimum annual

housing need figure, is any further work proposed to consider a higher housing need figure, particularly given that evidence on employment needs is currently lacking? The relationship between housing and economic development needs should be explored together through the evidence base.

It is noted under Spatial Housing Strategy Option G that: *“Urban extensions are provided across all neighbouring authorities within the Greater Birmingham Housing Market Area (GBHMA) with unmet housing needs to ensure that the district’s contribution to the GBHMA shortfall is met in locations from which households are being displaced.”* Whilst Bromsgrove District has committed to review its Green Belt to accommodate the remaining housing needs of the adopted Bromsgrove Development Plan and the future needs of the District Plan Review, the suitability of land within the Green Belt for development has not yet been assessed. This is one of the next key pieces of work in the Bromsgrove District Plan Review process. There is the potential for there to be a shortfall in the amount of suitable land available for development. This means that, together with the requirement under para 137 of the NPPF regarding establishing exceptional circumstances to justify the amendment of Green Belt boundaries, we will need to discuss the potential for the development needs of our district to be accommodated by our neighbouring authorities, including South Staffordshire.

Spatial Housing Strategy Options B, D, E, F and G all include a proposed area of search for an urban extension along the western edge of the Black Country, with the indicative number of dwellings associated with this broad location ranging from 619 (Option B) to 1106 (Option D) [Appendix 4: Indicative Growth Tables]. This is shown as a hatched area along the western edge of the Black Country on the associated diagram and this extends down to south of the district and its border with Bromsgrove district. Whilst Bromsgrove district only has a small common boundary with South Staffordshire, we would be keen to learn of the precise location of any planned urban extension in this vicinity at the earliest stage possible, so that any cross boundary impacts can be understood and explored.

Whilst we understand South Staffordshire’s approach in producing a consultation document which focuses solely on options for housing distribution and infrastructure at this stage, this presents questions which are unanswerable at this stage about the relationship with other uses, namely employment land. We therefore welcome the acknowledgement at para 5.4 of South Staffordshire’s role in the employment market area and that future employment land allocations in the area are likely to come from the Black Country authorities. We are interested to understand more detail of this proposal, preferably through Duty to Cooperate discussions prior to the finalisation of a Preferred Options document.

We look forward to continuing to work with South Staffordshire Council both through our roles in the GBHMA and during ongoing discussions in respect of the Duty to Cooperate as we work towards developing the next stages in our respective Local Plan Reviews.

All comments should be made in writing preferably using this form and should be made no later than 5pm Thursday 12 December 2019

You can view the documents online at www.sstaffs.gov.uk/localplanreview

Contact:

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Email the form to: localplanreview@sstaffs.gov.uk

Agenda Item 7

Or send by post to: Strategic Planning Team, South Staffordshire Council, Council Offices,
Wolverhampton Road, Codsall, South Staffordshire, WV8 1PX.

Data Protection

Your details will be added to our Local Plans Consultation database so that we can contact you as the review progresses. South Staffordshire Council will process your personal data in accordance with the Data Protection Act 2018 and the General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR). Our Privacy Notice can be viewed at <https://www.sstaffs.gov.uk/planning/strategic-planning--data-protection.cfm>

CABINET

15th January 2020

Homelessness Grant and Flexible Homelessness Support Grant Allocation for 2020/21

Relevant Portfolio Holder	Cllr Shirley Webb
Portfolio Holder Consulted	Yes
Relevant Head of Service	Judith Willis –Head of Community Services
Wards Affected	All
Ward Councillor Consulted	No
Key Decision	

1. SUMMARY OF PROPOSALS

- 1.1 This report seeks Members approval to award Homelessness Grant, Flexible Homelessness Support Grant and Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 New Burdens Funding to specific schemes recommended by the Strategic Housing Manager. It also seeks to delegate authority to the Head of Community Services in consultation with the Portfolio Holder to allocate any underspend of Homelessness Grant and Flexible Homelessness Support Grant during 20120/21 towards dealing with and preventing homelessness.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

That Cabinet RESOLVE as follows:-

- 2.1 That the initiatives in 3.8, 3.11 and 3.12 be approved to receive allocation of funding 2020/21.
- 2.2 That delegated authority be granted to the Head of Community Services following consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Strategic Housing to use any unallocated Grant during the year or make further adjustments as necessary to ensure full utilisation of the Grants for 2020/21 in support of existing or new schemes.

3. KEY ISSUES

Financial Implications

- 3.1 In addition to the annual MHCLG Homelessness Grant, the Council is awarded two more allocations, the first is Flexible Homelessness Support Grant and the second is Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 New Burdens funding. This report sets out how the Council intends to utilise this funding to create a package of support and services to prevent homelessness and support those who become homeless.

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15th January 2020

- 3.2 The annual homelessness grant to BDC, allocated through the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) has been used each year since 2002 to fund a range of homelessness support services and schemes that focus upon the prevention of homelessness and repeat homelessness. These schemes play a key role in meeting the Council’s Vision:
‘To enrich the lives and aspirations of all our residents, businesses and visitors through the provision of high quality services, ensuring that all in need receive the appropriate help and support’.
- 3.3 Flexible Homeless Support Grant has been ring fenced by the MHCLG for activities that prevent and deal with homelessness.
- 3.4 The Council is being awarded an allocation of Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 New Burdens funding at the same value as this current year’s award. The grant is not ring fenced but reflects the increased workload on Housing Options Services due to the administrative burden relating to the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017.
- 3.5 The Homelessness Grant is prioritised for homelessness initiatives in respect of rough sleeping, offender rehabilitation and emergency accommodation for young people.

The Council has agreed a budget of £112,000 for the 2020/21 Homelessness Grant allocation. In addition, Worcestershire County Council has allocated £11,200 to the Council to part fund the Young Persons Pathway Worker post. The Council received an income for the Crash Pad which will be carried forward into the 2020/21 budget.

- 3.6 The Council therefore has a total £206,212 for Homelessness Prevention Services in 2020/21 (including grant from Worcestershire County Council), as follows:

Grant	2020/21
Homelessness Grant Including YPPW and Crash income	£127,200
Flexible Homelessness Support Grant	£83,012
Homelessness Reduction Act	£18,035

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New Burdens Funding	
Total Grant Available	£228,247

Legal Implications

- 3.7 Homelessness support and prevention initiatives and schemes developed and funded through MHCLG Grant assist the Council in meeting its statutory duties to those threatened with homelessness and those who are actually experiencing homelessness including those placed in Temporary Accommodation under the Homeless provisions of the Housing Act 1996 (as amended).

Service / Operational Implications

- 3.8 It is recommended that the Homeless Grant monies are allocated as follows:

Homelessness Grant Allocation	2020/21 £ (up to)
Young Persons Pathway Worker – support to prevent homelessness to over 100 young people a year	23,200
Worcestershire Strategic Housing Partnership Co-ordinator – contribution towards county-wide development and delivery of housing initiatives in partnership with other agencies	6,300
Single Person and Childless Couples Homelessness Prevention Service top up	1,924
Rapid Response Winter Weather Workers	3,500
No Second Night Out Rough Sleeping Accom	1,000
Entrenched Rough Sleeper Crash Pad and Personal Budget – to provide rent in advance and deposit in order to access accommodation and then provide a personal budget to assist with tenancy sustainment.	3700
St Basils Crash Pad – provide a unit of emergency accommodation to young homeless people – utilised continually during the year	9,627
NewStarts - Provide Furniture and Volunteering Opportunities for Ex-Offenders – improves future employment opportunities/reduces risk of	15,000

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15th January 2020

reoffending	
Fry Housing Related Support – helping ex-offenders remain housed/seek employment	22,000
St Basils Foyer – provides stable accommodation/support for young people - 14 units – fully occupied during last financial year	30,000
Total committed expenditure	116,251

- 3.9 An element of the BDHT three year contract includes the management of Temporary Accommodation for Homeless Households. The Flexible Homelessness Support Grant from the Department for Communities and Local Government has been allocated for the purpose of managing temporary accommodation and supporting those who are homeless or threatened with homelessness. The Council therefore proposes to allocate £15,500 from this grant to fund this element of the service, as listed below
- 3.10 The Councils Overview and Scrutiny Task Group in 2016 identified that the support providers listed in the table offer a valuable service and recommended that they continue to receive support from the Council. Therefore, it is recommended that the remaining grant is utilised to fund the expansion of these services and create greater resilience and self-efficacy for their particular client groups.
- 3.11 It is recommended that the Flexible Homeless Support Grant is allocated as follows:

Flexible Homelessness Support Grant	Scheme	2020/21 £ (up to)
BDHT	Managing Temporary Accommodation Costs for BDHT	£15,500
CCP	CCP offer an outreach and prevention service targeting rough sleepers and those at risk of rough sleeping. The office rough sleeper estimate this year was reported as zero. The Government funding ends in July and	£31,041

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15th January 2020

	therefore we would like to continue this service utilising Flexible Homelessness Support Grant.	
Basement Drop in Service	Support for young people at risk of homelessness – over 139 young people a year	£35,000
Total		£81,541

- 3.12 The Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 New Burdens grant has increased workloads for Housing Options Teams. Therefore it is proposed to transfer this to bdht as was done in 2019/20.

	2020/21
Homelessness Reduction Act New Burdens Funding	£18,035

- 3.13 This leaves a remaining amount of £12,420 unallocated and as in previous years it is recommended that this is delegated to Officers in consultation with the Portfolio Holder to ensure full utilisation of the Grants for 2020/21 in support of existing or new schemes.

Customer / Equalities and Diversity Implications

- 3.14 The Homelessness Grant, Flexible Homelessness Support Grant and Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 New Burdens Funding will benefit customers by offering household's more options to prevent their homelessness, support them to remain in their own homes or help the Council to manage and support households in Temporary Accommodation.
- 3.15 These schemes and functions play a role in meeting the Council's Strategic Vision:
 'To enrich the lives and aspirations of all our residents, businesses and visitors through the provision of high quality services, ensuring that all in need receive the appropriate help and support'.
- 3.16 The grant will also benefit the larger community as opportunities to prevent homelessness will be maximised.

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15th January 2020

4. RISK MANAGEMENT

4.1 If the recommended schemes are not approved there is a risk that more households who are threatened with homelessness, or who are in housing need, will have limited alternative options. There is also therefore the risk that they may have to make a homeless approach and this could consequently lead to the following negative outcomes:

- Increased B&B costs
- Increased rough sleeping in the District
- Impacts on physical and mental health, educational achievement, ability to work and similar through increased homelessness

4.2 All recipients of Grant will enter into a grant agreement and have regular monitoring with officers on the delivery of the service

5. APPENDICES and BACKGROUND PAPERS

None

6. KEY

AUTHOR OF REPORT

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BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL

CABINET

15th JANUARY 2020

NORTH WORCESTERSHIRE ECONOMIC GROWTH STRATEGY

Relevant Portfolio Holder	Cllr Karen May – Leader of the Council and Portfolio Holder for Economic Development, Town Centre and Strategic Partnerships
Portfolio Holder Consulted	Yes
Relevant Head of Service	Ostap Paparega, Head of North Worcestershire Economic Development and Regeneration (NWedR)
Ward(s) affected	All
Ward Councillor(s) Consulted	N/a
Key Decision / Non-Key Decision	

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 This report provides a summary of the North Worcestershire Economic Growth Strategy 2019-2024 and outlines its four pillars of growth, strategic priorities and supporting projects and interventions.

2. RECOMMENDATION

Cabinet is recommended to AGREE:

- 2.1 The report and its strategic priorities and interventions.

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 Since 2011, Bromsgrove DC has relied on the Worcestershire Local Enterprise Partnership and Greater Birmingham and Solihull LEP Strategic Economic Plans (SEPs) as its key economic strategy documents. This was considered appropriate at the time, as the Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs) had been set up to deliver local economic growth.
- 3.2 Since then, a series of political, economic, social, technological and legislative changes have taken place that would require a more specific place based strategy capable of responding to these challenges and embracing the growth opportunities arising from them.
- 3.3 Perhaps one of the most significant developments was the launch of the government's Industrial Strategy in 2017 followed by the request that all Local Enterprise Partnerships should develop their own Local Industrial Strategies.
- 3.4 In 2017 the government announced the creation of a UK Shared Prosperity Fund to replace the EU funding programmes in the UK after the UK had left the European Union and its intention to distribute the fund through LEPs on the basis of their Local Industrial Strategies. Although the Industrial Strategy promised consultation on the UK Shared Prosperity Fund by the end of 2018, this consultation is still awaited: the new fund is due to be fully operational for grants to be awarded from 1 January 2021 and time is now beginning to run short for the Government to consult adequately prior to the fund being opened for applications during 2020.
- 3.5 Also, in 2017 the government published its national review of Local Enterprise Partnerships – 'Strengthening Local Enterprise Partnerships'. One of the review's key outcomes was a request that LEPs come forward with 'proposals which best reflect real functional economic

areas, remove overlaps and, where appropriate, propose wider changes such as mergers.’ This request has a direct impact on Bromsgrove DC, as it and the other two North Worcestershire local authorities – Redditch BC and Wyre Forest DC – are members of two LEPs, Greater Birmingham & Solihull and Worcestershire respectively.

4 KEY ISSUES

- 4.1 The North Worcestershire Economic Strategy is attached in Appendix 1. It is intended to cover a five year period 2019-2024 and sets out some of the key economic indicators across the North Worcestershire geography as well as the attributes that make the area attractive for businesses and visitors supporting local economic growth.
- 4.2 The strategy is built on four pillars of economic growth – talent, infrastructure, technology and creativity – as these are common to all three North Worcestershire partners. The strategy then goes on to set out what the key growth priorities and interventions are and these reflect the collective geography’s potential as well as the individual identity that each of the partner district and borough has.
- 4.3 Taking a North Worcestershire wide approach, which covers the districts of Bromsgrove and Wyre Forest and the borough of Redditch, the strategy recognises the North Worcestershire functional economic geography and the principle that ‘the whole is greater than the sum of its parts.’
- 4.5 A North Worcestershire strategy provides stronger evidence of the North’s combined strengths and opportunities to generate economic growth. It also offers a coherent narrative that demonstrates alignment with the Local Industrial Strategies and provides the evidence base for investments from the UK Shared Prosperity Fund.
- 4.6 Key data**
 - 4.6.1 North Worcestershire’s GVA falls behind the average GVA for England, West Midlands Combined Authority (WMCA), WMCA Tri-Sep geography, GBSLEP and WLEP.
 - 4.6.2 Business survival rates across North Worcestershire are above the England average for every year. Compared to the West Midlands Metropolitan County rates are also far higher and this gap increases over time from 1.9% higher after one year in business to 3.6% higher after five. Survival rates are also higher than the Worcestershire average after year one, however from years two to five businesses in other districts in the county outperform those of North Worcestershire.
 - 4.6.3 North Worcestershire’s job market is dominated by Manufacturing, Wholesale and Retail Trade; Repair of Motor vehicles, Transportation and Storage, Admin and Support and the Health and Social Work sectors with each utilizing over 10% of the workforce. Compared to the West Midlands and Great Britain average, the Transportation and Storage, Construction and Admin and Support sectors provide a higher percentage of jobs in the area.
 - 4.6.4 Both resident and workplace earnings in all three districts, apart from Bromsgrove residents, fall below the UK median. In addition there is a large disparity between the resident and workplace earnings in Bromsgrove, indicating that people are emigrating out of the district for higher paid work. The same can be said of Wyre Forest although the difference is less pronounced. Both Redditch and Wyre Forest fall behind South Worcestershire on both fronts.

4.7 The Four Pillars of Growth

4.7.1 Talent

The workforce in North Worcestershire is relatively well skilled in relation to the rest of the West Midlands. However, compared to the rest of GB, education levels are similar apart from NVQ4+ where the districts fall behind. Within the geography, Redditch fares the poorest with only 21% of the population gaining NVQ4+ qualifications compared to 38.6% across GB. Wyre Forest also falls behind here at 30.7%, whereas Bromsgrove pulls North Worcestershire's average statistics up with 45% of 16-64 year olds gaining a NVQ4+ qualification.

4.7.2 Infrastructure

There is an overall need for a 'North Worcestershire Infrastructure' package that captures improved intra North Worcestershire connectivity and improved inter Worcestershire connectivity for North Worcestershire as well as significant interventions to address the severe lack of supply of employment land in the north of the county.

There is a severe shortage of top quality employment space in some parts of the geography, which is undoubtedly one of the biggest barriers to growth and future prosperity across North Worcestershire. This factor not only pushes up rents but also prevents investment and business relocation into the area.

4.7.3 Technology

Digital connectivity across the North Worcestershire is currently good, with over 95% of district households and businesses having access to superfast broadband. The coverage of ultrafast broadband (100mbps+) is especially good in Redditch, with Wyre Forest and Bromsgrove both failing below the English and West Midlands average in this category. Access to ultrafast broadband, as an enabling technology, is critical to business attraction, so improving the two districts' ultrafast broadband coverage must be an immediate priority.

4.7.4 Creativity

The creative industries in North Worcestershire have achieved significant growth in the past few years with Bromsgrove recording the fastest growth in creative industries jobs (25%) in the Greater Birmingham and Solihull LEP area (Greater Birmingham Creative Economy Mapping 2017). Combining expert music industry knowledge and experience with conventional training and education, Kidderminster College-based MAS Records, an award winning innovative non-profit music development programme has expanded since its 2001 launch to 16 centres nationally.

North Worcestershire has heritage of national and international significance and this is reflected in the RSA Heritage Index that shows the area performing well compared to the national average score of the 325 districts. Wyre Forest comes out ahead on most indicators, but most importantly the level of potential growth for all districts is high and the positive impact on the visitor economy significant.

4.8 Strategic priorities

This strategy outlines the key growth priorities in North Worcestershire under three main categories: places, businesses and people. These are underpinned by the four pillars of growth – talent, infrastructure, technology, culture – as described above.

The data analysis shows that North Worcestershire has key strengths and competitive advantages to build on and realise its growth opportunities on the one hand, but is facing

significant challenges and barriers in achieving its potential growth on the other hand. To strengthen its economic competitiveness and attraction to business investment, which would bring new employment and growth, the North Worcestershire economy needs to be supported by a range of targeted interventions that address these challenges and create the conditions for future growth.

The strategy identifies the growth priorities and supporting interventions that, if materialised, have the potential to bring about significant economic, social and environmental benefits to North Worcestershire's residents, businesses and local communities.

Cumulatively, these interventions have the opportunity to deliver over 1,000 new homes, 500 new jobs, 500,000 sq ft of employment floorspace and £500m Gross Development Value (GDV).

4.8.1 Strategic priority – Places (town centres, premises and connectivity)

The investments in places will focus on strengthening the vibrancy and viability of our town centres, infrastructure that unlocks land for residential and employment development, estate regeneration, bringing unused / underutilised buildings back into commercial use and connecting people with jobs.

Our strategic priorities are:

- Unlocking strategic employment land to facilitate business growth and attract investment to North Worcestershire
- Accelerating development through the use of Local Development Orders (LDOs), enterprise zones and other delivery mechanisms
- Working with strategic partners to identify key 'growth corridors' to accelerate development of employment land, particularly
- Delivering major town centre projects that will bring more residential, employment and leisure uses to counterbalance the significant retail decline and address the significant structural challenges faced by our town centres
- Improving coverage for ultrafast internet (>100mbps), especially in Bromsgrove and Wyre Forest
- Creating the conditions for 5G roll-out in Bromsgrove, Kidderminster and Redditch

4.8.2 Strategic priority – Businesses (retention, expansion, relocation)

Our priorities will focus on retaining the existing business base, supporting local businesses to expand and encourage new business formation and relocation to the area by:

- Providing a comprehensive package of business support – including business grants and regulatory advice - to ensure business retention and expansion
- Developing incubator / innovation space to encourage investment and growth in new and emerging technologies
- Working with key partners to attract investment in the area
- Encouraging investment in knowledge intensive sectors
- Encouraging investment in the creative industries sector

4.8.3 Strategic priority – People (skills, apprenticeships, careers)

A talented, skilled, knowledgeable and competent workforce is key to a successful economy. Despite North Worcestershire's workforce achieving qualifications above the West Midlands average, more needs to be done to ensure that the workforce is equipped

with the relevant skills and knowledge to capitalise on the new employment opportunities that existing and emerging technologies will bring about.

Our key priorities are to:

- Reduce the mismatch between employers' skills needs (demand) and skills provision by education and training providers (supply)
- Motivate and inspire people to develop skills for the high growth key sectors and emerging technologies
- Use partnership and collaboration to tackle skills shortages and gaps that are barriers to long terms business growth and productivity
- Promote the wide spectrum of careers available in North Worcestershire to inspire the careers choices our young people make

4.9 The strategy lists the key projects and interventions proposed to be delivered against its priorities. The list will evolve as new development, investment and funding opportunities arise.

4.10 Stakeholders (partners, funders, supporters)

Our ability to deliver this ambitious growth programme is heavily dependent on the collaboration with and support of our key partners, funders and supporters, as illustrated below. We are grateful for all their support provided so far and will continue to foster deeper and closer working relationships with them to deliver the interventions needed to enable our places, businesses and people to develop, grow and prosper.

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

5.1 To deliver the projects and interventions in the strategy will require significant resources, both in terms of capacity and funding. NWedR service monitors all external funding programmes available on an on-going basis and submits bids accordingly.

6. LEGAL AND POLICY IMPLICATIONS

6.1 There are no legal implications.

6.2 The key policy implication is in relation to the Local Plan Review. In particular, the outcomes of the Local Plan review would have a significant impact on two of the three strategic priorities namely places and businesses. The main implication in that respect is the supply of employment land, which would either enable or hinder business growth and inward investment in the district.

7. EQUALITY IMPACT NEEDS ASSESSMENT

7.1

8 RISK MANAGEMENT

8.1 There are development and investment risks associated with the delivery of the key interventions identified in the strategy. A risk register will be prepared for each of these interventions as and when they are considered for implementation.

9. CONCLUSION

9.1 This report provides a summary of the North Worcestershire Economic Growth Strategy 2019-2024 and outlines its four pillars of growth, strategic priorities and supporting projects and interventions.

9.2 The strategy identifies the growth priorities and supporting interventions that, if materialised, have the potential to bring about significant economic, social and environmental benefits to North Worcestershire's residents, businesses and local communities.

9.3 Cumulatively, these interventions have the opportunity to deliver over 1,000 new homes, 500 new jobs, 500,000 sq ft of employment floorspace and £500m Gross Development Value (GDV).

10. CONSULTEES

10.1 Greater Birmingham and Solihull Local Enterprise Partnership, Worcestershire Local Enterprise Partnership, Worcestershire County Council and Bromsgrove Economic Development Theme Group

11. APPENDICIES

11.1 North Worcestershire Economic Growth Strategy

NORTH WORCESTERSHIRE ECONOMIC GROWTH STRATEGY

PLACES | BUSINESSES | PEOPLE

2019-2024



Bromsgrove
District Council
www.bromsgrove.gov.uk



Wyre Forest
District Council



FOREWORD

Combining old and new urban settlements, rolling green landscapes and small villages with an eclectic mix of history and culture, North Worcestershire is a place of tremendous business innovation, pioneering spirit and distinguished heritage of national and international significance.

From Kidderminster-based Sir Rowland Hill, the originator of the penny postage system and developer of the modern postal service, which was adopted worldwide, to playing a major role in manufacturing and developing technologies around the world, such as helping to make the world's first jet engine (Redditch) and being home to one of the top ten and internationally renowned independent schools in the country (Bromsgrove), North Worcestershire is defined by a constant drive to innovate, progress and excel.

This entrepreneurial and innovating spirit is embraced today by many of the 17,500 businesses based in North Worcestershire, accounting for 52.5% of all businesses in Worcestershire. Our businesses continue to achieve phenomenal levels of growth with half of the top 50 fastest growing companies in the county coming from North Worcestershire and seven of them placed in the top 10, as reported in the Worcestershire Business Growth Barometer published by BDO in 2018.

Building on the area's current success and recognising that the public sector must do its share to enable North Worcestershire to retain and strengthen its competitive advantages, the local authorities of Bromsgrove, Redditch and Wyre Forest have prepared this strategy and its supporting interventions.

Access to enabling technologies, such as ultrafast broadband and 5G; adequate infrastructure that connects people with jobs and businesses with markets; supply of quality employment land and premises; thriving town centres that are home to creative industries, arts and culture; a skilled and highly knowledgeable workforce ready to embrace employment opportunities brought about by new and emerging technologies and a knowledge intensive economy are our combined priorities.

We are setting out these priorities and supporting interventions as a platform for future, smart growth that will deliver significant economic, social and environmental benefits for North Worcestershire's residents, businesses and communities and strengthen the area's attractiveness as a great place to live, work, do business and enjoy. We look forward to working with our key partners, stakeholders, developers and investors to make this strategy a success.

Cllr Karen May

Cllr Matt Dormer

Cllr Fran Oborski

Leader of Bromsgrove DC
Cabinet Member for Economic
Development, Town Centre and
Strategic Partnerships

Leader of Redditch BC
Cabinet Member for Planning, Economic
Development, Commercialism and
Partnerships

Deputy Leader of Wyre Forest DC
Cabinet Member for Economic Regeneration,
Planning and Capital Investments

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NORTH WORCESTERSHIRE – AT A GLANCE

World leading businesses

North Worcestershire is home to world leading companies and a significant advanced engineering and manufacturing sector

25 of the Top 50 fastest growing companies in Worcestershire are based in the north of the county (BDO Worcestershire Growth Barometer 2018)

The fastest growth in creative industries jobs (25%) in the Greater Birmingham and Solihull LEP area (Greater Birmingham Creative Economy Mapping 2017) - Bromsgrove

World's first Wi-Fi 6 and industrial IoT trial at Mettis Aerospace in Redditch

Over 17,500 companies based in North Worcestershire accounting for 52.5% of all businesses in the county

95% superfast broadband coverage across the area, 88% ultrafast (> 100mbps) broadband coverage in Redditch well above the West Midlands' 68% coverage

Well skilled workforce above West Midlands average

Heritage of national and international significance

Sir Rowland Hill, originator of the penny postage system and developer of the modern postal service (Kidderminster)

Museum of Carpet – over 300 years of Kidderminster's fascinating industrial heritage. Over 3,000 carpet designs, many by significant designers.

Witley Court – spectacular ruins of what once was one of the England's greatest country houses. An English Heritage estate.

Hagley Hall and Park, magnificent achievements of eighteenth century English architecture. The Hall is the last of the Great Palladian houses.

Harvington Hall, built in the 1300s and developed in the 1500s, has the largest surviving series of priest hides in the country and a rare collection of original Elizabethan wall paintings

Forge Mill Museum, one of the most unique museums in Worcestershire and the West Midlands. Redditch once produced 90% of the world's needles.

Bewdley – 'the most perfect small Georgian town in Worcestershire'

Stourport – 'the pioneer town of the canal age' and home to the award-winning Canal Basins

Great outdoors and attractions

Arley Arboretum – 'best place in Britain to see the autumn colours' (BBC Countryfile 2017), over 300 species dating back over 350 years

Bodenham Arboretum – over 3,000 species of trees and shrubs from all over the world spread over 134 acres

Arrow Valley Country Park – 900 acres of parkland, excellent wildlife, 29 acre lake, water sports activities

Wyre Forest – one of the largest, most ecologically significant oak woodlands in England. Great opportunities for walking, mountain biking, horse riding, learning and adventure play

Clent Hills – a National Trust estate to explore miles of footpaths, bridleways and trails offering breathtaking panoramic views over the Cotswolds, Shropshire Hills and Welsh borders

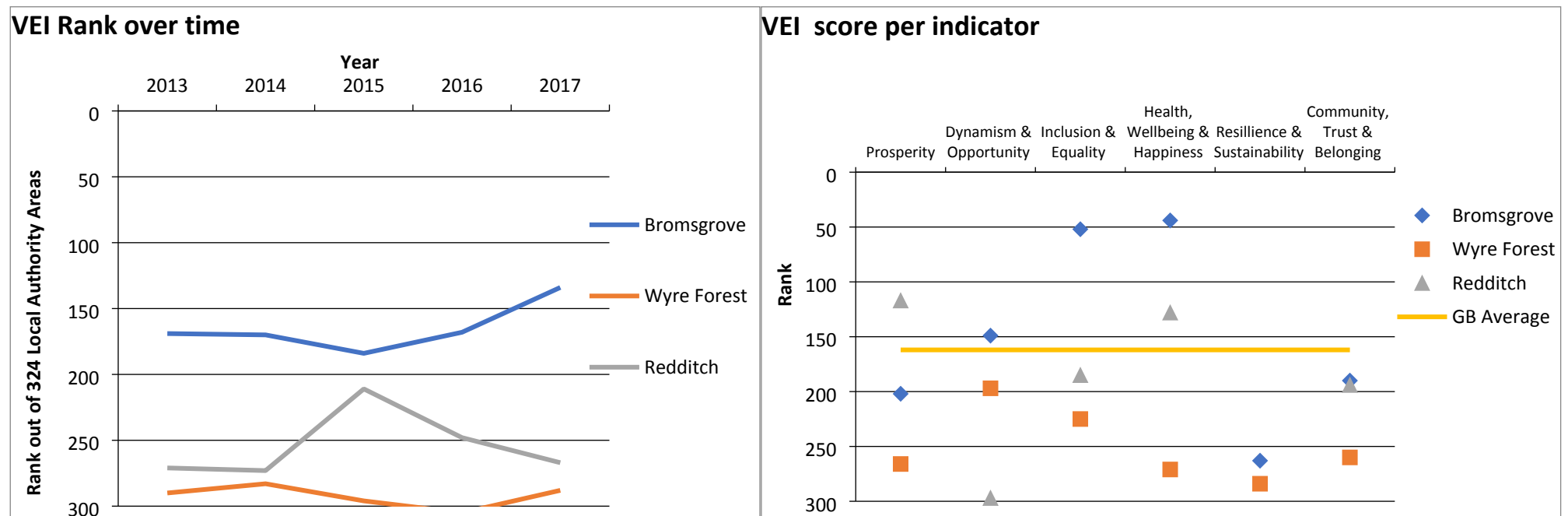
Severn Valley Railway – steam-hauled train along 16 miles of full-size standard-gauge railway line through the amazing scenery of the Severn Valley. Over 250,000 visitors a year.

Wet Midland Safari Park – award-winning visitor attraction (over 700,000 visitors a year) home to around 140 species including cheetah, lions, elephants giraffes and rhinos.

In order to assess the state of the North Worcestershire economy, a variety of quantitative and qualitative data has been assessed. The key findings are presented below, often with comparison to the wider West Midlands geography and that of Great Britain. In order to highlight spatial disparities between the three districts some figures are presented individually, though the strategy is designed to encompass the North Worcestershire area in its entirety.

The Vibrant Economy Index

The Vibrant Economy Index, created by Grant Thornton, scores districts based on a variety of socio-economic indicators to help reveal each economy's strengths and weaknesses. A breakdown of the comprehensive index can be found in Appendix A. Each local authority is ranked against 324 other areas.



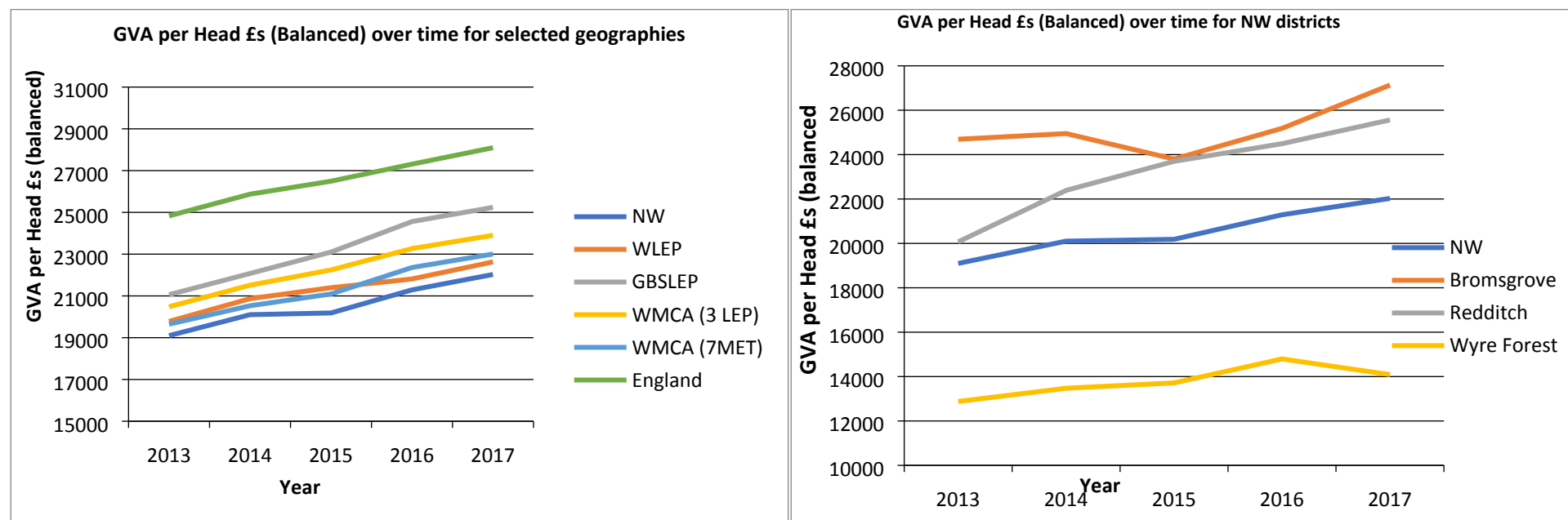
From this data the spatial diversion in economic performance across the districts becomes apparent. Bromsgrove outperforms Redditch and Wyre Forest in all but one basket of indicators (Prosperity). All of the districts have scored below the national average for both the Resilience & Sustainability measure and the Community, Trust & Belonging measure.

Gross Value Added (GVA)

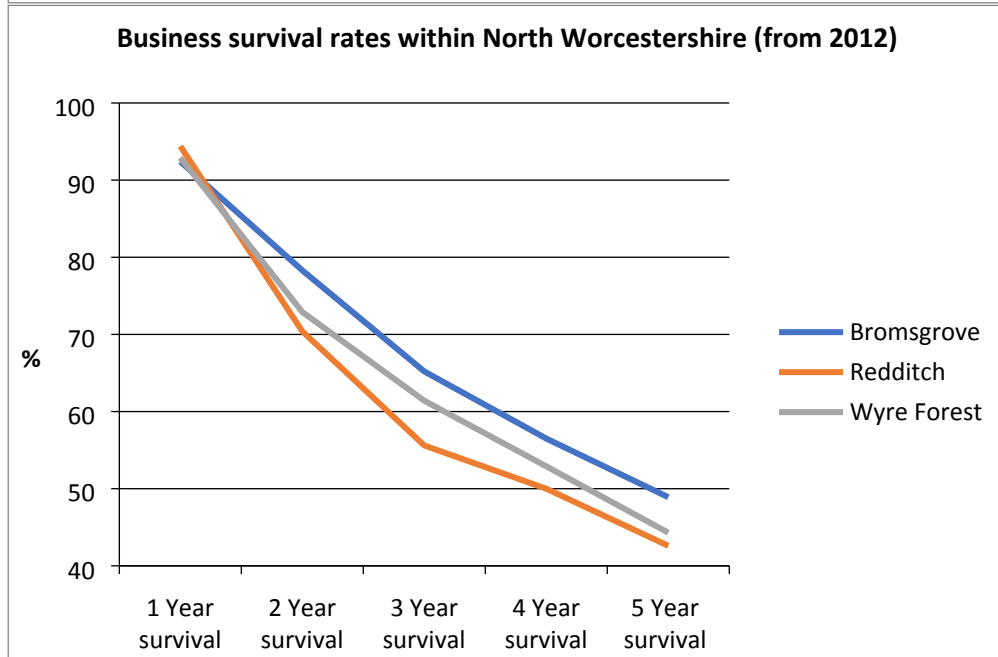
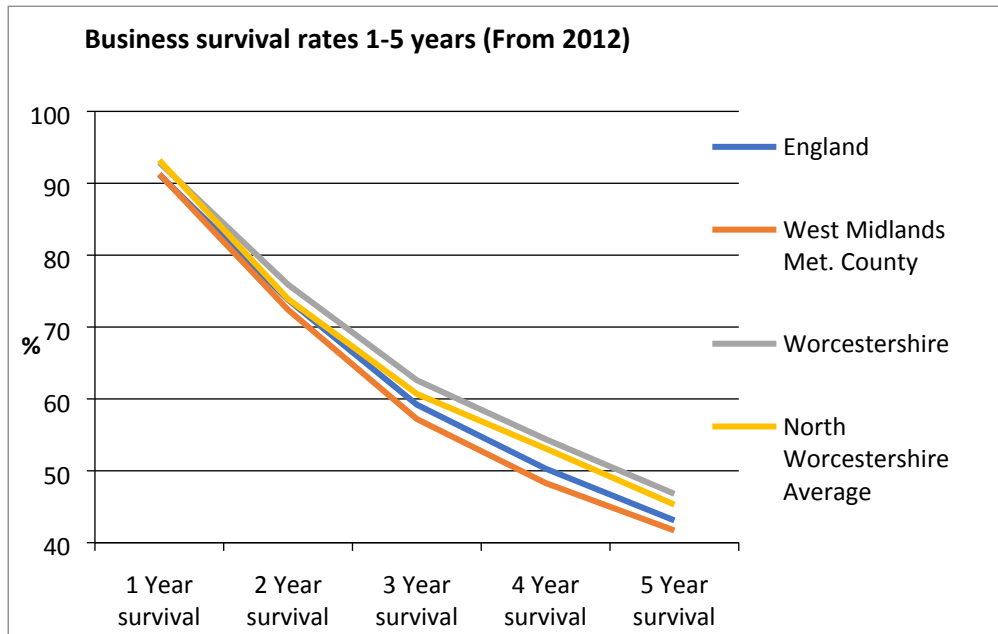
North Worcestershire's GVA falls behind all geographies shown in the graph below – England, West Midlands Combined Authority (WMCA), WMCA Tri-Sep geography, GBSLEP and WLEP.

In order to improve North Worcestershire's GVA, which is significantly below England's average, focus on knowledge intensive sectors such as tech, advanced engineering and manufacturing, finance, professional, scientific and technical activities need to be encouraged. In order for these sectors to thrive, further advances in the employment and skills agenda to promote a highly skilled workforce must be championed. Furthermore, building upon the area's historical success in advanced engineering manufacturing and supply chains whilst diversifying across high growth sectors will not only help protect our economy from shifting global trends and shocks, but raise our added value.

Continued work and support on regeneration and development projects must be advanced and supplemented as high quality infrastructure, public realm and business space will be vital to complement our geographies inherent advantages of high connectivity, proximity to pivotal urban centres and natural beauty.



The Business Environment



Business survival rates across North Worcestershire are above the England average for every year.

Compared to the West Midlands Metropolitan County rates are also far higher and this gap increases over time from 1.9% higher after one year in business to 3.6% higher after five.

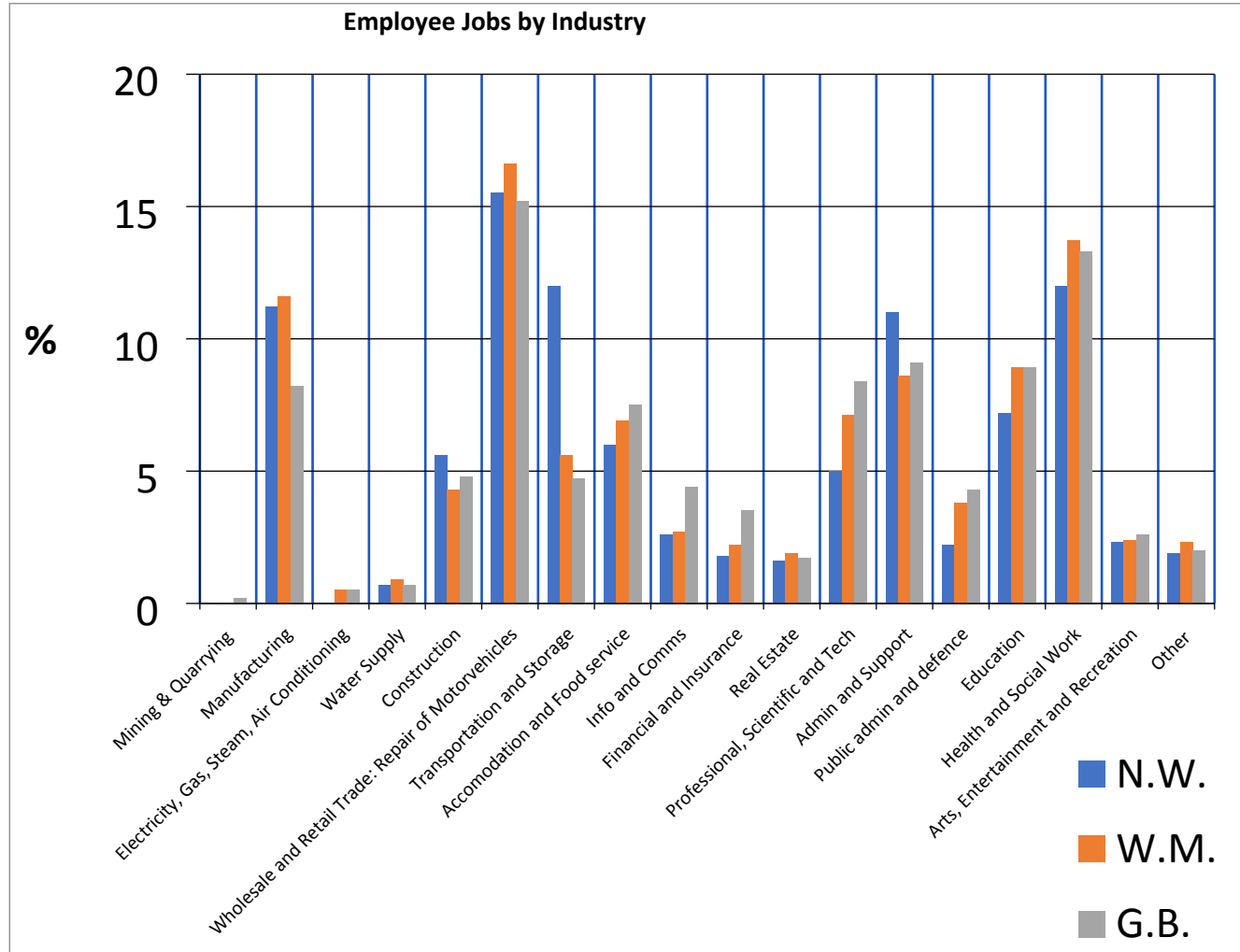
Survival rates are also higher than the Worcestershire average after year one, however from years 2 to 5 businesses in other districts in the county outperform those of North Worcestershire.

Within the district Bromsgrove consistently outperforms Redditch and Wyre Forest in terms of business survival, except for year one where both supersede it.

Here, Redditch has the highest survival rate at 94.4%, though in the following years it falls below Wyre Forest for survival rates.

Sector Strengths

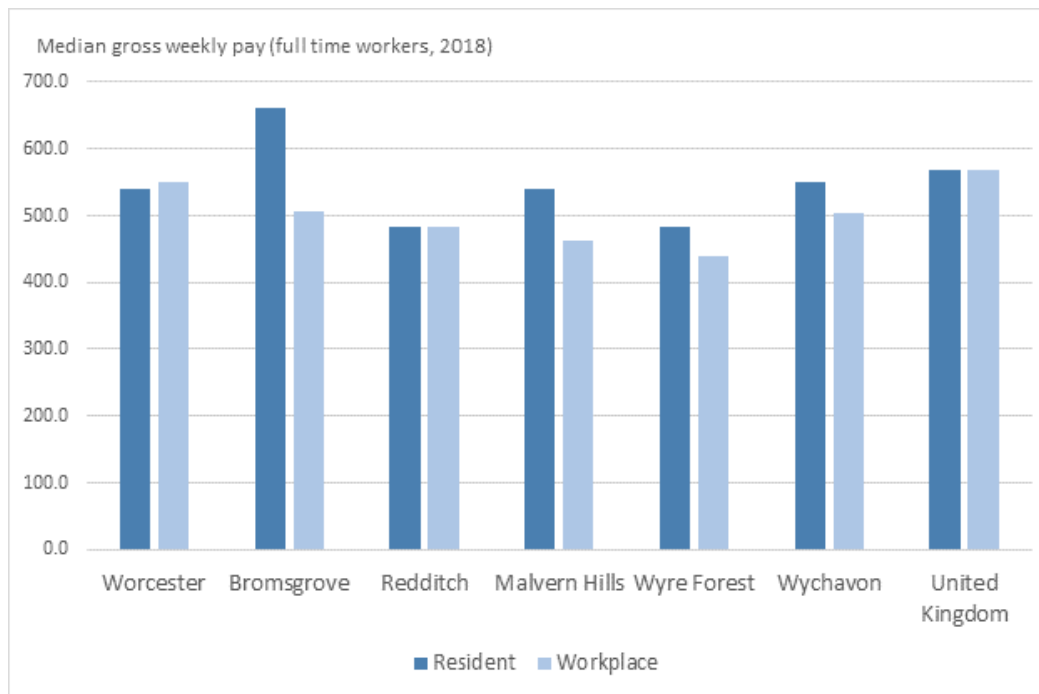
As is shown in the graph below, North Worcestershire’s job market is dominated by Manufacturing, Wholesale and Retail Trade; Repair of Motor vehicles, Transportation and Storage, Admin and Support and the Health and Social Work sectors with each utilizing over 10% of the workforce. Compared to the West Midlands and Great Britain average, the Transportation and Storage, Construction and Admin and Support sectors provide a higher percentage of jobs in the area.



Source: NOMIS, Official Labour Market Statistics

Resident vs workplace earnings

The graph below shows that both resident and workplace earnings in all three districts, apart from Bromsgrove residents, fall below the UK median. In addition there is a large disparity between the resident and workplace earnings in Bromsgrove, indicating that people are emigrating out of the district for higher paid work. The same can be said of Wyre Forest although the difference is less pronounced. Both Redditch and Wyre Forest fall behind South Worcestershire on both fronts.



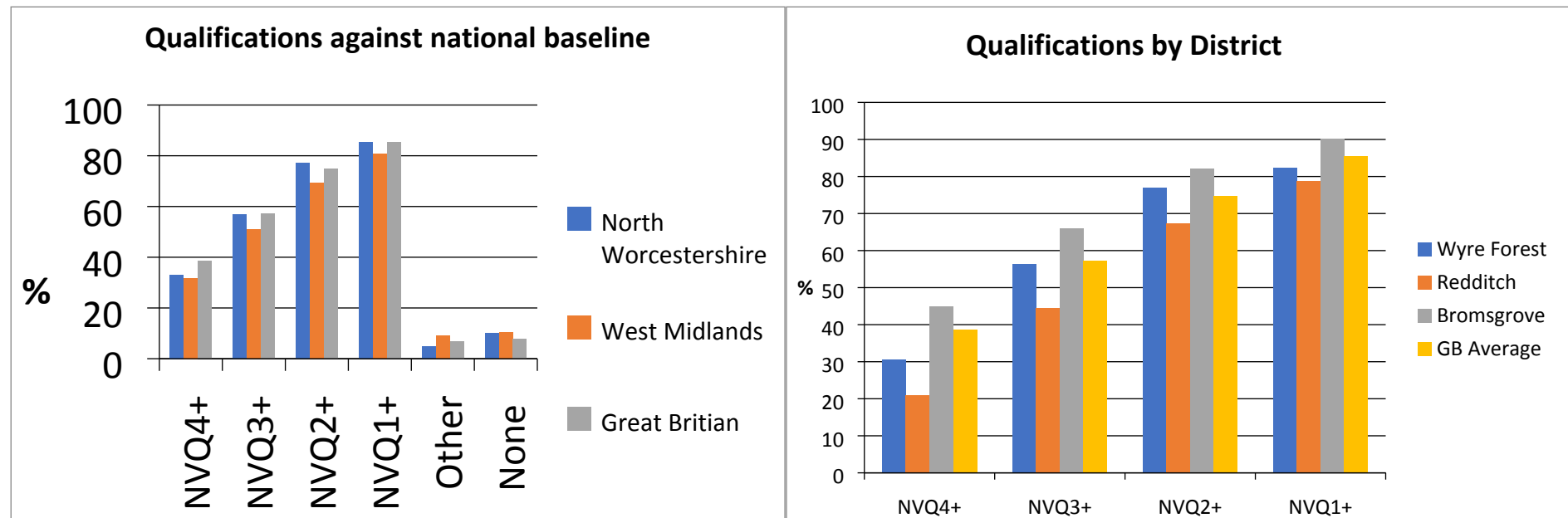
PILLARS OF GROWTH

Talent | Infrastructure | Technology | Creativity

TALENT

A key pillar of growth is the human capital of the area, and as such, raising its levels of skills, qualifications and knowledge will help drive productivity and growth in the future.

The workforce in North Worcestershire is relatively well skilled in relation to the rest of the West Midlands. However, compared to the rest of GB, education levels are similar apart from NVQ4+ where the districts fall behind. Within the geography, Redditch fares the poorest with only 21% of the population gaining NVQ4+ qualifications compared to 38.6% across GB. Wyre Forest also falls behind here at 30.7%, whereas Bromsgrove pulls North Worcestershire's average statistics up with 45% of 16-64 year olds gaining a NVQ4+ qualification.



INFRASTRUCTURE

Land | Premises | Rail | Road

There is an overall need for a 'North Worcestershire Infrastructure' package that captures improved intra North Worcestershire connectivity and improved inter Worcestershire connectivity for North Worcestershire as well as significant interventions to address the severe lack of supply of employment land in the north of the county.

Key issues:

Rail

- Rail connectivity – investment in rail is needed to stimulate and realise the economic growth potential of the area – connectivity is poor within North Worcestershire and also to the south of the county. There is a need for the county to work collectively to realise the potential of the economic growth set out in the County Rail Strategy.
- Redditch Railway station – currently very poor – there is need for investment in the station and more express services to Birmingham;
- Bromsgrove Railway Station – a new station has been built but there is a need for more services; also, connectivity to the town centre is a key issue that needs addressing.

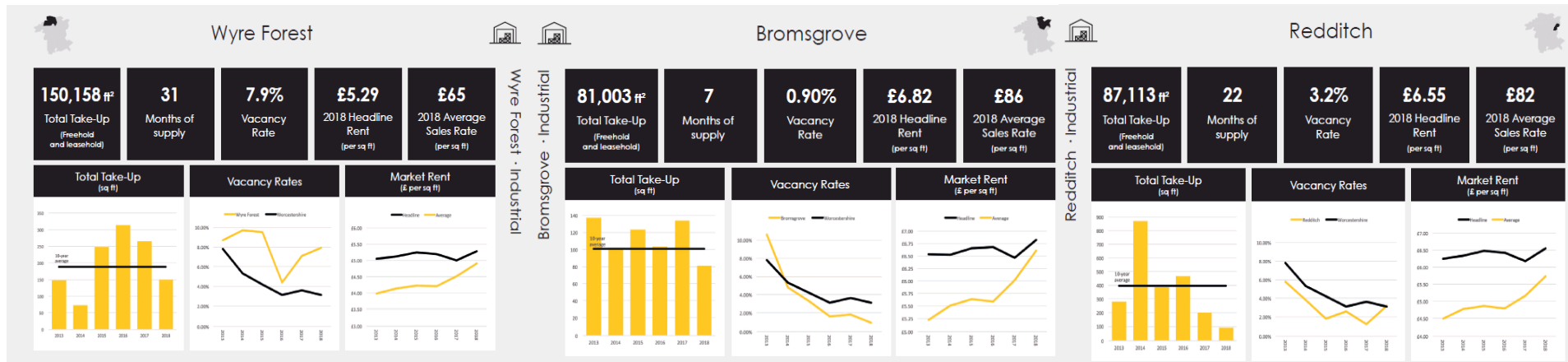
Road

- Redditch and Kidderminster – need for improved connectivity into Worcester;
- Bromsgrove – continued investment in the A38 to service existing growth; need for longer term infrastructure solutions to create capacity for future growth;
- Wyre Forest – need for infrastructure to support growth to the east of Kidderminster;
- Realising the economic potential of 'growth corridors'

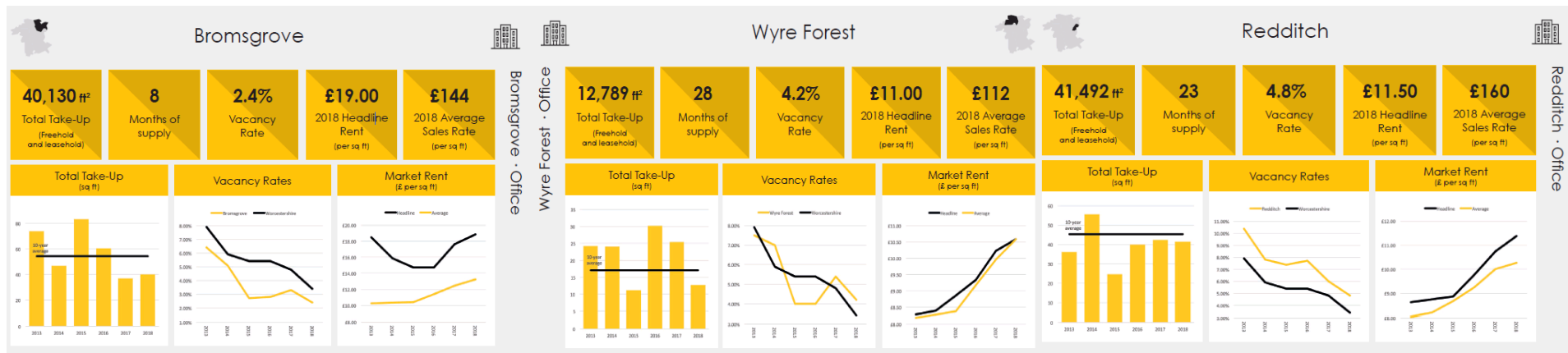
Land & premises

There is a severe shortage of top quality employment space in some parts of the geography, which is undoubtedly one of the biggest barriers to growth and future prosperity across North Worcestershire. This factor not only pushes up rents but also prevents investment and business relocation into the area.

With respects to *industrial premises*, the 2018/19 GJS Dillon Market Report notes high levels of demand for sub 10,000 sq/ft premises in Bromsgrove coinciding with a severe stock shortage. This is reflected in their low vacancy rate and high rents. As such newly developed land for the purpose of commercial use must be prioritised over residential use. The outlook in Redditch is more positive, with recent developments at Crescent Trade Park and Velocity42 and the forthcoming one at Redditch Eastern Gateway providing a wide choice for investors in size of property. Yet, Redditch's close proximity to other alternative spots means that ease of expansion for local businesses must be a priority. Wyre Forest houses the largest unused supply of industrial premises, largely linked to its historical past as a manufacturing hub. These brownfield sites offer exciting opportunities to investors with huge potential.



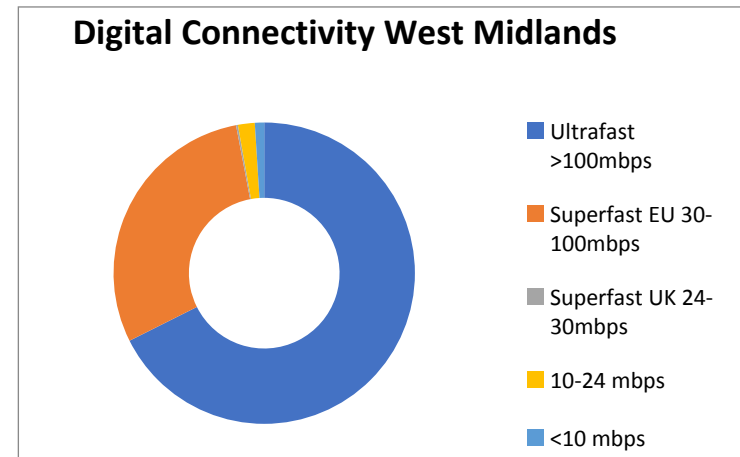
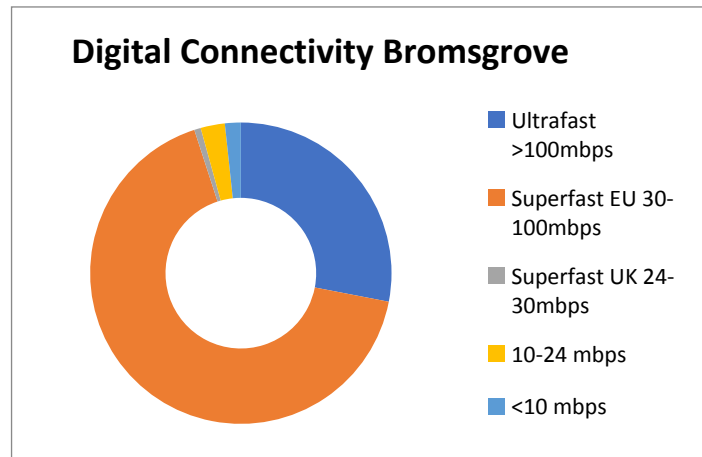
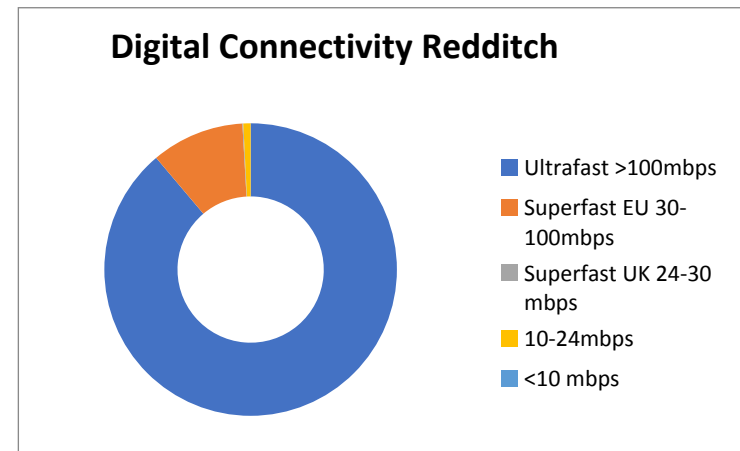
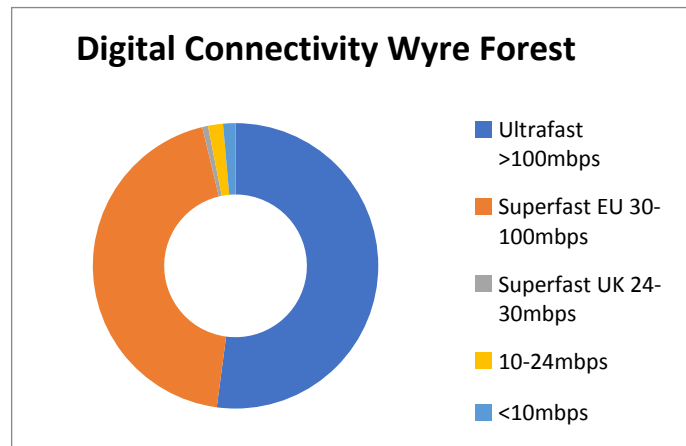
Office space faces a major challenge in Bromsgrove, with the lowest amount of supply across Worcestershire. This will increase rents (currently by far the highest across North Worcestershire) and capital values upwards and may prove a barrier to increasing local growth. In both Redditch and Wyre Forest the main challenges are due to a lack of Grade A stock. Wyre Forest represents the areas greatest opportunity to expand due to the vast manufacturing land which is dormant. In Redditch there is a need for large stock to meet current demand, meaning that small and mid-range stock has become more readily available.



TECHNOLOGY

The possibility of generating high levels of productivity and GDP growth, addressing key societal challenges and enabling *smart* living through technological advancements is of particular interest at this time. The expected roll out of 5G technology has the opportunity to transform the world as we know it, allowing high capacity, high reliability and low latency internet connections. This will lead to major economic advantages for the economy even creating new industries, products and services, touching every aspect of daily life.

Digital connectivity across the North Worcestershire is currently good, with over 95% of district households and businesses having access to superfast broadband. The coverage of ultrafast broadband (100mbps+) is especially good in Redditch, with Wyre Forest and Bromsgrove both failing below the English and West Midlands average in this category. Access to ultrafast broadband, as an enabling technology, is critical to business attraction, so improving the two districts' ultrafast broadband coverage must be an immediate priority.



CREATIVITY

The creative industries in North Worcestershire have achieved significant growth in the past few years with Bromsgrove recording the fastest growth in creative industries jobs (25%) in the Greater Birmingham and Solihull LEP area (Greater Birmingham Creative Economy Mapping 2017). Combining expert music industry knowledge and experience with conventional training and education, Kidderminster College-based MAS Records, an award winning innovative non-profit music development programme has expanded since its 2001 launch to 16 centres nationally.



Cultural heritage

North Worcestershire has heritage of national and international significance and this is reflected in the RSA Heritage Index that shows the area performing well compared to the national average score of 325 districts. Wyre Forest comes out ahead on most indicators, but most importantly the level of potential growth for all districts is high and the positive impact on the visitor economy significant.

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	Total score	Historic built environment	Museums, activities and artefacts	Industrial heritage	Parks and Open space	Landscape and natural heritage	Culture and memories	General/ Infrastructure
Bromsgrove	128	161	166	133	44	239	82	200
Malvern Hills	32	80	239	176	4	195	27	66
Redditch	85	198	157	18	19	189	246	254
Worcester	10	22	9	1	122	113	86	82
Wychavon	79	110	255	200	15	166	112	53
Wyre Forest	37	107	64	7	23	82	166	83

Source: RSA Heritage Index (www.thersa.org/heritage)

Note: The rankings are for 325 English Local authorities. Traffic lights: green (top third, 1-108); amber (middle third, 109-217); red (bottom third, 218-325)

GROWTH PRIORITIES

PLACES | BUSINESSES | PEOPLE

This strategy outlines the key growth priorities in North Worcestershire under three main categories: places, businesses and people. These are underpinned by the four pillars of growth – talent, infrastructure, technology, culture – as described above.

The analysis in previous sections shows that North Worcestershire has key strengths and competitive advantages to build on and realise its growth opportunities on the one hand, but is facing significant challenges and barriers in achieving its potential growth on the other hand. To strengthen its economic competitiveness and attraction to business investment, which would bring new employment and growth, the North Worcestershire economy needs to be supported by a range of targeted interventions that address these challenges and create the conditions for future growth.

The section below outlines the growth priorities and supporting interventions that, if materialised, have the potential to bring about significant economic, social and environmental benefits to North Worcestershire’s residents, businesses and local communities.

Cumulatively, these interventions have the opportunity to deliver over:

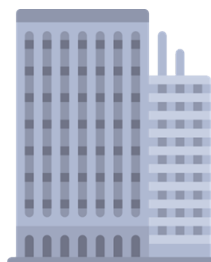
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1,000
homes



500
jobs



500,000sqft
floorspace



£500m
GDV

This is an ambitious growth programme with a transformational potential that requires a comprehensive and coordinated approach. North Worcestershire Economic Development and Regeneration (NWEDR) – the shared service between Bromsgrove DC, Redditch BC and Wyre Forest DC – will lead on the programme implementation under the leadership of the three councils and work with key partners, stakeholders, developers and investors to ensure its successful delivery.

PLACES

Town Centres | Land & Premises | Connectivity

The investments in places will focus on strengthening the vibrancy and viability of our town centres, infrastructure that unlocks land for residential and employment development, estate regeneration, bringing unused / underutilised buildings back into commercial use and connecting people with jobs.

Key priorities:

- Unlocking strategic employment land to facilitate business growth and attract investment to North Worcestershire
- Accelerating development through the use of Local Development Orders (LDOs), enterprise zones, development corporations and other delivery mechanisms
- Working with strategic partners to identify key ‘growth corridors’ to accelerate development of employment land, including a North Worcestershire infrastructure package to ensure capacity at key transport nodes such as motorway junctions and railway stations
- Delivering major town centre projects that will bring more residential, employment and leisure uses to counterbalance the significant retail decline and address the significant structural challenges faced by our town centres
- Improving coverage for ultrafast internet (>100mbps), especially in Bromsgrove and Wyre Forest
- Creating the conditions for 5G roll-out in Bromsgrove, Kidderminster and Redditch

To deliver against these priorities, a number of projects and interventions are currently planned or at various stages of delivery – these are captured in the table below.

PROJECT / INTERVENTION	OUTPUTS / OUTCOMES	KEY PARTNERS
Bromsgrove Market Hall site	Mixed used development Public realm improvements	Bromsgrove District Council Worcestershire County Council
Bromsgrove Dolphin Centre site	Residential / mixed used development	Bromsgrove District Council
Bromsgrove Town Centre Vision 2040	Visioning document setting out long term priorities for the town centre	Bromsgrove District Council Worcestershire County Council
Bromsgrove Local Centres Strategy 2020-2024	Strategy and implementation plans for key local centres in the Bromsgrove district	Bromsgrove District Council Worcestershire County Council
Redditch Town Deal	The Town Deal with the government to secure investment in the regeneration of Redditch New Town	Redditch Borough Council Worcestershire County Council Worcestershire LEP GBS LEP West Midlands Combined Authority

		WM5G Company
Redditch Railway Quarter	380 new homes 5,000 sqm of commercial space Public realm improvements	Redditch Borough Council West Midlands Railways Worcestershire County Council Homes England
Redditch Community Hub	10,000 sqm of new office space	Redditch Borough Council Worcestershire County Council NHS Trust CCG Department for Work and Pensions
Redditch Education & Enterprise Quarter	2,000-2,500 sqm of incubation / innovation space	Redditch Borough Council Worcestershire County Council Worcestershire LEP Betaden GBSLEP Heart of Worcestershire College WMCA
Redditch Matchborough & Winyates Regeneration	300-400 New homes 1,000 sqm of new commercial space Improved public realm	Redditch Borough Council Worcestershire County Council Homes England West Midlands Combined Authority RSA Academy
Kidderminster Town Centre Regeneration – Crown House and Lion Fields Parcel 4	Mixed use development – residential, workspace, food & beverage, leisure, public realm works	Wyre Forest District Council Worcestershire County Council
Kidderminster - former Magistrates Court regeneration	4,000 sqm of new incubator / innovation space (creative industries)	Wyre Forest District Council Kidderminster College MAS Records
Kidderminster Lion Fields Parcel 1	Leisure-led mixed use development (cinema, food & beverage), gym, other leisure	Wyre Forest District Council Worcestershire County Council
A38 improvements	Improvements in capacity at Junction 4 of the M5 Improvements in capacity at the M42/A38 roundabout Introduction of a right turn lane for southbound traffic waiting to turn into Barley Mow Lane	Bromsgrove District Council Worcestershire County Council GBSLEP Worcestershire LEP Highways England
Growth Corridors Study	Unlocking of employment land to enable business growth and job creation	Bromsgrove District Council GBSLEP and Worcestershire LEP

BUSINESSES

Retention | Expansion | Relocation

Key priorities

Our priorities will focus on retaining the existing business base, supporting local businesses to expand and encourage new business formation and relocation to the area by:

- Providing a comprehensive package of business support – including business grants and regulatory advice - to ensure business retention and expansion
- Developing incubator / innovation space to encourage investment and growth in new and emerging technologies
- Working with key partners to attract investment in the area
- Encouraging investment in knowledge intensive sectors
- Encouraging investment in the creative industries sector

The table below summaries the projects and interventions being implemented or planned to support the delivery against the above priorities.

PROJECT / INTERVENTION	OUTPUTS / OUTCOMES	KEY PARTNERS
Growth support	Number of businesses benefiting from Growth Hubs supports	GBSLEP Growth Hub Worcestershire Business Central
Booster grants	Number of businesses applying for grants Number of business grants issued	GBSLEP Growth Hub Worcestershire Business Central
Invest in North Worcestershire	Number of inward investment enquiries generated Number of inward investment enquiries responded to	Department for International Trade West Midlands Growth Company Worcestershire LEP (Invest in Worcestershire) GBSLEP
Business aftercare programme	Number of key accounts (businesses) developed and managed Number of businesses receiving support	Department for International Trade West Midlands Growth Company Worcestershire LEP Herefordshire and Worcestershire Chamber of Commerce
North Worcestershire Business Ambassadors	Number of ambassadors	NWedR North Worcestershire Businesses
North Worcestershire Business Awards	Number or entries	North Worcestershire Business Leaders NWedR

Redditch Business Centres	Occupancy level	NWedR
Develop a Creative Hub in Kidderminster (former Magistrates Court building)	Number of businesses incubated and supported / Number of jobs created	GBSLEP WLEP National Lottery Heritage Fund Arts Council MAS Records Kidderminster College
Develop a Digital Innovation Centre in Redditch	Number of businesses incubated and supported / Number of jobs created	GBSLEP WLEP WM5G Company West Midlands Growth Company
Develop a Business Incubator Centre in Bromsgrove	Number of businesses incubated and supported / Number of jobs created	GBSLEP WLEP
Explore the possibility of setting up Cultural Action Zones	Number of businesses supported in the creative industries sector	GBSLEP

PEOPLE

Skills | Apprenticeships | Careers |

A talented, skilled, knowledgeable and competent workforce is key to a successful economy. Despite North Worcestershire’s workforce achieving qualifications above the West Midlands average, more needs to be done to ensure that the workforce is equipped with the relevant skills and knowledge to capitalise on the new employment opportunities that existing and emerging technologies will bring about.

Key priorities:

- Reduce the mismatch between employers’ skills needs (demand) and skills provision by education and training providers (supply)
- Motivate and inspire people to develop skills for the high growth key sectors and emerging technologies
- Use partnership and collaboration to tackle skills shortages and gaps that are barriers to long terms business growth and productivity
- Promote the wide spectrum of careers available in North Worcestershire to inspire the careers choices our young people make

PROJECT / INTERVENTION	OUTPUTS / OUTCOMES	KEY PARTNERS
Apprenticeships	Number of businesses offering apprenticeships	Worcestershire Apprenticeships Heart of Worcestershire College Kidderminster College Re-Wyre North Worcestershire businesses
Opening Doors to Business	Number of pupils visiting businesses participating in the project	Continu Trust RE-Wyre OGL Computers Redditch Business Leaders Group (skills) Worcestershire Apprenticeships
Learn to Earn programme	Programme designed to connect pupils’ career aspirations with studying STEM subjects. 300 pupils in North Worcestershire expected to take part	GBS LEP Young Enterprise
High Skills Level Match	Paid and unpaid internships for graduates	Birmingham City University Newham University Re-Wyre
WMCA Mayor’s Mentors programme	Number of pupils / schools participating Number of mentors recruited	Redditch Borough Council WMCA Redditch Business Leaders Group (skills) Trinity High School Redditch St Augustine
Connecting Communities Programme	Skills programme the focuses on Batchley / Brockhill Ward in Redditch	WMCA Heart of Worcestershire College

Adult Information and Guidance	IAG, career review, skills health check, bespoke and tailored workshops, retraining, up-skilling	National Careers Service WMCA Heart of Worcestershire College
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FUNDING INSTRUMENTS

The delivery of the above projects and interventions will require significant external funding contributions. There are several funding instruments currently available:

- Future High Streets Fund
- Towns Fund (Towns Deal)
- Greater Birmingham and Solihull (GBS) LEP and Worcestershire LEP Local Growth Fund
- GBSLEP SEP Enabling Fund
- National Lottery Heritage Fund - Heritage Enterprise
- UK Shared Prosperity Fund (total budget, allocation method, eligibility and administrative arrangements to be confirmed; envisaged to be operational from 2021)

MEASURES OF SUCCESS

We will measure the success of our strategy and its supporting projects and interventions by the performance of the following indicators:

- Number of VAT / PAYE registered businesses within the District
- Number / type/ size of businesses within District
- Affordability of houses v income
- Wage levels for people who live and work in the district
- Number of people who live and work in the district (also expressed as a % of the working age population)
- Number of vacancies on existing employment sites and length of vacancy/turn around. This will show demand and if broken down into location/size it will give extra info on company demand profile in the local area to measure regional and national assumptions against
- Number of enquiries received by the Council and the NWEDR team from prospective inward investors
- Number of existing businesses supported to grow and develop
- Number of new business start-ups
- Skills attainment rates
- Town centre measures such as progression of key development sites / footfall
 - o Number of car parking spaces sold (as this would show the total number of people coming to the area)
 - o Average time bought in car parks (as this would show town centre dwell times or at least give an indication of how long people intend to stay for)
 - o % occupancy of market spaces (would show how attractive the town centre offer is to traders)
 - o Progression of key development sites
- Footfall
- Number of self-employed within District (as a % of businesses)
- Number of employment related applications

KEY STAKEHOLDERS

Partners | Funders | Supporters

Our ability to deliver this ambitious growth programme is heavily dependent on the collaboration with and support of our key partners, funders and supporters, as illustrated below. We are grateful for all their support provided so far and will continue to foster deeper and closer working relationships with them to deliver the interventions needed to enable our places, businesses and people to develop, grow and prosper.



Market Hall Site Meanwhile Uses

Relevant Portfolio Holder	Cllr Karen May, Leader of the Council and Portfolio Holder for Economic Development, the Town Centre and Strategic Partnerships
Portfolio Holder Consulted	Yes
Relevant Head of Service	Kevin Dicks, Chief Executive
Ward(s) Affected	Sanders Park
Ward Councillor(s) Consulted	Yes
Key Decision / Non-Key Decision	
This report contains exempt information as defined in Paragraph(s) of Part I of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972, as amended	

1. SUMMARY OF PROPOSALS

1.1 This report outlines the proposals for meanwhile uses on the former Market Hall site.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

2.1 The Cabinet is recommended to:

2.1.1 Note the report and consider the three options appraised for the temporary use of the former Market Hall site

2.1.2 Approve Option 1 as the preferred option to be implemented

2.1.3 Delegate authority to the Chief Executive after consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Economic Development, the Town Centre and Strategic Partnerships to implement Option 1

3. KEY ISSUES

Background

3.1 The Former Market Hall / Hanover Street Car Park site has been a long standing identified regeneration opportunity for Bromsgrove Town Centre. The first phase of the development site has been a success with the delivery of a new Waitrose store to the town. However, the second phase of the site has proved more challenging to deliver. The developer appointed to deliver a development on the entire site (Hinton Group) was unable to provide a commercially viable scheme for the second phase based on the agreement they had in place with Bromsgrove District Council. As a result, the development agreement with the developer was not renewed / extended and the site reverted back to Bromsgrove District Council control.

3.2 Hoardings have remained around the site for a number of years, creating an unsightly view in the heart on the town centre. To prevent this key gateway site in the town centre from continuing to be an unattractive and untidy vista to locals and visitors, work has been underway to assess options for *meanwhile uses* for the site whilst work to consider the more permanent development options to be delivered at the site is undertaken.

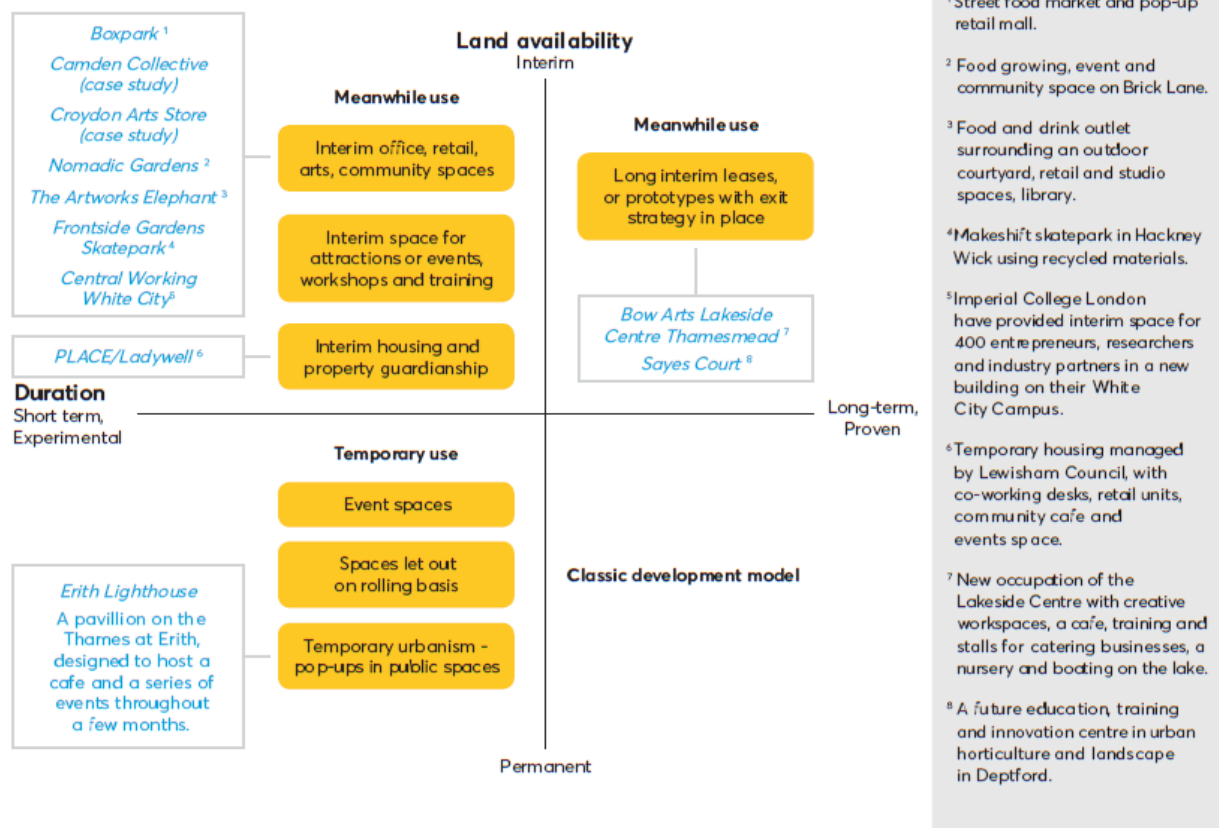
3.3 In parallel, a tender has been advertised for a multi-disciplinary team to assess options for a permanent use of the site and the former Dolphin Centre site. It is envisaged that

the professional team will be appointed in January 2020 and complete the work (designs, viability appraisal and soft market testing for the preferred options) by September 2020. However, it is worth noting that any physical redevelopment of the site will not happen for at least 18 months, so it is important that action is taken at the site in the meantime, in order to overcome the current issues identified above.

Meanwhile uses

- 3.4 *“When it works, it creates pride, a sense of achievement, a can-do approach, and a more vibrant, interesting place for the people that live and work there, now and long into the future. That’s the real power of Meanwhile use”¹*
- 3.5 Meanwhile uses refer to the interim occupation of vacant premises and land, during periods of redevelopment, until the landlord secures a tenancy agreement or lease. The Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) describes it as a process of “intelligent use of unproductive buildings and underused land.”
- 3.6 Figure 1 below illustrates the variety of meanwhile uses in terms of scope and length based on a case study of 51 sites in London.²

Figure 1: What do we mean by meanwhile use?



¹ Meanwhile Space (2019), *Meanwhile Space: Ten Years in Practice*

² Bosetti, N. and Colthorpe, T (2018), *Meanwhile, in London: making use of London’s empty spaces*, Centre for London, 11

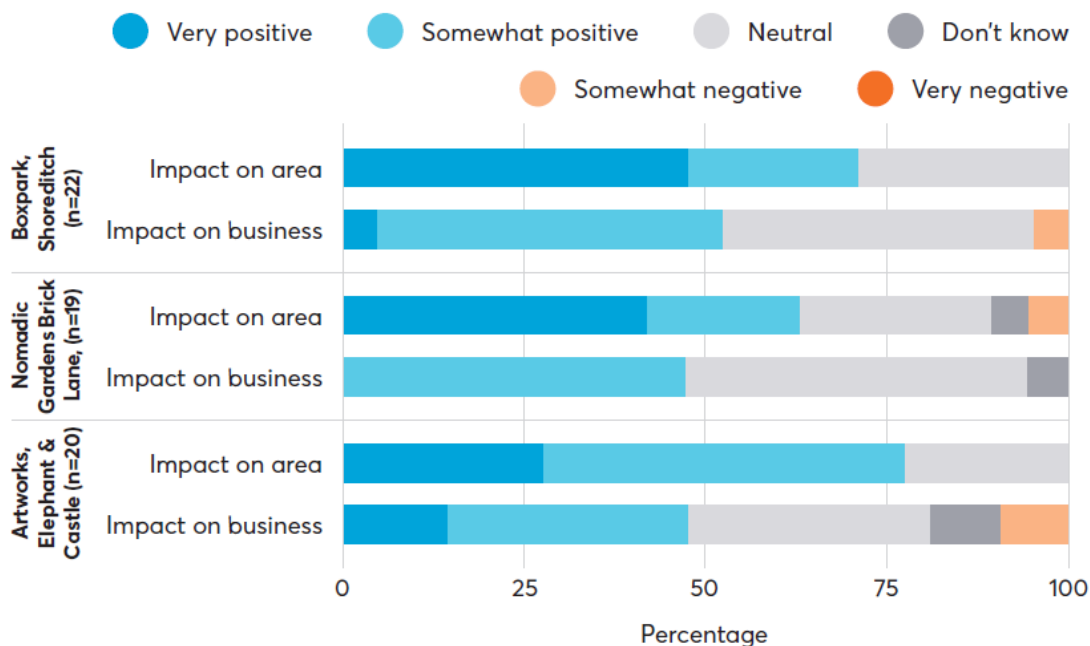
The value and impact of meanwhile spaces

3.7 The Centre for London Report³ identifies that meanwhile uses offer value in three ways:

- Efficiency – although they are time limited, the meanwhile activities deliver a more efficient use of urban land.
- Affordability – meanwhile uses increase the supply of affordable space, which can be used by local traders and businesses to pilot, experiment and try new ideas at low cost and risk. Also, they provide space for non-market uses such as arts, education and training.
- Flexibility – they offer a platform for temporary projects to raise interest or for artists to showcase their work or ideas

3.8 Figure 2 summarises the results of a survey that measured the impact of meanwhile uses on places and businesses.⁴ The survey results show that c. 70% of respondents saw positive or very positive impacts on the area and c.50% saw positive or very positive impacts on their business.

Figure 2: Survey of 60 shop owners and shopkeepers working near large London meanwhile projects



Survey questions: 'Overall, how would you rate the impact of [this scheme] on the area?' and 'Overall, how would you rate the impact of [this scheme] on your business?'

#BirdBox

3.9 The meanwhile use of the former Market Hall site in Bromsgrove town centre is proposed to be a high profile project creating a gateway to Worcester Road, an area of the town centre that has attracted a variety of entrepreneurial independent businesses and an area that has the lowest vacancy rate of the town centre. It could foster a culture

³ Bosetti, N. and Colthorpe, T (2018), *Meanwhile, in London: making use of London's empty spaces*, Centre for London, 14-15

⁴ Ibid., 16

of social engagement and innovation; an opportunity to unlock a space to become an integral part of the changing landscape of the town centre.

- 3.10 The proposed name of the meanwhile use concept is *Bird Box*. The reason for this name is multi-faceted but the origins reflect some of the key architectural features that exist on many of the buildings in the surrounding area (please see below)



Giinger, Hair Salon, Worcester Road

- 3.11 The *Bird Box* is located in the conservation area and is steeped in rich history and heritage and architectural significance. Recent Townscape Heritage Initiative (THI) investment has seen many of the properties close to the space undergo high quality shop frontage improvements bringing a new lease of life to Worcester Road. The name of the space provides a further connection to this part of the town.
- 3.12 The ethos of *Bird Box* is to promote a meanwhile space that attracts ideas, initiatives and activities that can nest, grow and migrate. A space where creative ideas can be discussed, developed and grown, innovative space where entrepreneurs can come and go, establish collaborative proposals and contribute to the wider cultural offer in Bromsgrove town centre.
- 3.13 By adopting a tailored and bespoke approach to the space it could encourage and attract community and social spaces, food and beverage markets, creative workshops, hi-tech incubators and niche retail start-ups. If the concept is proved, it could act as a pilot / pathfinder and be a key driver and attractor for the creative industries and digital and technology sectors offering bespoke and high quality workspace on a more permanent basis.

Financial Implications

- 3.14 Three options have been appraised for a temporary use of the former Market Hall site:
- Option 1 – Bird Box high quality
 - Option 2 – Bird Box standard quality
 - Option 3 – temporary car park

3.14.1 Option 1- Bird Box high quality

Appendix 1 illustrates the concept designs for this option.

The capital cost to deliver this option is £276,664. The cost was prepared by external cost consultants. However, the council’s contractor has prepared a cost report for the same specification and achieved a reduced cost of £210,180.

Pros	Cons
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unlocks the potential of the former market hall site • A high quality, innovative use of a prime but derelict site in Bromsgrove town centre • Could act as catalyst for further pop up and meanwhile uses in void retail properties in the High Street • Sends a strong statement of intent in terms of quality place making (perception) • More likely to attract quality users • Brings Bromsgrove town centre into line with neighbouring areas offering a pop-up meanwhile use; Digbeth, Worcester 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Exceeds the existing budget • The more intensive uses of the site may require a planning application to be submitted

3.14.2 Option 2 – Bird Box standard quality

Appendix 2 illustrates concept designs for this option.

The cost of Option 2 is £101,155.

This is a medium value scheme, retaining some ideas from the first option, at a reduced cost. This has been achieved by removing the perimeter planting and design work to the flooring and hoardings.

The site has been designed to maximise the current surfacing where possible and remove the softer elements like artificial grass flooring. The number of seating options has been reduced. A timber trip rail runs the perimeter of the site.

Pros	Cons
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unlocks the potential of the former market hall site • The revised proposals are more aligned to the available budget • The site would still be able to be utilised by interested parties 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lower quality site • A lower quality setting may be less attractive to higher end operators / events / activity • Does not unlock the full potential of the site

3.14.3 Option 3 – temporary car park

The cost of Option 3 is £33,750.

This option is to gravel the site and provide temporary and informal car parking. This proposal has not been designed but a cost has been established from the Council’s civil contractors which would see the site levelled and then gravel put in place.

The cost for this option would include a small trip rail fence to be installed but the cost does not include any lining of spaces, which would be difficult to achieve on a gravel surface, and so it would be an informal arrangement with cars parking as they see fit. The cost for this option does not include the installation of a parking meter, which would be an additional cost.

Pros	Cons
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Offer additional car parking spaces in the town centre • Potential revenue generation for the District Council • Lowest cost option 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does not unlock the potential of the site • Will not act as a town centre attraction / catalyst • No opportunity to introduce pop-ups / events / creative uses in the town centre • Loss of opportunity to stimulate creative collaborations / activities in the town centre

3.15 Option 1 – Bird Box high quality – is recommended as the preferred option for implementation. This would require an one-off allocation of £110,180 in the capital programme, as there is already £100,000 retained deposit from the development agreement that expired in February 2019.

3.16 There is the possibility to generate income from letting the space on the site to traders, pop-up shops and other users. Further work needs to be done to establish the appropriate rent levels, however, it is not anticipated that they will generate a significant rate of return relative to the capital investment in the site.

Legal Implications

3.17 There are no legal implications.

Service / Operational Implications

3.18 The council’s framework contractors have confirmed that completion of works can be achieved before Easter 2020, subject to Cabinet approval.

3.19 The council will need to put in place site management / security arrangements. This may have further staff and cost implications.

3.20 If either of the two Bird Box options is approved, then a programme of events will be delivered on the site.

- 3.21 Appendix 3 outlines a high level programme of events that could be delivered on the site. North Worcestershire Economic Development and Regeneration (NWEDR) and the council's events team will agree a coordinated approach to avoid duplication and confusion.

Customer / Equalities and Diversity Implications

- 3.22 The proposals are aligned with the council's equality and diversity policies.

4. RISK MANAGEMENT

- 4.1 The risks associated with the delivery of the physical works will be managed by the council's framework contractor in accordance with the approved processes and procedures.
- 4.2 The risks associated with the delivery of the events and activities will be identified, assessed and managed through the event management plan that will be prepared by NWEDR and the council's events team.

5. APPENDICES

- Appendix 1 - Bird Box High Quality
- Appendix 2 - Bird Box Standard Quality
- Appendix 3 – High level event programme

6. BACKGROUND PAPERS

7. KEY

AUTHOR OF REPORT

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Tel.: 01562 732192

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BIRD BOX

APPENDIX 1

VISION BOARD 1

THE CONTEXT

THE SITE

One Creative Environments Ltd was commissioned in February 2019 by NWEDR to provide design ideas for a meanwhile use space on the former Market Hall Site.

The site is in a strategic location forming both a key southern gateway into the Town Centre and marking the transition between the High Street and Worcester Road – an area of Bromsgrove which is fast gaining a reputation for innovative, local and independent businesses by young entrepreneurs. This provides the opportunity to reflect these business trends for the temporary use site.



CONSTRAINTS

The site is predominantly flat, empty and hard surfaced – comprising a mix of concrete and block paving with remnants of the former Market Hall site floor footprint and a few remnant brick planters to the northern edge. The southern section of the site has a number of health and safety hazards including uneven ground, level changes, collapsed walls, close proximity to Spadesbourne Brook. It is also overlooked by residents from Sampson Court.

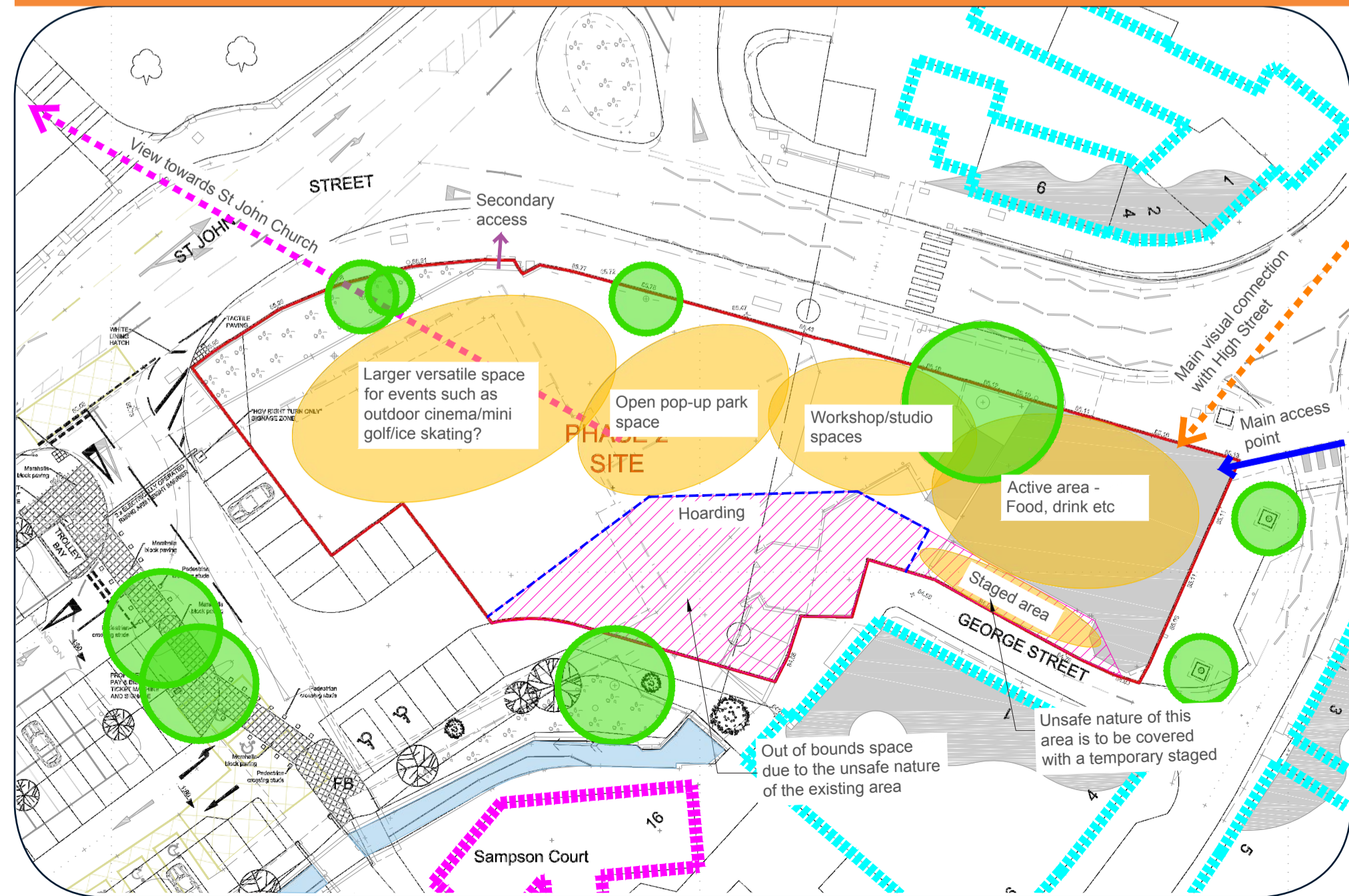
We have looked to turn these constraints into opportunities – proposing a staged area built over part of the uneven ground and hoarding to secure the rest. This provides a blank canvas for graffiti art to personalise the space and discreetly reduces the size of the site's use to a manageable space.

OPPORTUNITIES

This pivotal location needs to serve a number of key purposes:

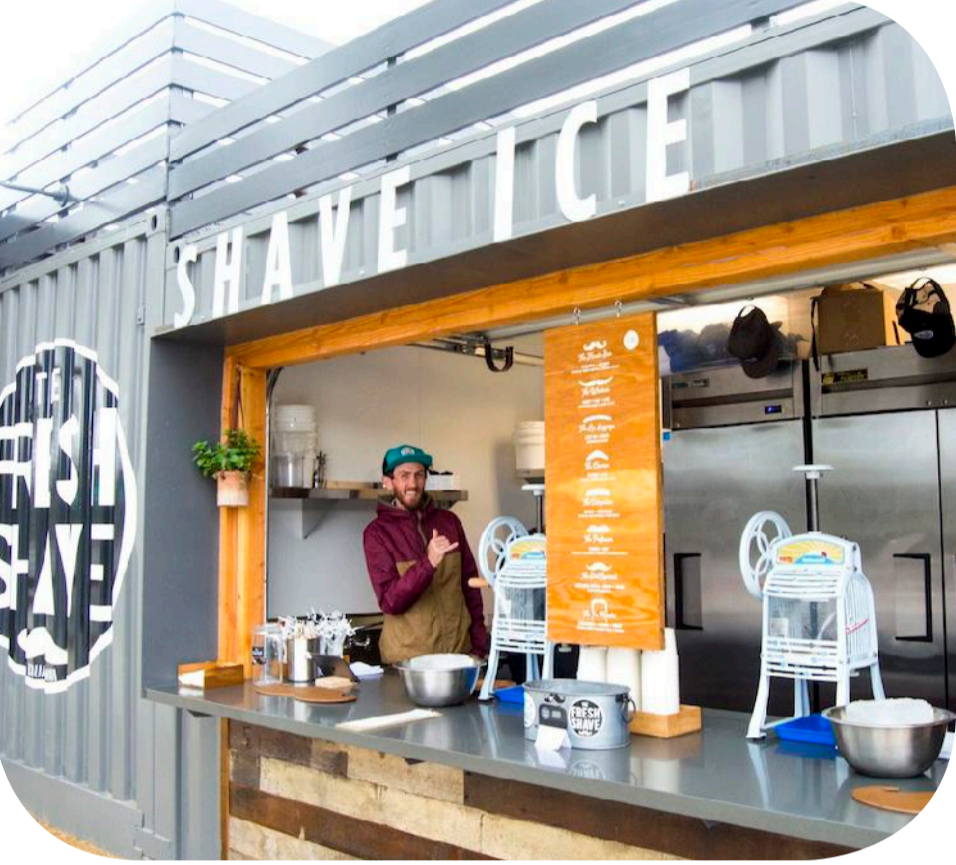
- Be a destination at the end of the High Street
- Be vibrant and welcoming
- Be a draw to local businesses
- Be a real catalyst to entrepreneurial 'start ups'
- Be the place to go - a staging post for festivals
- Attract outside visitors
- Be permeable and accessible
- Be secure
- Have a very different, edgy character to the High St
- A versatile space for a range of seasonal outdoor uses

CONSTRAINTS & OPPORTUNITIES



SITE CONSTRAINTS AND OPPORTUNITIES

ON-THE-GO FOOD & DRINK



FOOD & DRINK



SEMI-ENCLOSED VENUES

SIT-DOWN CASUAL DINING



TERRACED DINING VENUE



COMMERCIAL SPACE BUSINESSES ADVICE CENTRE



ART STUDIOS



BARBERS SHOP



SHELTERED EVENT SPACES

ASTROTURF OPEN SPACE



POP-UP PARK SPACE



OUTDOOR CINEMA SCREEN

EXERCISE CLASSES



MINI GOLF



THE VISION

To create an exciting, inviting and unique temporary space for the community to celebrate and promote their businesses and skills in the form of 'pop-up shops'.

To foster an atmosphere of encouragement and creativity, supporting budding entrepreneurs who want to test their 'start-up' ideas in an inclusive environment where they have the opportunity to meet and share ideas with established independent companies.

To celebrate local entrepreneurship and establish a reputation in the Midlands that attracts both locals and visitors to experience all that Bromsgrove has to offer and to generate a revenue stream.

The space is to be versatile and multi-use, catering for a range of activities: Food, drink, bars, cafes; A pop-up park with plants and trees to create a sense of well-being; Workshop / studio spaces for barbers, artists, walk-in-business advice; A stage for demonstrations. The space will also cater larger events such as an outdoor cinema, mini golf, street parties.

FOOD DEMONSTRATIONS



ICE SKATING RINK



BIRD BOX

DESIGN PRINCIPLES

DESIGN PRINCIPLES

Gateways at key destination points to ensure a permeable site:

1. Two main gateways - one is focussed in the north east corner forming a strong visual connection with the high street to capture and also directly off Worcester Road. The second is to the south west corner - capturing shoppers and visitors from the public car park by Waitrose and the western area of Bromsgrove. All are framed by canopy lighting.
2. Secondary entrances - one utilises the existing steps at the corner of Market St with St Johns Street along with a further entrance located at the pedestrian crossing on St Johns Street.

Defined zones to provide a series of destination spaces:

3. Food and drink pop-ups
4. Stage for demonstrations, music events, choirs, buskers etc
5. Workshop / Studio pop-up spaces
6. Pop-up park with deckchairs, containerised trees and astroturf
7. Large versatile space for pop-up outdoor events - such as cinema nights; golf; ice-skating with the opportunity for a temporary covered shelter if required and a secure storage area.

Boundaries to provide structure and containment:

3. Bamboo in linear planters - Golden stemmed bamboo (*Phyllostachys aureosulcata 'spectabilis'*) provides a semi-permeable screen with partial views through the canes into the space and visual containment by the crown. They are robust, highly attractive and provide a beautiful sound when the wind rustles through the leaves.
3. Semi-mature containerised trees - to provide structure, much needed greening of the site and to define the pop-up park area.



MASTERPLAN DESIGN OPTION

BRANDING

'BIRD BOX'

When creating a new destination it is important to brand the area so that it has a clear identity that people can relate to. Interestingly, many of the surrounding shop frontages have bird boxes designed into their façades. This is quite unique and present on many shop frontages around the site. This, together with the use, inspired the name for the site.

'BIRD BOX' - a space for fledgling start-ups - a place where you can pilot your ideas to see if your business will take off!



ART FEATURES

RIBBON CANOPY



HOARDING ARTWORK



COLOURED PAVERS



SEATING

OIL DRUM BENCH



DECK CHAIRS



CONCRETE CUBES



PLANTING

BAMBOO SCREEN



PLANTED OIL DRUM



CONTAINED TREES



LIGHTING

CANOPY LIGHTS



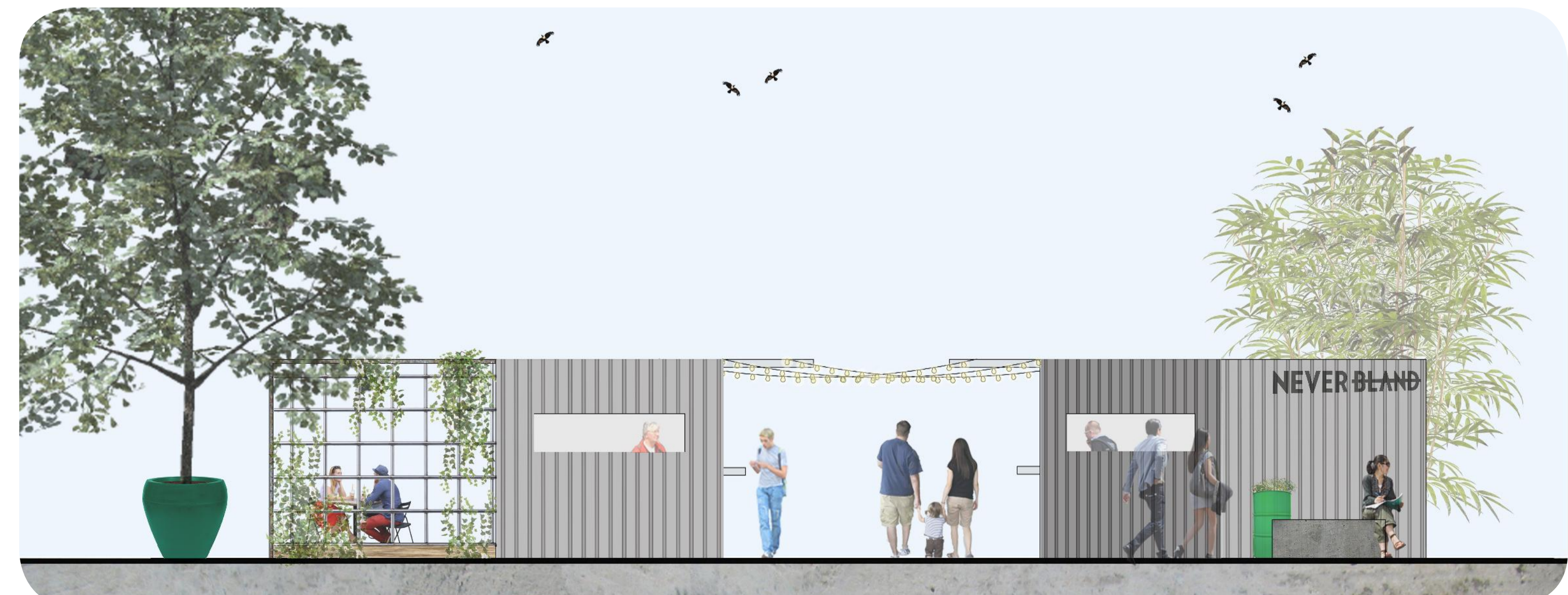
STRIP LIGHTING



SPOT LIGHTING



ELEVATION A - MAIN ENTRANCE FROM HIGH STREET



ELEVATION B - ENTRANCE OFF WORCESTER ROAD

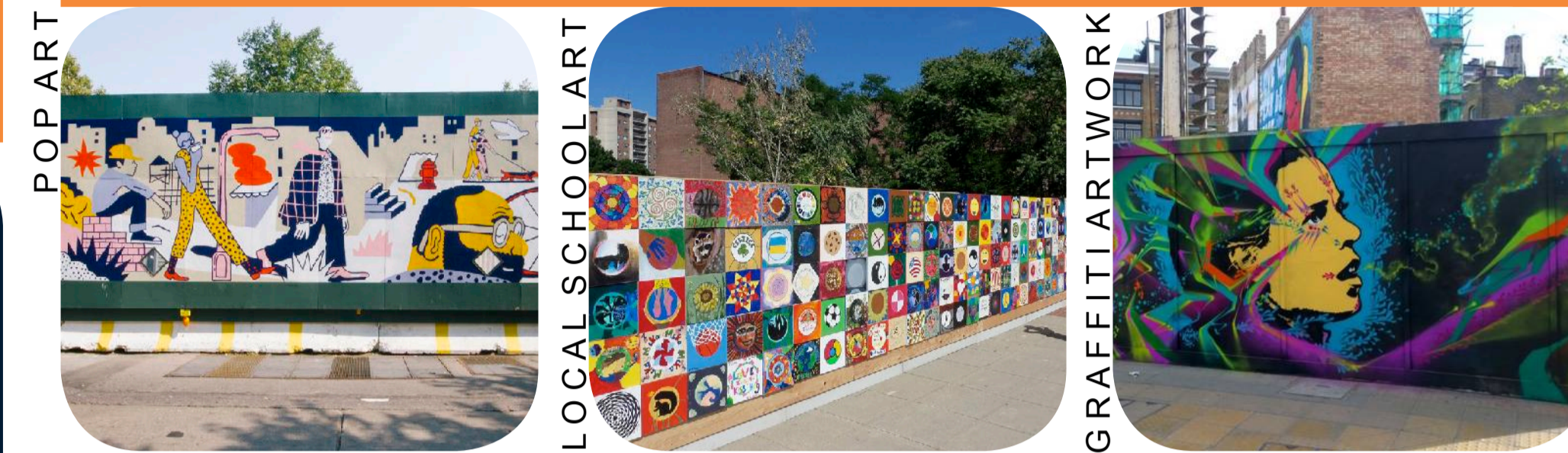
BIRD BOX

MASTERPLAN

- MASTERPLAN**
- 1 Main gateway access
 - 2 Secondary entrances
 - 3 Food & drink pop-ups
 - 4 Stage for demonstrations

- 5 Workshop/studio spaces
- 6 Pop-up park open space
- 7 Large versatile event space
- 8 Bamboo planters to boundary
- 9 Semi-mature containerised trees

BOUNDARY ARTWORK



NEXT STEPS

NEXT STEPS

We foresee this to be very much a community space with the opportunity for local companies to provide some equipment/materials as a mean of local support and good publicity / product placement.

We suggest that these concept ideas are initially discussed at an informal public consultation event to identify which local companies would be keen to contribute to the space. Informal discussions with some independent companies have identified strong support for this and include plant nurseries, cafes and bars, artists etc. This would then enable you to identify which elements could be 'contributed' and which elements would be a capital cost.

An indicative list of costs for delivering the project to site includes:

- Design Fees including Principal Designer (CDMC)
- Hoarding
- Provision and installation of gateway features/secure boundary treatment
- Hire + installation of containers
- Securing a safe ground surface
- Provision + installation of surface finishes i.e. astroturf
- Lighting + installation
- Stage construction
- Hire of a large temporary shelter (unless NWEDR/WFDC have one that can be used)
- Hire or purchase of seating (deckchairs /concrete plinth)

Potential items/works contributed by the community:

- Graffiti walls /Art works to floor by local artists or students
- Large semi-mature containerised trees and bamboo
- Storage sheds

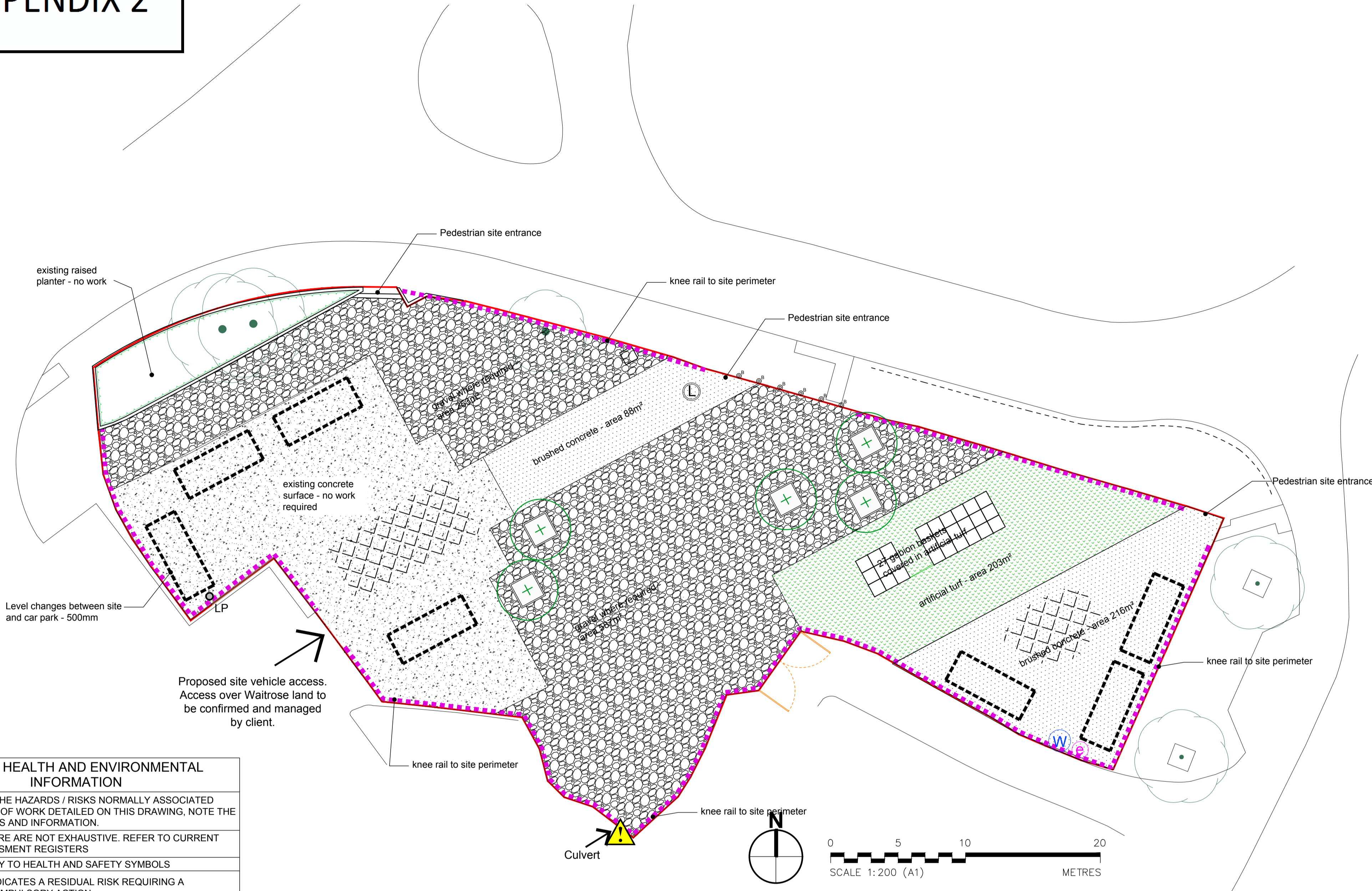


LOCAL SUPPLIERS



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APPENDIX 2



KEY

Site Boundary

Soft Landscape

- Retain existing trees
- Proposed feature trees in moveable planters (Total number: 5)

Hard Landscape

- Concrete surface retained (Refer to drawing BBX-ONE-ZZ-XX-DR-L-0010 Paving and Edging Plan. Total area: 323m²)
- Proposed concrete with brushed finish
- Proposed artificial turf with flush timber edging where required
- remove 100mm depth of unsuitable existing surface and replace with gravel.

Boundary Treatment

- Timber knee high fence to surround
- Existing bollards retained

Furniture/ Accessories

- Proposed Turf Seating Cubes (Varying heights of gabion basket covered in artificial turf as seating. Refer to drawing BBX-ONE-ZZ-XX-DR-L-0022 Typical Details.)
- Secure/ lockable electric point with 2no. sockets (Total number: 2)
- Proposed lockable bib tap (Total number: 1)
- Existing Lamp Post to be retained (Refer to BBX-ONE-ZZ-XX-DR-L-0005 Lighting Strategy)
- Temporary paving graphics (Feather design - scope tbc)
- Potential location for temporary containers

NOTES:

- Remove 100mm depth of unsuitable existing surface
- where necessary provide a double kerb restraint where there is a difference in level to the public footpath.

Page 117

SAFETY HEALTH AND ENVIRONMENTAL INFORMATION	
IN ADDITION TO THE HAZARDS / RISKS NORMALLY ASSOCIATED WITH THE TYPES OF WORK DETAILED ON THIS DRAWING, NOTE THE FOLLOWING RISKS AND INFORMATION.	
RISKS LISTED HERE ARE NOT EXHAUSTIVE. REFER TO CURRENT CDM RISK ASSESSMENT REGISTERS	
KEY TO HEALTH AND SAFETY SYMBOLS	
	INDICATES A RESIDUAL RISK REQUIRING A COMPULSORY ACTION
	INDICATES A RESIDUAL RISK FOR INFORMATION
	INDICATES A RESIDUAL RISK REQUIRING A PROHIBITIVE ACTION
	INDICATES A RESIDUAL RISK AS A WARNING

SAFETY, HEALTH AND ENVIRONMENT INFORMATION	
NOTES BELOW ARE ADDITIONAL TO HAZARDS/RISKS NORMALLY ASSOCIATED WITH THIS TYPE OF WORK	
CONSTRUCTION	
#1 - UNDERGROUND SERVICES - INVESTIGATION TO CONFIRM POSITION AS SURVEY DRAWING AND UTILITY COMPANY INFORMATION. IDENTIFY POSSIBILITY OF UNKNOWN LIVE SERVICES.	
#2 - ASBESTOS - HISTORICAL USE OF SITE UNKNOWN. CONTRACTOR TO ENSURE SITE IS ASSESSED FOR RISK OF ASBESTOS BOTH UNDERGROUND AND IN FLOORING MATERIALS PRIOR TO ANY EXCAVATION WORKS BEING UNDERTAKEN.	
#3 - EXISTING VEGETATION - CONTRACTOR TO ENSURE ALL EXISTING VEGETATION TO BE RETAINED IS PROTECTED IN ACCORDANCE WITH BS.5837:2012 PRIOR TO WORKS BEING UNDERTAKEN.	
#4 - WORKS ADJACENT TO PUBLIC - CONTRACTOR TO LIAISE WITH NEIGHBOURING SUPERMARKET TO ENSURE SAFE WORKING AREA DURING SUPERMARKET CAR PARK OPERATIONAL HOURS	
#5 - CULVERT - LOCATION OF EXISTING CULVERT BELOW SITE UNKNOWN. CONTRACTOR TO LOCATE EXISTING CULVERT AND TO BE CLEARLY IDENTIFIED ON SITE PRIOR TO CONSTRUCTION WORKS COMMENCING. CONTRACTOR TO TAKE CARE WHEN WORKING IN CLOSE PROXIMITY OF THE CULVERT TO MINIMISE LOADINGS.	
FOR INFORMATION RELATING TO USE, CLEANING AND MAINTENANCE SEE THE HEALTH AND SAFETY FILE, AND CDM RISK REGISTER	
IT IS ASSUMED THAT ALL WORKS WILL BE CARRIED OUT BY A COMPETENT CONTRACTOR WORKING, WHERE APPROPRIATE, TO AN APPROVED METHOD STATEMENT	



REV	DESCRIPTION	DATE	BY
	DESIGNER ONE Creative Environments Ltd. London Office 43-45 Portman Square Heath House London W1H 6HN Tel: 0203 870 1645 Email: reception@onehd.com		
	Midlands Office 5 The Triangle Wilwood Drive Worcester WR5 2DX Tel: 01905 362 300 Email: reception@onehd.com		

CLIENT

Bromsgrove District Council
www.bromsgrove.gov.uk

North Worcestershire edR

PROJECT NUMBER
P0829

PROJECT TITLE
Bird Box, Bromsgrove

DRAWN BY: RS	POSITION: LA	DATE: 24/06/2019
------------------------	------------------------	----------------------------

UNCHECKED - NOT FOR ISSUE
NOT APPROVED - DO NOT USE

DRAWING TITLE
Landscape Masterplan
Medium cost option

DRAWING STATUS
S2 - Issued for information

SCALE 1:200 **DRAWING SIZE** A1

DRAWING NUMBER BBX-ONE-ZZ-XX-SK-L-0001 **REVISION** (P01)

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Agenda Item 10

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APPENDIX 3

Bird Box – proposed calendar of events 2020/21

Groups

Bromsgrove District Council Events Team	Bromsgrove Festival Committee
Bromsgrove Carnival Committee	Friends of St. John's
Beatfreeks	Kris Hubal (Festival of Light)
Bromsgrove Indie Club	Bromsgrove Arts Alive
NwedR Centres Management Function and Budget	Royal British Legion (Remembrance Parade)

Bank Holidays
10 April – Good Friday
13 April – Easter Monday
08 May – May Day
25 May – Bank Holiday
31 August – Bank Holiday

April	Activity
Launch Bird Box - Easter events	Workshops for children and families
May	Activity
Friday 08 May 2020 – Sunday 10 May 2020	75 th Anniversary VE Day – three-day international celebration
Monday 25 May BH	Weekend of VE Day Themed Events
Royal British Legion	Begun to organise a day long programme of events in town centre
Love Your Local Market	Pop up markets to showcase local small businesses, makers includes live performances and music
Film Festival	Screenings of feature films, shorts, media art installations and walking tours, music and performances
June	Activity
Summer themed activity	Makers Market
	Buskers Box Music Programme
	Bromsgrove Court Leet add-on
July	Activity
Food Festival	Event to include live cooking demonstrations; cooking workshops; music; food vendors; include road closure to New Road to use whole of High Street and Worcester Road. Potential to be a weekend long event to incorporate the site, New Road and Worcester Road
Urban Skate Event	Skateboard and BMX event; pop up vendors; installation of ramps; music & food Skateboarding to appear in the Olympic games for the first time in 2020
Outdoor Cinema	Programmed cinematic experiences; interactive; digital media and arts
Pop up gaming	Everything gaming; partnership with the gaming community and digital media companies; virtual reality
Bromsgrove Festival	Incorporate existing events and additional activity

August	Activity
Alternative cabaret	Performers from the world of burlesque and alternative cabaret
Spoken Word festival	Week long programme of spoken word
September	Activity
End of School Holidays	Programme of end of school holidays events and activities
October	Activity
Day of the Dead Festival	In partnership with the Bromsgrove Indie Club
Halloween	Pumpkin carving workshops; spooky evening walks; pop up food vendors and music
Light Event Example Leeds Lights	Friday to Sunday light themed event; incorporates the Recreation Ground, Sanders Park, town centre; light installations; artists; interactive performances and events
November	Activity
Bromsgrove Christmas Light Switch On	Relocation of stage onto Bird Box and pop up vendors in association with Indie Club
December	Activity
Christmas Makers Market – 3 days	Local makers; artists; creative's; music; food; live performances
Year-round programme	Classes; arts; dance; performance; digital; film making
	Art exhibitions; pop up gallery
	Cooking classes
	Workspace for new businesses; showcasing artists; free introductory space

Creative Residencies

There is an opportunity to offer space for creative and arts residencies. The added benefit of this is we would attract artists and creative students from across the UK to work and share ideas in Bromsgrove. Further strengthen the identity of the Bird Box as an area for incubation and start-ups.

Identified by businesses

- Area for bins; businesses prepared to pay for space due to lack of space on Worcester Road for bins
- Toilets; the toilet provision for the Worcester Road event were very popular and feedback from the visitors was that toilet provision was welcomed; maybe a shipping container that are toilets etc.

April	Activity
Launch of Easter events	Workshops for children and families

Members ICT Policy Cabinet Committee

15th January 2020

Member ICT Policy

Relevant Portfolio Holder	Cllr Geoff Denaro
Portfolio Holder Consulted	Yes
Relevant Head of Service	Deb Poole – Head of Transformation & OD
Ward(s) Affected	N/A
Ward Councillor(s) Consulted	N/A
Key Decision / Non-Key Decision	

1. SUMMARY OF PROPOSALS

- 1.1 Members are asked to consider a change to the Member ICT Policy that covers their ability to access electronic information. The proposed policy offers three options for the type of equipment available to provide this access, each has its own financial implications.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

The Cabinet is asked to RECOMMEND

- 2.1 That the proposed Member ICT Policy be agreed and implemented for all Members and that the options within it are made available to Members.
- 2.2 That Members choose the appropriate individual option for themselves from the policy, as currently provided kit becomes obsolete.

3. KEY ISSUES

Options and Financial Implications

- 3.1 Option One - has no additional financial implications as it is the same as currently provided.
- 3.2 Option Two – has additional financial implications as new equipment will be required. A capital bid for this additional funding would be put forward separately.
- 3.3 Option Three - has no additional financial implications as licenses for Members are already available. There would also be some potential savings if Councillors decided to use their own equipment, as the Council would not incur any costs to provide hardware.

Legal Implications

- 3.4 None.

Members ICT Policy Cabinet Committee

15th January 2020

Service / Operational Implications

- 3.5 The current Member ICT Policy restricts Members to using a Council provided iPad to access electronic information. Whilst this is sufficient for many Members, some have found it restrictive, particularly if they require access to the additional functionality provided by other equipment.
- 3.6 The policy outlines three options for Members to select from, depending on their individual ICT equipment needs. These options are:-

Option One

The Authority will provide an Apple iPad that is technically secure, to enable Councillors to access corporate email, corporate calendars, the Modern.Gov application, MS Office suite and any necessary documents. Additional security may be added at a future date to ensure compliance with any new Public Services Network policy requirements.

Option Two

The Council will provide a technically secure Windows Laptop/Tablet to enable Councillors to access corporate email, corporate calendars, the Modern.Gov application, MS Office suite and any necessary documents. Additional security may be added at a future date to ensure compliance with any new Public Services Network policy requirements.

Option Three

The Council will provide technically secure Blackberry Software to enable Councillors to access corporate email, corporate calendars and any necessary documents stored on the Councils network. The software would be installed on the Councillors own Android or Apple device which would not be owned by the council.

Customer / Equalities and Diversity Implications

- 3.7 None.

4. RISK MANAGEMENT

- 4.1 There is a risk that a separate future capital bid for additional equipment may be unsuccessful. Therefore, no budget would be available to pursue Option Two (see above) If this were to happen, Option Two would be removed from the policy.

5. APPENDICES

Appendix 1 - Policy Document – Members ICT Facilities.

**Members ICT Policy
Cabinet Committee**

15th January 2020

6. BACKGROUND PAPERS

None

7. KEY

None

AUTHOR OF REPORT

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Council Members Policy Document

**BDC Bring Your
Own Device Policy**

Version 1.2

Document Control

Organisation	Bromsgrove District Council
Owner	ICT Transformation Manager
Protective Marking	Not protected
Review date	One year from last approval

Revision History

Revision Date	Reviser	Version	Description of Revision
11/03/2019	Peter Bailey	1.0	Policy created
20/03/2019	Peter Bailey	1.1	Initial wording review, signature field
30/10/2019	Mark Hanwell	1.2	Changes following Members Development Steering Group Meeting

Document Approvals

Sponsor Approval	Name	Date	Version Approved
			1.2

Document Distribution

This document will be distributed via Democratic Services to all Council Members. For those without access to NetConsent the Policy can be signed and returned to the Information Management Team directly or via Democratic Services.

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1. Policy Summary

This policy covers any person wishing to use a device owned by someone other than the Council (e.g. personal devices) to access Council data – commonly known as Bring Your Own Device (BYOD). You must comply with the whole policy, but in summary:

- If you have accepted certain policies and your device meets certain criteria, you may access Council data from a personal device
- **The Council retains control of the council data**, and as part of this agreement you accept the installation of software that can erase Council data from your device and adds certain management facilities for Council use which include being able to record use of facilities
- **You must tell the ICT Helpdesk** if your device is lost, stolen, sold, infected with malware or the security of the device is otherwise compromised or no longer in your possession.
- **The Council does not offer support of the physical personal device** although installation instructions are maintained for your use. The Council will accept comments and issues around BYOD but does not commit to respond to them. Issues with connectivity will be investigated, but if they cannot be reproduced you will have to find solutions in conjunction with your personal providers.
- **Some types of data should not be stored or accessed on BYOD devices for example DWP data. It is your responsibility to be aware of any third-party agreements that you have agreed to.** If you are using as part of your role data from certain partners, you cannot use BYOD devices.

2. Introduction

The Council has a responsibility to safeguard the information that has been provided to it by people and various government and statutory organisations to carry out its business. In order to do this, we need to make sure that:

- the requirements of UK law on personal data management are being met.
- the requirements of the Public Service Network Code of Connection (CoCo) are met
- the Council's own Data Privacy and Information Security policies are being followed
- where third party data is being used, the requirements of the data owners are being followed.

The Council recognises that users may wish to use their own mobile devices to access Council data and use Council applications as part of flexible working

arrangements. This policy outlines the responsibilities of both the device owner and the Council.

3. Who does the Policy apply to?

This policy applies to all persons who connect or intend to connect a device not owned by the Council to use Council data.

4. The Council's Responsibilities

It is the Council's responsibility to provide the Blackberry software license. This can only be done once a cost code and confirmation of policy acceptance is provided via the relevant request form.

It is the Council's responsibility to filter and monitor resources that are available or accessed via the secure Blackberry applications. Activities outside of the Blackberry applications are not captured, stored or monitored by the Council.

It is not the Council's responsibility to reimburse the Council Member for the cost of mobile data, mobile repairs, peripherals, insurance or mobile maintenance of any kind.

As the data controller, the Council is responsible for ensuring that all processing of personal data which is under its control remains in compliance with UK law. Additionally, the Council receives data from partners which may be restricted by their security policies with which we have to comply.

The Council must also remain mindful of the personal usage of such devices and the privacy of the individual. Technical and organisational measures used to protect Council owned data must remain proportionate to the risks and consider your rights as an individual to privacy. Decisions on these matters will be made via the Council's internal governance routes.

5. Rights, Privileges and Responsibilities

The use of a personally-owned device in connection with Council business is a privilege granted to device owners. The Council reserves the right to revoke these privileges without notice.

You must read and understand this policy before configuring your device to access Council information.

You must also have completed the Council's training on Data Protection, Freedom of Information and Information Security and have read and accepted the ICT Information Security Policy within the last 12 months of being provided access to information from your personal device.

There are additional requirements for certain persons e.g. contractor staff who may need to sign additional agreements; please consult with the Information Team if you are in this group.

The Council remains the data controller for all Council data held on BYODs.

Disciplinary and / or **criminal action** may be taken **against you** if a breach of policy or law occurs.

As the device owner, you carry specific responsibilities, as listed below:

- You will not lend anyone your device to access Council information or use Council infrastructure.
- Should you decide to sell, recycle, give away or change your device, you will inform the ICT Helpdesk by phone on ext. 1766 or if calling from an external number on 01527 881766. **Do not allow the device to leave your possession until you have been informed council data has been wiped.**
- In accepting this policy, you must ensure that your device has, at minimum, a four-digit pin or a passcode to access your device.
- In order to access your Council e-mail and calendar, you will need to enter your network account password during setup.
- You must ensure that your device is compliant, and that security software is kept up-to-date. The system will check whether your device meets compliance criteria and if not, will automatically stop syncing and potentially be wiped of Council data.
- The Council data can be wiped from the device without notice if:
 - 1) you lose the device;
 - 2) the device is stolen;
 - 3) your council membership ends;
 - 4) ICT detects a data or policy breach or virus/malware infection;
 - 5) Your device becomes jailbroken or rooted (either intentionally or through the installation of software or an application that makes the modification to add additional functionality)
 - 6) The device has not connected to the Council infrastructure for 30 days
 - 7) OS out of date
 - 8) Deemed necessary by the Council.
- You are responsible for the safekeeping of your own personal data. We recommend that you secure and encrypt your phone appropriately using the facilities on the device, and that you have an up-to-date malware scanning solution installed (anti-virus).
- You must conform strictly to the Council's Information Security Policy.

All users are expected to use their device in an ethical manner. Using your device in ways not designed or intended by the manufacturer is not allowed. This includes, but is not limited to, "jailbreaking" your iPhone or "rooting" your android device even if this adds additional functionality.

6. Which devices are covered?

Current devices approved for Bring Your Own Device use are listed below along with the minimum system requirements:

- Android 6.0 (“Marshmallow”) or higher Smart Phones and Tablets
- iOS 11.0 or higher iPhones and iPad

Devices below these specifications will not comply with our policies and therefore will not be allowed to be used as BYOD.

It should be noted that as technology improves and newer versions of operating system are introduced by vendors or vulnerabilities are discovered in existing operating systems this list is subject to immediate change and access maybe revoked (in some instances this may be without notice).

7. Which Services Are Available via Blackberry Applications?

Currently, the only Services available and covered by this policy are:

- E-mail
- Calendar
- Contacts
- Tasks
- Network file access and editing
- Whitelisted Intranet Sites

Note that some file types cannot be securely opened, and hence you may find you cannot open certain attachments etc.

A minimum four-digit passcode will be required to access devices containing Council data; you will also initially need to set up the device using your Council username/email and password. You **MUST NOT** share these with any other person.

Council data is stored encrypted to protect it and is subject to restrictions on copying and where it can be saved.

8. Who Manages this Facility?

ICT will manage the BYOD facility, as described within this document, on behalf of the Council.

9. What Support will ICT provide?

The Council makes reasonable endeavours to ensure that your device is not adversely affected and that only Council data is erased, but this cannot be guaranteed, and the Council accepts no liability for issues resulting from use.

The Council does not offer support of the physical personal device although installation instructions are maintained for your use. Furthermore, the Council will not cover any damage to the device or any loss of personal data that may occur as a result of use of BYOD or as part of the removal of Council data.

It is recommended that device owners insure their device as part of their home contents insurance or via a specific mobile device insurance scheme and advise their insurer that the device will be used for work purposes at home and at work locations.

Upon installation of the mobile device management software, the device owner can connect to the Council infrastructure to access their Council accessible data. However, the device owner is personally liable for the device and carrier service costs. They will not be reimbursed by the Council for the acquisition of a mobile device, its use, maintenance or replacement or any carrier service charges incurred. The device owner must agree to all terms and conditions in this policy to be allowed access to Council services listed in this document.

10. If a Security incident should occur

A Security incident is defined in the ICT Information Security Policy and can be generally described as **any** event that could compromise information security. Some examples: your device is lost or stolen, someone else gains access to your password/passcode, your device becomes infected with malware.

If a security incident should occur, you are required to inform the Information Management Team and your Line Manager **immediately** with details.

The Council reserves the right to wipe Council data and applications.

You should ensure that you read and understand both the policy and your responsibilities to report a security incident. In all cases you should contact the Information Management Team directly or via the ICT Helpdesk.

The Council also needs to act where potential incidents are identified. Where 'near misses' occur, these should be reported to Information Management Team and a local decision taken as to whether the cause of the 'near miss' is one which could involve the enhancement of the policy or the process. If this

is the case, you should contact the Information Management Team directly or via the ICT Helpdesk.

Note that not immediately reporting security incidents is a breach of this policy.

11. ICT Services Security Incident Response

When a security incident is reported ICT Services are required to remove the Council data and application from the affected device.

12. Guidelines for Acceptable Behaviour

Device owners are expected to behave in accordance with the Council's policies whilst undertaking work for the Council. Further information can be provided by your manager or by contacting a HR advisor.

Be aware that any personal device used at work may be subject to discovery in litigation. This means that it could be used as evidence in a lawsuit. Your data and device could be examined by other parties in any legal action.

13. Allowed Countries

The General Data Protection Regulation only permits export of personal data to certain countries. Because of this, we can only permit BYOD applications with Council data to be accessed within the United Kingdom. Council data is encrypted using the password set by the Council Member in the Blackberry application and **MUST NOT** be entered outside the United Kingdom.

14. If You Leave the Council

Democratic Services are required to inform ICT when you are leaving the council, your access to the Council infrastructure and applications will cease and your device will be de-provisioned, access to Council data will cease and Council data wiped.

15. Council Release of Liability and Disclaimer Statement

The Council hereby acknowledges that the use of a personal device in connection with Council business carries specific risks for which you, as the device owner and user, assume full liability. These risks include, but are not limited to, the partial or complete loss of non-council data, errors, bugs,

viruses, and/or other software or hardware failures, or programming errors which could render a device inoperable.

The Council hereby disclaims liability for the loss of any such non-council data and/or for service interruptions. The Council expressly reserves the right to wipe the Council application and data at any time as deemed necessary for purposes of protecting or maintaining Council infrastructure and services. The Council also disclaims liability for device owner injuries such as repetitive stress injuries developed; The Council provides ICT equipment that is suitable for long-term office use.

Device owners bring their devices to use at the Council as their own risk. Device owners are expected to act responsibly with regards to their own device, keeping it up to date and as secure as possible. It is their duty to be responsible for the upkeep and protection of their devices.

The Council is in no way responsible for:

- Personal devices that are broken while at work or during work-sponsored activities
- Personal devices that are lost or stolen at work or whilst undertaking work-related activities
- Maintenance or upkeep of any device (keeping it charged, installing updates or upgrades, fixing any software or hardware issues)
- The management or creation of users own 'cloud' based user accounts, which are required for purchasing software, or backing up data

The Council does not guarantee that Service will be compatible with your equipment or warrant that the Service will be available at all times, uninterrupted, error-free, or free of viruses or other harmful components, although it shall take reasonable steps to provide the best Service it can.

Furthermore, depending on the applicable data plan, the software may increase applicable rates. You are responsible for confirming any impact on rates as a result of the use of Council supplied applications as you will not be reimbursed by the Council.

The Council reserves the right, at its own discretion, to remove any Council supplied applications from your personal device as a result of an actual or deemed violation of the Council's BYOD Policy.

16. Policy Acceptance for Offline Distribution

Please sign and date below to acknowledge that you have read and understand the content above and agree to adhere to the BDC Council Members Policy. **You cannot use a BYOD if you do not read, understand and accept this policy.**

Signed:

Date:

Please return the signed policy document to the Information Management Team.

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Policy Document

Members' ICT Facilities

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1 Policy Statement

Bromsgrove District Council Members require access to information that enables them to perform their duties as a councillor. Much of this information can be provided electronically via email, word processing and spread sheet files. The Council's general presumption is for electronic provision of information / transaction of business.

2 Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that Bromsgrove District Councillors can access Information and Communication Technology (ICT) facilities whilst maintaining compliance with Central Government's Public Service Network (PSN) and other related policies.

The Council holds large amounts of personal and restricted information. Information security is very important to help protect the interests and confidentiality of the Council and its customers. Information security cannot be achieved by technical means alone. Information security must also be enforced and applied by the people who use it and those who provide support for it.

3 Scope

This policy applies to any Councillor that requires access to Council information systems such as email or other documents, whether it is a temporary or permanent arrangement.

4 Definition

The Council understands that to reduce the risk of theft, fraud or inappropriate use of its information systems, anyone that is given access to Council information systems **must**:

- Be suitable for their roles.
- Fully understand their responsibilities for ensuring the security of the information.
- Only have access to the information they need.
- Request that this access be removed as soon as it is no longer required.
- Complete Data Protection training to ensure Members are clear on how information can be used when they are working on behalf of the council and when they are working on behalf of constituents, and how it should be stored.
- Ensure that no personal information that could be in breach of the Data Protection Act, is stored on their laptop or other unencrypted device.

This policy must therefore be applied prior, during and after any user's access to information or information systems used to deliver Council business.

5 Provision for ICT equipment.

The Council recognises that individual Councillors have a requirement to access electronic information.

Due to a zero tolerance approach to the PSN code of connection, this has led to implementing innovative methods of accessing ICT, whilst remaining within the budget and work with the resource limitations of the Authority. Should the limits of the budget be reached, the Leader of the Council will revisit current ICT needs for the future.

The council will not automatically forward Council emails to personal email accounts such as Hotmail, Google mail etc. This is to ensure the authority complies with the Government's code of connection.

Option1

The Authority will provide an Apple iPad that is technically secure, to enable the Councillor to access corporate email, corporate calendars, Modern.Gov, Office suite and necessary documents. Additional security may be added at a future date to keep in line with new PSN policy requirements.

Broadband services are to be provided by the Councillor and expenses for these claimed through the normal expenditure claim process at £100 per year (maximum 1 per household).

Support for this Apple iPad will be provided by the authority's ICT department by telephoning 01527 881766 Mon-Fri 8:30 to 17:00.

All internet usage and emails sent and received via the corporate device, will be subject to automated scanning, monitoring and filtering to assist with ICT security and adherence to additional policies as described in section 9.

It is the Councillor's responsibility to ensure their password for accessing any Corporate Information service is not shared with any other person and that connection to such services is ended by logging off the system, as soon as work is completed or the connection is left unattended. This is to prevent unauthorised access to information.

If it suspected that someone else may know their password, or any security problem has occurred, Councillors must report this to the helpdesk immediately so it can be rectified.

The Councillor shall make reasonable arrangements for the safe-keeping of the iPad.

Insurance for the iPad is provided by the council but a £100 excess is payable for loss, theft or damage.

The Council provides the Apple iPad together with ancillary equipment and materials required, for the Councillor's functions as a Councillor. Use of this equipment for any other reason, including personal use or use by anyone other than a Councillor is not permitted.

All ICT equipment provided by the authority remains the property of the Council and must be returned at the end of the election term.

Option 2

The Authority will provide a Windows based Laptop/Tablet that is technically secure, to enable the Councillor to access corporate email, corporate calendars, Modern.Gov, Office suite and necessary documents. Additional security may be added at a future date to keep in line with new PSN policy requirements.

Broadband services are to be provided by the Councillor and expenses for these claimed through the normal expenditure claim process at £100 per year (maximum 1 per household).

Support for the Windows based Laptop/Tablet will be provided by the authority's ICT department by telephoning 01527 881766 Mon-Fri 8:30 to 17:00.

All internet usage and emails sent and received via the corporate device, will be subject to automated scanning, monitoring and filtering to assist with ICT security and adherence to additional policies as described in section 9.

It is the Councillor's responsibility to ensure their password for accessing any Corporate Information service is not shared with any other person and that connection to such services is ended by logging off the system, as soon as work is completed or the connection is left unattended. This is to prevent unauthorised access to information.

If it suspected that someone else may know their password, or any security problem has occurred, Councillors must report this to the helpdesk immediately so it can be rectified.

The Councillor shall make reasonable arrangements for the safe-keeping of the Laptop/Tablet.

Insurance for the Windows based Laptop/Tablet is provided by the council but a £100 excess is payable for loss, theft or damage.

The Council provides the Windows based Laptop/Tablet together with ancillary equipment and materials required, for the Councillor's functions as a Councillor. Use of this equipment for any other reason, including personal use or use by anyone other than a Councillor is not permitted.

All ICT equipment provided by the authority remains the property of the Council and must be returned at the end of the election term.

Option 3 (can be in addition to Option 1 or 2)

The Authority will provide the Blackberry Software that is technically secure, to enable the Councillor to access Corporate email, Corporate calendars and necessary documents stored on the network, to be accessed from an Android or Apple device not owned by the council.

Additional security may be added at a future date to keep in line with new PSN policy requirements.

Broadband services are to be provided by the Councillor and expenses for these claimed through the normal expenditure claim process at £100 per year (maximum 1 per household).

Support for the Blackberry Software, but not the device it is installed on, will be provided by the authority's ICT department by telephoning 01527 881766 Mon-Fri 8:30 to 17:00.

All internet usage and emails sent and received via the Blackberry Software, will be subject to automated scanning, monitoring and filtering to assist with ICT security and adherence to additional policies as described in section 9.

No scanning, monitoring and filtering of any activity outside of the Blackberry Software will take place.

It is the Councillor's responsibility to ensure their password for accessing any Corporate Information service is not shared with any other person and that connection to such services is ended by logging off the system, as soon as work is completed or the connection is left unattended. This is to prevent unauthorised access to information.

If it suspected that someone else may know their password, or any security problem has occurred, Councillors must report this to the helpdesk immediately so it can be rectified.

All ICT equipment (including software licenses) provided by the authority remains the property of the Council and must be returned at the end of the election term.

6 Policy Compliance

If any Member is found to have breached this policy, IT provision will be withdrawn. If a criminal offence is considered to have been committed further action may be taken to assist in the prosecution of the offender(s).

If you do not understand the implications of this policy or how it may apply to you, please seek advice from Members' Services or ICT.

7 Policy Governance

The following table identifies who within the council is Accountable, Responsible, Informed or Consulted with regards to this policy. The following definitions apply:

- **Responsible** – the person(s) responsible for developing and implementing the policy.
- **Accountable** – the person who has ultimate accountability and authority for the policy.
- **Consulted** – the person(s) or groups to be consulted prior to final policy implementation or amendment.
- **Informed** – the person(s) or groups to be informed after policy implementation or amendment.

Responsible	ICT Transformation Manager
Accountable	Head of Business Transformation
Consulted	Corporate Management Team, Members' Services
Informed	All Councillors.

8 Review and Revision

This policy will be reviewed as it is deemed appropriate, but no less frequently than every 12 months.

Policy review will be undertaken by the ICT Manager.

9 References

The following Bromsgrove District Council policy documents are directly relevant to this policy.

- Central Government's PSN Policy
- Information Security Policy.
- Members' Code of Conduct and related Codes and Protocols.

Receipt and acceptance statement

I, Councillor _____ agree to comply with the policy items as stated within this document.

Signed _____ Date _____

PLEASE RETURN COMPLETED STATEMENT AS SOON AS POSSIBLE TO :

Democratic Services
Bromsgrove District Council
Parkside

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WORCESTERSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCILS

MEETING OF THE WORCESTERSHIRE REGULATORY SERVICES BOARD

THURSDAY, 28TH NOVEMBER 2019, AT 5:00 P.M.

PRESENT: Councillors J. Grubb (Chairman), A. D. Kent (during Minute No's 19/19 to 23/19), H. J. Jones, J. Gallagher (substituting for Councillor J. Raine), T. Wells (during Minute No's part of 22/19 to 23/19). J. Squires, A. Stafford (substituting for Councillor L. Griffiths), E. Stokes, D. Morris, H. Dyke and P. Dyke

Partner Officers: Mr. P. Merrick, Malvern Hills District Council and Wychavon District Council, Mr. L. Griffiths, Worcester City Council and Mr. M. Parker, Wyre Forest District Council

Officers: Mr. S. Wilkes, Mr. R. Keyte, Mr. C. Forrester, Mr. M. Cox, Mr. D. Mellors and Mrs. P. Ross.

19/19 **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND NOTIFICATION OF SUBSTITUTES**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors J. Raine, Malvern Hills District Council and L. Griffiths, Worcester City Council, with Councillors J. Gallagher and A. Stafford present as substitute members respectively.

20/19 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest.

21/19 **MINUTES**

The minutes of the meeting of the Worcestershire Regulatory Services Board held on 26th September 2019, were submitted.

Councillor H. Jones, Bromsgrove District Council commented that she had not received a response to the two queries that she had raised at Minute Number 14/19.

The Head of Regulatory Services responded to both queries.

RESOLVED that the minutes of the Worcestershire Regulatory Services Board held on 26th September 2019, be approved as a correct record.

Due to the late commencement of the meeting and having been informed that two Members of the Board had to leave the meeting early, the Chairman altered the running order of the Agenda, in order for the Board to consider Agenda Item 5, Worcestershire Regulatory Services Budgets 2020/21 – 2022/23 and Agenda Item 4, Worcestershire Regulatory Services Revenue Monitoring April – September 2019 first.

22/19

WORCESTERSHIRE REGULATORY SERVICES BUDGETS - 2020/21 - 2022/23

The Financial Services Manager, Bromsgrove District Council, introduced the report and in doing so drew Members’ attention to the tabled amended Recommendations; and clarified that the vote was by majority and not unanimous, as detailed in the report.

In response to questions from Members:

The Financial Services Manager clarified that, the 1% pay award for 2021/22 and 2022/23, had been included in the budget; and was based on the pay award assumption made by the host authority Bromsgrove District Council (BDC). The Head of Regulatory Services further commented that BDC usually worked to a 1% assumption, however, moving forward he was happy to work with the Financial Services Manager to look at a higher level of pay award for 2021/22 and 2022/23 and the potential impact on WRS; with an information report being presented to a future meeting of the Board.

The Head of Regulatory Services explained that not all partner authorities included the taxi test within their licensing fees, some kept the taxi test fee separate from the licensing fee; hence taxi tests being included in the Supplies and Service section on Appendix 1 to the report.

The Financial Services Manager agreed to amend Appendix 1 to the report, in order to include the 2019/2020 figures. The Democratic Services Officer to be tasked to ensure that the amended appendix, Appendix 1, and the amended Recommendations tabled at the meeting to be provided to each partner authority, in order to be included in their budget setting and decision making process.

RECOMMENDED that partner authorities approve the following for 2020/21:

1.1 The base revenue partner contributions for 2020/21-2022/23

Bromsgrove District Council	£439k
Malvern Hills District Council	£386k
Redditch Borough Council	£529k
Worcester City Council	£499k
Wychavon District Council	£701k
Wyre Forest District Council	£463k

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28th November 2019

Total	£3,017k
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1.2 The partner percentage allocations for 2020/21 onwards:-

	%
Bromsgrove District Council	14.55
Malvern Hills District Council	12.79
Redditch Borough Council	17.53
Worcester City Council	16.54
Wychavon District Council	23.24
Wyre Forest District Council	15.35

1.3 The additional partner liabilities for 2020/21 in relation to unavoidable salary pressure and increase in WRS pension forward funding rate.

Bromsgrove District Council	£13k
Malvern Hills District Council	£11k
Redditch Borough Council	£16k
Worcester City Council	£15k
Wychavon District Council	£21k
Wyre Forest District Council	£14k
Total	£90k

1.4 The additional partner liabilities for 2020/21 in relation to three additional Technical Officers.

Council	Tech Officer Primary Authority – 3 Months £000	Tech Officer Animal Activity £000	Tech Officer Gull Control £000
Bromsgrove District Council	1	6	

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Malvern Hills District Council	1	9	
Redditch Borough Council	1	1	
Worcester City Council	1	4	30
Wychavon District Council	2	9	
Wyre Forest District Council	1	4	
Total	7	33	30

1.5 The 2020/21 gross expenditure budget of £3,547k as shown in Appendix 1 to the report; and

1.6 The 2020/21 income budget of £530k as shown in Appendix 3 to the report.

23/19

WORCESTERSHIRE REGULATORY SERVICES REVENUE MONITORING APRIL - SEPT 2019

The Board considered the Worcestershire Regulatory Services (WRS) Revenue Monitoring report, April to September 2019.

The Financial Services Manager, Bromsgrove District Council (BDC), introduced the report and in doing so highlighted that the revenue report as detailed at Appendix 1 to the report, showed a projected outturn 2019/2020 of an £18k deficit. WRS officers would continue to work on income generation and would do their utmost to mitigate this excess as much as possible by the end of the financial year. It was appreciated that this was an estimation to the year end based on the assumptions, as detailed on page 11 of the main agenda report.

The Financial Services Manager, BDC reported that if April to September 2019 spend on pest control continued on the same trend for the rest of the year, that there would be an overspend on this service of £19k. WRS officers would continue to monitor and analysis this spend and advise of any changes in quarter 3.

The actual bereavements costs for April to September 2019 to be funded by partners, were charged on an as and when basis. Due to the nature of the charge it was not possible to project a final outturn figure.

Appendix 2 to the report detailed the income achieved by WRS from April to September 2019.

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With regard to questions raised on the additional Animal Activity licensing, the Head of Regulatory Services briefly explained that there had been an additional £23k worth of vet inspections, which was fully recovered.

The licensing of various animal-related establishments, Animal Welfare (Licensing of Activities Involving Animals) (England) Regulations 2018 had come into effect on 1st October 2018, with specific procedural documents and guidance documents published by the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA).

As a result of these new regulations a large number of licences already in force under the previous licensing regimes expired in December 2018 and new licence applications were also received. Each application made under the new regulations required an inspection to be undertaken, with some inspections requiring a vet to be in attendance.

The Head of Regulatory Services further responded to a question raised with regard to 'Works in Default'.

The Technical Services Manager, WRS, responded to questions with regard to the Dog Warden and explained that WRS had recently employed 2 new dog wardens who were very active and worked later into the evenings, therefore taking away some of the work previously carried out by 'out of hours' contractors.

RESOLVED:

- (a) that the final financial position for the period April – September 2019 be noted;
- (b) that partner councils be informed of their liabilities for 2019-20 in relation to Bereavements, as follows; and

Council	April – Sept 2019 Actual for Bereavements £000
Redditch Borough Council	3
Malvern Hills District Council	2
Worcester City Council	10
Bromsgrove District Council	7
Total	22

- (c) that partner councils be informed of their liabilities for 2019-20 in relation to Pest Control, as follows; and

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Council	Estimated Projected Outturn Recharge in relation to Pest Control 2019/20 £000
Redditch Borough Council	11
Wychavon District Council	7
Wyre Forest District Council	1
Total	19

(d) that partner councils be informed of their liabilities for 2019-20 in relation to three additional Technical Officers, as follows:

Council	Estimated Projected Outturn 2019/20 Tech Officer Primary Authority £000	Estimated Projected Outturn 2019/20 Tech Officer Animal Activity £000	Estimated Projected Outturn 2019/20 Tech Officer Gull Control £000
Redditch Borough Council	5	1	
Malvern Hills District Council	4	9	
Worcester City Council	5	3	30
Bromsgrove District Council	4	6	
Wychavon District Council	6	8	
Wyre Forest District Council	4	4	
Total	28	31	30

24/19

ACTIVITY AND PERFORMANCE DATA - QUARTER 2

The Environmental Health & Trading Standards Manager Worcestershire Regulatory Services (WRS), presented the Activity and Performance Data, Quarter 2 report.

The Environmental Health & Trading Standards Manager WRS, reported that the number of food safety interventions had remained on par with previous years. Complaints and enquiries were down over the summer compared with previous years and that there had been a notable dip in August, when officers would normally expect to

see a peak. This had enabled officers to task allergen work into the programme.

Health and Safety enquiries and complaints/service requests remained broadly in line with 2018/2019. The greater proportion of accidents related to injuries to members of the public or injuries to a worker being incapacitated for more than seven consecutive days. Several resource intensive formal investigations were ongoing with the likelihood of legal proceedings.

The number of requests for support from planning colleagues remained significantly up in quarter 2. During the last quarter the team reviewed and provided advice on over 500 potential sites for Strategic Housing and Employment Land Availability Assessment to inform the review of the South Worcestershire Development Plan.

Quarter 2 saw the Director of Public Health, Highways, WRS and County and district Sustainability team representatives attend the first comprehensive air quality action forum for Worcestershire. This was an exciting development and was the first time that all stakeholders had committed to having a role in improving health and air quality.

The Dog Warden Team had had another busy quarter with a total of 418 dogs being reported to WRS as strays. Over 300 were reunited with their owners and a further 67 were successfully rehomed by WRS through reputable charities. Sadly 8 of the dogs were welfare cases, where possible improvement notices were issued to owners. In addition to this a further 9 dogs required veterinary treatment for other ailments.

In general WRS had performed well against the agreed indicators. The percentage of service requests where a resolution was achieved to customer satisfaction was higher than it had been for some time at over 73%. Business satisfaction remained excellent at over 98%. The proportion of people who felt better equipped to deal with issues in the future following WRS interventions was also up on previous quarters at 63%.

The processing measure for taxi licences was over 75% within 5 working days and were all issued before the licences expired. This was slightly higher in the past so officers would look at to why this has slipped. The figure for defective vehicles whilst in service as taxis was similar to the figures at the end of last year (30 compared to 44), so slightly up on the half year figure last year (17). The Licensing Team have spoken with the garages carrying out the tests and have emphasised the need to feed this information back to Licensing officers as it was key intelligence as to how well drivers were maintaining their vehicles.

Sickness figures had increased slightly to 2.9 days per full time equivalent (PFTE), compared to 2.8 (PFTE) last year.

The income figure as a proportion of budget was 5.3% for 2019/2020. As previously highlighted WRS had yet to fill the gap left by the loss of one of the dog related contracts that was worth £60,000 per annum.

RESOLVED that the Activity and Performance Data report for Quarter 2, be noted; and that Board Members use the contents of the report to inform each of their partner authorities.

25/19

INFORMATION REPORT - AIR QUALITY UPDATE 2019

The Technical Services Manager, Worcestershire Regulatory Services (WRS), presented the Air Quality Update 2019, information report.

The Local Air Quality Management process (LAQM) was the Local Authority role with air quality that was set out in PART IV of the Environment Act 1995 and subsequent Technical Guidance and Policy documents. There were a number of health based objectives for pollutants but for Worcestershire it was nitrogen dioxide which was the primary pollutant of concern.

The objectives for that pollutant were an annual average of 40 microgrammes per metre cubed for a residential property or school and a one-hour average of 200 microgrammes per metre cubed for a property where someone would realistically spend an hour, such as outdoor seating of a café or a playground. WRS reported annually to the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) on behalf of all Districts on the current situation.

There were currently 7 AQMAs in Worcestershire. The focus of DEFRA Guidance to Local Authorities had been aimed at District and County Council's together with Public Health colleagues to deliver the measures to improve air quality that were included in their local Action Plans.

The Technical Services Manager, WRS, drew Members' attention to the summarised annual monitoring data for 2018 for each partner authority, as detailed on pages 66 and 67 of the main agenda pack.

The actual monitoring results for each district were reported annually in an 'Annual Status Report' (ASR) submitted to DEFRA. The report was produced between April and June with the previous year's monitoring data, following adjustment for location (to represent relevant exposure), analytical bias and any missing data (to represent a full year's worth of data). The ASR also provided details of all of the current measures in the Action Plan to address poor air quality. DEFRA recommended that 3 years' worth of robust data should be collated.

The Technical Services Manager, WRS, responded to questions from Members with regard to their specific authorities' information as detailed on pages 66 and 67 of the main agenda pack.

Agenda Item 12

Worcestershire Regulatory Services Board
28th November 2019

The Technical Services Manager, WRS, briefly explained the European emission standards, Euro 4 for petrol driven vehicles and Euro 6 for diesel driven vehicles.

RESOLVED that the Air Quality Update 2019, Information Report be noted.

The meeting closed at 5.45 p.m.

Chairman

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Account description	Budget		Budget	
	2019 / 2020	2020 / 2021	2021 / 2022	2022 / 2023
	£000's	£000's	£000's	£000's
Employees				
Monthly salaries	2,695	2,749	2,789	2,833
Training for professional qualifications	2	0	0	0
Medical fees (employees')	2	2	2	2
Employers' liability insurance	40	40	40	40
Employees' professional subscriptions	3	2	2	2
Sub-Total - Employees	2,741	2,793	2,833	2,877
Premises				
Rents	52	52	52	52
Room hire	2	2	2	2
Trade Waste	0	0	0	0
Sub-Total - Premises	54	54	54	54
Transport				
Vehicle repairs/maint'ce	3	3	3	3
Diesel fuel	8	8	8	8
Licences	1	1	1	1
Contract hire of vehicles	4	4	4	4
Vehicle insurances	5	5	5	5
Van Lease	9	9	9	9
Fares & Car Parking	5	5	5	5
Car allowances	75	70	70	70
Sub-Total - Transport	110	105	105	105
Supplies & Service				
Equipment - purchase/maintenance/rental	23	22	22	22
Materials	9	9	9	9
Clothing, uniforms & laundry	2	2	2	2
Training fees	23	23	23	23
General insurances	5	5	5	5
Printing and stationery	18	18	18	18
Books and publications	2	2	2	2
Postage/packaging	11	11	11	11
ICT	40	40	40	40
Telephones	21	21	21	21
Taxi Tests	22	22	22	22
CRB Checks (taxi)	26	26	26	26
Support service recharges	100	100	100	100
Support service recharges - ICT	44	44	44	44
Sub-Total - Supplies & Service	345	344	344	344

	Budget 2019 / 2020 £000's	Budget 2020 / 2021 £000's	Budget 2021 / 2022 £000's	Budget 2022 / 2023 £000's
Contractors				
Consultants / Contractors' fees/charges/SLA's	239	234	234	234
Advertising (general)	5	5	5	5
Grants and subscriptions	11	11	11	11
Marketing/promotion/publicity	2	2	2	2
Sub-Total - Contractors	257	252	252	252
Income				
Grants / Primary Authority / Food Training / Contaminated Land / Stray Dogs / Ad Hoc	-410	-310	-310	-310
Sub-Total - Income	-410	-310	-310	-310
Income				
From partners for Technical Officers	-79	-70	-64	-66
Sub-Total - Income	-79	-70	-64	-66
Additional Income				
Income to be Determined		-60	-60	-60
Income to be found due to unavoidable salary pressures		-90	-136	-178
Sub-Total - Income	0	-150	-196	-238
DISTRICT PARTNERSHIP BUDGET	3,017	3,017	3,017	3,017

2020/21 Partner Percentages

Bromsgrove District Council	14.55%
Malvern Hills District Council	12.79%
Redditch Borough Council	17.53%
Worcester City Council	16.54%
Wychavon District Council	23.24%
Wyre Forest District Council	15.35%
Total	100.00%

	Budget	Contribution Technical Officers	Partner Contribution
	2019 / 2020	2019 / 2020	2019 / 2020
	£000's	£000's	£000's
Budget 2019 / 20			
Bromsgrove District Council	439	10	449
Malvern Hills District Council	386	14	400
Redditch Borough Council	529	7	536
Worcester City Council	499	23	522
Wychavon District Council	701	16	717
Wyre Forest District Council	463	10	473
Total	3,017	80	3,097

	Budget	Contribution Technical Officers	Partner Contribution	Unavoidable Salary Pressure	Total Partner Contribution
	2020 / 2021	2020 / 2021	2020 / 2021	2020 / 2021	2020 / 2021
	£000's	£000's	£000's	£000's	£000's
Budget 2020 / 21					
Bromsgrove District Council	439	7	446	13	459
Malvern Hills District Council	386	10	396	11	407
Redditch Borough Council	529	2	531	16	547
Worcester City Council	499	35	534	15	549
Wychavon District Council	701	11	712	21	733
Wyre Forest District Council	463	5	468	14	482
Total	3,017	70	3,087	90	3,177

	Budget	Contribution Technical Officers	Partner Contribution	Unavoidable Salary Pressure	Total Partner Contribution
	2021 / 2022	2021 / 2022	2021 / 2022	2021 / 2022	2021 / 2022
	£000's	£000's	£000's	£000's	£000's
Budget 2021 / 22					
Bromsgrove District Council	439	6	445	20	465
Redditch Borough Council	529	1	530	19	549
Wyre Forest District Council	463	5	468	23	491
Wychavon District Council	701	9	710	25	735
Malvern Hills District Council	386	9	395	27	422
Worcester City Council	499	34	533	22	555
Total	3,017	64	3,081	136	3,217

	Budget	Contribution Technical Officers	Partner Contribution	Unavoidable Salary Pressure	Total Partner Contribution
	2022 / 2023	2022 / 2023	2022 / 2023	2022 / 2023	2022 / 2023
	£000's	£000's	£000's	£000's	£000's
Budget 2022 / 23					
Bromsgrove District Council	439	6	445	26	471
Redditch Borough Council	529	2	531	26	557
Wyre Forest District Council	463	5	468	30	498
Wychavon District Council	701	9	710	35	745
Malvern Hills District Council	386	10	396	32	428
Worcester City Council	499	34	533	29	562
Total	3,017	66	3,083	178	3,261

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WORCESTERSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCILS

MEETING OF THE WORCESTERSHIRE REGULATORY SERVICES BOARD

THURSDAY 28TH NOVEMBER 2019, AT 4.30 P.M.

PARKSIDE HALL, MARKET STREET, BROMSGROVE,
WORCESTERSHIRE, B61 8DA

SUPPLEMENTARY DOCUMENTATION

The attached papers were tabled at the meeting, detailing the amended Recommendations for Agenda Item 5.

5. Worcestershire Regulatory Services Budgets - 2020/21 - 2022/23 (Pages 1 - 2)

K. DICKS
Chief Executive

Parkside
Market Street
BROMSGROVE
Worcestershire
B61 8DA

29th November 2019

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WRS Board 28th November 2019

WORCESTERSHIRE REGULATORY SERVICE BUDGETS 2020/21 – 2022/23

It is proposed that the WRS Board **recommend** to partner Councils that they approve the following for 2020/21:

1.1 The base revenue partner contributions for 2020/21-2022/23

Bromsgrove District Council	£439k
Malvern Hills District Council	£386k
Redditch Borough Council	£529k
Worcester City Council	£499k
Wychavon District Council	£701k
Wyre Forest District Council	£463k
Total	£3,017k

1.2 The partner percentage allocations for 2020/21 onwards:-

	%
Bromsgrove District Council	14.55
Malvern Hills District Council	12.79
Redditch Borough Council	17.53
Worcester City Council	16.54
Wychavon District Council	23.24
Wyre Forest District Council	15.35

1.3 The additional partner liabilities for 2020/21 in relation to unavoidable salary pressure and increase in WRS pension forward funding rate.

Bromsgrove District Council	£13k
Malvern Hills District Council	£11k

Redditch Borough Council	£16k
Worcester City Council	£15k
Wychavon District Council	£21k
Wyre Forest District Council	£14k
Total	£90k

1.4 The additional partner liabilities for 2020/21 in relation to three additional Technical Officers.

Council	Tech Officer Primary Authority – 3 Months £000	Tech Officer Animal Activity £000	Tech Officer Gull Control £000
Bromsgrove District Council	1	6	
Malvern Hills District Council	1	9	
Redditch Borough Council	1	1	
Worcester City Council	1	4	30
Wychavon District Council	2	9	
Wyre Forest District Council	1	4	
Total	7	33	30

1.5 The 2020/21 gross expenditure budget of £3,547k as shown in Appendix 1.

1.6 The 2020/21 income budget of £530k as shown in Appendix 1.

BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL

CABINET

15th January 2020

ESSENTIAL LIVING FUND POLICY

Relevant Portfolio Holder	Cllr Geoff Denaro
Portfolio Holder Consulted	Yes
Relevant Head of Service	Jayne Pickering – Executive Director of Finance and Resources
Wards Affected	All Wards

1. SUMMARY OF PROPOSALS

The report and appendices provide an Essential Living Fund (ELF) policy to replace the existing guidance. The new guidance will be introduced from 1st April 2020 and will provide greater clarity on the operation of the ELF scheme.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

2.1 Cabinet is asked to RECOMMEND to Council that:

- 1) The Essential Living Fund (ELF) policy is approved.
- 2) The policy is implemented from the 1st April 2020.

3. KEY ISSUES

Financial Implications

- 3.1 The costs for the provision of ELF are met locally by Bromsgrove District Council. The existing budget for the ELF scheme is £30k. Failure to provide clear procedures for the allocation of funds under the scheme may result in budget being overspent and insufficient funds being available for high need cases.

Legal Implications

- 3.2 There are no specific legal implications.

Service/Operational Implications

- 3.3 The Welfare Reform Act 2012 introduced major changes to welfare benefits. The changes included the introduction of Universal Credit, the implementation of the under occupancy charge for claimants in social sector housing, and changes to the existing Social Fund scheme.

BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL

CABINET

15th January 2020

3.4 The Social Fund scheme previously consisted of 3 elements:

- Budgeting Loans to meet intermittent needs.
- Crisis loans for emergency situations.
- Community care grants to help vulnerable people live independently rather than enter care institutions.

The changes to the Social Fund abolished crisis loans and community care grants and funding was made available to local authorities to provide local assistance to people needing additional support.

3.5 In response to the changes Bromsgrove District Council introduced the Essential Living Fund (ELF) the purpose of the fund is to provide assistance similar to that which was previously available from crisis loans and community care grants.

3.6 For the period from 1st April 2013 to 31st March 2015 funding for the operation of ELF was provided by Worcester County Council. Funding was withdrawn from 1st April 2015 and the cost for this provision has been met by the local authority.

3.7 The existing ELF guidance has become out-dated and does not provide consistency in the operation of the scheme. There is a need to revise the guidance to; provide greater clarity for council officers for making determinations of entitlement to support; increased clarity for customers when making applications for support; and better oversight of the operation of the scheme and the allocation of funds.

3.8 The current guidance is limited to providing short term support in the form of food bank referrals and/or utility vouchers. This short-term support helps to alleviate urgent financial pressures however it is not helping to enable long term support and a move towards financial stability which can be strengthened through referring to appropriate outside agencies for more specialist support.

3.9 The revised policy enables decision makers to provide targeted support to those that most require it as well as ensuring that this support is appropriate and provides the assistance that can help customers work towards long term financial stability.

Customer / Equalities and Diversity Implications

3.10 The ELF policy identifies those groups that would be most impacted should an award not be made.

BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL

CABINET

15th January 2020

- 3.11 Having a framework which identifies that flexibility is required, both in the claiming process and the administration of the scheme will assist in ensuring that the scheme objectives are fairly administered and do not place unreasonable restrictions on either staff or the people looking to access the scheme

4. RISK MANAGEMENT

- 4.1 Failure to manage the Essential Living Fund could result in a budgetary Overspend. The risk of overspend will be mitigated by the introduction of measures monitoring the overall costs of the ELF scheme on a month to month basis.
- 4.2 The failure to adopt a robust policy may lead to a risk of not offering a consistent service to some of our most vulnerable residents. Measures relating to application for ELF support and both approvals and refusals of support will be monitored to ensure that decisions are being made in line with the policy and support is targeted to the residents most in need.

5. APPENDICES

Appendix 1 – Essential Living Fund Policy

Appendix 2 – Summary of allocation of awards from 2015 to 2018

6. BACKGROUND PAPERS

None

AUTHOR OF REPORT

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Bromsgrove
District Council
www.bromsgrove.gov.uk

Bromsgrove District Council

Essential Living Fund (ELF)

Index

Mission Statement

1- Purpose of the Scheme

2 - Start Date of the Scheme

3 - Decision Makers

4 - Purpose of the Fund

5 - How Much to Award

6 - Eligibility

7 - Number of Awards and Repeat Applications

8 - Needs which are covered by ELF

9 - Needs which are NOT Covered by ELF

10 - Applications

11 - Evidence

12 - Reviewing a Decision

Appendix A - Other Funds / Schemes

Essential Living Fund

Mission Statement

The Essential Living Fund scheme is designed to help members of the community remain in their home and to assist residents in times of financial hardship whilst aiming to secure financial independence.

The Essential Living Fund team will endeavour to be:

- **Efficient**
- **Understanding of the needs of the people claiming**
- **Fair and unbiased**
- **Easily accessible**

We will undertake the above whilst putting people at the heart of everything we do, and supporting our local communities.

1. Purpose of the Scheme

The Essential Living Fund (ELF) is primarily intended to help vulnerable people live as independent a life as possible in the community.

Its prime objectives are to:

- Ease exceptional pressures on people or their families.
- Help people who are unable to meet their immediate short term needs either in an emergency in relation to some expenses or as consequence of an unforeseen event.
- Help people establish in the community following a stay in an institution, care home, Local Authority care, hostel, prison or similar and also to support people to remain in the community.
- Helping our residents maximise their benefit entitlement and also exploring other income opportunities and signposting where appropriate.

For more on each of these see the explanations under 'Eligibility'.

2. Start Date of the Scheme

This version of the ELF scheme is effective from the 1st April 2020.

3. Decision Makers

An award under the ELF scheme will be made by a Decision Maker (DM). This is an employee of Bromsgrove District Council who is acting within the principles of the ELF schemes policy to make a discretionary decision as to the eligibility of the applicant.

The DM will also liaise with other council departments and fully engage in partnership working to get the best outcome for the customer.

4. Purpose of the Fund

Careful consideration will be given to all the circumstances of an application before deciding whether or not to make a Essential Living Fund award.

Each case will be decided based on the details as presented and verified.

The flexibility of the scheme and wide variety of individual circumstances covered mean that a decision in one case does not constitute a precedent for others.

Regard must be given, in particular to:

- The nature, extent and urgency of the need.
- The existence of other resources from which the need may be met.
- The possibility that some other person or body may wholly or partly meet that need. In providing this help care must be taken to ensure the Essential Living Fund does not duplicate support provided by other agencies.

See **Appendix A** for a list of other schemes and funds to be considered and also the section 'Needs which are not covered by ELF'.

- The Councils Essential Living Fund budget – The ELF's budgetary position will vary throughout the financial year. Decision makers must control and manage the ELF budget so that priority needs are met first throughout the whole of the year and the allocation is not exhausted before year end.

In making a decision the decision maker should:

- Clearly and fully document the reason for their decision.
- Always use discretion.
- Use discretion sensitively and with imagination to ensure that the objective of the scheme is promoted.
- Avoid rigid interpretation of the guidance.
- Remember that the absence of guidance applying to a particular circumstance, item or service does not mean help should be refused.
- Consider all the circumstances of a case when they determine an application.
- Consider the consequences of refusing an award.

The decision maker should ensure the reasons for their decision is fully supported by evidence and recorded in their decision.

The way in which we will provide this help could be:

- Referral to sources for recycled goods/furniture.
- Provision of fuel vouchers.

- Food Parcels – by the issuing of a food bank referral.
- Signposting or providing advice and information.

This list is not exhaustive.

The groups of people most likely to require help from an ELF are:

- Frail elderly people.
- People with learning difficulties.
- People with mental health problems.
- People with a physical impairment, including those with sensory impairment.
- Chronically sick people/Terminally ill people.
- People who have (or still do), misuse alcohol, drugs or other substances.
- People released from prison or youth offending institute.
- Young people leaving Local Authority care or special residential schools.
- Families with complex needs or living in difficult circumstances.

This list is not exhaustive.

5. How Much to Award

An ELF award may be for a single item or expense or a number of items and expenses added together.

Decision makers should bear in mind that the scheme is cash limited. Paying more than the applicants needs would mean there is less funding for other applications. The ELF budgetary position may vary throughout the financial year. Decision makers must control and manage the ELF budget so that priority needs are met first throughout the whole of the year and the allocation is not exhausted before year end.

Therefore irrelevant of what the applicant requests the decision maker is advised to:

- Use, as appropriate, the agreed suppliers for the provision of certain items.
- If not using the prescribed suppliers, use national high street chain retailers and/or national catalogue outlets that are available locally to determine the amount to be awarded when awarding for furniture and household equipment, clothing and footwear.
- Make the best use of the ELF funding by awarding the lowest prices where that will still meet the applicants needs.
- Consider the use of Discretionary Housing payments (DHP) where appropriate.

6. Eligibility

To claim an ELF the applicant must be aged 16 or over and a 'resident' in Bromsgrove District Council area and on a low income or with little or no resources. For the purpose of this scheme 'resident' means someone who lives in a property in the Bromsgrove District Council area or are accessing services such as the Job Centre as if a resident of the area.

When assessing an applicant's entitlement to an ELF the amount of resources the applicant has available to them should be taken into account.

Resources include

- Capital assets.
- Earnings.
- Any other income.
- Cash in hand.
- Funds in banks, building societies, post office or credit union accounts.
- Any sources of credit such as cash cards, store cards, credit cards, overdraft facilities or loan schemes (unless they are receiving Income Based Jobseekers Allowance, Income related Employment and Support Allowance, Income Support or Pension Credit)
- Help which might be available from any other source to meet or partly meet the need if there is a realistic expectation that help would be available in time such as charities and benevolent funds, friends and family.

The decision maker can disregard certain resources where it would be reasonable to do so, for example, Housing Benefit and Council Tax Reduction could be disregarded as they are intended for use in covering rent and council tax charges.

The following people are ineligible from claiming for an ELF:

- People in care homes or hospital – unless they are due to be released within the next 6 weeks and are applying for an ELF grant to help them set up in the Community. See further guidance below.
- People who are members of and fully maintained by a religious order.
- Prisoners – unless they are due to be released within the next 6 weeks and are applying for an ELF to help them set up in the Community. See further guidance below.
- People in education – except those that receive Income Support, Income Based Jobseekers Allowance or Income Related Employment and Support Allowance or Pension Credit OR those who do not have access to the Student Loans and Grants intended to help with living costs whilst a student.

- People who fail the Habitual Residency Test / Subject to Immigration Control i.e. those that have no recourse to public funds.

Help people establish in the community following a stay in an institution, care home, Local Authority care, hostel, prison or similar.

Examples of accommodation this refers to are:

- Hospitals.
- Care homes.
- Hostels for homeless people, alcohol misusers or drug misusers.
- Prisons and Youth Offender Institutions.
- Foster Care.
- Staffed Group Homes.
- Supported Lodgings.
- Staff intensive sheltered housing providing a substantial level of personal care.

This list is not exhaustive.

Each case must be looked at as an individual case; as even residents within the same hostel may receive a different level of support

An ELF may also be awarded if an applicant moves to a larger or more suitable accommodation so that they, or a member of their family can take care of a person discharged from institutional or residential care who will be living in the same household and is unable to live freely in the community without some provision of care under this rule.

This could include people who have been without a settled way of life and have been placed in accommodation as part of a planned resettlement programme.

Help people remain in the community rather than enter an institution or care home in which they will receive care

There does not need to be an immediate threat of being taken into care for a payment to be made. The award should however be ensuring the applicants independent life in the community will improve and the risk of admission will lessen.

The ELF award may help to improve an applicant's existing living conditions with the provision of certain goods or enable them to move to accommodation which is more suitable, for example by providing them with furniture if moving from a furnished to an unfurnished property.

An ELF award could also be claimed under this rule for applicants who are moving nearer to relatives/close friends who will provide support OR applicants moving nearer or into the house of a vulnerable person to provide support. The decision maker should try and check that the new care arrangement is meant to be permanent by talking informally the person who will be providing the care. If that is not possible they could seek advice from other interested parties such as the Social Services Department. The decision maker should have particular regard to the nature, extent and urgency of the need.

Ease Exceptional Pressures On People And Their Families

All families, especially those on low incomes, face pressures at various times so that in itself is not a reason to award an ELF payment. However, they may be awarded to ease exceptional pressures on a family, i.e. circumstances which put a family under greater pressure than might normally be associated with low income.

Examples of exceptional pressure could be:

- The breakdown of a relationship (especially where domestic violence is involved) – this is for when a relationship has recently ended. However the decision maker should give consideration to what happened since the relationship broke down; for example if the applicant had spent time in a refuge or other temporary accommodation until permanent accommodation could be found it could still be considered despite the fact the relationship had not recently ended. It will not normally be appropriate to make an ELF award more than once for the breakdown of the same relationship.
- The onset of or deterioration in, a disability of a member of the family. This could include repair or replacement of items damaged by the behavioural problems within the family or where new or better items are needed since the deterioration occurred
- Sudden domestic upheaval imposed by an unforeseen calamity such as a house fire, natural disaster such as flooding

Help people who are unable to meet their immediate short term needs either in an emergency in relation to some expenses or as a consequence of a disaster.

This is referred to as help with 'general living expenses'. Any need that would be expected to last more than 14 days is not 'short term'.

Examples of when this would apply include:

- An unexpected disaster. A disaster is an event of great or sudden misfortune or sudden calamitous event. Examples being flooding, gas explosion, chemical leak or fire.
- Had an emergency which is defined as a situation which caused them to have a pressing need or unforeseen circumstance either of which requires immediate remedy or action, and the expense of that has left them with no funds to live on.

There is no provision within the scheme to assist people:

- In the situation where their money has been lost or stolen. The applicant must accept some personal responsibility for taking care with their monies
- Affected by the Governments Welfare Reform Programme, unless the Decision Maker feels they meet an exception and fit the other eligibility criteria as above
- Affected by delays with the Department for Work and Pensions processing benefit applications, unless a short term benefit advance has been applied for and refused AND they meet the other eligibility criteria as above

The Decision Maker must give consideration to the resources the applicant still has available to them. See the section on 'Eligibility' for more.

7. Number of Awards and Repeat Applications

For help with furniture, furnishings, household equipment, clothing, footwear and other items not covered under the title of 'general living expenses' it will not normally be appropriate to make an award for the same expense if it has been less than 12 months since the last application. Unless the applicant has had a relevant change in circumstances that require them to reapply for the same expense – for example an application is made and agreed for a bed, the bed is destroyed in a house fire and the applicant applies for another bed.

For help with 'general living expenses' an award is at the discretion of the decision maker. If an applicant makes multiple claims under this rule the decision maker should take account of what the applicant will do and has done to resolve the issues that have caused them to claim. Ultimately the maximum number of awards allowed will be no more than 3 in any 12 month rolling period.

An exception to this could be made in extreme circumstances at the discretion of the decision maker. So long as the claim is not in consequence of an act or omission for which the applicant or their partner is responsible, or could have taken reasonable

steps to avoid an example of an applicant causing the emergency is having no money because they have gambled or misspent it.

An emergency generally means a situation causing the applicant to have a pressing need or unforeseen circumstance either of which requires immediate remedy or action.

A disaster is an event of great or sudden misfortune or sudden calamitous event.

Examples being flooding, gas explosion, chemical leak or fire.

Needs which are covered by the Essential Living Fund

- Furniture – such as a bed, settee, armchair, wardrobe, table.
- Furnishings – such as curtains, bedding, curtain poles.
- Household Equipment – such as a cooker, fridge, washing machine.
- Clothing and Footwear.
- General Living Expenses – these are day to day living expenses such as groceries, nappies, toiletries, cleaning/hygiene products which will be provided by a food bank referral, vouchers to use in pay as you go fuel meters.

Needs which are NOT covered by the Essential Living Fund

- Maternity Expenses as covered by the Sure Start Maternity Grant which is designed to pay for the immediate needs of a new baby.
- Funeral Expenses as covered by the Funeral Payment regulated element of the Social Fund Scheme.
- Needs and costs which the Local Authority has a statutory duty to meet, for example the Disabled Facilities Grant.
- Repairs and improvements (both the cost of materials and labour) to the dwelling occupied as the home, including any garage, garden and outbuilding.
- A need which occurs outside the UK.
- An educational or training need including clothing and tools, distinctive school uniform or sports clothes for use at school or equipment to be used at school.
- Travelling Expenses.
- Expenses in connection with court (legal proceedings) such as legal fees, court fees, fines, costs, damages, subsistence or travelling expenses.
- Removal or Storage Charges.
- Domestic assistance and respite care.
- A medical, surgical, optical, aural or dental item or service.
- Work related expenses.

- Debts to government departments.
- Investments.
- Costs of purchasing, renting or installing a telephone and of any call charges.
- Council Tax and Rent.
- Items which can be met by the award of a Discretionary Housing Payment.

8. Applications

The date of a written application to the Essential Living Fund is the date it is received by the Councils offices.

Applications can be made:

- On a form approved by the Council in accordance with instructions on the form.
- By letter if sufficient information is included.
- By telephone.

An application that does not meet the requirements as above will be deemed defective.

However, the application could be treated as made on the date it was originally received if the applicant complies with any request made to supply further information as necessary.

The normal time limit allowed to provide any further information requested will be 1 calendar month. This can be extended where it is reasonable to do so.

Telephone Applications

An applicant will be able to make a claim for 'general living expenses' by telephone.

Where a need is to be met, they must agree to the terms and conditions but will not need to do so in writing. They will be informed that if they require immediate support that they will have to attend a designated office/building at a designated time with sufficient proof of identity to confirm their statement.

Where the decision is negative they will be informed by telephone and will also receive by post a full written confirmation of the decision with a right to review.

9. Evidence

It is the applicant's responsibility to provide all the evidence necessary to determine an application.

By minimum requirement all applications will need supporting evidence of bank statements detailing the last 2 months transactions and balances.

Where it is necessary to seek further information to clarify an aspect of the application this could be done by either:

- Contacting the applicant.
- Checking departmental records.
- Contacting a third party where appropriate, and either permission is given or the data protection laws would allow.
- Arranging for clarification to be provided at a pre-award visit.

Evidence can be documentary, verbal or physical. It may be derived from such sources as:

- The current application form.
- Supporting documents and correspondence.
- Telephone or interview records.
- A record of observations on visit.
- Previous applications.
- Computer systems.
- Local knowledge.

Evidence may be provided by, for example:

- Applicants and/or their representatives.
- Social workers.
- Probation officers.
- Medical doctors.
- Housing departments.
- Landlords.
- Decision makers.

Exceptionally, it may be appropriate to ask the applicant for any supporting evidence they may have, such as relevant evidence of a medical condition, e.g existing doctors note or a letter from a hospital.

If the evidence provided is inconsistent, improbable or contradictory, the applicant should be given the opportunity to clarify or comment on any aspect of the evidence that is causing doubt.

The decision maker should ask for as much supporting evidence from the applicant for validation as is reasonable and necessary to substantiate the application but should **not**:

- Ask for evidence which would incur any expense to the applicant.
- Insist that the applicant provides supporting evidence, particularly from a third party.

If the applicant does not provide the requested evidence then a decision should be made based on the completed application and any other evidence already held.

10. Reviewing A Decision

Applicants can request a review of ELF decision if they disagree. They must do this in writing within one month of the date they are notified of the decision. The applicant must sign the review request letter.

Late requests will be considered at the discretion of the Decision Maker where he/she considers that there were good reasons for the delay.

If a review is requested regarding the decision this will be looked at by a member of the Benefits Management Team who will then determine the final decision.

APPENDIX A

Other Grants/ Funds/ Schemes for consideration in the award of an ELF:

- The Prison Service is responsible for ensuring a discharged prisoner has suitable and adequate clothing (Prison Services Manual V). This is for both convicted prisoners upon release and prisoners held on remand (if their own is not fit to wear). It is therefore recommended that the Decision Maker checks with the prison/probation services if the application is for clothing. The normal rule is the applicant should have a change of clothing and sufficient protective clothing.

The ex-prisoner may also be given a travel warrant to pay for travel back home or anywhere else in the British Isles or Republic of Ireland where they are going to settle down.

Most prisoners are also given a discharge grant to cover living expenses for the first week after they leave prison.

- The Family Fund – This provides discretionary grants for families caring for a severely disabled child or children aged 17 or under. It is an independent Government funded organisation registered as a charity.
- Items for severely disabled children that are the responsibility of a statutory agency such as the health authority, local government, social services, housing or education department. This would include;
 - Medical services such as equipment and continence supplies including nappies, buggies and wheelchairs – responsibility of health trusts or authorities
 - Equipment for daily living such as ramps, hoists and bath aids – responsibility of social services

- Education equipment – responsibility of Children and Learning Department.
- Benevolent Funds.
- Other sources of help as cited by websites such as **Turn to Us**.
- Maternity Expenses as covered by the Sure Start Maternity Grant which is designed to pay for the immediate needs of a new baby.
- Funeral Expenses as covered by the Funeral Payment regulated element of the Social Fund Scheme.
- Expenses which the Local Authority has a statutory duty to meet, for example the Disabled Facilities Grant.
- DWP Cold Weather or Winter Fuel Payments.
- Expenses that could be covered by the DWP Budgeting Advance if the applicant meets the qualifying conditions.
- The Short Term Benefit Advance. This is an advance of some of a claimants benefit made where they declare a financial need which may result in a serious damage to their health and/or welfare of them or their family, either at the start of a new claim or when a change means their benefit will significantly increase.
- NHS Healthy Start Scheme – provides vouchers to buy cow's milk, fresh or frozen vegetables and instant formula milk and Healthy Start vitamins. It is for people who are pregnant or have a child under 4 if they are in receipt certain means tested benefits.
- NHS Low Income Scheme – If a person has a low income they may be able to get help with the costs of prescriptions, dentists, eye care, healthcare travel, wigs and fabric supports through this scheme. The application form is available from the Job Centre, Hospital and most doctors, dentists and opticians.
- Jobcentre Flexible Support Fund – A discretionary fund where a person can claim up to £120 over the lifetime of their benefit claim with the Jobcentre for:
 - Travel warrants to attend interviews and refunds for travel costs to attend interviews
 - Clothing for interviews

Agenda Item 13

- The cost of relevant checks to work in certain industries, such as the Construction Skills Certificate Scheme (CSCS) to work on a building site

This list is not exhaustive.

APPENDIX 2

AMOUNT OF ELF FUNDING

Year	Number of Awards	Cost Of Awards
2015/16	700	£41k
2016/17	260	£9k
2017/18	227	£4k
2018/19	332	£6k

AWARDS BREAKDOWN

ELF awards	Number of awards	Food vouchers	Utility Connection Charges	Clothing	White goods	Asst items
2015						
Crisis	243	34	23	2	105	79
Support	457	176	142	3	50	86
Total	700	210	165	5	155	165
2016						
Crisis	60	15	10	1	23	11
Support	200	100	75	0	11	14
Total	260	115	85	1	34	25
2017						
Crisis	22	3	8	0	5	6
Support	205	107	80	0	4	14
Total	227	110	88	0	9	20
2018						
Crisis	8	2	6	0	0	0
Support	324	158	160	4	0	2
Total	332	160	166	4	0	2

NB – Assisted items include: repairs, bedding, internal redecoration, toiletries and prescription charges.

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BROMSGROVE DISTRICT

Cabinet

15th January 2020

COUNCIL TAX BASE CALCULATION 2020/21

Relevant Portfolio Holder	Councillor Geoff Denaro
Portfolio Holder Consulted	Yes
Relevant Head of Service	Jayne Pickering
Wards Affected	No
Ward Councillor Consulted	No
Non-Key Decision	

1. SUMMARY OF PROPOSALS

- 1.1 This reports sets out details of the calculation of the District's tax base for Council Tax setting purposes. The calculation of the Council Tax base is required as part of the determination of the level of Council Tax for 2020/21

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 **Cabinet are asked to APPROVE that:**

The amount calculated by Bromsgrove District Council as the Council Tax Base for the whole area for 2020/21 is approved at **37,208.98** as detailed at **Appendix 1** to include the individual parish elements

3. KEY ISSUES

Financial Implications

- 3.1 The calculation of the Council Tax base forms the basis of the calculation of Council Tax for the new financial year. The Council Tax Base is calculated using a prescribed formula to generate the equivalent number of Band D properties in a District and also takes into account the number of Council Tax Support claimants within the area.

Legal Implications

- 3.2 The Local Authorities (Calculation of Council Tax Base) Regulations 1992, made under powers of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 specify the rules for the calculation of the Council Tax Base.

Service/Operational Implications

- 3.3 In October 2019, form CTB1 was submitted to the Department for Communities and Local Government. This analyses the draft Valuation List of properties into the various bands and then provides further details of those properties which are subject to the full charge, those entitled to discounts and those which are exempt.

- 3.4 This report is a summary of that return updated to include any known changes since November. It also makes provision for anticipated changes which could arise for a variety of reasons such as appeals, new properties or properties falling off the list. An allowance of 1.00% has been made for non-collection of the tax.
- 3.5 The Council is required to set a Council Tax Base each year, this forms part of the process of setting the following year budget. Failure to do so will result in the Council not being a Well Managed Organisation.

Customer / Equalities and Diversity Implications

- 3.6 There are no implications for the Councils Equalities and Diversity Policies.

4. RISK MANAGEMENT

- 4.1 There are no risk management issues.

5. APPENDICES

Appendix 1 - Council Tax Base Calculation for 2020/21

6. BACKGROUND PAPERS

Held within Revenue Services

AUTHOR OF REPORT

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Tel: 01527 881643

BROMSGROVE DISTRICT

Cabinet

15th January 2020

APPENDIX 1

Schedule of Council Tax Base by Parish Areas 2020/21

	£
Unparished	13,914.54
Alvechurch	2,322.37
Barnt Green	1,024.47
Belbroughton	1,209.47
Bentley Pauncefoot	192.70
Beoley	452.69
Bourneheath	216.93
Catshill and North Marlbrook	2,361.74
Clent	545.22
Cofton Hackett	1,088.55
Dodford with Grafton	404.24
Finstall	315.70
Frankley	49.23
Hagley	3,186.79
Lickey and Blackwell	2,108.95
Hunnington	237.16
Romsley	666.48
Parish of Stoke	1,763.20
Tutnall and Cobley	363.98
Wythall	4,784.57
Total for whole area	37,208.98

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CABINET

15th January 2020

Finance Monitoring Quarter 2 2019/20

Relevant Portfolio Holder	Councillor Geoff Denaro Portfolio Holder for Finance and Enabling Services
Relevant Head of Service	Jayne Pickering, Executive Director Finance and Corporate Resources
Non-Key Decision	

1. Purpose and Summary

- 1.1 To report to Cabinet on the Council's financial position for both Revenue and Capital for the period April 2019 – September 2019.

2. Recommendations

That Cabinet is asked to resolve

- 2.1 That Cabinet note the current financial position in relation to revenue and capital budgets for the period April 2019 – September 2019 as detailed in the report.

That Cabinet recommend to Council

- 2.2 Approval of an increase in the 2019-20 revenue budget of **£50k** for Development Management due to receipt of a planning enforcement grant from Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government. (3.5 below)
- 2.3 Approval of the reprofiling of the capital programme due to officers completing a full review of the Capital budget for 2019/20 – 2022/23. (Appendix 4)

3. Revenue budgets

- 3.1 This report provides details of the financial performance of the Council. The purpose of this report is to ensure officers and members have relevant information to consider the overall financial position of the Council. The report reflects the finances across all of the Strategic Purposes to enable Members to be aware of the level of funding attributed to each area and how this compares to budget. The summary at 3.4 shows the financial position for revenue funding for the period April 2019 – September 2019.
- 3.2 Financial reports are sent to budget holders on a monthly basis. As part of this process a detailed review is undertaken with support from the finance team to ensure that all issues are considered and significant savings or cost pressures are addressed. This report aims to focus on the key variances from budgets to ensure that these are addressed appropriately during the year.

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- 3.3 The £11.837m original budget as included in the table below is made up of the budget approved in February 2019 of £11.676m, which is then adjusted to reflect the approved transfers from reserves of £159k held in Corporate Financing.
- 3.4 In addition the revised 2019-20 budget of £12.008m includes transfers to/from reserves of £374k which is shown in appendix 1, use of balances of £21k along with savings virements of £224k (total savings is £376k of which £152k is within corporate financing).

Revenue Budget summary
Financial Year 2019/20 – Overall Council

Please note figures have been rounded

Strategic Purpose	Original Budget 2019/20 £'000	Revised budget 2019/20 £'000	Budget to date 2019/20 £'000	Actuals to date 2019/20 £'000	Variance to date 2019/20 £'000	Projected Outturn 2019/20 £'000	Projected Variance 2019/20 £'000
Keep my place safe and looking good	4,492	4,404	1,334	1,127	-208	4,100	-304
Help me run a successful business	-506	-535	-240	-240	19	-510	14
Help me be financially independent	231	239	907	929	22	251	12
Help me to live my life independently	-58	-60	-160	-160	0	-67	-7
Help me find somewhere to live in my locality	677	880	506	497	-10	868	-12
Provide Good things for me to see, do and visit	684	755	364	391	28	713	-42
Enable others to work/do what they need to do (to meet their purpose)	6,318	6,324	3,686	3,528	-158	6,010	-314
Total	11,837	12,008	6,378	6,072	-306	11,356	-654
Corporate Financing	-11,837	-12,008	-9,980	-10,033	-52	-12,039	-30
Grand Total	0	0	-3,602	-3,961	-359	-684	-684

Financial Commentary:

There are a number of variances across the strategic purposes. The summary above shows the overall 2019/20 revenue position for the Council and the main variations are as a result of:

Keep my place safe and looking good (£210k saving)

These budgets include those relating mainly to environmental services, planning, CCTV and other activities to deliver against the purpose ensuring an area is both safe and attractive for the community.

The variance position is explained as below:

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15th January 2020

- There are savings within Building Control due to salary vacancies projected **£20k** by the end of the financial year 2019/20.
- Development Control has received a number of large applications during the first half of the financial year 2019/20. It is therefore projected that the budget will be exceeded **£98k**.
- The town centre development service has been in receipt of additional monies for prior years claims due to revisions into the claimable amounts **£152k**.
- Trees and woodland management also have salary savings while the service is under review to possible use the funding towards external providers **£72k**

Help me run a successful business (£14k over budget)

The budgets within the strategic purpose include economic development, car parking, all licenses and costs associated with the town and other centres within the District.

- There is a projected overspend within car parks **£36k**, due to increased cash collections being required.
- There is a slight underspend within Economic & Tourism Development due to savings on supplies and services budgets not being required **£16k**

Help me be financially independent (£12k over budget)

The strategic purpose includes all costs relating to the support of benefits and the administration and delivery of Council Tax services and business rates in the District.

- There are no individual material variances in the quarter 2 to report.

Help me to live my life independently (£7k saving)

There are a number of budgets relating to the delivery of the strategic purpose including; Lifeline, Community Transport and Disabled Facilities Grants.

- There are no individual material variances in the quarter 2 to report.

Help me find somewhere to live in my locality (£12k saving)

The costs associated with homeless prevention, housing strategy and land charges are all included in the strategic purpose.

- There are no individual material variances in the quarter 1 to report.

Provide Good things for me to see, do and visit (£42k saving)

The majority of budgets within this purpose relate to Leisure and Culture services.

- There is an underspend of **£12k** within Parks and Events on general supplies and services.
- Sports and Arts Development has a small underspend due to a staff vacancy which has now been filled **£11k**.

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Enable others to work/do what they need to do (to meet their purpose) (£314k saving)

All support services and corporate overheads are held within the enabling purpose. These include; IT, HR, Finance, Management team and other support costs.

- There is currently a saving forecast within CMT due to salary savings. This is subject to change depending on the outcome of the review of the Senior Management Team **£85k**.
- Customer Service Centre, Democratic Services & Member Support, Financial Support and Professional Legal Advice & Services also have salary savings due to vacancies. Whilst some posts will be filled in the financial year the remaining savings will show as a projected underspend **£135k** for 2019/20.
- Facilities Management has underspends on supplies and services budgets not yet spent. This is forecast to have a projected saving by year end **£34k**.

Corporate Financing (£30k saving)

- There is a variance in corporate financing due to borrowing costs not being as much as expected due to the spending profile of the capital programme in the first quarter of the year **£30k**

3.5 Planning Enforcement Grant

The Request for the approval of an increase in the 2019-20 revenue budget of **£50k** for Development Management is due to receipt of a planning enforcement grant from Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government.

The Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government has confirmed that payment will be made on 14 November 2019.

The monies are ring-fenced to Development Management. A monitoring report will need to be sent in to the Government Agency in due course that will detail how the monies have been spent in accordance with the bid terms and conditions.

4. Savings Monitoring

- 4.1 The medium term financial plan included £332k of savings identified to be delivered during 2019/20 the breakdown of these savings is attached at appendix 2. £166k of these identified savings are in relation to a vacancy factor.

To quarter 2 £181k of the savings have been realised against the budgeted April 2019 to June 2019 savings of £166k.

In addition to the above officers have been required to find further savings throughout the financial year 2019/20. At quarter 1 savings were found of £542k, £166k of these were allocated to the vacancy factor target. The remainder £376k have therefore been returned to balances. At quarter 2 officers have found another £16k these will be also be vired off the relevant services to be returned to working balances by quarter 3.

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15th January 2020

5. Cash Management

- 5.1 The financial position in relation to borrowing at the start and end of the financial is shown in the table below:

Date	£m	Position
As at 31 st March 2019 (Actual)	13.5	Borrowing
As at 30 th September 2019	3.0	Borrowing

5.2 Borrowing

Outstanding as at the 30th September 2019 are £3.0m in short term borrowing with associated borrowing costs of £1k due to the flexible way debt is managed during the period.

An interest payable budget had been set of £133k for 2019/20 due to expenditure relating to current capital projects.

5.3 Investments

At 30th September 2019 there were £2m investments held.

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15th January 2020

6. Capital Budgets

**Capital Budget summary
Financial Year 2019/20 – Overall Council**

Please note figures have been rounded

Strategic Purpose	Original Budget 2019/20 £'000	Revised budget 2019/20 £'000	Budget to date 2019/20 £'000	Actuals to date 2019/20 £'000	Variance to date 2019/20 £'000	Projected Outturn 2019/20 £'000	Projected Variance 2019/20 £'000
Keep my place safe and looking good	3,385	6,328	3,164	2,234	-929	4,473	-1,855
Help me run a successful business	0	300	150	150	0	300	0
Help me to live my life independently	950	1,333	838	795	-43	1,223	-110
Provide good things for me to see, do and visit	170	1,507	704	582	-122	1,437	-70
Enable others to work/do what they need to do (to meet their purpose)	10	479	240	131	-109	300	-179
Totals	4,515	9,947	5,096	3,892	-1,203	7,733	-2,213

Finance commentary:

Keep my place safe and looking good

- The main variances for this strategic purpose relate to the following projects;
 - The majority of projects have commenced and are projected to be completed by the end of the financial year 2019/20.
 - The Vehicle replacement programme, Cemetery Extension infrastructure at North Bromsgrove Cemetery Phase Two and Replacement parking machines have had a full review by officers and it has been requested that the budgets are reprofiled into future years. See appendix 4.

Help me run a successful business

- The project for this strategic purpose relates to the OLEV/ULEV Taxi infrastructure scheme which is expected to be completed by the end of the financial year.

Help me to live my life independently

- The small variance relates to Energy Efficiency Installation and Home Repairs Assistance projects. The energy advice service has been procured and is due to commence on July 1st 2019 until March

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31st 2022. Discretionary home repairs assistance will hopefully begin uptake within the second half of 2019/20.

Provide Good things for me to see, do and visit

- The small underspend here relates to the s106 project re-landscaping of Recreation ground – this is currently going through the tender/procurement process and is likely to commence towards the last end of the last quarter of 2019/20 and may possibly be requested to be reprofiled into the beginning of 2020/21.

Enable others to work/do what they need to do (to meet their purpose)

- The variance for this strategic purpose relates to the New Finance Enterprise System in Financial services which has now commenced. The project is expected to be completed by September 2020 and a request may be made to reprofile some of the budget into the first quarter of 2020/21.

7. Earmarked Reserves

- 7.1 The position as at 30th June 2019/20 is shown in Appendix 1. This also details the planned use of the reserves for the future budget years 2020/21 and 2021/22.

8. General Fund Balances

- 8.1 The General Fund Balance as at the 31st March 2019 is £4.926m. A balanced budget was approved in February 2019 to include identified savings which have been built into individual budget allocations. This also included a planned use of balances for 2019/20 of £946k towards the demolition of the Dolphin centre and building of associated car parking.

Due to the virement of savings at quarter 2 of £376k back to balances along with planned use, the current level of balances will therefore be £4.335m.

9. Legal Implications

- 9.1 No Legal implications have been identified.

10. Service/Operational Implications

- 10.1 Managers meet with finance officers on a monthly basis to consider the current financial position and to ensure actions are in place to mitigate any overspends.

11. Risk Management

CABINET

15th January 2020

11.1 Effective budget monitoring supports any risks associated with the Council.

APPENDICES

Appendix 1 - Earmarked Reserves 2019/20

Appendix 2 - Savings Monitoring 2019/20

Appendix 3 – Capital reprofiling

AUTHOR OF REPORT

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FINANCIAL RESERVES STATEMENT 2019/20

Appendix 1

Please note these figures have been rounded

Description	Balance b/fwd 1/4/2019	Budgeted Release 2019/20	Revised Balance b/fwd 1/4/2019	Transfers in existing reserve 2019/20	Transfers out existing reserve 2019/20	New Reserve 2019/20	C/fwd 31/3/2020	Planned use for 2020/21 Budget	Planned use for 2021/22 Budget	Comment
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	
Building Control	(7)	0	(7)	0	0	0	(7)	0	0	To Fund the mobile working project
Building Control Partnership	(61)	0	(61)	0	0	(18)	(80)	0	0	Partnership income has to be reinvested back in to the service.
Commercialism	(33)	0	(33)	0	2	0	(31)	0	0	To help fund costs in relation to commercialism projects
Community Services	(31)	0	(31)	0	31	0	0	0	0	To help towards a district network feasibility study
Economic Regeneration	(476)	150	(326)	0	0	0	(326)	150	150	To fund the Economic Development opportunities across the District
Election Services	(88)	0	(88)	(13)	0	0	(101)	50	0	To support the delivery of individual electoral registration and to set aside a reserve for potential refunds to government
Environmental Services	(8)	0	(8)	0	6	0	(2)	0	0	To help towards the unauthorised trespass prevention scheme, Tree works, and single use plastic project within the district
Financial Services	(179)	0	(179)	0	0	0	(179)	0	0	A number of reserves / grants have been set aside to support residents through the changes to welfare reform
Corporate Financing	(3,441)	0	(3,441)	0	0	0	(3,441)	0	0	The reserve has been created to offset the loss on Business rates collection and appeals in 2019/20.
Housing Schemes	(511)	0	(511)	0	181	0	(330)	0	0	To support the feasibility and implementation of housing schemes across the district
ICT/Systems	(164)	11	(152)	0	0	0	(152)	0	0	To provide for replacement ICT systems
Leisure/Community Safety	(266)	0	(266)	0	155	0	(111)	0	0	Grant received and reserves set aside to support a number of leisure and well being schemes across the District
Local Development Framework	(31)	0	(31)	0	31	0	0	0	0	To fund the costs associated with the Core Strategy
Local Neighbourhood Partnerships	(16)	0	(16)	0	0	0	(16)	0	0	Grant received in relation to liveability schemes
Other	(86)	0	(86)	0	0	0	(86)	0	0	To support apprentices, set up costs and other general reserves
Planning	(30)	0	(30)	0	0	0	(30)	0	0	To support apprentices, set up costs and other general reserves
Regulatory Services (Partner Share)	(38)	0	(38)	0	0	0	(38)	0	0	BDC Share of WRS grant related reserves
Shared Services Agenda	(311)	0	(311)	0	0	0	(311)	0	0	To fund potential redundancy and other shared costs
Grand Total	(5,777)	161	(5,615)	(13)	406	(18)	(5,241)	200	150	

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Department	Strategic Purpose	Description of saving	2019-20 £'000	April - Sept 19/20	Comments	Quarter 2			
						On target Y/N	Additional (add to to in yr savings) £'000	below target Y/N	Pressure £'000
Community Services	Help me to live my life independently	Additional Income from new contract with Cannock Chase Council	-60	-30	New SLA with Cannock	Y			
Community Services	Help me to live my life independently	Additional Income from new contract with Cannock Chase Council - SLA with Cannock	-20	-10	New SLA with Cannock	Y			
Corporate Services	Enabling	New Print Contract	-29	-15	Savings realised on procurement of new print contract	Y			
Corporate Services	Enabling	Car Mileage	-2	-1	Reduction in Car Mileage	Y			
Corporate Services	Enabling	Community Group Funding	-5	-3	Budget has decreased due to the impact of the New Homes Bonus scheme reducing	Y			
Environmental Services	Keep my place safe & looking good	Review of budget allocations	-15	-8	Reductions in various materials, equipment & vehicle R&M budgets	Y			
Legal & Democratic	Help me find somewhere to live in my locality	Review of budget allocations within Land charges	-2	-1	Budget no longer required	Y			
Legal & Democratic	Enabling	Additional income on external legal work	-7	-4		Y			
Customer Services & Financial Support	Enabling	Reduction in operational budgets	-26	-13		Y			
Corporate Services	Enabling	Vacancy Management	-166	-83	2% on any employee that does not require agency cover	Y	-15		
			-332	-166			-15		0

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Description	Department	Funding	Re-profiling from 19/20 programme	2019/20 Total	Re-profiling from 19/20 programme	2020/21 Total	Re-profiling from 19/20 programme	2021/22 Total	Re-profiling from 19/20 programme	2022/23 Total	2023/24 Total
Fleet Replacement	Environmental Services	Capital Receipts/Borrowing	-1,708,771	451,000	318,000	1,184,000	45,000	481,000	383,000	1,591,000	0
Cemetery Extension infrastructure at at North Bromsgrove Cemetery Phase Two	Environmental Services	Capital Receipts/Borrowing	-25,016	0	8,000	8,000	7,500	7,500	6,500	6,500	0
Replacement Parking machines	Environmental Services	Capital Receipts/Borrowing	-120,000	0	120,000	120,000		0		0	0

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CABINET

15TH JANUARY 2020

MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL PLAN 2020/21 – 2023/24

Relevant Portfolio Holder	Councillor Geoff Denaro Portfolio Holder for Finance and Enabling Services
Relevant Head of Service	Jayne Pickering, Executive Director Finance and Corporate Resources
Non-Key Decision	

1. SUMMARY OF PROPOSALS

1.1 At Cabinet on the 26th February 2020 a recommendation will be made to Full Council on the Council tax resolutions for 2020/21. This report outlines the issues faced by the Council and delegates to officers to investigate ways to achieve a balanced budget for Cabinet to consider.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 Cabinet is asked to **RECOMMEND** to Council the approval of £75k from balances to provide funding towards the District Heating Feasibility Study forward to Detailed Project Development (DPD) Phase. The detailed report is attached at Appendix 1.
- 2.2 Cabinet is asked to note the current medium term financial plan gap and to request officers continue to review the position to enable a balanced budget to be presented to Council on the 26^h February.

3. KEY ISSUES

Financial Implications

3.1 The Council's Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) provides the framework within which the revenue and capital spending decisions can be made. For 2020/21 a 4 year plan is proposed to 2023/24. The plan addresses how the Council will provide financial funding to the Strategic Purposes and ensure residents receive quality services to meet their needs in the future. The Purposes that drive the financial considerations are :

- Affordable & sustainable homes
- Provide good things for me to see, do and visit
- Living independent, active & healthy lives
- Run & Grow a successful business
- Work and financial independence
- Communities which are safe, well maintained and green

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- 3.2 The Council must be mindful when setting the 4 year plan to ensure that savings are robust and deliverable and that the longer term financial sustainability of the Council is considered. It is accepted that there are many uncertainties in relation to Local Government funding over the next 4 years but the aim of the Council must be to consider the future plans and funding requirements to enable as clear a position as possible to be presented to the Council.
- 3.3 When reviewing the budget projections officers consider the impact of demand on service and the costs associated with this demand. This may result in additional costs (associated with maintaining current service delivery) or reductions in anticipated income revenue over the next 4 years.
- 3.4 Over the last 12 months the Finance and Budget Scrutiny working group, as established by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee has met on a regular basis to review costs, fees and charges and the capital programme and have made a number of recommendations to Cabinet.
- 3.5 Officers have factored in a number of assumptions into the Medium Term Financial Plan to update it in line with revised calculations and information from officers and Government. The current position is based on the final Financial Settlement as published on 20th December 2019. There remains detailed analysis to be undertaken on the impact of the Business Rates Pool across Worcestershire and this will be factored into the final report to February.
- 3.6 The table below demonstrates the changes in the financial projections and budget gap for 2020/21- 2023/24 based on the original estimation of a £678k gap as presented in February 2019. Following the table there are explanations of the reasons for the changes resulting in a slight surplus of £29k for 2020/21 with a 4 year shortfall of £2.6m.

	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24
	£000	£000	£000	£000
Starting Gap at 19/20 budget round	678	1,119	1,271	1,271
Incremental Progression (Salaries) /Inflation on Utilities	191	250	271	457
Unavoidable Pressures - Departments	421	333	289	45
Revenue Bids/Revenue impact of capital bids - Departments	220	129	76	47
Savings and Additional income - Departments	-380	-547	-616	-687
Reduction to pension deficit payments	-436	-409	-380	-409
Net Revenue Budget Requirement	694	875	911	724
Reserves to be released	0	-209	0	0
Transfer to pension reserve	200	0	0	0
MRP, interest and investment income	-159	-72	39	172
Council Tax - change to 2%	22	145	211	-101
New Homes Bonus (NHB)	-589	0	0	295
Collection Fund surplus	-166	0	0	0
Discount on advanced pension payment	-31	-103	-174	0
Funding position	-723	-240	76	365
Remaining Gap to find	-29	635	987	1,089

Changes from original assumptions re 2020/21

3.7 Additional pay and inflation on utilities £191k

This reflects the additional costs of the pay inflation at 2% above that initially estimated of 1% (£175k). In addition there is a cost included for additional utility charges of £16k.

3.8 Unavoidable Costs £421k

When proposing the budget officers have also identified a number of budget pressures that have been deemed “unavoidable”. Unavoidable includes the ongoing effects of pressures identified during 2019/20 together with any issues that have been raised as fundamental to maintaining service provision as part of the budget process. The £421k includes £320k to provide funding for the evidence base for the Local Plan review (assumed to be £200-220 p.a.), plus funding for Independent Highways advice, assumed to diminish year on year from approx £100k p.a. to £50k p.a., to zero.

3.9 Bids and Revenue Implications of Capital Projects £220k

In addition to the unavoidable pressures revenue bids have been identified. Bids relate to new funding requests made by officers to improve service delivery or to realise future efficiencies. The current bids for 2020/21 of £220k include funding required to prepare a comprehensive parks and

open spaces strategy and additional staffing required to support the transition of the land charges service to Central Government.

3.10 **Savings/ additional income -£380k**

Officers have undertaken full reviews of income generated and expenditure budgets and have identified £334k in reducing spend and £46k additional income. These include:

- Management Review £54k
- Insurance contract retender £130k
- Service Reviews £75k
- Garden waste income £25k

3.11 **Pension Deficit Reduction - £436k**

Following an actuarial review of pension liabilities the provision required for funding of historic deficits has reduced significantly due to improved investment returns and previous Council contributions to pay off the deficit.

3.12 **Pension Reserve £200k**

Due to the nature of investment funds it is proposed that a risk reserve is set aside of £200k to provide for any volatility in the pension contributions in the future.

3.13 **MRP, interest and investment income (-£159k)**

A full review of all capital projects and investment opportunities has been undertaken with a significant saving realised for future years. This has no impact on the capital programme delivery for the future and the detailed programme will be presented to Members in February 2020.

3.14 **Council Tax £22k**

It was assumed that the Council would be allowed to increase Council Tax by up to 2.99% without the need for a referendum. This has been revised to 2% or £5 whichever is the greater as part of the final settlement. It is proposed that a £5 increase is included in the budget for the February meeting. There is still a cost to the Council in 2020/21 of £22k.

3.15 **New Homes Bonus (NHB) (£-589k)**

It was assumed that New Homes Bonus would not continue into 2020/21. The provisional settlement received by the Council stated that NHB would be payable for 2020/21 but only for one year and with no legacy payments. The £589k is therefore a significant improvement to the budget position and will result in £70k for community funding.

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3.16 CT Surplus -£166k

This is the estimated surplus based on the latest 2019/20 collection fund information

3.17 Discount on advanced pension payment -£31k

By paying the pension fund payments in advance a saving can be made of £31k to the Council.

3.18 **Future Years**

Assumptions have been made in the financial plan for the following years including :

- No further New Homes Bonus payments to be made. As Members will be aware this is a significant income stream to the Council
- Additional costs of borrowing for the capital programme
- Further reductions in the cost of enabling services by 1% per annum

3.19 The current 4 year shortfall is £2.6m compared with £4.4m at the beginning of the financial year. It is clear that significant savings and reductions in expenditure need to be identified for the medium term financial plan to be delivered within the current funding levels. Officers are working with colleagues to ensure the impact of the fair funding review and other changes to Government financial distribution are considered for future years.

3.20 General Fund

3.20.1 The level of the general fund balance is £4.9m with planned release of £600k in 2019/20. It is assumed that the release may not be required due to the current level of savings at quarter 2 and projected for the financial year 2019/20 as reported separately to this meeting. The minimum level of balances recommended is £1.1m.

3.21 **Capital Programme**

3.21.1 The Capital Programme has been fully reviewed and significant changes have been made to reduce the level of spending whilst ensuring schemes are provided to the Council. The revised programme will be considered in February when setting the Council Tax.

4 **Legal Implications**

4.1 As part of the budget and the Council Tax approval process, the Council is required by the Local Government Finance Act 1992 to make specific calculations and decisions in approving a balanced budget for the following financial year and setting the Council Tax Level. These will be included in the report to Cabinet and Council in February.

5 **Service / Operational Implications**

- 5.1 The MTFP will enable services to be maintained and, where achievable, improvements to the community.

6 **Customer / Equalities and Diversity Implications**

- 6.1 Any impact on the customer of savings over the 4 years period will be managed via impact assessments and in discussion and consultation with the customer as to the most effective and supportive way of managing reductions in funding and potentially service delivery.

7 **RISK MANAGEMENT**

- 7.1 To mitigate the risks associated with the financial pressures facing the Authority regular monitoring reports are presented to both officers and Members to enable proactive action being undertaken to address any areas of concern. Risks include:
- Reductions in government funding leading to a reduction in the level of services delivered to the public
 - Reductions in business rates income as a result of appeals or reduction in the rateable value leading to a lower level of income for the Council.
 - Identification of sufficient and ongoing revenue savings to deliver a balanced budget.
 - Allocation of sufficient resources to meet the needs of service delivery and the Councils priorities.
 - Maintain adequate revenue and capital balances as identified in the MTFP to ensure financial stability.

The regular financial monitoring by Officers and Cabinet will provide a framework to mitigate the above risks.

8. **APPENDICES**

Appendix 1 – District Heat System update.

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APPENDIX 1

Outline Business Case for Funding for a Detailed Project Development Study for the Development of Bromsgrove Heath Network

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Date:	20.12.19
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1. Executive Summary

The purpose of this business case is to identify the opportunity to take the District Heating Feasibility Study forward to Detailed Project Development (DPD) Phase. This will require funding from Bromsgrove District Council (BDC).

The need to invest in energy systems that ensure resilience against increasing energy costs, energy instability and carbon emissions is ever more pressing. The threat that climate change presents to Bromsgrove District, the UK and the Global community with increasing regularity, is real and present in everyday life. Urgent mitigation interventions are required to lessen the human influence on climate change of which energy usage in heating systems is a major contributor.

A heat network connects multiple consumers and supplies heat and power from a centralised energy centre, with the express aims of reducing energy costs and carbon emissions. Decarbonising heat supply is generally challenging and a heat network is an important opportunity that can deliver deep and sustained carbon reduction in an area, particularly as it facilitates future expansion and the inclusion of alternative technologies over time.

An energy mapping and master planning study and a techno-economic feasibility study have both been completed to identify the suitability of a district heat network within Bromsgrove Town. The outcome to date suggests there is the potential for a heat network to work in the identified area and that a Detailed Project Development project is now required to develop commercial, modelling, legal structuring, financial modelling, a procurement strategy and a full business case for the network.

The work to date has been part funded through the Department of Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS) Heat Network Delivery Unit (HNDU), Bromsgrove District Council and Worcestershire LEP North Worcestershire Economic Development and Regeneration unit (NWEDR).

The proposal for Bromsgrove is a Ground Source Heat Pump and Combined Heat and Power with the bore holes and Energy centre being located on the site of Bromsgrove School. This option allows for the most preferential emission, energy output, and economic

model to be implemented however the option of biomass was also investigated and is viewed as an alternative option should the GSHP become unfavourable.

The GSHP / CHP scheme would save an annual average of 1,560 TCO₂, 5% reduction in energy costs¹ plus further benefits such as operational payback in reduced plant liability, inward investment in the town, opportunity for new energy ventures and also to secure existing business and new businesses into the town.

The network identified consists of numerous properties covering retail, leisure, residential and healthcare establishments. Key Stakeholders, with over 54% of the total annual heat demand are Bromsgrove School, Princess of Wales Community Hospital, Bromsgrove District Housing Trust and Bromsgrove District Council. Stakeholders have already expressed support for the future development of the scheme and expressed a willingness to commit financially should the project progress to DPD. To prove commitment, give confidence and allow the project to develop, a joint stakeholder project group will be necessary to drive the DPD forward and deliver any future outcomes.

Project structuring and financing options have not been explored and these will be considered and proposed in the DPD.

HNDU are able to provide further support for the DPD stage where BDC are able to bid to secure 66% of the total amount required, plus a fully funded experienced Project Manager to driver the project onto the next stage. The full cost of the DPD is likely to be around £250,000 of which BDC can bid for £165,000 from HNDU funding. To date key stakeholders have committed £10,000 towards this project therefore leaving a shortfall of £75,000 to fund.

There has never been more support for funding and supporting Heat Network Developments in the UK however, in order to make use of this support a bid will need to be delivered to HNDU by the end of December 2019 and an HNIP bid will need to be submitted during 2020.

¹ Heat Network Study for Bromsgrove, 2019, Greenfield

2. Introduction

2.1. A heat network connects multiple consumers and supplies heat and power from a centralised energy centre, with the express aims of reducing energy costs and carbon emissions. Decarbonising heat supply is generally challenging and a heat network is an important opportunity that can deliver sustained carbon reduction in an area, particularly as it facilitates future expansion and the inclusion of alternative technologies over time.

2.2. A feasibility study for a heat network in Bromsgrove has been completed for Bromsgrove town, part-funded by Department of Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS), Heat Network Delivery Unit (HNDU), Bromsgrove District Council (BDC) and Worcestershire Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) North Worcestershire Economic Development and Regeneration unit (NWEDR).

2.3. The study is a detailed investigation involving mapping of loads (energy demands), and, identification, initial concept design, and, techno-economic testing of heat network solutions.

2.4. The heat network identified connects a number of consumers, including public buildings, offices, schools, and, residential properties, supplying heat and/or power utilising low carbon energy systems. Key consumers with over 54% of the total annual heat demand include Bromsgrove School, Princess of Wales Community Hospital (POWCH), Bromsgrove District Housing Trust (BDHT), Council properties, and leisure facilities.

2.5. The heat network is planned to originate from the Bromsgrove School site where the energy centre is proposed to be located. The main network build-out is proposed over three years period really to present a relatively pessimistic roll-out for the school. It is assumed that Bromsgrove School and South Bromsgrove High School are connected in Year 1. Year 1 refers to the first year of construction which may not be possible before 2021, due to the preceding planning stages which may take 18 months to 2 years to finalise. Year 2 sees expansion into the southern part of the town centre and then Year sees expansion to the Leisure Centres, Hospital and other

consumers in the northern part of the town centre. It is important to reach the hospital as soon as possible (since they need to resolve their ageing boiler plant). The last buildings to connect are assumed to be the ASDA store and adjacent properties, in year 11. This is linked to the retirement of the Air Source Heat Pumps currently used at the store.

2.1. The report provides a credible economic and environmental case for a heat network in Bromsgrove Town and a reasonable ROI could be delivered (with typical risks and uncertainties) with the model incorporating the required HNIP grant funding.² The recommendations from this report are:

i. The Council seeks executive and member support to take the project forward, focusing on a ground source heat pump (GSHP) / combined Heat and Power (CHP) hybrid solution. A solution utilising biomass would be a fall-back option should the GSHP/CHP not be realised.

ii. The project is moved on to a Detailed Project Development (DPD) phase.

2.2. Bromsgrove School have committed £10K towards the next stage of the project and Worcestershire Health and Care NHS Trusts have expressed their willingness to commit financially to the project by submitting a business case to the Trust Board and would be asking for a contribution in the region of £10K.

2.3. Worcestershire LEP have indicated they would like to contribute towards the DPD however due to Central Government withholding additional funding due to the unresolved issue associated with the overlapping LEP geographies. This may change and Officers will keep communications with the LEP open in order to realise any funding via this route.

2.4. BDC are advised to take advantage of the current funding into UK Heat Networks, as research and investigation is costly and requires specific expertise, and there is no reliance that the offerings present through HNDU will persist into future years. In order to make use of this support a bid will need to be delivered to HNDU by the end of December 2019 and an HNIP bid will need to be submitted during 2020.

² Modelling incorporates BEIS forecasted increases for gas and electricity prices and the Biomass price has been assumed to inflate based on Bank of England 2% CPI target

HNDU are able to provide further support for the DPD stage where BDC are able to bid to secure 66% of the total amount required, plus a fully funded experienced Project Manager to driver the project onto the next stage.

3. The Strategic Case

3.1. The strategy behind the development of a DHN fits with the following Councils Strategic Purposes:

- Keep my place safe and looking good.
- Do sensible things to improve my locality.
- Help me run a successful business.
- Help me back to financial independence

3.2. BDC views climate change as a serious issue and as such, declared a Climate Change Emergency in July 2019. By this action, Councillors have committed to taking urgent action against climate change and that activities taken up to this point have not been sufficient to limit the change required.

3.3. The DPD will cost an estimated £250k and will consist of a test borehole, full lifecycle project management, the DPD report. It should be understood at this point that the borehole is an intrinsic part of understanding the future of the project. Although British Geological Survey Data has been used in the analysis of the feasibility report, until a borehole is taken, much of the costings remain uncertain as the actual geology of the land is not known. In saying this, the survey data is robust and is very likely to represent the actual ground conditions.

3.4. The proposal is for Bromsgrove District Council to facilitate and part fund the subsequent stage of the district Heat Network project and take this onto DPD. The sum of £75K ³is required from BDC in order to commit to the DPD stage and allow the project to deliver the identified benefits.

³ This amount is anticipated to be reduced following confirmation that the project will move to DPD stage as Bromsgrove School and Worcestershire Health & Care NHS Trust have indicated a financial commitment of a minimum of £10,000

Table of Cost Breakdown for DPD Phase

Item	Cost
Project Management	Fully funded by HNDU
Test Borehole	£100K
DPD	£150K
<i>Total</i>	<i>£250K</i>
Funding from HNDU@ 66%	£165K
Funding from Bromsgrove School	£10K
Funding from NHS Trust	to be determined
Funding from BDHT	to be determined
<i>Remainder to Fund</i>	<i>£75K</i>

Case for Change

3.5. The threat that climate change presents to Bromsgrove District, the UK and the Global community with increasing regularity, is real and present in everyday life. Urgent mitigation interventions are required and BDC need to actively engage in and promote interventions to lessen its impacts.

3.6. Energy usage for heating is a major contributor towards climate change where traditional gas and electricity is consumed for space heating. Whilst it is understood that decarbonisation of the grid will occur as increased renewables are fed into the network, there is still much consumers can do on a local level.

3.7. District Heating Networks (DHN's) have been identified as a key component in decarbonising the energy used in heating and thus minimising carbon emissions to the environment. ⁴

3.8. DHN's are also able to more easily be converted from one fuel type to another than individual heating systems due to the very nature of having one centralised energy centre with a shared network of pipes supplying multiple properties. This therefore guards against having legacy systems that become redundant over time. This added resilience allows for staged progression towards increasingly renewable forms of energy as time allows.

3.9. The DHFS identified the following deliverables based on the scheme proposed⁵:

- 32% Reduction in carbon emissions⁶.
- 5% Reduction in consumer energy costs⁷
- Ability to deliver sustained carbon reduction for the town⁸.
- Around £20m inward investment into the town of (construction costs)⁹
- Operational benefits e.g. reduced plant liability and releasing space
- Development of a local energy generation / supply entity
- Encourage commercial/residential tenant retention in the town
- Training and the educational support opportunities ¹⁰
- Reputational benefits for the town, local authority and other stakeholders

Spending Objectives

3.10. In order to realise the deliverables identified by the DHFS BDC is required to be the lead partner to see the project through to DPD stage. The DPD will then identify opportunities for development of project board and future business vehicles to continue the venture.

⁴ The Climate Change Commission identify 18% of heat will need to come from heat networks by 2050

⁵ GSHP & CHP Hybrid

⁶ *Calculated of the first 25 years of the project*

⁷ Existing costs have been modelled as baseline

⁸ Through expansion and easy transition to future low carbon technologies

⁹ Not including subsequent short term employment in construction stage

¹⁰ Staff and students at Bromsgrove School, South Bromsgrove School and HOW college

3.11. The work to date has been part funded through the Department of Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS) Heat Network Delivery Unit (HNDU), Bromsgrove District Council and Worcestershire LEP North Worcestershire Economic Development and Regeneration unit (NWEDR). In the investment of relatively moderate sums of money at the developmental stage BDC will be able to follow through on its commitment to take action against climate change and secure all the other benefits outlined in 3.9.

Existing Arrangements

3.12. All the properties identified in the DHFS suitable for connection to the network have individual energy supply for power and heat. They are individually metered to mains supplies and as such are subject to market conditions with increasing energy costs.

3.13. None of the properties identified for the network utilise any significant forms of renewable or low carbon energy sources.

Consultation

3.14. Liaison with stakeholders has been a crucial part of requirement gathering throughout the DHFS process and consultation has taken place to a lesser or greater degree dependent on the nature of the building type and the level of detail required in calculating energy loads and demand profile.

Feedback presentations have been delivered to the Key Stakeholders (Bromsgrove School, Worcestershire Health and Care NHS Trust (for POWCH) and BDHT. All stakeholders were positive and encouraged to see the opportunity that the DHFS had identified and as a result all have expressed a desire to move this project forward to the DPD stage.

Business Needs

3.15. It is clear that BDC have an expressed desire and drive to work towards supporting lower carbon opportunities for the District with its declaration of the climate change emergency.

3.16. BDC further had a responsibility to ensuring the local area highlighted in the Strategic Purposes and the Council Plan.

Potential Scope

3.17. The outcomes of the proposed heat network are wide reaching with 70 properties in total having been identified for potential connectivity with the network, notably the impacts on some of the consumers will be considerable. There are numerous sheltered housing, retirement and care home facilities housing elderly and often vulnerable residents to whom a secure, efficient and affordable energy supply is crucial.

3.18. The public buildings including schools, Council offices, Library and other Government buildings would also benefit considerably from the reduction in energy costs enabling to demonstrate their commitment towards delivering cost effective publically funded services.

3.19. The initial network has the ability to be further developed over time allowing future developments to link in and benefit. This coupled with the opportunity deliver deep and sustained carbon savings with future expansion and the inclusion of alternative technologies over time. The presence of a heat network within the town will provide confidence and set a precedent for future build within the town and the wider boundaries of the District. Reputational benefits for the town, local authority and other stakeholders are far reaching and should not be underestimated.

3.20. Other significant opportunities present themselves with the development of a heat network including the development of a local energy generation and or supply entity

which in itself allows for commercialisation of the project. The interest in new business to the town should not be overlooked as the benefits of reduced energy costs and carbon saving are key and of growing importance to the vast majority of businesses.

3.21. There are also noteworthy opportunities in training and the education sector where there are opportunities for training and development utilising the heat work and an educational asset, where students will be able to gain interest, career aspirations and training as a precursor to work in the low carbon economy.

Benefits and Risks

3.22. Table Benefits and Risks associated with the DPD & Heat Network

Issue	Benefit	Risk
£75k required to progress project onto detailed project development stage and necessary borehole works	Will confirm the future direct of the project and the technical solution that that been proposed by the feasibility study.	May result in spend of £75k with no deliverable project.
Borehole investigation	Identifies positive conditions for GSHP and progression to full DPD study	<p>identifies unfavourable conditions and resulting in increasing construction costs</p> <p>identifies unfavourable conditions for GSHP and need to revert to biomass option</p> <p>If project is deemed unsuitable at this stage there</p>

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		is no requirement to progress to full DPD stage - project
Progression to DPD and beyond	Operational Heat Network	No Heat Network and spend of £75k does not produce desired outcome
	Building and sustaining relationships with the wider community	Poor Reputation given the opportunity to further progress to DPD into develop and beyond
Carbon emissions	Reduced carbon delivering 39,000T reduction over 25 year period	No/ little control over the carbon emitted when buying energy direct from supplier
Instability in energy supply	Removes issues with interrupted supply	mains supply risks instability on supply
	Assurance over source of fuel supply (GSHP/ CHP)	No control over fuel source type renewable or no renewable)
Energy Cost	5% reduction in energy costs	Guaranteed increasing energy costs
	Control over increasing costs as new low cost technologies more easily rolled out and implemented	Exposure to market conditions and increasing energy costs
Stakeholder support	Stakeholders commit strategically and financially	Stakeholder support is fragile risking further development of

enabling the heat network to reach full potential	the project. Particular risk is losing the site for energy centre
---------------------------------------------------	-------------------------------------------------------------------

3.23. Mitigation against spending the full £75k with no viable project to take forwards can be managed by carrying out the borehole investigation in the first instance followed by the full DPD if conditions are favourable. This will decrease the actual loss of financial commitment should the borehole identify conditions that would render the proposed project unfeasible. The full £150k for the DPD study is then likely not to be required.

3.24. Stakeholder management is required to ensure all partners are fully aware of potential benefits and risk to the project.

3.25. A full breakdown of Risks for the proposed scheme itself can be seen in the DHFS report Appendix 11.

Constraints and Dependencies

3.26. The DHFS has investigated the potential scope of a HN for the town as far as current data, research and other factors allow. The next stage is to undertake a test borehole on the site of the proposed build in order to validate the BGS geological information to assess conditions and suitability of the site itself. Should the test borehole dictate conditions are not compatible with the original BGS data, amendments may be made to the original feasibility study which may increase or decrease costs dependent on the features identified below ground. There is also the fall back option of moving to a biomass technology option¹¹.

4. The Economic Case

¹¹ Full details of the biomass option can be seen in the feasibility report

4.1. Table of Short List options

Option Reference Number	Option
1	Do Nothing
2	BDC Facilitate & fund DPD with GCHP/CHP
3	BDC Facilitate & fund DPD with Biomass
4	BDC Facilitate & fund DPD with GCHP/CHP with fall back to Biomass

4.2. The DHFS itself does investigate two technology options in the deliverability of the project itself and this is GSHP with CHHP and Biomass, a comparison in the capital cost summary can be seen in the table below. The study concluded that the GSHP and CHP option was the stronger solution for the network, however to the options have been used below together with the fall back option of reverting to biomass should the GSHP / CHP option prove unworkable

4.3. Table of Evaluation against selected criteria

	Option 1	Option 2	Option 3	Option 4
Evaluation Criteria	Do Nothing	BDC Fund & facilitate GSHP & CHP DPD	Facilitate & fund DPD Biomass	Facilitate & fund DPD GSHP / CHP with option to revert to Biomass
a) Further deliver on Strategic Purposes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
b) Significant reduction in Carbon Emissions for the town	No	Yes (32.2%)	Yes (61.4%)	Yes (32.2 >61.4%)

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c) Reduction in Energy costs for those connected	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
d) Internal Rate or Return on investment	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
i) no grant	0	3.5%	1.1%	3.5-1.1%
ii) with £5m grant	0	7%	6.1%	7-6.1%
ii) with £7m grant	0	10%	6.9%	10-6.9%
e) Total CAPEX				
i) no grant		20.1	15.4	20.1>15.4
ii) with £5m grant		12.7%	32%	12.7-32%
ii) with £7m grant		24.7%	39.5%	24.7-39.5%
f) Revenue (Full Scheme)	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
		(£2.2 m/yr)	(£1.8 m/yr)	(£2.2 >£1.8 m/yr)

4.4. Table of Capital Cost Summary.

Baseload supply technology	CHP + GSHP £K	Biomass Boilers £K
DH Network (steel)	7,428	7,428
Heat substations, HIUs & metering	1,515	1,515
Private Wire network	942	0
Energy Centre	6,042	3,709

Utility connections (gas, power, water, drainage, telecoms)	447	107
Thermal Store	139	139
Development costs¹²	1,725	1,110
Contingency (10%)	1,824	1,401
Total capital costs £K	20,061	15,408

4.5. Table of Economic Modelling.

Item	<i>unit</i>	GSHP/CHP	Biomass
Total CAPEX (full scheme)	£m	20.1	15.4
Total REPEX (full scheme)	£m	8.7	6.8

¹² Including detailed engineering costs, professional fees, project management, and project development

Total OPEX (full scheme)	£m/yr.	1.2	1.3
Annual revenue (full scheme)	£m/yr.	2.2	1.8
Gross margin (full scheme)	£m/yr.	1.0	0.5
Consumer heat tariff costs (full scheme)¹³	£/MWh	57.5	57.5
Total connection fees	£m	2.4	2.4
NPV (25 yr @ 3.5 %)	£m	0.1	-3.6
IRR (25 yr)	%	3.5 %	1.1 %
Social IRR (25 yr)¹⁴	%	3.4 %	2.5 %
LCOE (25 yr)	£/MWh	75.8	90.2

4.6. The techno-economic analysis shows a marginal economic performance for the Ground Source Heat Pump (GSHP) / Combined Heat and Power (CHP) hybrid option with a 3.5 % IRR (25-year) for the base case, with a worse result for the biomass option at 1.1%. These figures account for social costs of climate changes as per HM Treasury guidance

4.7. Whilst there are potential opportunities to improve economic performance there are also risks to it. As such, it is anticipated that grant support, notably from HNIP, will be required if the project is to proceed. For the GSHP / CHP hybrid option £2.6m grant would be required to achieve 5% IRR, £5m for a 7% IRR and £7m for a 10% IRR. It is anticipated that these values would fall below state-aid constraints and that

¹³ Average across all consumers to the wider community and society as a whole. The calculation includes net impact on heating costs, carbon emissions and air quality.

¹⁴ Social IRR accounts for impacts accrued to the heat network operator and those connected to the networks, as well as

the project, in principal, could be structured as a publicly or privately funded project (or a combination). The project structuring options have not been explored and this would need to be considered in any further work.

- 4.8. In principal, it is considered that the project could be supported by HNIP, but it should be noted that this is an open and competitive process and is time-limited with an application for the DPD to be submitted by end of December 2019.

Cost Benefit Analysis

- 4.9. For the financial elements of the analysis the reader should refer to the full feasibility study and relating appendices. The conclusion being that Option 4 is preferable.

The Preferred Option

- 4.10. Option 4 – Facilitate & fund DPD with GSHP/ CHP
(with option to revert to Biomass should indications from the DPD suggest GSHP is not feasible).

5. The Commercial Case

For a full commercial case on the study please refer to the DHFS and associated appendices.

6. The Financial Case

- 6.1 The proposal is for Bromsgrove District Council to facilitate and part fund the subsequent stage of the district Heat Network project and take this onto Detailed

Project Development phase (DPD). £75K ¹⁵is required from BDC in order to commit to the DPD stage and allow the project to release further potential.

6.2 The DPD will cost an estimated £250k and will consist of a test borehole, full lifecycle project management, the DPD report. It should be understood at this point that the borehole is an intrinsic part of understanding the future of the project. Although British Geological Survey Data has been used in the analysis of the feasibility report, until a borehole is taken, much of the costings remain uncertain as the actual geology of the land is not known. In saying this, the survey data is robust and is very likely to represent the actual ground conditions.

Table of Cost Breakdown for DPD Phase

Item	Cost
Project Management	Fully funded by HNDU
Test Borehole	£100K
DPD	£150K
<i>Total</i>	<i>£250K</i>
Funding from HNDU@ 66%	£165K
Funding from Stakeholders	£10K to date
<i>Remainder to Fund</i>	<i>£75K</i>

7. The Management Case

7.1 The bid to HNDU will also request specialist project management support for this project for which full funding from HNDU is available. Officers feel this is necessary in order to deliver on the technical and specialist nature of this project.

¹⁵ This amount is anticipated to be reduced following confirmation that the project will move to DPD stage as Bromsgrove School has showed a financial commitment of £10,000 and Worcestershire Health & Care NHS are seeking board approval for a similar amount.

7.2 A Project Board will be formed in order to deliver on the high level strategic elements of the project together with a Project Team that will be responsible for the day to day delivery of the project.

7.3 The project manager (PM) will be responsible for managing and monitoring the risk register associated with this project and elevating issues as they arise to the Project Board.

8. Next Steps

If the business case is successful in securing the £75K required, Officers will complete the application to HNDU for the DPD stage of the project and consequently look to recruit and appoint a suitable PM via the necessary mechanisms.

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MANAGEMENT REVIEW

Relevant Portfolio Holder	Cllr Karen May
Portfolio Holder Consulted	Yes
Relevant Head of Service	Kevin Dicks
Ward(s) Affected	All
Ward Councillor(s) Consulted	N/A
Key Decision	

1. SUMMARY OF PROPOSALS

- 1.1 This report outlines the proposals with regard to the restructuring of the Single Management Team that serves both Redditch and Bromsgrove Councils. These proposals would be the subject of consultation with the directly affected staff (Directors and Heads of Service), recognised trade unions and the staff within the service areas where the Head of Service is proposed to be changed.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 That Cabinet recommends to Council the proposed changes to the Single Management Structure attached at Appendix C and recommend it for formal consultation with the affected staff and trade unions.

3. KEY ISSUES

Financial Implications

- 3.1 The single management team structure to serve Bromsgrove and Redditch Councils was created in 2009 (attached at Appendix A) and recruited to in 2010. This incorporated:
- 1 Chief Executive
 - 3 Executive Directors
 - 1 Director
 - 10 Heads of Service
- 3.2 The full year savings at that stage from just the Corporate Management Team (CMT) management posts was £458,000 per annum. This was split approximately £246,000 to Bromsgrove District Council (BDC) and £212,000 to Redditch Borough Council (RBC). This excluded any severance costs.
- 3.3 Since 2010 there have been a number of changes to the management structure which have occurred for a variety of reasons. The current structure is attached at Appendix B and comprises:
- 1 Chief Executive

- 2 Executive Directors
 - 1 designated Deputy Chief Executive
 - 1 designated Section 151 Officer
- 8 Heads of Service (this excludes the post of Head of Worcestershire Regulatory Services (WRS) and Head of North Worcestershire Economic Development and Regeneration).

It should be noted that 3 of the Head of Service posts are currently vacant. Whilst the Head of Housing Services remains in the structure the budget provision has been removed.

3.4 It was envisaged within the Efficiency Strategy that had to be submitted in late 2016 (to secure a 3 year settlement) that a Management restructure would be undertaken to deliver financial savings. The estimated amount of savings was £270,000 (split equally between the 2 councils). It should be noted that this wasn't just to be delivered from the CMT level but from management posts across the 2 organisations. Savings have been made towards this amount but further savings have been factored in to the Medium Term Financial Plan.

3.5 The management restructuring has been delayed for a number of HR related issues:

- Housing issues at RBC which required a review of Heads of Service responsibilities
- Creation of Rubicon Leisure at RBC and the subsequent appointment of the Council's Head of Leisure and Cultural Services to the MD position
- The ill health retirement of the Head of Customer Access and Financial Services

The management restructuring delay was agreed with the respective leaders.

3.6 All the posts that are proposed to be changed (i.e., all Heads of Service) would need to be subject to Job Evaluation (JE). All posts are based upon a proportion of the Chief Executives salary. At this stage it has been assumed that there is no increase in salary for any of the posts. With regard to the Head of Financial Services the grade for this post has been assumed as having parity with the rest of the Heads of Service.

3.7 If members were to agree the restructuring proposals (subject to consultation) the savings in 2020/21 would be £196,920 split as follows (subject to the results of Job Evaluation):

BDC	£54,221
RBC GF	£54,221

RBC HRA £88,478

- 3.8 This includes deletion of the Head of Housing Services post although this has already been deleted from the budgets. If you were to compare it to the original cost of the 2 management teams prior to the creation of the single management team (not including pay inflation) there is an annual saving of approximately £1.06m per annum.

Legal Implications

- 3.9 There are numerous employment law obligations placed upon both Council's as individual employers when considering the restructure of a management team, specifically where this may result in redundancies. The proposals contained within this report do not envisage any redundancies and as such the risks should be minimised.

Service / Operational Implications

- 3.10 As with any management restructure proposals there are a variety of options available to members however the very clear steer that has been given from Leaders is that neither consider the senior leadership and management arrangements requiring much change and indeed any changes should be "light touch" and essentially looking to formalise what is now in place.
- 3.11 Part of the reasoning for this is that a major management restructuring at this time could derail much of the good work that is being undertaken and in addition Redditch need to focus on developing and delivering a robust medium term financial strategy as a result of being served with the Section 24 notice.
- 3.12 Notwithstanding the above formal consideration and due regard has been given to where there are considered to be gaps within the Management Team (in terms of skillset or capacity) in delivering the strategic purposes and priorities of both Councils. These are detailed below:

Commercialism

- We have a Commercialism Strategy in place (across both Councils – which we are currently reviewing) and have delivered some additional income from our service areas however it is acknowledged that we need to do more in order to become more self sufficient. There are 2 main facets of commercialism (over and above making the Councils more efficient which we are continuing to pursue through our transformation programme – this particular element is being led by the Head of Service – Business Transformation and Organisational Development):

- Acquisition and Investments Strategy – we need to be more proactive in terms of identifying property (and other investment opportunities) and then evaluating whether they represent good value for money. We are currently looking to address this with external support.
- Commercialising the business and generating more income – this is being lead by the Head of Service – Environmental & Housing Property Services and we have commissioned external support through a company called Black Radley who will help and support us to become more commercial, identify market opportunities and generate more income. This will build on our Transformation Programme.
- It is considered that the whole of the Management Team and indeed all service areas need to be more Commercial. The value of appointing someone specifically to lead on Commercialism is therefore diminished. CMT will, as a team, take over the leadership of the Commercialism agenda (from the Commercialism Programme Board) with the support of Black Radley, and external support around property acquisitions will enable us to be more focussed and deliver more income.

Development projects

- There are a significant number of development projects that are being considered (at this stage primarily within Redditch) which we will need to ensure all services and teams are bought into and play their full part in delivering. A Redditch and Bromsgrove Regeneration Board has been formed and chaired by the Chief Executive which seeks to achieve coordinated effort and delivery. Whilst NWEDR will play a lead role in this it is considered that neither they, or indeed CMT, have the skill set or capacity to oversee the Management / Implementation of these developments in the delivery of multi million pound regeneration schemes (including Town Centre and District Centres). Whilst this could potentially be incorporated within the CMT by undertaking this in conjunction with partners, and fund this from the investment programme or the Towns Fund would be more advantageous moving forward.

Financial Services

- The Councils took the decision some time ago to delete the role of Head of Financial Services and create the role of Head of Customer Access and Financial Support with the Financial Services Manager reporting directly to the Executive Director. Whilst it was considered the correct decision at the time this has increasingly resulted in the Executive Director (Finance and Corporate Resources) being drawn into vast levels of operational detail. It is therefore proposed that a Head of Financial Services with an extended remit is added back into the structure. This would enable the

Executive Director (Section 151 Officer) to focus more on financial strategy and leadership of strategic purposes. It is also believed that having a Head of Financial Services, with the right skill set, would complement the existing skill set of the other members of CMT and be a further force for change.

Proposed changes

3.13 Attached at Appendix C is the proposed new structure – this is very much based upon adjusting the current structure and adding service areas to people’s areas of responsibility rather than a fundamental review. Service area alignment has been achieved as much as possible, however given the capacity issues a balance of levels of responsibilities and workloads are being proposed. It should be noted that it is not unusual when operating at a senior management level that Heads of Service have responsibility for a diverse set of service areas.

3.14 Unless highlighted in ***bold italics*** on Appendix C officers portfolio of responsibilities have remained the same. In summary the proposed changes are as follows:

- Head of Service – Legal, Democratic & Property Services (Monitoring Officer). The current postholder has taken over responsibility for Property Services in Redditch following the transfer of services back to the Council from Place Partnership given the linkages with the legal function. It is proposed to formalise this arrangement as a result of the proposed management restructuring. It is also proposed that facilities management be incorporated within this Head of Service area of responsibility given the obvious linkage with property. This would be for both councils (responsibility was previously split between different areas). Responsibility for Business Development (previously under Leisure and Cultural Services) would also be included.
- Head of Service – Financial and Customer Services. As referred to above, the creation of a Head of Financial and Customer Services who, in addition to being responsible for Financial Management, would also be responsible for Revenues and Benefits is recommended. The proposal is that this post would also be responsible for all facets of Customer Services. This would enable alignment with revenues and benefits and ensure the post has a wider operational remit.
- Head of Service – Environmental & Housing Property Services. The current postholder has taken over responsibility for Capital Improvements and Repairs and Maintenance following the issues relating to Housing Services in Redditch. The continuation of this arrangement is proposed

given the alignment between the “operational services” for both housing property and environmental services.

- Head of Service – Community and Housing Services. The current postholder has taken over responsibility for the following services as a result of the issues relating to Housing Services in Redditch:
 - Homelessness
 - Housing Options/Choice Based Lettings
 - Housing Performance and Database
 - Right to Buy
 - St David’s House Extra Care Housing
 - Tenancy Management

The continuation of this arrangement as a result of the proposed management restructuring is proposed to achieve alignment of Housing Strategy, housing tenancy and community services.

- Head of Service – Planning, Regeneration and Leisure Services. Following the creation of Rubicon Leisure we currently have interim arrangements in place to cover the remaining functions for Leisure and Cultural Services:
 - Development Services (Sports and Arts Development)
 - Parks and Events
 - Business Development
 - Facilities Management

It is proposed to add these areas (with the exception of Facilities Management and Business Development) to this Head of Service responsibilities. Whilst these services may not seem naturally aligned there are synergies between the strategic role with regard to Leisure and Cultural Services (following the creation of Rubicon Leisure) and Strategic Planning. This is increasingly crucial in the “place making role”. This also achieves a breadth of workloads / responsibilities across all Heads of Service to bring a better and more cohesive balance across the CMT.

Additionally it is proposed that the Head of NWEDR reports directly to the Head of Service rather than directly to the Chief Executive as previously. This is not to say that the Chief Executive will not continue to have a very proactive role with regard to Economic Development and Regeneration (retained in the the relevant strategic purposes delivery) however this will enable the Head of Service to have greater responsibility and accountability for this area.

3.15 The councils have endorsed slightly different strategic purposes and priorities and whilst there are no proposed changes to the roles of Executive Directors, the Strategic Purposes can't be achieved by one department on their own. The Councils will therefore continue to adopt a matrix management approach in order to ensure co-ordinated delivery. The Strategic Purposes are below (together with the lead director):

- Redditch Strategic Purposes
 - Run and grow successful business (Chief Executive)
 - Finding somewhere to live (Deputy Chief Executive)
 - Aspiration, work & financial independence (Executive Director – Section 151 Officer)
 - Living independent, active & healthy lives (Executive Director – Section 151 Officer)
 - Communities which are safe, well maintained & green (Deputy Chief Executive)

- Bromsgrove Strategic Purposes
 - Run and grow a successful business (Chief Executive)
 - Work and financial independence (Executive Director – Section 151 Officer)
 - Living independent, active & healthy lives (Executive Director – Section 151 Officer)
 - Affordable and sustainable homes (Deputy Chief Executive)
 - Communities which are safe, well maintained and green (Deputy Chief Executive)

In addition to both Council's Strategic Purposes there is also responsibility for ensuring the enabling services for both councils are fit for purpose and this will be discharged by the Strategic Management Team (SMT) – Chief Executive, Deputy Chief Executive and Executive Director as a collective.

3.16 The continuation of 2 Executive Directors is considered important as they provide (alongside the Chief Executive) the strategic direction, from an officer perspective, to the 2 Councils and the services they provide. They are also, by working in a matrix management arrangement, best placed to co-ordinate and direct services to most effectively achieve strategic purposes. This includes working in partnership with other organisations.

3.17 This proposal is very much about "tweaking" what is currently in place to ensure strategic and operational delivery alongside the delivery of financial savings. It is not believed to be achievable to reduce the structure further whilst both councils still continue to provide the multitude of services that they do. If members require a more radical restructure options this could risk destabilising both organisations

at a crucial time. Another option should members wish to explore this would be to commission some external support to develop a completely new structure, incorporating the next tier of 4th / 5th tier managers.

- 3.18 If members are to agree the restructure proposals contained within this report subject to formal consultation the Heads of Service will be asked to critically review the 4th / 5th tier levels across the organisations to ensure that the configuration of services assists with the effective delivery of the strategic purposes of both councils.

Customer / Equalities and Diversity Implications

- 3.19 No immediate direct impact on the Customer arising from this report, although indirectly the intention of each area is to deliver further efficiencies/savings or improve service quality to the ultimate benefit of the customer.

4. RISK MANAGEMENT

- 4.1 The risks identified, which the restructuring proposals seek to address, include:
- Continuation of informal arrangements – restructure provides formal role clarity
 - Lack of support for recommendations / future actions – inability to deliver against strategic purposes.
 - Managing the impact of national / regional changes – financial, social, economic or environmental at a strategic and operational levels.

5. APPENDICES

Appendix A - original management structure when the Single Management Team for BDC / RBC was created

Appendix B - current Single Management Team for BDC / RBC

Appendix C – proposed Single Management Team for BDC / RBC

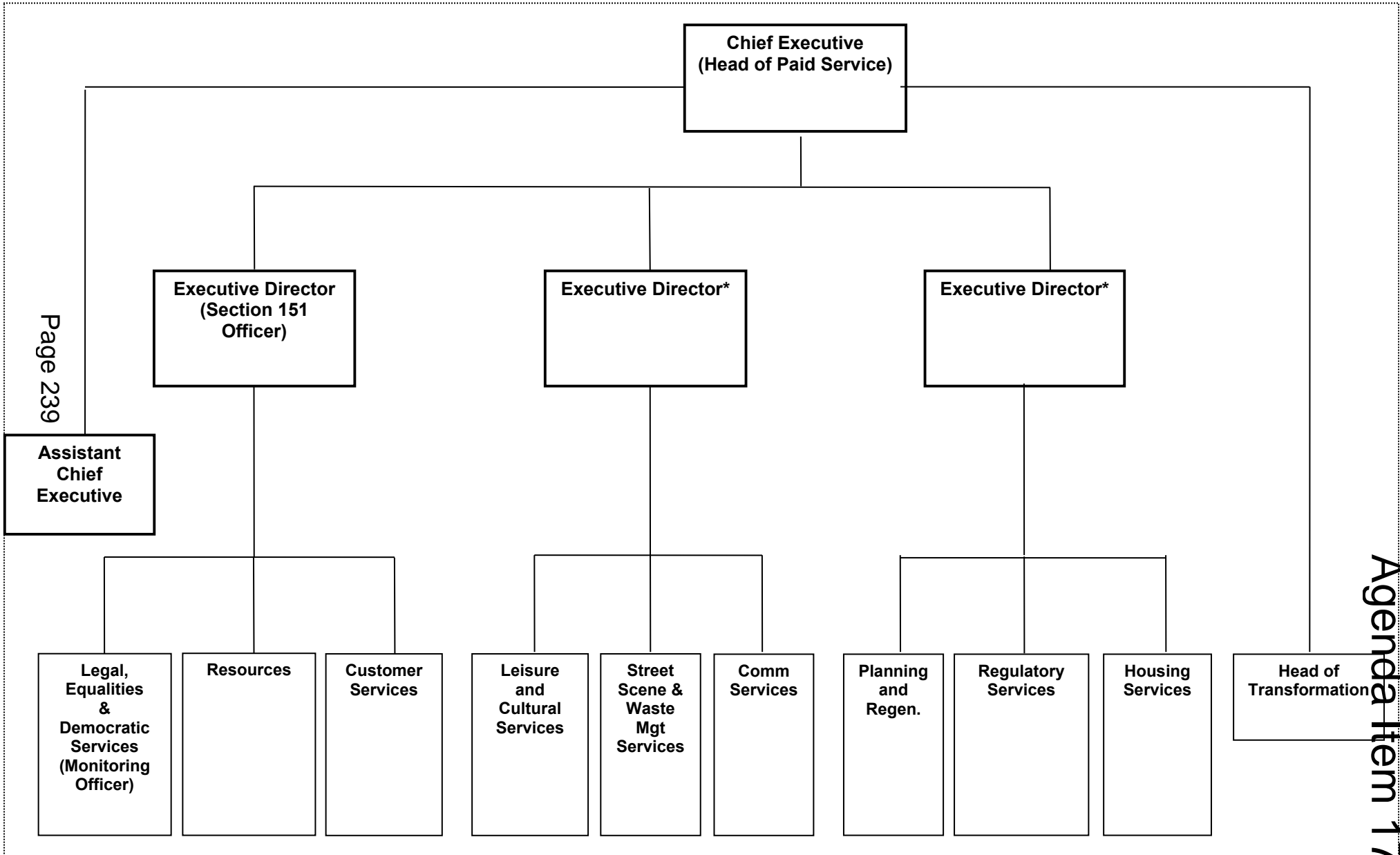
6. BACKGROUND PAPERS

Previous Shared Services and Single Management Team reports

AUTHOR OF REPORT

Name: Kevin Dicks
Email: k.dicks@bromsgroveandredditch.gov.uk
Tel.: 01527 534000

Original Bromsgrove District Council and Redditch Borough Council – Proposed Single Management Structure



Assistant Chief Executive

- LSP & Other Strategic Partnerships
- Performance Management & Improvement
- Policy (excluding service specific strategy)
- Consultation & Community Engagement
- Communications, Marketing and Promotion
- Customer Insight
- Special Projects
- Inspections (CAA etc)
- Complaints
- Civic Support
- Corporate Administration/ Central Post Opening & Reception
- Climate Change / Agenda 21(Energy Efficiency)

Head of Transformation

- I.C.T.
- Business Development
- E Government
- Web Development
- Printing & Reprographics
- GIS
- Transformation, Business Process Re-engineering and Lean Systems
- Information Management
- Freedom of Information, Data Protection, Records Management
- Organisational Development (including Workforce Planning and Succession Planning)
- Training & Development

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Head of Legal, Equalities & Democratic Services
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Professional Legal Advice & Services• Right to Buy• Election & Electoral Services, Periodic Electoral Review• Democratic Services & Member Support• Monitoring Officer Role, Probity & Standards• Governance• Advice to Parishes• Member Development• Equalities & Diversity

Head of Resources
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Accounts & Financial Management & Advice• Corporate Income & Debt Management• Procurement• Revenues & Benefits• Audit• Risk Management• Payroll• Property, Assets & Facilities Management (including Caretakers)• Human Resources & Welfare• Health & Safety

Head of Customer Services
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Customer Service Centre• One Stop Shops• Cashiers• Customer First• Customer Access and Customer Engagement

*
One Director will take the lead for Redditch issues and one for Bromsgrove issues.
One Director will also be designated as Deputy Joint Chief Executive and act as Head of Paid Service in Joint Chief Execs absence.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Head of Leisure and Cultural Services

- Leisure/Sports Centres/Dual Use Facilities
- Sports and Recreation Development
- Arts Development
- Children & Young People, Play
- Health Education/Interventions
- Parks and Open Spaces
- Allotments
- Museum
- Events
- Community Centres
- Theatre

Head of Street Scene and Waste Management Services

- Refuse & Recycling
- Waste Management, Policy, Promotion, Management
- Car Parks/Civil Enforcement Parking
- Shopmobility
- Street Scene / Street Cleansing
- Grounds Maintenance/ Landscaping
- Highways
- Cesspools/Sewers
- Public Conveniences
- Fly Tipping, Bill Posting
- Abandoned Vehicles
- Pest & Dog Controls
- Engineering Design
- Street Naming and Numbering
- Cemeteries / Crematorium
- Land Drainage

Head of Community Services

- Community Cohesion (Older and Young People)
- Social Inclusion
- Community Safety
- Anti Social Behaviour Team
- CCTV & Lifeline Operation & Development
- Voluntary Sector & Community Networks, Grant Aid
- Transport
- Community Transport / Dial A Ride
- Bus Passes / Concessionary Fares
- Grant Aid
- Housing Strategy and Enabling Role etc.

*
One Director will take the lead for Redditch issues and one for Bromsgrove issues.
One Director will also be designated as Deputy Joint Chief Executive and act as Head of Paid Service in Joint Chief Execs absence.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Head of Regulatory Services

- Environmental Health / Protection / Enforcement
- Public Health & safety
- Food Safety
- Licenses (all)

Head of Planning and Regeneration

- Strategic Planning (Planning & Local Development Framework)
- Development Control
- Building Control
- Land Charges
- Emergency Planning / Business Continuity
- Conservation
- Tree Officers
- Travellers
- Economic and Tourism Development (including Business Centres and Markets)

Head of Housing

- Housing Revenue Account activities including DLO for Housing
- Homelessness
- Children's Centres
- Care and Repair Agency
- Capital Improvements
- Housing Options
- Housing Performance and Database
- St David's House
- Disabled Facilities Grants

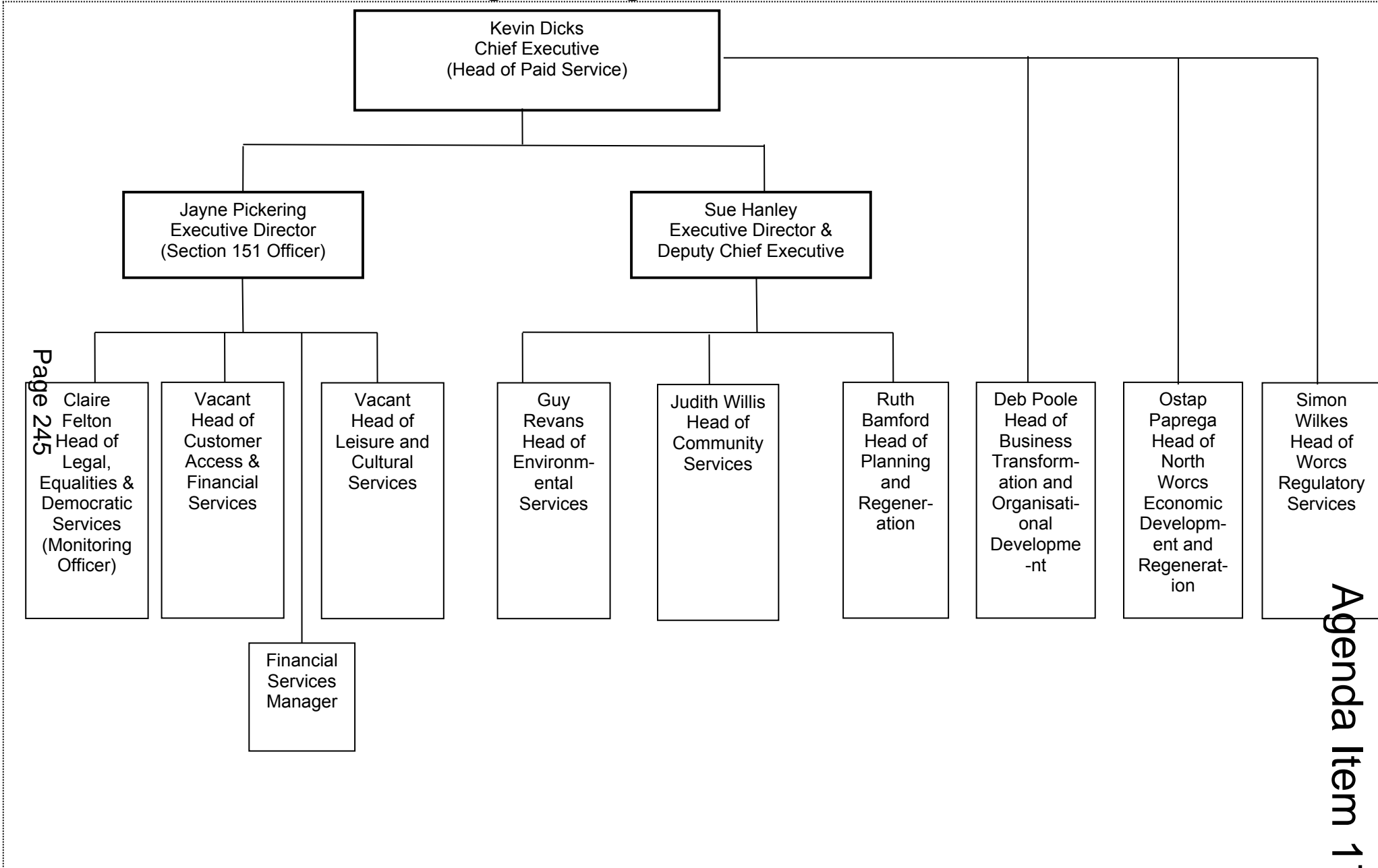
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One Director will take the lead for Redditch issues and one for Bromsgrove issues.

One Director will also be designated as Deputy Joint Chief Executive and act as Head of Paid Service in Joint Chief Execs absence.

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Bromsgrove District Council and Redditch Borough Council Single Management Structure



**Kevin Dicks
Chief Executive**

- LSP & Other Strategic Partnerships
- Communications, Marketing and Promotion (including oversight of web content)
- Printing & Reprographics
- Civic/Mayoral Support
- Corporate Administration/ Central Post Opening
- Town Centre Regeneration

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**Deb Poole
Head of Business
Transformation and
Organisational Development**

- I.C.T.
- Business Development
- E Government
- Web Development
- Land and Property Gazetteer / GIS / Street Naming and Numbering
- Transformation, Business Process Re-engineering and Lean Systems
- Information Management
- Freedom of Information, Data Protection, Records Management
- Organisational Development (including Workforce Planning and Succession Planning)
- Training & Development (strategy)
- Performance Management & Improvement
- Policy (excluding service specific strategy)
- Consultation & Community Engagement
- Customer Insight
- Human Resources
- Training & Organisational Development
- Health & Safety

**Simon Wilkes
Head of Regulatory
Services**

- Health & safety
- Food Safety
- Food Standards
- Licenses (all)
- Pest & Dog Control
- Animal Health and Welfare
- Contaminated land
- Fair Trading
- Consumer and Business Advice
- Air Quality
- Metrology
- Product Safety
- Rogue Trading and Counterfeiting
- Underage Sales
- Statutory Nuisances
- Infectious Diseases

**Ostap Paparega
Head of NW EDR**

Claire Felton Head of Legal, Equalities & Democratic Services
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Professional Legal Advice & Services• Election & Electoral Services, Periodic Electoral Review• Democratic Services & Member Support• Monitoring Officer Role, Probity & Standards• Governance• Advice to Parishes• Member Development• Equalities & Diversity• Land Charges• Procurement

Chris Forrester Financial Services Manager (reports direct to Jayne Pickering)
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Accounts & Financial Management & Advice• Audit• Risk Management• Payroll (RBC, BDC, WFDC)

Vacant Head of Leisure and Cultural Services
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Leisure/Sports Centres/Dual Use Facilities• Sports and Recreation Development• Arts Development• Children & Young People, Play• Health Education/Interventions• Parks and Open Spaces• Allotments• Museum• Events• Community Centres• Theatre• Countryside Centre• Sponsorship

Vacant Head of Customer Access & Financial Support
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Customer Service Centres and One Stop Shops• Revenues including corporate Income & Debt Management• Benefits• Complaints and Customer Feedback• Customer Service Strategy• Cashiers• Reception Services• Switchboard Services• Assets & Facilities Management (RBC)• Property

**Guy Revans
Head of Environmental
Services**

- Waste Management
- Street Scene / Street Cleansing
- Grounds Maintenance/ Landscaping
- Bereavement Services
- Climate Change / Energy Efficiency
- Public Conveniences
- Cesspools/Sewers
- Engineering and Design
- Minor Works Team
- Abandoned Vehicles
- Street Naming and Numbering (operational)
- Tree management inc TPOs
- Land Drainage
- Car Parks/Civil Parking Enforcement

**Judith Willis
Head of Community
Services**

- Community Cohesion (Older and Young People) / Social Inclusion
- Community Safety
- Anti Social Behaviour Team
- CCTV & Lifeline Operation & Development
- Voluntary Sector & Community Networks, Grant Aid
- Transport
- Community Transport / Dial A Ride
- Bus Passes / Concessionary Fares
- Grant Aid
- Housing Strategy and Enabling
- Private Sector Housing
- Disabled Facilities Grants
- Travellers
- Shopmobility
- Children's Centres

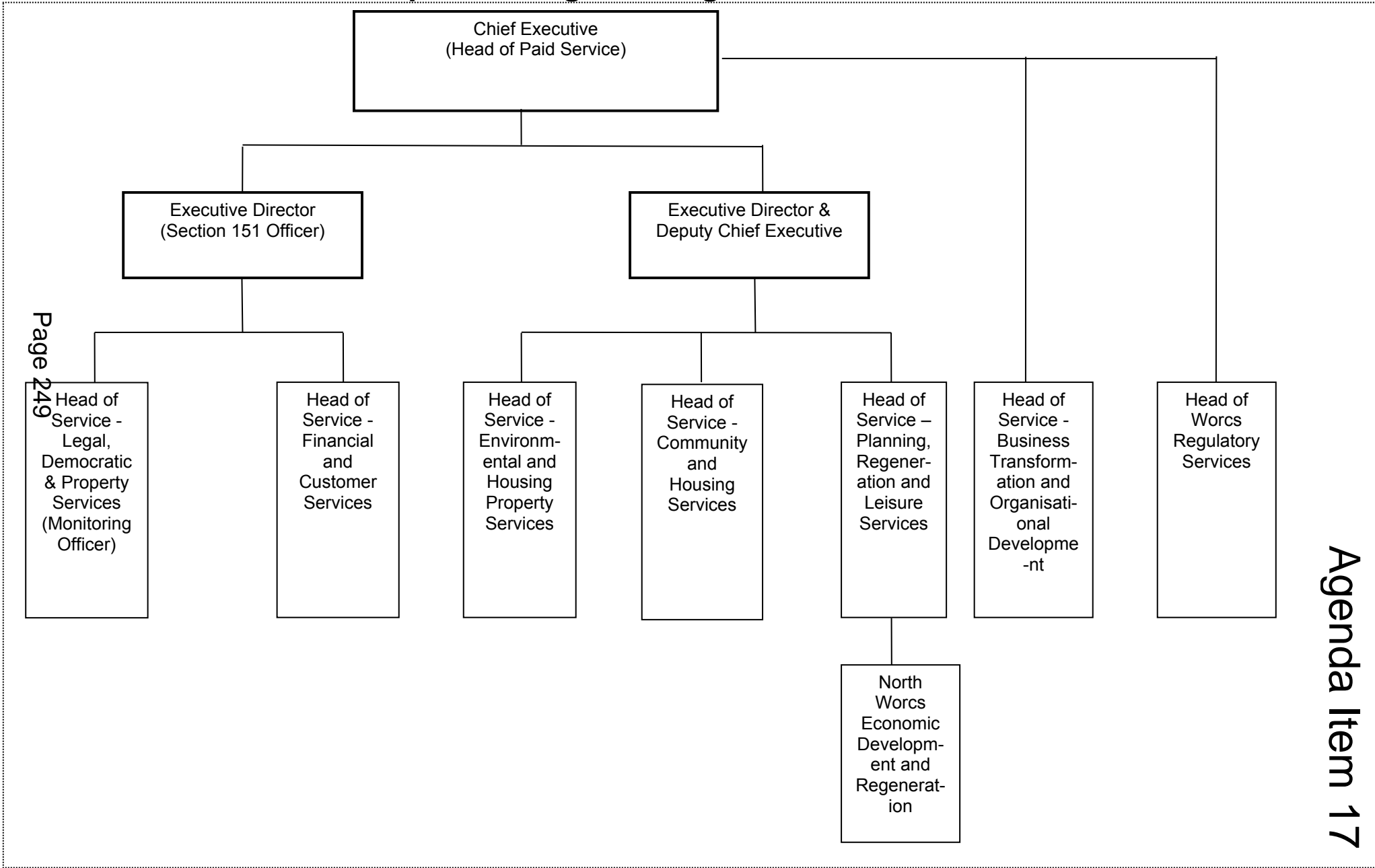
**Ruth Bamford
Head of Planning and
Regeneration**

- Strategic Planning (Planning & Local Development Framework)
- Development Management (including Planning Enforcement)
- Building Control
- Land Charges
- Emergency Planning / Business Continuity
- Conservation
- Economic Development

**Vacant
Head of Housing**

- Capital Improvements
- Repairs & Maintenance
- Homelessness
- Housing Options/Choice Based Lettings
- Housing Performance and Database
- Right to Buy
- St David's House Extra Care Housing
- Tenancy Management

Bromsgrove District Council and Redditch Borough Council Proposed Single Management Structure



Chief Executive

- LSP & Other Strategic Partnerships
- Communications, Marketing and Promotion (including oversight of web content)
- Printing & Reprographics
- Civic/Mayoral Support
- Corporate Administration/ Central Post Opening
- Town Centre Regeneration

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Head of Service - Business Transformation, Organisational Development and Customer Services

- I.C.T.
- Business Development
- 5G / Digital Champion
- Web Development
- Land and Property Gazetteer / GIS / Street Naming and Numbering
- Transformation, Business Process Re-engineering and Lean Systems
- Information Management
- Freedom of Information, Data Protection, Records Management
- Organisational Development (including Workforce Planning and Succession Planning)
- Training & Development (strategy)
- Performance Management & Improvement
- Policy (excluding service specific strategy)
- Consultation & Community Engagement
- Customer Insight
- Human Resources
- Training & Organisational Development
- Health & Safety
- Equalities & Diversity

Continuation of Revised Responsibilities

- ***Commercialism – Operational efficiency***

Head of Worcs Regulatory Services

- Health & safety
- Food Safety
- Food Standards
- Licenses (all)
- Pest & Dog Control
- Animal Health and Welfare
- Contaminated land
- Fair Trading
- Consumer and Business Advice
- Air Quality
- Metrology
- Product Safety
- Rogue Trading and Counterfeiting
- Underage Sales
- Statutory Nuisances
- Infectious Diseases

Head of Service – Legal, Democratic & Property Services (Monitoring Officer)
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Professional Legal Advice & Services• Election & Electoral Services, Periodic Electoral Review• Democratic Services & Member Support• Monitoring Officer Role, Probity & Standards• Governance• Advice to Parishes• Member Development• Land Charges• Procurement <p><i>New Functions / Services</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>Assets & Facilities Management</i>• <i>Property</i>• <i>Business Development (previously under Leisure Services)</i>

Head of Service – Financial and Customer Services (new role)
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Accounts & Financial Management & Advice• Audit• Risk Management• Payroll (RBC, BDC, WFDC)• Revenues including corporate Income & Debt Management• Benefits• Customer Services including:<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Centres and One Stop Shops○ Complaints and Customer Feedback○ Customer Service Strategy○ Cashiers○ Reception Services○ Switchboard Services

Head of Service – Environmental & Housing Property Services

- Waste Management
- Place teams including:
 - Street Scene / Street Cleansing
 - Grounds Maintenance/ Landscaping
- Bereavement Services
- Stores and Depots
- Cesspools/Sewers
- Engineering and Design
- Minor Works Team
- Abandoned Vehicles
- Street Naming and Numbering (operational)
- Tree management inc TPOs
- Land Drainage
- Car Parks/Civil Parking Enforcement

Continuation of Revised Responsibilities

- ***Housing Property Capital and Compliance***
- ***Repairs & Maintenance (including voids and Equipment and Adaptations)***
- ***Mechanical and Electrical***
- ***Commercialism – income Generation / cost reduction***

Head Service –Community and Housing Services

- Community Cohesion (Older and Young People) / Social Inclusion
- Community Safety
- Anti Social Behaviour Team
- CCTV & Lifeline Operation & Development
- Voluntary Sector & Community Networks, Grant Aid
- Transport
- Community Transport / Dial A Ride
- Bus Passes / Concessionary Fares
- Grant Aid
- Housing Strategy and Enabling
- Private Sector Housing
- Disabled Facilities Grants
- Travellers
- Shopmobility
- Children's Centres
- Climate Change / Energy Efficiency

Continuation of Revised Responsibilities

- ***Homelessness***
- ***Housing Options/Choice Based Lettings***
- ***Housing Performance and Database***
- ***Right to Buy***
- ***St David's House Extra Care Housing***
- ***Tenancy Management***

Head of Service – Planning, Regeneration and Leisure Services

- Strategic Planning (Planning & Local Development Framework)
- Development Management (including Planning Enforcement)
- Building Control
- Land Charges
- Emergency Planning / Business Continuity
- Conservation
- Economic Development

New Functions / Services

- ***Leisure and Cultural Services Strategy incorporating***
- ***Development Services (Sports and Arts Development)***
- ***Parks and Events***