

29 March 2016

Committee	Executive
Date	Wednesday, 6 April 2016
Time of Meeting	2:00 pm
Venue	Committee Room 1

ALL MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE ARE REQUESTED TO ATTEND



**for Sara J Freckleton
Borough Solicitor**

Agenda

1. ANNOUNCEMENTS

When the continuous alarm sounds you must evacuate the building by the nearest available fire exit. Members and visitors should proceed to the visitors' car park at the front of the building and await further instructions (staff should proceed to their usual assembly point). Please do not re-enter the building unless instructed to do so.

In the event of a fire any person with a disability should be assisted in leaving the building.

2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND SUBSTITUTIONS

To receive apologies for absence and advise of any substitutions.



Item	Page(s)
3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST	
<p>Pursuant to the adoption by the Council on 26 June 2012 of the Tewkesbury Borough Council Code of Conduct, effective from 1 July 2012, as set out in Minute No. CL.34, Members are invited to declare any interest they may have in the business set out on the Agenda to which the approved Code applies.</p>	
4. MINUTES	1 - 16
<p>To approve the Minutes of the meeting held on 3 February 2016 and of the special meeting held on 9 March 2016.</p>	
5. ITEMS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC	
<p>To receive any questions, deputations or petitions submitted under Rule of Procedure 12.</p> <p><i>(The deadline for public participation submissions for this meeting is 30 March 2016).</i></p>	
6. EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE FORWARD PLAN	17 - 19
<p>To consider the Committee's Forward Plan.</p>	
7. PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT REPORT - QUARTER THREE 2015/16	20 - 77
<p>To receive and respond to the findings of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee's review of the quarter three performance management information.</p>	
8. 2016/17 SERVICE PLANS	78 - 115
<p>To endorse the 2016/17 service plans.</p>	
9. COUNCIL PLAN YEAR 1 (2016-20)	116 - 134
<p>To recommend the Council Plan to Council for adoption.</p>	
10. FORMAL COMPLAINTS POLICY	135 - 143
<p>To approve the formal Complaints Policy.</p>	
11. DIGITAL STRATEGY	144 - 160
<p>To consider and approve the Digital Strategy.</p>	
12. DISABLED FACILITIES GRANTS REVIEW	161 - 182
<p>To approve the review of Disabled Facilities Grants.</p>	

Item	Page(s)
<p>13. DRAFT RESPONSE TO TECHNICAL CONSULTATION ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF PLANNING CHANGES CONTAINED IN THE HOUSING AND PLANNING BILL</p> <p>To approve the Council's response to the consultation, as set out in Appendix 1 to the report, for submission to the Department of Communities and Local Government.</p>	183 - 280
<p>14. SEVERN VALE HOUSING SOCIETY ASSET DISPOSAL STRATEGY</p> <p>To consider asset disposals recommended by Severn Vale Housing Society and to delegate authority to the Deputy Chief Executive, in consultation with the relevant Lead Members, to determine any future consideration of asset disposals by registered providers operating in the Borough.</p>	281 - 307
<p>15. REVIEW OF THE REVENUES AND BENEFITS WRITE-OFF POLICY</p> <p>To adopt the revised Revenues and Benefits Write-Off Policy.</p>	308 - 312
<p>16. SEPARATE BUSINESS</p> <p>The Chairman will move the adoption of the following resolution:</p> <p>That under Section 100(A)(4) Local Government Act 1972, the public be excluded for the following items on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Act.</p>	
<p>17. PROPERTY PURCHASE</p> <p><i>(Exempt –Paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 –Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information))</i></p> <p>To consider the purchase of property for investment purposes.</p>	313 - 320
<p>18. FUNDING FOR COLLAPSED BANK REPAIRS - THE GRANGE, BISHOP'S CLEEVE</p> <p><i>(Exempt –Paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 –Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information))</i></p> <p>To consider the use of capital funds and make a recommendation to Council.</p>	321 - 327
<p>19. ABBEY CARAVAN SITE, TEWKESBURY</p> <p><i>(Exempt –Paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 –Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information))</i></p> <p>To consider a new lease for the Abbey Caravan Site, Tewkesbury.</p>	328 - 333

20. TEWKESBURY TOWN REGENERATION

To Follow

(Exempt –Paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 –Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information))

To consider the way forward in respect of Tewkesbury Town Regeneration and make a recommendation to Council thereon.

DATE OF NEXT MEETING**WEDNESDAY, 8 JUNE 2016****COUNCILLORS CONSTITUTING COMMITTEE**

Councillors: R E Allen, Mrs K J Berry, R A Bird, D M M Davies, M Dean, Mrs E J MacTiernan, J R Mason, R J E Vines (Chair) and D J Waters (Vice-Chair)

Substitution Arrangements

The Council has a substitution procedure and any substitutions will be announced at the beginning of the meeting.

Recording of Meetings

Please be aware that the proceedings of this meeting may be recorded and this may include recording of persons seated in the public gallery or speaking at the meeting. Please notify the Democratic Services Officer if you have any objections to this practice and the Chairman will take reasonable steps to ensure that any request not to be recorded is complied with.

Any recording must take place in such a way as to ensure that the view of Councillors, Officers, the public and press is not obstructed. The use of flash photography and/or additional lighting will not be allowed unless this has been discussed and agreed in advance of the meeting.

TEWKESBURY BOROUGH COUNCIL

**Minutes of a Meeting of the Executive Committee held at the Council Offices,
Gloucester Road, Tewkesbury on Wednesday, 3 February 2016 commencing at
2:00 pm**

Present:

Chair
Vice Chair

Councillor R J E Vines
Councillor D J Waters

and Councillors:

R E Allen, Mrs K J Berry, R A Bird, D M M Davies, M Dean, Mrs E J MacTiernan and J R Mason

EX.72 ANNOUNCEMENTS

- 72.1 The evacuation procedure, as noted on the Agenda, was advised to those present.
- 72.2 The Chairman welcomed Mr Bruce Carpenter, Gloucestershire Joint Waste Committee, to the meeting and advised that he was in attendance for Item 7, Waste Service Review and Vehicle Procurement.

EX.73 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

- 73.1 The Committee's attention was drawn to the Tewkesbury Borough Council Code of Conduct which was adopted by the Council on 26 June 2012 and took effect from 1 July 2012.
- 73.2 There were no declarations of interest made on this occasion.

EX.74 MINUTES

- 74.1 The Minutes of the meeting held on 13 January 2016, copies of which had been circulated, were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

EX.75 ITEMS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

- 75.1 There were no items from members of the public on this occasion.

EX.76 EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE FORWARD PLAN

- 76.1 Attention was drawn to the Committee's Forward Plan, circulated at Pages No. 11-13. Members were asked to consider the Plan.
- 76.2 Referring to Page No. 12, Cemetery Provision in Tewkesbury, a Member questioned whether this referred to Tewkesbury Town or Tewkesbury Borough. In response, the Finance and Asset Management Group Manager indicated that this referred to the cemetery in Tewkesbury Town which was an asset owned by the Borough Council. The cemetery was almost at capacity so there was a need for the Council to explore the options available to it for the future.

76.3 Accordingly, it was

RESOLVED: That the Committee's Forward Plan be **NOTED**.

EX.77 WASTE SERVICE REVIEW AND VEHICLE PROCUREMENT

- 77.1 The report of the Environmental and Housing Services Group Manager, circulated at Pages No. 14-28, informed Members of the outcome of the review and recommended a revised model for the waste and recycling service as well as a procurement process to provide the vehicles to deliver the service. Members were asked to endorse the findings of the waste service review; adopt the comingled recycling service with separate food waste collections (option two) as the preferred option for implementation in 2017; to recommend to Council that the allocation of £3.25 million from capital resources to fund the vehicle replacement programme be approved; and to delegate authority to the Deputy Chief Executive, in consultation with the Lead Members for Clean and Green Environment and Finance and Asset Management, to procure the new and replacement vehicles.
- 77.2 The Deputy Chief Executive advised Members that the current waste and comingled recycling collection service had been in place since 2010. The service had been introduced with the aim of achieving 50% recycling and composting by 2014/15 and reaching an annual landfill rate of 273kg per capita. Since 2014, the waste and recycling collection service had been provided for Tewkesbury by the local authority company Ubico which also provided street cleansing and ground maintenance services in the Borough. The vehicles currently used by Ubico for delivery of the service were contract hired and that agreement was due to expire at the end of March 2017 so this also needed to be given consideration. The review of the waste service had been commissioned in September 2015 to consider whether the current service configuration was still fit for purpose and to compare it against other service models in terms of cost, performance and compliance. Bruce Carpenter, working through the Joint Waste Team, had undertaken the review on behalf of the Council and the report before Members drew together the conclusions of that review.
- 77.3 In introducing himself Bruce Carpenter explained that he was the Head of Operations for the Somerset Waste Partnership and through that was linked to the Joint Waste Team. He explained that the report before the Committee described the review and made recommendations on service provision and the replacement vehicles that might deliver the new service. As identified by the Deputy Chief Executive, the current service had been introduced in 2010 and had proven to be successful in reducing residual waste and improving recycling so it was likely that, if reversed, recycling would reduce and this would be contrary to the Council's objectives. This had to be taken into account as did the fact that, by 2019, the energy from the waste facility at Javelin Park should come on-stream. Members were also advised that new legislation had been introduced by the Waste Regulations England and Wales 2011 (as amended) which had underpinned the review. Those Regulations required the collection of materials separately but there were expectations within them that allowed comingling of materials if it was not technically, environmentally and economically practicable (TEEP) to change.
- 77.4 In terms of the service models being considered option one was the 'as is' option which had recycling and food waste collections using a refuse collection vehicle with a pod for the food waste; a refuse and food collection using the same vehicle; and a garden waste collection. Option two would see a recycling collection, a refuse collection and a garden waste collection using standard refuse collection vehicles and a food waste collection using a food waste vehicle which was not podded – this vehicle would be much smaller, quicker and more efficient than

those used at the moment and the refuse collection vehicles themselves would be high capacity standard vehicles. Option three was a splitback refuse collection vehicle which would collect recycling and glass, refuse collection vehicles for refuse and garden waste vehicles and a food waste vehicle – this offered some benefit in terms of the Materials Recovery Facility (MRF) gate fees but the original cost of the vehicle was approximately £30,000 more than a standard one. Option four was a full kerbside sort with a resource recovery vehicle for recycling and food waste and standard refuse collection vehicles for refuse and garden waste. In terms of the evaluation of the options a framework had been developed around the core principles of sustainability which showed that, overall, options one and two were the favourites. Future issues had also been considered including property growth, speed of loading, change of tipping point and likely financial changes. As a result of that analysis, option two was the preferred option as it used less expensive vehicles and had a reduced capital requirement; it avoided the cost of change; it had a low customer and client impact; there were minimal requirements for communications; no new containers were required; manual handling was minimised; the Borough's high recycling rate would be maintained; the service would be future proofed against a high level of property growth and changes in tipping points; and there would be no costs transferred to the Waste Disposal Authority.

77.5 A number of vehicles would be required to provide the proposed new waste service as well as a number of other types of vehicles which did not form part of the review but were needed to provide the service overall i.e. sweepers, cage tippers, transits etc. All in all the number of vehicles totalled 29 and, taking into account market values, was likely to cost in the region of £3,099,000. The review had looked at various ways of financing this project and the next stage was to go through the procurement phase; due to the fact that this was a relatively small number of vehicles there would not be a great economy of scale gained on the open market so it was felt that a framework arrangement would be the best way forward. This also reduced the risk of challenge. One further element to consider was that, by selecting the continuation of the comingled recycling service, the Council would need a MRF contract from 2017. Whilst a framework agreement could not be used for that, Bruce Carpenter was aware of MRFs within 30 miles of Tewkesbury Borough which had already said they would bid for the work so he suggested that this be done through a direct procurement service which would be managed by him.

77.6 Members thanked Bruce Carpenter for his clear presentation which had been easy to follow and understand. One Member questioned whether the Joint Waste Committee had generally been negative about the service that Tewkesbury Borough Council offered. In response, a Member indicated that Tewkesbury had always been different as it was the only authority that offered a comingled recycling service. Other Members within the Joint Waste Committee felt that a kerbside sort approach was better as it produced cleaner recyclate; however, with the improvements in MRFs he was sure that comingled recyclate would soon be as good as that gained from a kerbside sort approach. Referring to Paragraph 2.5 of the report, a Member questioned whether the issues with contaminated loads going into the MRF had now been addressed. In response, the Deputy Chief Executive confirmed that this had been addressed; although it had resulted in an increase in the contract price there was now a different system in place which was working well. In addition, work was still taking place within communities to try and raise awareness. The next time a MRF contract was agreed it would need to take account of the systems needed to ensure a similar contamination issue did not happen in future.

- 77.7 Referring to the food waste costs set out in the report, a Member questioned why they were different i.e. £412,710 in Paragraph 5.8 and £272,000 in Paragraph 6.1. In response Bruce Carpenter explained that Paragraph 5.8 was inclusive of the costs of Ubico providing the service i.e. fuel, staff, maintenance etc. Paragraph 6.1 was the specific cost of purchasing the vehicles. In terms of the depreciation of the vehicles, which was accounted for over a seven year period, the Member questioned why Ubico appeared to benefit. In response, the Finance and Asset Management Group Manager indicated that this was a financial charge arrangement and it did not mean that the Borough Council lost out in any way. In terms of paying for new vehicles in seven years' time, the Finance and Asset Management Group Manager explained that a sinking fund would be established to ensure the savings from the contract lease were put aside to enable replacement of the vehicles in the future. There may need to be a 'top up' to make adequate provision but, in theory, most of the funding needed would be there.
- 77.8 In terms of the proposed comingled recycling service, a Member indicated that he was pleased to see this was the favoured option. He felt the Borough's residents would expect the popular service to remain in place and was of the view that they would definitely not want to return to a more in-depth sorting service. In terms of the risk of 'challenge' that the Council may face to its choice of waste service, Bruce Carpenter indicated that the risk was never nil and it was true that, in some ways, maintaining a comingled recycling service was contrary to the new waste Regulations; however, it should be borne in mind that over 60% of authorities across the country did not comply as they also operated comingled recycling collections. The review had been undertaken in an auditable and robust manner and, having gone through that process, the risk of challenge was significantly reduced. Bruce Carpenter felt that it was also interesting to note that there had been no challenges since the Regulations had been introduced in 2015 and, despite the fact that in a recent survey of authorities across the country, it had been found that only eight out of 400 authorities had decided to change their services in line with those Regulations.
- 77.9 Members felt that the Borough's residents were pleased with the current service and, therefore, to opt for one that would not appear different to the customer would be the best way forward. Accordingly, it was

RESOLVED:

- a) That the findings of the Waste Service Review be **ENDORSED**.
- b) That the comingled recycling service, with separate food waste collections (Option 2), be adopted as the preferred option for implementation in 2017.
- c) That it be **RECOMMENDED TO COUNCIL** that £3.25million be allocated from capital resources to fund the vehicle replacement programme.
- d) That authority be delegated to the Deputy Chief Executive, in consultation with the Lead Members for Clean and Green Environment and Finance and Asset Management, to procure the new and replacement vehicles.

**EX.78 GLOUCESTER, CHELTENHAM AND TEWKESBURY JOINT CORE STRATEGY
ADDITIONAL BUDGET REQUEST**

- 78.1 The report of the Development Services Group Manager, circulated at Pages No. 29-31, asked Members to approve the use of £135,000 of reserves within 2016/17 to further support the Joint Core Strategy.
- 78.2 Members were advised that the Council was well aware of the protracted length of time that the examination of the Joint Core Strategy was taking and the fact that the Council had been supporting the whole process with finance and staff resources since 2008. Each of the three Joint Core Strategy authorities (Cheltenham, Gloucester and Tewkesbury) had been putting £60,000 into a budget on an annual basis since that time. However, since the examination was taking significantly longer than had initially been anticipated and was requiring more and more work, that funding was no longer adequate. The examination was now reaching stage three which covered major issues such as flooding, transport modelling etc. and following that would move into the main modifications phase, further consultation and examination of those modifications; along with this there would also be costs associated with the Community Infrastructure Levy work which ran alongside the Joint Core Strategy. The known/anticipated costs were £435,000 but it was felt prudent to add another £50,000 per authority to cover the length of the examination and the additional costs which were likely to be incurred.
- 78.3 In addition to the costs outlined above, the Inspector had also now released a preliminary findings report which was resulting in additional work but it was anticipated that the additional funding would also cover the costs of that work. The Joint Core Strategy was legally inescapable and Officers had to do the work required by the Inspector so it was hoped that Members would support the additional funding. Members were concerned at the length of time that the examination was taking and expressed their frustration at the costs that had to be borne by the Council even though it was not the Council's fault that the process was so lengthy and costly. One Member questioned why New Homes Bonus funding could not be used rather than uncommitted reserves. In response, the Deputy Chief Executive indicated that she understood the frustrations and Officers had had conversations with the Secretary of State and the Planning Inspectorate which had resulted in a noticeable change in the speed of the Inspector. In terms of where the additional funding would come from, the Finance and Asset Management Group Manager indicated that the primary reason for using uncommitted reserves was that Officers did not have the figure for New Homes Bonus at the time of writing the report; largely it did not really make a difference which of the two routes the funding came from and he hoped the surplus at year end would top back up the reserves for further support for the Joint Core Strategy and other services.
- 78.4 Members agreed that the whole situation with the Joint Core Strategy was frustrating, particularly as the Council appeared to have no choice but to continue paying for the examination for as long as it lasted. It felt like the Planning Inspectorate was out of sync with the rest of government in terms of the fact that there was a drive to build more homes but this was not possible until the examination on the core strategy was complete. In response to a query regarding the thoughts of the other Joint Core Strategy authorities, the Development Services Group Manager explained that Gloucester City Council had already taken the issue to its Members and Cheltenham Borough Council was about to. She was not anticipating any problems although she expected similar comments to be made by those Members regarding the speed of the examination and the frustrations with the process. In terms of the costs, a Member questioned what had been spent on the Joint Core Strategy since 2008; who paid the bills directly; how much the Inspector had cost to date; and what her daily/hourly rate was. In response, the

Development Services Group Manager advised that the overall cost to date had been approximately £480,000 per authority, however, she was not sure of any extra added in over that time since 2008. All of the invoicing was done through Cheltenham Borough Council but the Project Manager was a joint manager and all three Councils were involved in the governance at every level. The cost of the Inspector was unknown but the Deputy Chief Executive undertook to find out those costs. The Member indicated that she would like an analysis of the money spent by each Council to date, how much the examination was costing the Council and a comparison to other joint strategies so that letters could be written to the Planning Inspectorate and the Secretary of State to tell them how much the process was costing the Council.

78.5 Accordingly, it was

RESOLVED: That the use of £135,000 of reserves within 2016/17 be **APPROVED** to further support the Joint Core Strategy.

EX.79 BUDGET 2016/17

79.1 The report of the Finance and Asset Management Group Manager, circulated at Pages No. 32-75, set out the proposed budget for 2016/17. Members were asked to consider and make a recommendation to Council thereon. The recommendations included a delegated authority for the Finance and Asset Management Group Manager, in consultation with the Lead Member for Finance and Asset Management, to apply to the Government for a four year settlement if he believed it to be in the best interest of the Council.

79.2 Members were advised that the Council had considered the Medium Term Financial Strategy at its meeting on 8 December 2015. That document outlined the current budget pressures facing the Council, as well as those in future years, and depicted the gap between the estimated net budget of the Council and the estimated funding available to finance that net expenditure. The deficit over the five years of the Strategy was estimated to be approximately £2.9 million with a gap in 2016/17 of approximately £1,090,000. Since the production of the Medium Term Financial Strategy, the conclusions of the Government's Comprehensive Spending Review had been announced with the headlines being a 46% reduction in core government grant support over the next four years (56% in real terms); greater support to upper tier authorities for the provision of social care, partly funded from an extra 2% levy on Council Tax and partly funded from redistribution of existing funding; and a consultation on the future of the New Homes bonus scheme with the intention of reducing the financial envelope by at least £800 million equating to 2/3 of the current spend. The Council had also received the provisional Local Government settlement for 2016/17 together with the promised New Homes Bonus consultation. All of that information, along with general information on the financial climate, had been brought together to make a proposal for the budget for 2016/17 and the resultant Council Tax.

79.3 The Finance and Asset Management Group Manager explained that details of the local government settlement for 2016/17 were contained at Paragraph 2.0 of the report. It should be noted that this was a provisional settlement at this stage and, although it did not usually change, the final settlement would not be received until the following week. Assuming the provisional figure remained the final one, table one at Page No. 35 of the report showed the significant reductions to core government support that were expected over the next four years. This was in line with the projections in the Medium Term Financial Strategy but the profile of the reductions was more gradual meaning that the Council was losing less support in the next couple of years compared with estimates. For 2016/17, the reduction was

£451,000 which was approximately £110,000 better than anticipated. The government had made an offer to local authorities to apply for a four year fixed settlement which, in theory, would give the Council certainty as it prepared its Medium Term Financial Strategy; however, there was a lack of detail surrounding the offer, particularly what the Council would have to do to receive a multi-year settlement. It appeared that an efficiency plan would be needed which would include an intended use of reserves to support the budget. It should also be borne in mind that, although a four year deal would be agreed in principle, there were circumstances, for instance economic shock, when the government may not honour that deal. Of particular concern were the details regarding business rates and the future of New Home Bonus funding and, since more information was awaited regarding those issues, it was suggested that delegated authority be given to the Finance and Asset Management Group Manager, in consultation with the Lead Member, to consider the offer and, if deemed beneficial to the Council, to apply to the government.

- 79.4 Paragraph 3.0 detailed the New Homes Bonus allocation for 2016/17 which was based on housing growth and bringing empty properties back into use between October 2014 and 2015. The allocation for 2016/17 was £659,431 and gave the Council a total allocation of £3,401,162. In terms of the consultation the proposals included: a reduction in the number of years for which payments were made; that New Homes Bonus funding be withheld if there was no local plan in place; the loss of a percentage of funding if the local plan was not up-to-date; a reduction in payments for homes allowed on appeal – either 50% or 100%; and payments only made for housing growth above a baseline to allow for growth that would happen regardless of an incentive scheme being in place. The Council's forecast of future New Homes Bonus receipts had been reworked based on the government's preferred approach and those were set out at table two on Page No. 36 of the report. The proposed use of New Homes Bonus monies included support to the base budget; a base budget contingency; a business rates reserve; asset (IT and property) management; community grants; business transformation; and an uncommitted balance. The uncommitted balance would be spent through reports to the Executive Committee requesting a 'draw down' of funds as and when required. This would give flexibility to respond to the emerging needs of projects such as regeneration, public sector housing, the public service centre and vehicle purchases.
- 79.5 Referring to the performance of business rates, the Finance and Asset Management Group Manager advised that this had not been going particularly well and, given the ongoing threat of appeals and revaluations from Virgin Media especially, it had been agreed that Tewkesbury Borough Council would withdraw from the Gloucestershire business rates pool for 2016/17. Tewkesbury would then continue to operate independently within the retained business rates scheme and, should there be future safety net requirements, those would be met by the government rather than the Gloucestershire authorities. If the ongoing risk was reduced then Tewkesbury would look to re-join the pool at the earliest opportunity.
- 79.6 In terms of Council tax setting, Members were advised that the recommendation was for an increase of £5 on a Band D property which was the most that it was allowed to increase within referendum limits and, if this was agreed, it would retain its position of one of the lowest charging authorities. The position from the government was that a national threshold of 2% for lower tier authorities was set with the exception of those authorities whose Council Tax was in the lowest quartile and who were therefore deemed to have low Council Tax. A threshold of £5 or 2%, whichever was higher, had been set for those authorities. If the increase of £5 was approved it would be the first time in five years that the Council would have increased its Council Tax and that would generate much needed additional income of around £96,000 over an increase of 2%. That increase would limit the need to use reserves to cover ongoing service costs in 2016/17 and would also put

the Council in a better position to tackle the future deficits it would face as well as the uncertainty over the future of the New Homes Bonus scheme. Referring to the proposed budget, the Finance and Asset Management Group Manager advised that the estimates for 2016/17 included an £80,000 increase in direct staffing costs as a result of the assumption of a 1% pay award which was still to be agreed for the period from April 2016; a £196,000 increase in pension deficit contributions which was the third and final step of the agreed three year settlement; a £150,000 increase in national insurance contributions as a result of removing the rebate from contracted out schemes; a £63,000 reduction in Housing Benefit Administration Subsidy grant from the government; a £68,000 reduction in investment income as a result of reduced investment balances; a £140,000 increase in the cost of resources in the planning department to meet increased demand; a £303,000 increase in planning income; a £70,000 increase in garden waste income; and £10,000 of new procurement targets. Also included were savings generated by a number of business transformation activities over the last 12-18 months as well as the previous Council decisions that would have a new impact on the base budget for 2016/17 i.e. the opening of the new leisure centre, the cashable savings generated by the service review of Customer Services, the potential savings from the ongoing review of environmental health and development management and the estimated return on the photovoltaics.

- 79.7 The risks to the budget were set out at Paragraph 7.0 and the Finance and Asset Management Group Manager drew particular attention to the top three which were the largest risks; those included government support, New Homes Bonus and business rates. Appendix A set out the current capital programme and Members were asked to bear in mind that this may need to be amended to fund future ambitions. In addition, Paragraph 9.4 of the report set out the Council's early plans for future investment which included a range of activities such as the purchase of a new vehicle fleet for its waste and recycling, grounds maintenance and cleansing services. All of those initiatives would require significant investment at a level well in excess of capital balances and, whilst the Council would seek to dispose of less valuable assets to supplement its current capital receipts, it was inevitable that it would need to consider borrowing, either internally or externally, in the next financial year.
- 79.8 During the discussion which ensued, a Member questioned whether the suggestion of a four year settlement from the government would restrict the Council's own Medium Term Financial Strategy on an annual basis. In response, the Finance and Asset Management Group Manager advised that the settlement should offer more certainty to the Council and therefore help form the Strategy, however, there was still a need to see the detail of the offer from government before this could be confirmed. Another Member indicated that he regretted the need to increase Council Tax and he felt the Council needed to look more imaginatively at the ways that income could be increased so that Tax payers were not burdened with more increases in forthcoming years. In response to a query regarding garden waste fees, the Finance and Asset Management Group Manager explained that whether or not the fees would be increased was still to be decided. The matter would be considered by the Transform Working Group again at its next meeting to see if a steer could be gained. In terms of the budget the suggested £70,000 additional income would, in part, be due to the increased number of households taking up the scheme. Some increase in fees would be included so if an increase was not agreed Members would need to discuss where the money would be funded from. In respect of the pay increase, a Member advised that he suspected this may end up being 1.5% rather than 1% and, in response, the Finance and Asset Management Group Manager advised that an extra 0.5% would cost the Council approximately £40,000 which would have to be met from New Homes Bonus. The Member noted that, to date, the work of the Transform Working Group had been focussed on the budget but now its attention would need to turn to

how to raise income as it was not sustainable just to keep making savings.

79.9 Referring to Paragraph 3.2, a Member questioned how the Council would be affected by the possibility that New Homes Bonus funding could be cut if its local plan was not up-to-date. In response, the Finance and Asset Management Group Manager indicated that the Council had not yet been provided with a definition of what was meant by up-to-date. However, Tewkesbury Borough's local plan had been rolled over so its argument would be that it did have a local plan in place even though it was currently going through the Joint Core Strategy examination process.

79.10 Having considered the report and information provided, it was

RESOLVED:

That it be **RECOMMENDED TO COUNCIL:**

- i. That a net budget of £9,663,342 be **APPROVED**.
- ii. That a Band D Council Tax of £104.36, an increase of £5.00 per annum, be **APPROVED**.
- iii. That the use of New Homes Bonus, as proposed in Paragraph 3.5 of the report, be **APPROVED**.
- iv. That the capital programme, as proposed in Appendix A to the report, be **APPROVED**.
- v. That the capital prudential indicators, as proposed in Appendix B to the report, be **APPROVED**.
- vi. That the annual Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) statement, as contained in Appendix B to the report, be **APPROVED**.
- vii. That the mid-year 2015/16 Treasury Management update, as contained in Appendix C to the report, be **APPROVED**.
- viii. That the 2016/17 Treasury Management Strategy, as proposed in Appendix D to the report, be **APPROVED**.
- ix. That authority be delegated to the Finance and Asset Management Group Manager, in consultation with the Lead Member for Finance and Asset Management, to apply to the Government for a four year Settlement if he believes it to be in the best interests of the Council.

EX.80 SEPARATE BUSINESS

80.1 The Chairman proposed, and it was

RESOLVED

That, under Section 100(A)(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public be excluded from the meeting for the following items on the grounds that they involve the likely discussion of exempt information as defined in Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Act.

EX.81 SEPARATE MINUTES

81.1 The separate Minutes of the meeting held on 13 January 2016, copies of which had been circulated, were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

The meeting closed at 3:40 pm

TEWKESBURY BOROUGH COUNCIL

**Minutes of a Special Meeting of the Executive Committee held at the Council
Offices, Gloucester Road, Tewkesbury on Wednesday, 9 March 2016
commencing at 2:00 pm**

Present:

Chair	Councillor R J E Vines
Vice Chair	Councillor D J Waters

and Councillors:

R E Allen, Mrs K J Berry, R A Bird, D M M Davies, Mrs E J MacTiernan and J R Mason

EX.82 ANNOUNCEMENTS

82.1 The evacuation procedure, as noted on the Agenda, was taken as read.

EX.83 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND SUBSTITUTIONS

83.1 An apology for absence was received from Councillor M Dean. There were no substitutions for the meeting.

EX.84 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

84.1 The Committee's attention was drawn to the Tewkesbury Borough Council Code of Conduct which was adopted by the Council on 26 June 2012 and took effect from 1 July 2012.

84.2 There were no declarations of interest made on this occasion.

EX.85 ITEMS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

85.1 There were no items from members of the public on this occasion.

EX.86 USE OF SPRING GARDENS AND OLDBURY ROAD

86.1 The joint report of the Finance and Asset Management Group Manager and the Development Services Group Manager, circulated at Pages No. 1-8, provided information about the areas known as Spring Gardens and Oldbury Road. Members were asked to consider the information provided and instruct the Finance and Asset Management Group Manager, having regard to the Tewkesbury Town Centre Masterplan: Strategic Framework document, to prepare development proposals and identify those areas that may be declared surplus to service requirements, taking into consideration the future requirements for car parking in the town.

- 86.2 The Finance and Asset Management Group Manger explained that this report was intended to acknowledge the current and future under-utilisation of assets and to give authority to Officers to investigate the best way forward for the sites. It was intended that as much discussion as possible would be held in 'open' business as this would ensure the public knew what the intentions were which would hopefully allay their fears about what would happen following the closure and demolition of Cascades. There would be some commercially sensitive information which would need to be considered in confidential business but, as far as possible, this would be kept to a minimum.
- 86.3 In terms of the sites referred to, the Finance and Asset Management Group Manager explained that the Borough Council was the freehold owner of both the Oldbury Road and the Spring Gardens car park sites; which included the lease of land to the Swimming Bath Trust for the Cascades leisure facility. Both sites were key strategic sites within Tewkesbury town centre and yet the quality of 'place' in both locations was currently poor and did not generate a positive contribution towards the overall attractiveness of the town. Both sites were extensively used for providing hardstanding car parking facilities with Spring Gardens providing 286 spaces on non-market days and Oldbury Road providing a total of 96 spaces. A large proportion of the Spring Gardens site was currently leased to the Swimming Bath Trust and, in addition to that use, it also hosted a twice weekly market and a large part of the annual Mop Fair which had historic roots within the town. In July 2012 the Council had adopted the Tewkesbury Town Centre Masterplan: Strategic Framework document which included the Spring Gardens and Bishop's Walk Design and Development Principles document. Those documents identified both sites as being suitable for mixed use development whilst also concentrating on re-establishing the historic grain of Tewkesbury town as well as preserving and enhancing the character of the town; maintaining and mending the continuity of building frontages; improving the quality of the public realm; and maintaining sufficient levels of car parking.
- 86.4 Following the failure of the contract of sale for the Oldbury Road car park with McCarthy and Stone, and the development of a new leisure on the public service centre site, there was now an opportunity for the Council to review the options for both sites as a wider scheme. In terms of car parking, a review of the strategy had been conducted in 2014. This had included an independent assessment of the usage level of all Borough-owned parking facilities and recommended a series of measures aimed at increasing the usage of car parks and ensuring visitors stayed longer within the towns. The new strategy had had a positive effect with an increase in ticket sales of 3.4% in the first nine months of the year and, in particular, an increase in the longer stay categories; in general, there still remained a significant under usage of car parks across Tewkesbury. The closure of Cascades would free up a large part of the land at Spring Gardens, however, this would also have a significant effect on car parking. Analysis showed that approximately 30% of all ticket sales in Spring Gardens were related to the use of the leisure centre. It was expected that the current parking requirements for leisure usage would migrate to the new location and therefore it was suggested that approximately 95 less spaces would be required as a result. From the analysis that had been undertaken, it was clear that the current under-utilisation of Council assets for car parking provision would soon increase as the Cascades complex closed and the subsequent demolition of the site would add significantly to the over provision. There was currently no identified need, within service activities, to utilise the spare capacity available and it could therefore be concluded that the combined site had the potential for partial redevelopment opportunities.

- 86.5 A brief for the investigation of development opportunities would be mindful of the principles that had been established within the Masterplan which included: access and ease of movement – repairing the historic grain of Tewkesbury by making places that connected with each other at the town scale and at local level; mixed uses – a complimentary mix of uses that added to the life and vitality of the town centre; character – preservation and enhancement of Tewkesbury’s unique built and natural heritage; wayfinding – connecting and making distinctive and memorable streets, spaces, buildings and landscape to create a strong sense of ‘place’; continuity and enclosure – maintaining and mending the continuity of building frontages to enclose streets and other public spaces and to ensure lively and safe streets; quality of the public realm – creating attractive, safe and uncluttered streets and spaces for all users of the town centre, particularly for pedestrians and cyclists; sustainability – encouraging resource and energy efficient construction and reducing the need to travel by car for short journeys; and functionality – maintaining sufficient levels of car parking, access and servicing for the town centre and new development as it came forward. The development brief would have a vision to create a sustainable, mixed-use development that provided the highest standards of public realm and architecture and embraced the historic character of Tewkesbury in an innovative and modern approach. The potential development would provide a complementary mix of facilities, including retail, housing, car parking and public space as well as improving the existing connections within Tewkesbury town. Critical to the success of any redevelopment was the recognition and protection of the current uses i.e. the twice weekly market, the annual Mop fair, the provision of public conveniences and the provision of sufficient car parking. It was also acknowledged that both car parking sites were currently listed as community assets under the right to bid scheme and any development proposals that included the disposal of the land within the listed assets would need to comply with the requirements of that scheme. A press release had been produced on this issue and to date the feedback received from that and from social media had been relatively positive.
- 86.6 During the discussion which ensued, a Member questioned what percentage of the site would need to be left undeveloped to meet the needs of the market and the Mop Fair. In response, the Finance and Asset Management Group Manager explained that the present lease for the market allowed for the use of 104 car park spaces but the current usage was far smaller than that. The existing market lease was for one year and any development discussions would include talks with the market operator to understand its future needs. The Mop Fair currently utilised the entire car park (although obviously not the area where Cascades stood) but it was considered that there was scope to be more efficient in its layout; this would be discussed with the operator which had indicated that it was keen to work with the Borough Council to consider the future needs of the Fair and what that would mean in terms of the space required. The Finance and Asset Management Group Manager suggested that one third of the land across the two sites may be available for development; this would of course depend on the surface car parking that the Council wished to retain and was therefore only an approximation. In response to a query regarding the discussions that had already taken place, the Finance and Asset Management Group Manager advised that the Council had been working with an architect to see what, if anything, would work on the site and this had resulted in some initial drawings but no finalised designs. The work undertaken to date by the architects had been free to the Council but if it wished to move forward to look at more detailed ideas there would be a charge. A Member felt that there was a need to ensure the designs put forward were good and likely to be acceptable to the Council and she questioned whether the initial designs could be shown to Members. In response, she was advised that Members would have the opportunity to see the designs before they were asked to make any formal

decisions. Negotiations were still ongoing and the Lead Member for Finance and Asset Management would take an oversight role in the development of proposals; he would also ensure that Members of the Committee were kept apprised of developments as the project moved forward. The Finance and Asset Management Group Manager indicated that there was an internal Officer Working Group which was looking at the project and that Group included Planning Officers so this should help ensure any plans that came forward were more likely to be appropriate and acceptable. It was also felt that it should be of comfort to Members that, as it was intended the land should remain within the ownership of the Council, what was developed there, if anything, would be within the control of the Council.

- 86.7 In terms of the Cascades lease, it had been agreed by the Swimming Bath Trust that it would be relinquished and this was now in the hands of the Trust's Solicitor to finalise the details. The formal date would be 30 May but it was intended that the agreement would be received before that. In response to a query regarding the right to bid scheme, the Finance and Asset Management Group Manager indicated that this would only take effect if the Council looked to dispose of the site but, as the current thinking was to retain and develop it, this would not be something that applied. If the Council did decide to sell the sites then the right to bid would kick in with an initial six week consultation stage followed by a period of six months for someone to put a bid together if they wished to. A Member was encouraged that Officers were considering developing and leasing the site rather than selling it as he felt a valuable income could be gained by using that approach. A Member questioned what was meant by service requirements as mentioned in the recommendations and, in response, the Finance and Asset Management Group Manager explained that ultimately this referred to car parking but it also applied to any other service the Council might need the land for. The Member indicated that this was a relatively small site and he questioned whether it had been considered for housing as well as retail, car parking and leisure. In response, the Finance and Asset Management Group Manager indicated that the opportunity for housing would depend on planning considerations as well as whether or not there was justification for it. In response to a query, the Finance and Asset Management Group Manager indicated that the Holy Trinity Church had approached the Council to express an interest in building a community centre type building in the area. Officers would be meeting with them to understand the needs and that would then be fed into the project for consideration. In respect of the demolition of Cascades, Members were advised that this would happen regardless of the development that took place on the site so those costs would be borne by the Council. Rather than the building being allowed to fall into disrepair over time it was felt that it would be better to demolish it as soon as possible. The building would be decommissioned prior to being demolished and it would have to be surveyed again as it was known that there was some asbestos on the site.

- 86.8 Accordingly, it was

RESOLVED: That the Finance and Asset Management Group Manager, in consultation with the Deputy Chief Executive, be instructed:

1. to prepare development proposals for the areas edged red on the plan attached to the report, and the wider environment, having regard to the Tewkesbury Town Centre Masterplan: Strategic Framework Document and the primary considerations as highlighted in Paragraph 5.4 of the report;

2. having regard to the current and future requirements for car parking in the town centre, the Tewkesbury Town Centre Masterplan: Strategic Framework Document and the primary considerations highlighted in Paragraph 5.4 of the report, to identify areas within the sites edged red on the plan attached to the report which may be declared surplus to service requirements; and
3. to return to a future meeting of the Committee with the information required by Paragraphs 1 and 2 of this resolution.

EX.87 CUSTOMER CARE STRATEGY

- 87.1 The report of the Communications and Policy Manager, circulated at Pages No. 9-23, set out the Customer Care Strategy and action plan which Members were asked to approve.
- 87.2 Members were advised that, in the Council Plan, a promise was made that the Council would put the needs of its customers at the heart of what it did and would listen to what they said, treating people fairly and without bias. The Customer Care Strategy was an important step to making this a reality as it detailed how the Council planned to deliver customer care and outlined the organisational commitments it would make to its customers. In addition, the action plan showed where the Council wanted to be and explained how it would monitor and report its progress in achieving those pledges. In addition, as part of its commitment to customer care, the Council would encourage the adoption of common customer care standards across the authority. The Strategy had been considered by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee where it had been endorsed and recommended to the Executive Committee for approval.
- 87.3 The Communications and Policy Manager explained that, whilst the standards were not unique, the Council had not had them before. They had been developed with Managers at all levels and, as such, were fully supported throughout the authority. For some teams this would be a considerable culture change but there was a commitment from Managers who had wanted to put into place something achievable and effective. The Customer Care Strategy aimed to: introduce a set of customer service standards for staff to follow; make it easier, simpler and more convenient for customers to interact with the Council when requiring a service; use feedback from the residents' survey to help shape future service delivery; make sure staff were equipped with the skills to deliver high quality customer service; promote approaches to delivering services that were more convenient for customers and less expensive to deliver for the Council; utilise technology to better manage and serve the changing access needs of customers in line with the Council's emerging digital strategy; and work with partners in the public services centre to ensure customers experienced a seamless and worthwhile experience when visiting the offices.

- 87.4 Referring to the standards as attached to the Customer Care Strategy, a Member noted that, in terms of responding to emails and telephone calls, the timescales were not very specific but in respect of letters they were. She was of the view that responding 'as soon as possible' did not really demonstrate good customer care. In response, the Communications and Policy Manager explained that the number of emails and telephone calls received by the Council was extremely significant and as such it was very difficult to put a time limit on responses; there was, however, a commitment to respond as soon as possible which was of the utmost importance. In respect of the telephone, the main changes being introduced were that, if there was not a member of the team to answer a call, the voicemail message which was left would provide useful information about how long the Officer would be away from the office for etc. This would at least help the caller to know if their query would receive a response fairly quickly or if the officer was away on holiday for a week or two.
- 87.5 Members agreed that this would be a culture change for some teams but it was definitely something that needed to be addressed and they welcomed the introduction of the customer care standards. The Chief Executive advised that Officers knew they were not perfect at the moment and this was the reason for the introduction of the strategy and standards as a way of managing the issues and tackling the problems. It could be difficult to get work done when there were constant interruptions so he understood why sometimes people chose not to answer a telephone but, if this was the case, alternative arrangements needed to be put into place to ensure the residents who were calling were able to get the help they required. Accordingly, it was

RESOLVED: That the Customer Care Strategy and action plan be
APPROVED.

The meeting closed at 3:00 pm

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE FORWARD PLAN

APRIL 2016 TO AUGUST 2016 (No Meeting in May)

REGULAR ITEM:

- **Forward Plan – to note the forthcoming items.**

<p>Addition to 6 April 2016</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Revisions to the Redundancy and Redeployment Policy. • Formal Complaints Policy. • Digital Strategy. • Disabled Facilities Grants Review. • Severn Vale Housing – Asset Disposal. • Housing and Planning Bill – Consultation. • Review of the Revenues and Benefits Write Off Policy.
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Committee Date: 8 June 2016			
Agenda Item	Overview of Agenda Item	Lead Officer	Has agenda item previously been deferred? Details and date of deferment required
Appointment of Portfolio Holders and Support Members (Annual).	To approve the Portfolio Holders and Support Members for the forthcoming Municipal Year.	Lin O'Brien, Democratic Services Group Manager.	No.
Cemetery Provision in Tewkesbury Town.	To review the options for the provision of cemetery facilities within Tewkesbury Town.	Simon Dix, Finance and Asset Management Group Manager.	Yes – deferred from 13 January 2016.
Land at Canterbury Leys, Tewkesbury.	To accept the surrender of leased land at Canterbury Leys, Tewkesbury.	Simon Dix, Finance and Asset Management Group Manager.	Yes – deferred from 6 April 2016 due to ongoing discussions.
Transfer of Land at The Hangings, Tewkesbury.	To approve the transfer of land at The Hangings, Tewkesbury to Tewkesbury Town Council.	Simon Dix, Finance and Asset Management Group Manager.	Yes – deferred from 6 April 2016 due to ongoing discussions.

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Agenda Item 6

Committee Date: 8 June 2016			
Agenda Item	Overview of Agenda Item	Lead Officer	Has agenda item previously been deferred? Details and date of deferment required
Flood Risk Management Group Terms of Reference and Action Plan (Annual Review).	To undertake an annual review of the Terms of Reference of the Flood Risk Management Group and action plan.	Richard Kirk, Interim Environmental and Housing Services Group Manager.	Yes – deferred from April 2016 to allow consideration by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.
Revisions to the Redundancy and Redeployment Policy.	To approve amendments to the Redundancy and Redeployment Policy.	Graeme Simpson, Corporate Services Group Manager.	Yes - deferred from 6 April 2016.

Committee Date: 13 July 2016			
Agenda Item	Overview of Agenda Item	Lead Officer	Has agenda item previously been deferred? Details and date of deferment required
Performance Management Report – Quarter Four 2015/16 (Annual).	To receive and respond to the findings of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee's review of the quarter four performance management information.	Graeme Simpson, Corporate Services Group Manager.	No.
Financial Outturn Report incl capital financing and earmarked reserves (Annual).	To consider.	Simon Dix, Finance and Asset Management Group Manager.	No.
Financial Inclusion Policy.	To approve a Financial Inclusion Policy.	Richard Horton, Revenues and Benefits Group Manager.	No.

Committee Date: 31 August 2016

Agenda Item	Overview of Agenda Item	Lead Officer	Has agenda item previously been deferred? Details and date of deferment required

TEWKESBURY BOROUGH COUNCIL

Report to:	Executive Committee
Date of Meeting:	6 April 2016
Subject:	Performance Management – Quarter 3 2015-16
Report of:	Graeme Simpson, Corporate Services Group Manager
Corporate Lead:	Mike Dawson, Chief Executive
Lead Members:	Councillors Mrs E J MacTiernan and D J Waters
Number of Appendices:	Six

Executive Summary:

At Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 23 February 2016, consideration was given to the 2015-16, quarter 3 performance management information. The observations made by the Committee can be found in Appendix 1.

The documents reviewed at the meeting consisted of the Council Plan Performance Tracker (Appendix 2), the Key Performance Indicator set (Appendix 3), the Revenue Budget Summary Statement (Appendix 4), the Capital Monitoring Statement (Appendix 5) and Reserves position summary (Appendix 6). These items form the core of the Council's Performance Management framework.

Recommendation:

To review and, if appropriate, take action against the observations of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee resulting from its review of the 2015-16, quarter 3 performance management information.

Reasons for Recommendation:

Monitoring reports are part of the Council's performance management framework.

Resource Implications:

None directly associated with this report.

Legal Implications:

None directly associated with this report.

Risk Management Implications:

If delivery of the Council's priorities is not effectively monitored then the Council cannot identify where it is performing strongly or where improvement in performance is necessary.

Performance Management Follow-up:

Performance management information is reported to Overview and Scrutiny Committee on a quarterly basis. The outcome of each quarterly review is then reported to Executive Committee.

Environmental Implications:

None directly associated with this report though elements of the Council Plan actions relate to environmental themes, for example, waste and recycling.

1.0 INTRODUCTION/BACKGROUND

- 1.1** The Council Plan Performance Tracker was introduced in 2012 and has proven to be an excellent tool to monitor the delivery of actions within the Council Plan. Supporting the Tracker is a key set of Local Performance Indicators (LPI). The Tracker and LPIs are reported on a quarterly basis to Overview and Scrutiny Committee. The outcome of the review, including any concerns or issues raised, are then reported to Executive Committee.
- 1.2** At Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 23 February 2016, consideration was given to the 2015-16, quarter 3 performance management information. The observations made by the Committee can be found in Appendix 1. The documents reviewed at the meeting consisted of the Council Plan Performance Tracker (Appendix 2), the Key Performance Indicator set (Appendix 3), the Revenue Budget Summary Statement (Appendix 4), the Capital Monitoring Statement (Appendix 5) and Reserves position summary (Appendix 6). These items form the core of the Council's Performance Management framework. The majority of information within the Performance Tracker reflects the progress of Council Plan actions as at the time of writing the report. The remaining information is of a financial and statistical type nature so represents the position as at the end of December 2015.

2.0 COUNCIL PLAN PERFORMANCE TRACKER

- 2.1** The Council Plan has five priorities on which action is focussed to deliver the Council's vision:
- Use resources effectively and efficiently.
 - Promote economic development.
 - Improve recycling and care for the environment.
 - Provide customer focussed community support.
 - Develop housing relevant to local needs.

Each of the five priorities is supported by a number of objectives and actions which will focus activity on delivery of the priorities. The Tracker has been developed and contains a set of key performance measures to support delivery of each Council Plan action.

2.2 For monitoring the progress of the Council Plan actions the following symbols are used:

☺ – action progressing well.

☹ – the action has some issues or delay but there is no significant slippage in the delivery of the action.

⊗ – significant risk to not achieving the action or there has been significant slippage in the timetable or performance is below target.

White – project has not yet commenced.

✓ – action complete or annual target achieved.

2.3 The majority of actions are progressing well, for example, since reporting the quarter 2 information, items of interest include:

- An Asset Management Strategy was approved by Executive Committee in November – and an example of our assets being sweated to generate maximum return is the installation of solar panels here at the Public Services Centre, which is set to generate a return on investment of 13.4%.
- A Customer Care Strategy, including corporate customer care standards, has been developed and is now subject to formal approval.
- Completion of the Planning and Environmental Health service review – the final report is awaited.
- Our inward investment campaign work is being showcased in the current edition of Commercial Property Monthly – a national property magazine.
- Following promotion in Tewkesbury Borough News, our Economic Development Team has received a high level of enquiries for business grants and is currently working with the businesses to develop their applications.
- A new Tewkesbury and riverside communities website – www.visittewkesbury.info – was launched in January using the government's Flood Support Grant money.
- Following a successful funding bid, the remaining funding for the Heritage Walks and Interpretation project has been achieved.
- The official launch of LEADER took place in December and the programme is now open for applications.
- The waste service review in how we collect our waste has been finalised and will inform stage two, fleet procurement.
- A successful 'day of action' took place in Churchdown and involved a range of agencies offering support and information to the local community.
- Following the completion of a flood bund in Tirley, two further flood response projects are being planned for Q4 – in Chaceley (an outfall into the Severn) and a Borough-wide scheme to provide property surveys to properties at risk of flooding.
- Training for Parish and Town flood wardens took place in December.
- Executive Committee approved the Borough-wide roll out of the Place Approach following its success in the east area.

2.4 Due to the complex nature of the actions being delivered, inevitably some may not progress as smoothly or quickly as envisaged. From the information obtained from service actions those with either a ☹ or ☺ are highlighted below: -

Action	Status and reason for status
Set Council Tax in line with Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS).	☹ - draft budget proposes to increase Council Tax by £5. Although outside of the strategy, this will help us to meet our increasing deficit.
Deliver the corporate savings programme -£ saved in accordance with programme target.	☹ - There has been some difficulty in delivering the overall savings programme – this is largely due to a review of benefits claims, which has highlighted an increased number of claimant errors. The savings programme is therefore expected to be delivered in 2016/17 and not this financial year. The annual target for both procurement savings and salary savings were delivered within the first two quarters in the full year.
Rationalise office accommodation through new ways of working – generate £235k through additional rental by end of 2015/16.	☹- partner to rent top floor not yet confirmed although detailed discussions are ongoing.
Develop a new Workforce Strategy.	☹ - the end of year target date may be affected by sickness absence.
Promote waste minimisation.	☹ - increase in tonnage to landfill and reduction in % recycled.
Street cleansing - Ensure we are responsive to customer complaints.	☹ - a number of complaints (100) were received around the Christmas collections. Around 7000 properties were affected.
Agree approach and programme of work for Community Infrastructure Levy.	☹ - impacted by work and timescale of Joint Core Strategy (JCS).
Delivery of JCS and Tewkesbury Borough Plan.	☹ - slippage in milestones as a result of additional examination phase.
Identify an interim housing requirement to monitor five year supply of housing land.	☹ - There remains uncertainty over any calculation as the objectively assessed needs are still being established through the JCS examination.

3.0 KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS (KPIs)

3.1 The set of Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) can be found in Appendix 3 and are a combination of contextual indicators and target related indicators. The set of KPIs must remain flexible to ensure they meet our needs. The data reported is the position at the end of quarter 3 (December 2015).

3.2 Of the 17 indicators with targets, their status as at the end of quarter 3 is :

☹ (target will not be achieved)	☺ (below target but likely to achieve target by end of year)	☺ (on course to achieve target)
4	5	8

And in terms of the direction of travel i.e. performance compared to last year, the status for the 17 indicators are:

↑ (better performance than last year)	↓ (not as good as last year)	↔(on par with last year)
11	6	0

Note: the direction of travel for KPI 4 and 5 - antisocial behaviour and crime incidents. There are no targets for these indicators.

3.3 Key indicators of interest include:

KPI 4 & 5 –The number of anti-social behaviour incidents is continuing to decrease and is an indicator of the proactive work among partner agencies. Overall crime is increasing.

KPI 11 – sickness absence. Average number of days taken increased in this quarter as a result of long term sickness though overall sick days are less than 2014/15.

KPI 12-14 – planning processing times. All three indicators confirm 2015/16 targets are unlikely to be achieved and processing times are down compared to 2014/15.

KPI 15 & 16 – average time to process benefit application and change of circumstances. Processing times are the best ever and show continued improvement.

KPI 26 – The number of enviro-crimes reported continues to increase and is greater than the overall target.

KPI 30 – it is estimated 205 new affordable homes will be delivered. The largest number delivered since 2007/8.

4.0 FINANCIAL SUMMARY - REVENUE POSITION

4.1 The Financial Budget Summary for Q3 shows a £276,131 saving (Q2 shows a £20,236 saving) against the profiled budget.

4.2 Below is a summary of the expenditure position for the Council split out between the main expenditure types.

4.3	Full Year Budget	Q3 Budget Position	Q3 Actual Position	Savings / (Deficit)	Budget Variance %
Group budget Summary					
Employees	8,087,297	6,013,646	5,910,028	103,618	1.7
Premises	666,394	461,878	440,958	20,921	4.5
Transport	166,390	122,073	105,857	16,215	13.3
Supplies & Services	2,328,723	1,507,515	1,468,765	38,750	2.6
Payments to Third Parties	4,229,315	3,472,722	3,500,956	(28,233)	(0.8)
Transfer Payments - Benefits Service	19,665,790	14,749,343	14,924,000	(174,658)	(1.2)
Income	(25,951,437)	(18,567,412)	(19,386,436)	819,023	(4.4)
Support Services	0	0	0	0	0.0
Capital Charges	443,878	0	0	0	0.0
Treasury Mg Activity	(188,835)	(117,626)	(99,174)	(18,452)	0.0
	9,447,515	7,642,139	6,864,954	777,185	10.17
Corporate budgets					
Salary & Procurement savings	(201,379)	(151,054)	0	(151,054)	100.0
New Homes Bonus	109,606	0	0	0	0.0
Retained Business Rates income	(250,000)	(250,000)	100,000	(350,000)	140.0
	9,105,742	7,241,085	6,964,954	276,131	3.81

4.4 Looking at the budget position of all the Group Managers there is an underspend of £777k being shown (292k at Q2). This is being achieved through underspends of:

- i) £123k on employees. These costs savings have been achieved through vacant posts, rather than through reduction in staff numbers. Vacancies and staff absences such as maternity leave have continued to increase the underspend through to end of Q3;
- ii) £786k of additional income above budget projection, with additional income from planning applications contributing the majority to this. The total income received by Q3 is already in excess of the target budget for the whole year. Other sources of income such as garden, trade waste and also from legal services work for third parties has helped achieve the underspend.

- 4.5** The reason for overspends within Groups include:
- i) Monthly monitoring of the position of the recovery of subsidy against housing benefit payments continues to show that we are overspent against budget. Overpayments relating to claimant error in claiming benefits going back into previous years continues to keep the recovery of costs below budget target.
 - ii) Treasury management continues to show an under recovery against budget. This is still impacted by the available of cash balances of the Virgin Media refund and the cost of the leisure centre.
- 4.6** Attached at Appendix 4 is a summary of the position for each Group Manager, which shows the current variance against their budget. Where the main types of expenditure headings, within the Group Manager's responsibility, has a variance over £10k, a short explanation for the reason for the variance has been provided.
- 4.7** Although the Group Managers position appears to be significantly underspent, the budget report also recognises the need to achieve savings from the base budget in terms of salaries and procurement savings. These savings targets are currently held on the corporate budget codes on the ledger. No savings are recognised against these plans as they accumulate through the year within service groupings.
- 4.8** Also detailed under corporate budgets is the retained income from the Business Rates Scheme. This is showing a deficit of £350k against the Q3 budget position. The budget projection was that a surplus above the business rates income target which would contribute £250k to the budget. During the year a series of revaluations on various properties within the Borough, and also write off of several debts which have proven to be unrecoverable, has meant that rather than a surplus being realised we are in a deficit position.
- 4.9** Looking towards the outturn position whilst the surplus is welcome, several financial pressures such as the additional cost of MRF contract and the JCS has meant that the Council has used current year reserves to meet these costs. This means that the surplus at Q3 is not sufficient to replace the reserves used. A further improvement in the surplus position over the final quarter would be welcome in order to replace the reserves and have further money available to meet other known one-off future expenditure items.

5.0 FINANCIAL SUMMARY – CAPITAL POSITION

- 5.1** Appendix 5 shows the capital budget position as at Q3. This is currently showing an underspend against the profiled budget of £1,460,128.
- 5.2** This is principally due to the capital asset fund of £1.9m which was expected to be spent in Q3, has not been. Although work has started in Q3 on the solar panels on the Council Offices they have not been paid for yet, also plans are being drawn up on future asset investment opportunities.
- 5.3** Community grants are underspent which is due to slippages in approved programmes, however monitoring by the Working Group highlights that all schemes are continuing and budgets are expected to be spent.
- 5.4** The larger schemes in relation to the new leisure centre and refurbishment of the Roses Theatre are showing differences to the profile spend in the budget, but project management by the Property Team is indicating that these schemes are in line to meet the total capital budget allocated to each scheme.

There is some slippage in the spending of the budget on Tewkesbury town and riverside projects as plans continue to be developed on how best to utilise the available budget.

6.0 FINANCIAL SUMMARY – RESERVES POSITION

6.1 See Appendix 6 for a summary of the current usage of available reserves

6.2 Reserves have been set aside from previous years to fund known future costs. At present the reserves are being utilised, and show actual payments made. The information in the Appendix does not take account of reserves which have been committed, but not yet paid.

6.3 As at the end of the this quarter, £961,981 has been expended against the opening reserves of £10,567,814. Details of significant movements over £50,000 are contained in the notes on the Appendix.

7.0 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

7.1 None.

8.0 CONSULTATION

8.1 None.

9.0 RELEVANT COUNCIL POLICIES/STRATEGIES

9.1 The performance information supports delivery of the Council Plan.

10.0 RELEVANT GOVERNMENT POLICIES

10.1 None directly.

11.0 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS (Human/Property)

11.1 None directly.

12.0 SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS (Social/Community Safety/Cultural/ Economic/ Environment)

12.1 Linked to individual Council Plan actions.

13.0 IMPACT UPON (Value For Money/Equalities/E-Government/Human Rights/Health And Safety)

13.1 Linked to individual Council Plan actions.

14.0 RELATED DECISIONS AND ANY OTHER RELEVANT FACTS

14.1 Council Plan 2012-16 (Year 4) approved at Council on 14 April 2015.

Background Papers: None.

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Appendices:

- 1 – Observations from Overview and Scrutiny Committee.
- 2 - Council Plan Performance Tracker Qtr 3 2015/16.
- 3 – Local Performance Indicator Set Qtr 3 2015/16.
- 4 – Financial Budget Summary Statement Qtr 3 2015/16.
- 5 – Capital Monitoring Statement Qtr 3 2015/16.
- 6 - Reserves Position Summary Qtr 3 2015/16.

**Questions raised by Overview and Scrutiny Committee at meeting
held on 23 February 2016**

Questions raised by Overview and Scrutiny	Response from officers
Performance Tracker:	
<p>Use resources effectively and efficiently: A Member questioned why it was taking such a long time to rent out the office space which was available within the Public Services Centre.</p>	<p>The Deputy Chief Executive explained that negotiations were ongoing with a group of partners but they were confidential at this stage. Ideally the space would be occupied by public services partners in order to grow the public service hub for Tewkesbury Borough. In terms of timescales, there were some set milestones but these were dependent on the other organisations and their consultation processes. Other factors also needed to be taken into consideration, for instance, if the expansion of One Legal went ahead the additional staff would need to be accommodated within the building. It was anticipated that a clearer steer would be gained over the next couple of months and Members would be kept informed as things progressed.</p>
<p>Promote economic development: – A Member sought clarification regarding the update on environment and resources efficiency.</p>	<p>The Economic and Community Development Manager explained that the Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) had been awarded European funding and there were now opportunities for organisations to bid for projects of an environmental nature.</p>
<p>Improve recycling and care for the environment: A Member raised concern that reports of enviro-crimes, particularly fly-tipping, seemed to be increasing and she questioned whether there was a need for the Overview and Scrutiny Committee Review Working Group to be resurrected.</p>	<p>The Environmental and Housing Services Group Manager advised that fly-tipping had been raised as an issue at the Joint Waste Committee and she explained that it was a national problem. Work had been carried out over the previous summer with one particular Officer and they had now been brought back to do a pilot scheme on work around fly-tipping. It was hoped that this would generate information to help to make a decision as to whether additional resources were required to tackle the problem.</p>

<p>Key Performance Indicators:</p>	
<p>KPI 12 to 14: A Member noted that the planning systems review was now complete but he had not seen any changes to the service provided, particularly in respect of communications and customer care, and he questioned when Members would be presented with the review report.</p>	<p>The Deputy Chief Executive clarified that the systems review had been led by the Planning team itself with external support from ICE Creates which had helped to capture the data and identify where improvements could be made. Whilst that part of the project was complete, changes to the way work was carried out within the department would be ongoing, as they had been within Revenues and Benefits which had just recorded its best ever performance in terms of housing benefit applications a year after the systems review had finished. It was important to recognise that the number of planning applications being received was at a record high which inevitably had an impact upon the performance figures, however, Officers had been making improvements and would continue to do so. One of the interesting things which had been identified in both Planning and Environmental Health was the amount of time Officers spent ‘feeding’ a computer system. This was not unusual in old, inefficient systems and part of the second phase would be to reduce reliance upon the computer system to allow Officers to spend more time dealing directly with customers. The review report itself would be presented to the Transform Working Group at its meeting the following day but it could also be brought to a future meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee if Members so wished.</p> <p>The Communications and Policy Manager indicated that the introduction of the Customer Care Strategy, which included Customer Care Standards for communicating with customers, would help to address the concerns around answering telephone calls etc. This would be discussed in more detail under the next Agenda Item.</p>

Council Plan Performance Tracker 2015-16 Progress Report

Appendix 2

Council Plan Actions progress key:	
☺	Action progressing well
☹	Action has some issues/delay but not significant slippage
☹	Significant risk to not achieving the action or there has been significant slippage in the timetable, or performance is below target
	Project has not yet commenced
✓	Action complete or annual target achieved

PRIORITY: USE RESOURCES EFFECTIVELY AND EFFICIENTLY				
Actions	Performance tracker	Responsible Officer/Group	Progress to date	Comment
Objective 1. Maintain low council tax				
3) Set Council Tax in line with the Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS)	1. Band D Council Tax approved within % limits defined in MTFS	Transform Working Group (TWG)	☹	<p>The Medium Term Financial Strategy was approved by Council on 8 December 2015 and included a strategy to increase council tax by 2% each year for the next five years.</p> <p>The draft budget proposal will be presented to Executive Committee on 3 February and includes a proposal to increase council tax by £5. This is a new referendum threshold offered by the Government for the best value councils and, although outside of the strategy agreed in the MTFS, is necessary to help meet the increasing deficits the council faces.</p>

b) Deliver the corporate savings programme	1. £ saved in accordance with programme target	Corporate Leadership Team (CLT)	☹️	<p>Business Transformation savings of £171,650 were included in the 2015/16 budget which was above the targeted figure of £150,000. These savings were from the Waste Service establishment and the Revenues and Benefits service. Approximately £57,000 has been delivered through direct cost savings.</p> <p>However, there has been some difficulty in delivering the overall savings programme balance – this is largely due to a review of benefits claims, which has highlighted an increased number of claimant errors. The savings programme is therefore expected to be delivered in 2016/17 and not this financial year. The annual target for both, procurement savings and salary savings were delivered within the first two quarters in the full year.</p>
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PRIORITY: USE RESOURCES EFFECTIVELY AND EFFICIENTLY

Objective 1. Maintain low council tax

Actions	Performance tracker	Responsible Officer/Group	Progress to date	Comment
c) Ensure the overall budget is delivered in accordance with the MTFS	1. Budget delivered in accordance with variance parameters	CLT/Group Managers	😊	<p>The MTFS allows for a 5% variance on the council's net revenue budget being an acceptable tolerance. The Q3 outturn report indicated a surplus of around £277,000 against the profiled budget, mainly derived from excess planning income, which resulted in a positive variance of 3.0%.</p> <p>This position includes the retained business rate financing stream which is expected to be in deficit.</p>

Objective 2. Provide value for money service delivery				
a) Rationalise office accommodation through new ways of working and to increase rental income.	1. 2000m2 of floor space to be freed up for rental by September 2014	Group Manager Finance & Asset Management	✓	A total of 2016m2 is now available for rental at the Public Services Centre.
	2. Generate £235,000 through additional rental income by 2015/16	Group Manager Finance & Asset Management	☹	Income of £161,000 is currently generated from tenants at the Public Services Centre. Discussions are ongoing with a number of public sector partners with the aim of increasing the amount of space rented including the vacant top floor area. These detailed discussions have become more advanced than first thought and therefore the outstanding rental income of £74,000 will not be achieved this financial year but will be delivered in 2016/17.
b) Implement the Procurement Strategy Action Plan.	1. Monitor delivery of action plan	Group Manager Finance & Asset Management	☺	A review of the action plan took place in the first quarter and indicated that many of the actions from the 2012 plan had been achieved or had been overtaken by other requirements. The revised Contract Procedure Rules were presented to Executive Committee on 13 January and a recommendation made to Council to approve. Once approved these will be reissued to staff along with appropriate procurement training.

PRIORITY: USE RESOURCES EFFECTIVELY AND EFFICIENTLY

Objective 2. Provide value for money service delivery

Actions	Performance tracker	Reporting Officer/Group	Progress to date	Comment
c) To review the asset portfolio and develop a strategy to maximise potential from the portfolio.	1. Outcome of portfolio review and development of strategy	Group Manager Finance & Asset Management	☺	An Asset Management Strategy for the period 2016-2020 was approved by Executive Committee in November 2015. Assets are still being sweated to generate maximum return to support our services, the latest example being the installation of solar panels at the Public Services Centre, which are generating a return on investment of 13.4%.

d) Develop a new workforce strategy.	1. monitor key milestones in developing the strategy	Group Manager Corporate Services	☺	This was a recommendation from the LGA Peer Challenge. We are working with senior HR managers from Gloucestershire Care Services NHS Trust to help deliver this strategy. This engagement provides an excellent learning opportunity for both partners. The end of year target date may be affected by sickness absence of the lead officer.
Objective: 3. Provide customer focused services measured by output against customer needs				
a) Agree a revised strategy for customer services which supports our business transformation proposals.	1. Development and delivery of the strategy	Group Manager Corporate Services	☺	A workshop for Overview and Scrutiny Committee on the draft Customer Care Strategy was held on 11 January 2016. The strategy including customer care standards were supported and will be formally considered at O&S committee on 23 February 2016.
b) Improve complaints handling, including learning from complaints received to improve service delivery.	1. Reduction in overall number of complaints received 2. Evidence of learning from complaints received	Group Manager Corporate Services	☺	A review of the complaints framework is underway with a target date to present at Executive Committee in April. The proposals will include a new reporting and monitoring system, staff resource to support monitoring and better signposting on the website. Although the framework requires review it should be noted the level of formal complaints is low, as reported to O&S Committee on a six monthly basis. In terms of learning, a recent planning complaint has led to a recommendation that the Overview & Scrutiny Committee review the effectiveness of public participation at planning committee.

PRIORITY: USE RESOURCES EFFECTIVELY AND EFFICIENTLY

Objective: 3. Provide customer focused services measured by output against customer needs

Actions	Performance tracker	Reporting Officer/Group	Progress to date	Comment
c) Put in place systems and procedures to enable consistent, high quality customer service.	1. Monitor implementation of high quality customer service systems	Group Manager Corporate Services	☺	As reported through previous updates and to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee workshop held on January 1, the customer services review is complete and has brought in a number of improvements such as ensuring the team is structured to meet work demands, processing of key transactions on a daily basis, promoting self-service, re-direction of Revenues and Benefits telephone calls etc. Although the review is complete longer term projects have been identified to ensure the highest level of customer service is maintained. For example, maximising the use of the advice and information centres, digitalisation of services etc. An action within the Corporate Services service plan for 2015/16 is to look at undertaking another residents' satisfaction survey.

Objective 4. Regularly review the effectiveness of customer focused services

a) Implement a programme of strategic service reviews and review potential partners for joint service delivery opportunities	1. Monitor programme and outcomes of reviews	CLT	✓	The programme of service reviews has been established and these include Customer Services (complete), Development Control and Environmental Health (in progress) and Human Resources (to be commenced). In addition to the programme, joint service delivery opportunities are considered such as the expansion of One Legal and Building Control.
b) Undertake and complete a review of customer services	1. Monitor delivery of the review	Group Manager Corporate Services	✓	The review was facilitated by ICE consultancy which provided similar support to the Revenues and Benefits review. The Customer Services review is now complete with an overview provided to members. Outcomes include: Successful transition of garden waste database (14,000) from depot services, re-alignment of staffing structure to meet demand peaks, more effective work planning, deletion of 0.5FTE, integration of team to the 1 st floor etc.

PRIORITY: USE RESOURCES EFFECTIVELY AND EFFICIENTLY

Objective 4. Regularly review the effectiveness of customer focused services

Actions	Performance tracker	Reporting Officer/Group	Progress to date	Comment
c) Review customer feedback systems in service areas to ensure there is a consistent and appropriate approach	1. Monitor and review feedback obtained from services	Group Manager Corporate Services	☺	This was a recommendation from the LGA peer challenge team. The service reviews undertaken in Revenues and Benefits, Customer Services and the current Environmental Health and Development Review have been undertaken to ensure customer feedback systems are effective. The introduction of corporate customer care standards will help strengthen this.

PRIORITY: PROMOTE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Objective 1. Promote Tewkesbury Borough to attract large scale businesses

35 a) Develop a targeted campaign to attract inward investment.	1. Monitor development of campaign	Group Manager Development Services	☺	<p>Inward Investment campaign work is showcased in the current edition of Commercial Property Monthly - a national property magazine. The advertisement revealed the new business branding and promotes the area as a location for business.</p> <p>Business and inward investment branding has been agreed and a website is currently in development. Launch proposed for March 2016.</p> <p>Tewkesbury Knights and Ambassador programme has been developed and meetings are taking place to develop case studies for use in promotional materials.</p> <p>A promotional video, material and further campaign work are also in development to promote Tewkesbury Borough as an excellent business location.</p>
b) Respond to enquiries for employment land and premises using online property search system.	1. Examples of responses particularly successful ones	Group Manager Development Services	☺	<p>Providing ongoing support through the co-star property search system, enquiries have included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Small start-up office and workshop space. • Industrial/warehouse premises – 30,000 – 50,000 sq. ft. Warehouse, plus office – 3000 sq. ft.

PRIORITY: PROMOTE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Objective 2. Provide support to help new start ups, young and growing businesses

Actions	Performance tracker	Reporting Officer/Group	Progress to date	Comment
<p>a) Deliver year four of the Business Support Grant Scheme.</p>	<p>1. Number and value of grants awarded</p>	<p>Group Manager Development Services</p>	<p>☺</p>	<p>Seven grants were awarded in this quarter totalling to £4549. This means 11 grants have been awarded so far in 2015/16 to the sum of £6,029.75.</p> <p>Following an article promoting the grant scheme in the last edition of Tewkesbury Borough News - we have received a high level of enquiries and are currently working with businesses to develop their applications.</p> <p>We attended a round table event at Gloucestershire Enterprise with Michelle Malone, the newly appointed start-up business tsar for government. An update was provided on the business support provided by the council. The government representatives were really impressed with the council's proactive approach to supporting business as it was some of the most impressive support they had encountered in their discussions and were particularly interested by the council's own business grant scheme.</p> <p>This scheme is being reviewed as part of the Economic Development and Tourism Strategy.</p>
<p>b) Organise events to strengthen relationships with key employers in the borough.</p>	<p>1. Number of events held, numbers attending and general effectiveness of events</p>	<p>Group Manager Development Services</p>	<p>☺</p>	<p>No events were held this quarter.</p> <p>However two events are being planned in for the upcoming months these are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Business event being planned in partnership with Chamber of Commerce to launch Tewkesbury Business Website – March 2016. • 'Join in China' business event being planned for April 2016. This will target identified sectors across the borough, to help build trade links with China and encourage investment.

PRIORITY: PROMOTE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Objective 2. Provide support to help new start ups, young and growing businesses

Actions	Performance tracker	Reporting Officer/Group	Progress to date	Comment
c) Work with partners to support business start-ups through training, mentoring initiatives and enterprise clubs	1. Number of training, mentoring initiatives, enterprise clubs and business start- ups supported.	Group Manager Development Services	☺	<p>Number of training, mentoring, workshops, enterprise clubs and start-ups supported since April 2015:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 28 businesses attended enterprise clubs. • 20 businesses attended 2 day start-up training courses. • 75 businesses are on the New Enterprise Allowance (NEA) Programme. • 152 business advice meetings. • 135 businesses attended half-day and open programme workshops. • 49 delegates attended an in-house training skills course. • 37 businesses attended a Gloucestershire Enterprise organised networking event.


Objective 3. Work with the Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) to promote economic growth

a) Work with the LEP to initiate projects identified in the Strategic Economic Plan (SEP) and the Structural and Investment Fund Strategy.	1. Implementation of projects.	Group Manager Development Services	☺	<p>Working with the Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) and other partners to promote opportunities emerging from the SEP and EU Structural and Investment Fund to the local business community.</p> <p>A pipeline bid for the Town Centre Regeneration work has been revised and submitted to the LEP.</p> <p>GFirst LEP and the Gloucestershire European Structure and Investment Funds (ESIF) Committee have launched 'calls' for organisations to bid to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Information and Communications Technology funding. This call focuses on extending broadband deployment and the roll-out of high speed networks and supporting the adoption of emerging technologies and networks for the digital economy. Up to £250,000 of funding is available and a minimum value of £200,000 can be applied for. - Environment and resources efficiency. This call is looking to protect and restore biodiversity and soil and promote ecosystem services. Up to £1,100,000 of funding is available through this
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call and a minimum of £500,000 of funding can be applied for. A proposal is being prepared on how a potential Growth Hub Spoke could be hosted at the Council Offices and in the wider borough.

PRIORITY: PROMOTE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Objective 3. Work with the Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) to promote economic growth

Actions	Performance tracker	Reporting Officer/Group	Progress to date	Comment
b) Work with partners, including Cotswold Tourism, to promote the borough to visitors 38	1. Monitor delivery of promotional campaigns and projects.	Group Manager Development Services		<p>The newly formed company, Cotswolds Tourism, launched its website in January. Detailed work was carried out on the website to gain maximum exposure for Tewkesbury Borough.</p> <p>The Visitor Guide – the main piece of destination print for The Cotswolds (including Tewkesbury Borough) has been produced. 60,000 copies of the guide have been printed and are being distributed both nationally and internationally. There is also an e-book version of the guide which can be viewed online.</p> <p>Using the Flood Support Grant, the new ‘Discover Tewkesbury’ brand has been developed with many local partners. It has been widely praised within local groups and communities. It can also be seen on the new website; www.visittewkesbury.info which was launched in January 2016.</p> <p>Tourist Information Signage Points are in the process of being replaced across borough.</p> <p>Currently working with Winchcombe to develop their marketing of the town.</p>

<p>c) To develop initiatives with partners to enhance the vitality of the retail centres in the borough.</p>	<p>1. Monitor development of partnership initiatives</p>	<p>Group Manager Development Services</p>	<p>😊</p>	<p>Ongoing delivery of Mosaïque Place Promotion and Investment Work (funded through Flood Recovery Grant and delivered in partnership with local business networks). Including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Development of the rebranded Visit Tewkesbury, public/visitor facing website for launched in January 2016. - Development of business /investment branding and website – for launch in March 2016. - Highways safety audit undertaken and ongoing development of town gateway signage. <p>A retail/ business survey on the town centre is currently being undertaken by Gloucestershire Rural Community Committee. Feedback of the results of this will be provided in the next quarter.</p> <p>Provisional dates set for High Street Food and Art Markets in 2016 – application being made to County Highways for road closure.</p> <p>Working with LEP Retail Sector Group investigating the potential for launch of a shopping app in retail centres.</p>
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PRIORITY: PROMOTE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Objective 3. Work with the Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) to promote economic growth

Actions	Performance tracker	Reporting Officer/Group	Progress to date	Comment
<p>d) Work with the newly formed Tewkesbury Town Regeneration Partnership (TTRP) to progress the regeneration of Tewkesbury Town.</p>	<p>1. Monitor delivery of the masterplan</p>	<p>Group Manager Development Services</p>	<p>😊</p>	<p>Projects continue to be developed with significant advancements following successful funding bids.</p> <p>The Missing Link project is currently being implemented with a completion date by the end of February 2016 (subject to flooding conditions).</p> <p>Following another successful funding bid to the Gloucestershire Environmental Trust, the remaining funding for the Heritage Walks and Interpretation project has been sought with the project aiming to be complete by November 2016. The contract has been awarded for the design and manufacture of the signs. Work is continuing regarding the text and imagery due to feature on the signs</p>

				<p>In partnership with Tewkesbury Town Council, work is progressing with the Moorings project with improvements to Back of Avon have been scheduled during the remainder of the 2015/16 financial year. Additional improvements are planned for further areas, aided by land transfers as a result of discussions between the two councils.</p> <p>The agent of Healings Mill and representatives of the Environment Agency have met with senior planning officers to discuss the progress of the sites redevelopment. Demolition approval for parts of the site demonstrates the intention to progress the area.</p> <p>A new Visit Tewkesbury website was launched in January 2016 with the new Discover Tewkesbury branding.</p> <p>Tewkesbury gateway signage project is progressing well and due to be completed within the next four months.</p>
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PRIORITY: PROMOTE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Objective 3. Work with the Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) to promote economic growth

Actions	Performance tracker	Reporting Officer/Group	Progress to date	Comment
<p>e) To encourage rural economic growth through the LEADER project.</p>	<p>1. Monitor the delivery of the programme</p>	<p>Group Manager Development Services</p>	<p>☺</p>	<p>The programme was officially launched in December; along with a press release publicising the programme is now open for applications.</p> <p>A promotional leaflet and website have been developed to promote the funding opportunity: www.forestandtewksleader.co.uk</p> <p>Outline applications have been submitted and were reviewed by the Local Action Group at their first meeting on 25 January. Following this meeting three applications, that fall in Tewkesbury borough are were approved to go to the next stage of a full application.</p> <p>A recruitment process is in place for a part time admin assistant. An appointment should be made in late Jan/early Feb.</p> <p>The programme manager is attending local business network meetings to present and promote the programme.</p>

Objective 4. Ensure the core strategy makes provision for sufficient employment land				
a) Ensure policies in the Joint Core Strategy encourage business development	1. Monitor development of policies	Group Manager Development Services	☺	<p>Joint Core Strategy (JCS) Submission November 2014 includes the following: Ambition 1 – A Thriving Economy</p> <p>The ambition is underpinned by the following strategic objectives: -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1- Building a strong and competitive urban economy 2- Ensuring vitality of town centres 3- Supporting a prosperous rural economy <p>The JCS is undergoing its examination in public which is likely to continue into Spring/Summer 2016.</p>
b) Ensure employment provision that meets the needs of growth sectors and addresses gaps in provision.	1. Monitor development of core strategy	Group Manager Development Services	☺	<p>Employment provision in Joint Core Strategy (JCS) Submission supports about 28,000 new jobs up to 2031 and 84 ha of employment land across the JCS area, 20 ha of which is replacement employment land at MoD Ashchurch.</p> <p>Further to the Inspector's requests at the examination, additional work has been completed to provide a 'policy on' approach to employment land supported by an economic and tourism strategy.</p> <p>This additional work was discussed during the JCS examination hearing sessions in January 2016.</p>

PRIORITY: IMPROVE RECYCLING AND CARE FOR THE ENVIRONMENT

Objective 1. Focus on continuous improvement in recycling and waste collection

Actions	Performance tracker	Reporting Officer/Group	Progress to date	Comment
a) Work with partners to ensure the optimum delivery of our waste and recycling services, street care and green spaces	1. Monitor progress and implementation of project milestones	Group Manager Environmental and Housing Services	☺	<p>Joint Waste Team, Ubico and Tewkesbury Borough Council are working well with a consultant in reviewing the current collection method, prior to the procurement of a new fleet of waste vehicles. A detailed report of the preferred option was approved at Executive Committee on 3 February with the recommendation to go to Council. If this is approved then stage two, fleet procurement, project milestones can be determined.</p>

b) Implement a framework for client monitoring of the Ubico contract	1. Performance Monitoring schedule	Group Manager Environmental and Housing Services	✓	The framework is in place and working well. Customer Services staff meet fortnightly due to issues which have been resolved. The Joint Waste Team carries out monthly monitoring. First quarterly Environmental Services performance monitoring meeting took place on 27 August 2015 with the third meeting to take place in February. A six month performance report was taken to O&S committee on 20 October with the next review due to be taken to O&S in April 2016.
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PRIORITY: IMPROVE RECYCLING AND CARE FOR THE ENVIRONMENT

Objective 2. Work towards achieving the 60% recycling target

Actions	Performance tracker	Reporting Officer/Group	Progress to date	Comment
42 a) Promote waste minimisation and aspire to increase our recycling rate through the working with our residents and communities on promotional campaigns.	1. Reduction in total tonnage of household waste arising which has been sent to landfill	Group Manager Environmental Health and Housing Services	☹	It is disappointing to see a continual increase in the tonnage going to landfill. The needle issue is still contributing to this along with extra waste over the Christmas period. The food waste sticker campaign did see an increase of 20% of food waste being sent to AN Digestion which is eventually turned into gas for energy. Please see the quarter 3 report relating to LPI outturn figures (Appendix 2).
	2. Increase in % of household waste recycled		☹	The recycling rate is impacted by the loss of recyclate as outlined above in two ways because it is a loss of tonnage being processed and recycled and it is then sent to landfill which increases the tonnage. Please see the quarter 3 report relating to LPI outturn figures (Appendix 2).
	3. Number of promotional campaigns		☺	“No food waste” sticker campaign. “Let’s give waste the heave ho ho ho” campaign- which included a double page spread in Tewkesbury Borough News winter edition- reducing your festive footprint, Christmas collections etc. Treecycle campaign- recycle Christmas trees following the festive period.

PRIORITY: IMPROVE RECYCLING AND CARE FOR THE ENVIRONMENT

Objective 3. Focus on continuous improvement in street cleansing

Actions	Performance tracker	Reporting Officer/Group	Progress to date	Comment
<p>43</p> <p>a) Raising awareness of enviro-crimes issues such as dog fouling.</p>	<p>1. Monitor delivery of awareness campaign</p>	<p>Group Manager Environmental Health and Housing Services</p>	<p>😊</p>	<p>A 'day of action' was organised and carried out in Churchdown on 23 November 2015. This involved officers from Tewkesbury Borough Council, the Police, Severn Vale Housing Society (SVHS) and Churchdown Parish Council. Information on the following took place:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Issues and consequences relating to dog fouling. • Issues relating to littering and fly tipping • Promoting the councils volunteering litter picking and the 'Paws on Patrol' scheme. • Police informed the community about burglaries • SVHS helped deliver messages on combatting fly tipping and abandoned vehicles. <p>Another 'Day of Action' is being planned in Spring 2016 within a different parish, further details of this is yet to be established.</p> <p>Work is continuing with parish council's to identify dog fouling 'hot spots' in which to concentrate council resources in tackling and continues to respond to complaints from individuals on dog fouling issues. Similar amounts were received to those in Q2.</p> <p>There was coverage in the press on the most recent fixed penalty notice for dog fouling served by Tewkesbury Borough Council.</p>
<p>b) Ensure we are responsive to customer complaints</p>	<p>1. Reduction in number of complaints and subsequent learning from complaints received</p>	<p>Group Manager Environmental Health and Housing Services</p>	<p>😊</p>	<p>A small number of complaints (100) were received around the double collection of waste over the Christmas period, due to Christmas day and boxing falling on a week day. Around 7,000 properties were affected. These complaints will feed into any decisions made next year.</p>

PRIORITY: IMPROVE RECYCLING AND CARE FOR THE ENVIRONMENT

Objective 4. Promote activities to reduce litter and fly tipping

Actions	Performance tracker	Reporting Officer/Group	Progress to date	Comment
<p>a) Undertake promotional campaigns and raise awareness to reduce the level of litter and fly-tipping</p>	<p>1. Deliver successful promotional campaign</p>	<p>Group Manager Environmental Health and Housing Services</p>	<p>☺</p>	<p>A summary of the 'day of action' promotional campaign in Churchdown is in the comment section of 3(a) above which included action and education on littering and fly-tipping.</p> <p>The press coverage in November on dog fouling also included wider commentary on Tewkesbury Borough Council's enforcement of other enviro crimes including litter and fly tipping.</p>
	<p>2. Reduction in the number of enviro crimes</p>		<p>See LPI Table</p>	<p>This is measured through a performance indicator – see attached LPI report (Appendix 2).</p>
<p>b) Continue to support the Volunteer Litter Picking Scheme</p>	<p>1. Develop action plan and support scheme.</p>	<p>Group Manager Environmental Health and Housing Services</p>	<p>☺</p>	<p>The Volunteer Litter Campaign continues to be a supported scheme by both volunteers and the council. A further five volunteers have been recruited making the total 188 volunteers.</p> <p>All volunteers were invited to the annual event on 9 December and as a result of listened to volunteer requests and suggestions.</p> <p>For future events there is potential to hold an annual event for all the council's volunteers.</p>
<p>c) Work with community groups to assist in reducing litter at community events</p>	<p>1. Promote awareness within communities</p>	<p>Group Manager Environmental Health and Housing Services</p>	<p>☺</p>	<p>There were eight community litter picks during 1 October – 31 December 2015. These were as follows:</p> <p>October 2015 (Three events)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Winchcombe Town Centre Community Weeding Event (bins). • Tewkesbury Mop Fair (bins). • Hucclecote Parish Council – Areas of Hucclecote (litter picking equipment).

				<p>November 2015 (Five events)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tewkesbury Bonfire and Fireworks Display on 7 November 2015 (bins). • Bishop's Cleeve Primary School Annual Bonfire Display (bins). • Tewkesbury Town Christmas Lights Switch-On (bins and litter picking equipment). • Churchdown Firework Extravaganza (bins and litter picking equipment). • Stanton Village Remembrance Day (an additional road sweep of the village prior to the event).
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PRIORITY: IMPROVE RECYCLING AND CARE FOR THE ENVIRONMENT

Objective 5. Continued work with partners to provide flood resilience measures

Actions	Performance tracker	Reporting Officer/Group	Progress to date	Comment
<p>4/5 a) Work with areas prone to flooding to build community resilience.</p>	<p>1. Monitor development of resilience initiatives</p>	<p>Group Manager Environmental Health and Housing Services</p>	<p>☺</p>	<p>Work to provide a substantial natural surface water flood 'bund' in Tirley is now complete. This scheme is the final (and possibly the biggest) scheme from the Flood Response Action Plan, agreed after the flooding of 2007. This part of the scheme was the largest element and now means that the majority of the overall scheme is complete.</p> <p>Two further projects are being planned for commencement in Q4:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. In Chaceley- an outfall into the Severn. 2. Borough wide- a scheme to provide property surveys to properties at risk of flooding. <p>The Tewkesbury Flood Project is jointly funded by Tewkesbury Borough Council and Gloucestershire Rural Community Committee (GRCC). This started in 2014 and has delivered support to a number of high risk communities to help deliver flood alleviation and resilience should flooding happen again. Of particular note is continuing recent work done with parish flood wardens, promotion of community plans and businesses that have flooded.</p> <p>Delivery of all of the above is monitored by the Flood Risk Management Group and reported to the Overview and Scrutiny committee on a quarterly basis.</p>

PRIORITY: IMPROVE RECYCLING AND CARE FOR THE ENVIRONMENT

Objective 5. Continued work with partners to provide flood resilience measures

Actions	Performance tracker	Reporting Officer/Group	Progress to date	Comment
<p>b) Advise and signpost local communities when applying for external funding for flood resilience measures.</p>	<p>1. Monitor number advised and funding gained.</p>	<p>Group Manager Environmental Health and Housing Services</p>	<p>☺</p>	<p>Delivery of projects is monitored by the Flood Risk Management Group and reported to the Overview and Scrutiny committee quarterly. The following is a brief summary of 'live' projects:</p> <p>Tirley: The works to the flood 'bund' is now complete. Additional flood attenuation measures (reopen an outfall into the river and install upstream flood attenuation measures), is being carried out. Funding available: £135,000, planned completion date: end February 2016.</p> <p>Chaceley: Diversion of drainage channel & reopening outfalls. Funding available: £45,000, planned completion date: Spring 2016.</p> <p>Tewkesbury: Work has started on the watercourse maintenance. Funding available: £20,000.</p> <p>River Severn communities: Property survey work to support a current Environment Agency grant bid. Funding available: £40,200, planned completion date: 2016.</p> <p>Surface Water Management Plans in Bishop's Cleeve and Woodmancote have identified a range of measures including diversion, storage and property protection. The Council is supporting Gloucestershire County Council in flood defence grant fund bids estimated at £1m in total, with the initial package of works being approved in association with the Parish Council. These options will be worked up, with detailed design to follow. These are long term plans with an estimated completion date of 2020.</p>

PRIORITY: IMPROVE RECYCLING AND CARE FOR THE ENVIRONMENT

Objective 5. Continued work with partners to provide flood resilience measures

Actions	Performance tracker	Reporting Officer/Group	Progress to date	Comment
c) Work with areas prone to flooding to build community resilience.	1. Monitor development of resilience initiatives	Group Manager Environmental Health and Housing Services	☺	<p>The Tewkesbury Flood Project is jointly funded between this council and GRCC for a support worker to assist with improving community resilience. The project has been successful in providing support to a number of local communities to increase resilience to flooding.</p> <p>A major success was the officer's work in promoting the Repair & Renew grant. Work has started in promoting a forthcoming scheme concentrating on surveys for individual property flood protection.</p> <p>In December, further training for parish and town flood wardens was successfully delivered in partnership with the Environment Agency, GCC Civil Protection Team and the National Flood Forum.</p>

PRIORITY: PROVIDE CUSTOMER FOCUSED COMMUNITY SUPPORT

Objective 1. Support and promote joint working arrangements with Gloucestershire County Council's Child and Family Support Services, Gloucestershire Constabulary and other agencies to achieve better outcomes for resident

a) Progress the Families First Programme to deliver a multi-agency response to the issues faced by families in challenging circumstances.	1. Monitor progress of the locality based approach, outcomes generated and target delivery	Group Manager Environmental Health and Housing Services	☺	<p>Working towards the target for 2015-2020 of approximately 300 families within the borough. Numbers of families being worked with continue to increase and the widening of criteria has helped bring more families in to the programme and also more agencies who are able to provide support. Key issues continue to be mental health and domestic abuse. Community Family Care are being used to support families as Children Services continue a restructure and are suffering a temporary staff shortage.</p> <p>Detailed numbers are still not available from Gloucestershire County Council, but should be by the end of the financial year. A six monthly update in April will be given at O&S committee.</p>
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PRIORITY: PROVIDE CUSTOMER FOCUSED COMMUNITY SUPPORT

Objective 1. Support and promote joint working arrangements with Gloucestershire County Council's Child and Family Support Services, Gloucestershire Constabulary and other agencies to achieve better outcomes for residents

Actions	Performance tracker	Reporting Officer/Group	Progress to date	Comment
b) Seek additional partners to increase the number of organisations operating from our public service centre at the council offices	1. Number of additional partners located in the public services centre	Group Manager Finance and Asset Management	☺	No additional partners have been located in the public services centre within quarter three. However it was reported within last 12 months a further three partners (Severn Vale Housing, Bromford Housing and Fire & Rescue Service) were integrated into the Public Services Centre taking the total number to seven organisations operating from this base on a regular basis. Discussions are ongoing with a number of other prospective partners.
48 c) Work in partnership with Citizens Advice Bureau to provide better outcomes for our residents.	1. Monitor effectiveness of outcomes	Group Manager Development Services	☺	The Citizens Advice Bureau continue to work closely with the council: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • provided advice and assistance to 1,007 residents in the first three quarters on variety of issues relating to benefits, debt, employment, relationships and housing. • Residents benefitting from £268,262 of financial gains. • By being a partner within the Financial Inclusion Partnership. • An annual presentation to Overview and Scrutiny committee will be carried out in June 2016 to ensure that the work carried out within the borough provides value for money.
Objective 2. Simplify and standardise business processes for the benefit of customers				
a) Use our public services centre to adopt a one-stop-shop approach to customer service.	1. Monitor development of the one-stop-shop approach	Group Manager Corporate Services	☺	There is potential to develop this further through the introduction of additional public service partners which would provide the opportunity for more integrated working particularly through improvements to the reception area. Strategic discussions are ongoing to move this forward.

PRIORITY: PROVIDE CUSTOMER FOCUSED COMMUNITY SUPPORT

Objective 2. Simplify and standardise business processes for the benefit of customers

Actions	Performance tracker	Reporting Officer/Group	Progress to date	Comment
b) ICT to provide improved customer focus and improved experience when contacting the council.	1. Monitor delivery of ICT projects	Group Manager Corporate Services	☺	This has been particularly successful with self service activities such as garden waste renewals, reporting missed bins, payments etc. A demonstration of this system 'Achieve' was presented to members on 26 January 2016. Other customer focused initiatives using ICT have or are being developed such as reporting & monitoring of freedom of information requests, review of complaints framework, tree and playground inspections. Moving forward, the council's website is programmed for review to ensure it is customer focused and in particular is compatible with being accessed from mobile devices and a digital strategy is being developed.



Objective 3. Work with Town and Parish Councils to deliver the localism agenda

6(a) Agree approach and programme of work for Community Infrastructure Levy	1. Monitor work programme	Group Manager Development Services	☹	<p>At the council meeting of 4 December 2012 members resolved to develop a draft Community Infrastructure Levy Charging Schedule and to establish a Member Working Group to oversee the development of the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL). The group has been established and has been overseeing the first stage of a CIL the Preliminary Draft Charging Schedule (PDCS).</p> <p>The PDCS, based on evidence in Core Strategy, was approved at Council for public consultation in April 2015. This consultation closed on 10 July 2015 and around 30 responses were received.</p> <p>In addition, a Viability Round Table Session (RTS) was held on 1 July 2015 to consider the viability appraisal work undertaken to support the JCS and where areas of agreement/ disagreement existed between the JCS authorities and the development industry. The outcomes of this was to undertake further work on viability that would feed into the next stages of CIL.</p> <p>The outcomes of the Viability RTS and the representations made in respect of the PDCS concluded that further work was required on viability and that this should feed into the next stages of CIL.</p>
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				Peter Brett Associates (PBA) have subsequently been commissioned by the JCS authorities to carry out additional work on viability, CIL and affordable housing and this has been ongoing over Winter 2015/16. A draft report was circulated in December. We are awaiting the final version this report will be used as the basis for discussion at each authority on how we may proceed with CIL. A all member seminar will be scheduled early March.
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PRIORITY: PROVIDE CUSTOMER FOCUSED COMMUNITY SUPPORT

Objective 3. Work with Town and Parish Councils to deliver the localism agenda

Actions	Performance tracker	Reporting Officer/Group	Progress to date	Comment
50 b) Develop a place programme of area working across the councils services	1. Monitor delivery of programme.	Group Manager Development Services		<p>Executive Committee approval for roll out of place approach based on Area East pilot. Members from the East Area have been supportive of the place approach and found quarterly meetings informative and useful.</p> <p>Already piloting smaller scale parish place approach with individual parishes, where required.</p>
c) Provide appropriate support for neighbourhood planning and community led planning.	1. Monitor requests from Town & Parish Councils	Group Manager Development Services		<p>Neighbourhood Plans also form part of the statutory development framework. Officers are working closely with those parishes with designated neighbourhood plan status to ensure that a joined up approach to the Joint Core Strategy, Tewkesbury Borough Plan and neighbourhood plans occur so as to avoid policy conflict.</p> <p>11 neighbourhood plans have been designated across 15 parishes.</p> <p>Significantly, both Winchcombe and Highnam Neighbourhood Plans have been formally submitted to the Council for 6 week consultation which end at the end of January 2016. Following this, the Council will be required to appoint an independent examiner and make arrangements for the examination process, which may include public hearing sessions. This is likely to take place during Spring 2016. If successful at examination then the Council will then need to make arrangements for a local referendum to vote on the neighbourhood plans.</p>

PRIORITY: PROVIDE CUSTOMER FOCUSED COMMUNITY SUPPORT

Objective 3. Work with Town and Parish Councils to deliver the localism agenda

Actions	Performance tracker	Reporting Officer/Group	Progress to date	Comment
<p>d) Enable the effective delivery of community led projects across the borough.</p>	<p>1. Type and diversity of projects delivered</p>	<p>Group Manager Development Services</p>	<p>☺</p>	<p>The three Community Development Officers are continuing to work and be located within community venues. As well as generic work, such as supporting communities and partners to address anti-social behaviour complaints, supporting parishes with young people’s projects and assisting parishes now interested in developing neighbourhood plans for their area, a sample of projects include:</p> <p>Area South:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Working with Brockworth Community Project to develop new business plan and to explore use of their IT suite as local hub for providing council/public sector services in the locality • Working with Imjin Barracks on Music Festival for June 2016 which aims to focus on strengthening links between the military and armed forces communities. Includes bid to Armed Forces Community Covenant Grant Fund. • Working with Innsworth Community Hall trustees, Innsworth Parish Council and Innsworth Junior School to explore how Innsworth Community Hall can be relaunched • Established cross agency working group for Highnam to look at specific issues around street/gulley cleaning/litter picking • Working with residents in new development area of Trumpeter Road, Badgeworth over issues around access/management of pond and ASB issues. Aim to explore ways for community to take active role in the area via schemes such as Neighbourhood Watch <p>Area North West:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assisting the Ronan’s Trust find a growing space to support bereaved individuals and families and re-build community connections to improve health and wellbeing. • Working from Northway Parish Council Offices to support the parish. The parish is extending their building to make provision for additional community space.

- Working with Environmental Health, members of the community and wider partners on addressing concerns about an HMO in the area.
- The Borough has now extended the amount of land and the license period for the edible garden project in Priors Park. We have also supported Vision 21 a revenue grant to extend capacity for this project.
- Assisting Wheatpieces Parish Council and the local community facilities within the parish to develop their case for enhanced community infrastructure as a result of recent pre-planning applications.

Area East:

- Supporting Alderton P C with evidence in relation to an existing capital grant
- Supporting Winchcombe Town Council with evidence required for capital grant application
- Building relationships with churches and community groups
- Exploring integration project for new and existing communities
- Held a Youth Providers Network Meeting at Winchcombe Youth Club

Community Funding:

- New officer has met with spoken with over ninety community groups in the last 6 months
- First round of new Community Grants scheme awarded
- Funding seminars planned for next quarter

PRIORITY: PROVIDE CUSTOMER FOCUSED COMMUNITY SUPPORT

Objective 4. Work with partners to reduce the level and perception of crime.

Actions	Performance tracker	Reporting Officer/Group	Progress to date	Comment
a) Support the delivery of projects agreed by the Community Safety Partnership	1. Monitor delivery of projects	Group Manager Environmental and Housing Services	☺	A workshop took place on 16 November, to launch to partners a new Community Safety Partnership structure which will include Neighbourhood Groups and neighbourhood watch. The Community Safety Partnership have continued with restructuring, and have been working on making funds available for community groups to bid for money for projects that meet the PCC priorities. Grant application forms and leaflets were launched at the end of January 2016.
	2. Overall reduction in level of crime		See LPI Table	This is measured through a performance indicator – see attached LPI report (Appendix 2)
53 b) Work with statutory and voluntary agencies to address the issues of anti-social behaviour and environmental crime in our communities.	1. Monitor outcomes of ASB and environmental crime partnership working	Group Manager Environmental and Housing Services	☺	A day of action was held in Churchdown recently involving a number of agencies to tackle enviro crimes, concentrating on fly tipping and dog fouling. Officers were on hand to give advice to dog walkers and other residents.
	2. Reduction in reported anti-social behaviour incidents		See LPI table	This is measured through a performance indicator – see attached LPI report (Appendix 2)
	3. Reduction in reported environmental crime incidents.		See LPI table	This is measured through a performance indicator – see attached LPI report (Appendix 2)

PRIORITY: PROVIDE CUSTOMER FOCUSED COMMUNITY SUPPORT

Objective 5. Help support the health and well-being of our residents

Actions	Performance tracker	Reporting Officer/Group	Progress to date	Comment
<p>a) Work with partners to promote sports and leisure activities</p>	<p>1. Monitor activities being delivered</p>	<p>Group Manager Development Services</p>	<p>😊</p>	<p>The following working procedures, projects and programmes enable the promotion of sport and physical activity throughout the borough.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Working with Active Gloucestershire, the County Sports Partnership (CSP) to bring Sportivate programme to the borough. This scheme is aimed at less active people. • Advise on health and safety, promotion and equipment in dozens of Borough wide events including fun runs and Junior Football Festivals. • Work closely with the new leisure centre operators, Place for People, to develop use of the facility for local sports clubs. • Keep the website search engine and social media updated with the boroughs sports clubs and activity classes by classification and area. <p>Within this quarter the following occurred:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Every Saturday at 9am Tewkesbury parkrun attracting about 100 runners and 20 volunteers per week • 11 Oct- Pink fun run charity event was held at the Wheatpieces, for breast cancer which saw around 150 people participated. • 1 Nov- Guy Fawkes 5 mile run, organised by Tewkesbury Athletics Club. <p>Work is underway on the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recommendation to be submitted Executive Committee, regarding tender process for the Cold Pool Lane Sports Facility. • Organising the Tewkesbury half marathon event for May. • Develop a park run at Sudeley Castle, Winchcombe.

PRIORITY: PROVIDE CUSTOMER FOCUSED COMMUNITY SUPPORT

Objective 5. Help support the health and well-being of our residents

Actions	Performance tracker	Reporting Officer/Group	Progress to date	Comment
b) Progress the work streams for a new leisure facility.	1. Monitor progress of the leisure facility project	Group Manager Finance and Asset Management	☺	<p>The build of the new leisure centre continues to progress well and is expected to be completed on time and within budget.</p> <p>Brickwork, installation of all external doors, rendering and plastering of the main pool, installation of under floor heating and floor screed are now complete. Mechanical and electrical works are continuing as well as tiling to the pool tanks and installation of the pools filtration system.</p>
c) Work with partners to deliver year three of the Health and Well-Being Strategy (2013-16).	1. Monitor progress in delivering Year 2 actions	Group Manager Development Services	☺	<p>New Leisure Centre on time and on budget. The sports development officer is working closely with the new leisure centre operators to develop use of the facility and increase participation.</p> <p>Social prescribing, linking people up with activities in the community that they might benefit them, is progressing well in Tewkesbury locality with referrals reaching the 40 mark.</p> <p>There is ongoing support for Winchcombe Memory Café with second year of funding for second monthly session</p> <p>Working with parish councils and local sports clubs to plan and deliver projects funded via S106 agreements.</p>

PRIORITY: DEVELOP HOUSING RELEVANT TO LOCAL HOUSING NEEDS

Objective 1. Develop a core strategy to meet current and future housing needs

Actions	Performance tracker	Reporting Officer/Group	Progress to date	Comment
<p>a) Continue to deliver a Joint Core Strategy in accordance with the key milestones.</p>	<p>1. Monitor progress towards achieving the key milestones</p>	<p>Group Manager Development Services</p>	<p>☹</p>	<p>There has been an extensive programme of events to brief members supported by further progress on a joint evidence base.</p> <p>JCS: A key milestone was reached in November 2014 when the Submission plan was submitted to the Secretary of State. From this point onwards the short term progress of the JCS will be largely determined by the Planning Inspectorate. An independent examiner has commenced a series of hearing sessions to consider the plan and the representations made to it. The hearing sessions have been ongoing since May 2015 and are expected to continue through to Spring/Summer 2016.</p> <p>In December 2015 the Inspector released some preliminary findings on the Green Belt, Spatial Strategy and Strategic Allocations. These findings provided the Inspector's initial views on the soundness of the allocation sites. These findings are set to be discussed at the end of January 2016.</p> <p>Further 'Stage 3' sessions are then expected to take place in March 2016 to discuss matters of infrastructure and the general plan policies. Following this there may be a need to revisit further work that has been requested of the JCS following the January 2016 sessions.</p> <p>Following the Inspector's final recommendations, each of the JCS authorities will consider main modifications to the plan necessary to make it 'sound' at individual Council meetings prior to a statutory period of public consultation and then adoption in late 2016/early 2017.</p>

PRIORITY: DEVELOP HOUSING RELEVANT TO LOCAL HOUSING NEEDS

Objective 1. Develop a core strategy to meet current and future housing needs

Actions	Performance tracker	Reporting Officer/Group	Progress to date	Comment
b) Continue to deliver the Tewkesbury Borough Local Plan in accordance with key milestones.	1. Refresh of the plan	Group Manager Development Services	☹	To support the preparation of the Tewkesbury Borough Plan, a series of Member presentations have been held regarding both plan content and also the supporting evidence base. The Draft Tewkesbury Borough Plan was subject to public consultation between 27 February and 13 April 2015. The timetable of the Tewkesbury Borough Plan is inextricably linked to the progress of the strategic, higher level joint Core Strategy, to which the Tewkesbury Borough Plan looks for the overall scale of development and spatial strategy.
57 c) Ensure policies in the Joint core strategy allow delivery of affordable housing for local needs.	1. Monitor delivery and outcomes of the policies	Group Manager Development Services	☺	The development of the JCS will provide strategic development plan policies which will be used to deliver affordable housing. A set of comprehensive, evidence based policies are contained within the Submission version of the JCS. This will be supported by viability evidence to demonstrate that the level of affordable housing being required through the JCS is robust.

PRIORITY: DEVELOP HOUSING RELEVANT TO LOCAL HOUSING NEEDS

Objective 2. Promote initiatives to make quality housing more affordable and accessible

Actions	Performance tracker	Reporting Officer/Group	Progress to date	Comment
a) Work in partnership with developers and registered providers to deliver a variety of affordable homes in all areas of the borough	1. Number and type of affordable homes delivered.	Group Manager Environmental & Housing Services	See LPI table	This is measured through a performance indicator – see attached LPI report (Appendix 2).


<p>b) To deliver a programme of affordable homes in partnership with parish councils, developers and registered providers to meet the needs of clients in rural communities.</p>	<p>1. Monitor development of a programme that meets clients' needs</p>	<p>Group Manager Environmental & Housing Services</p>	<p>😊</p>	<p>The Housing Enabling Officer is working across the Borough with six parishes at present to deliver rural affordable housing. Two schemes, Minsterworth and Sandhurst, are currently in the planning process.</p> <p>In addition, we are working with three parishes with council-owned garage land to determine the future use of the land and possible housing opportunities in these rural locations.</p>
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Objective 3. Work with all stakeholders to promote specific housing types to meet defined shortages

<p>a) Identify an interim housing requirement to monitor the five year supply of housing land</p>	<p>1. Monitor progress of identifying the housing requirement</p>	<p>Group Manager Development Services</p>	<p>😐</p>	<p>Housing and land monitoring completed for 2014/15 and the Annual Monitoring Report was published in October 2015. This included a latest 5 year housing land supply position based on the objectively assessed need set out within the Submission JCS. However, there remains uncertainty over any calculation as the objectively assessed needs are still being established through the JCS Examination.</p>
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PRIORITY: DEVELOP HOUSING RELEVANT TO LOCAL HOUSING NEEDS

Objective 3. Work with all stakeholders to promote specific housing types to meet defined shortages

Actions	Performance tracker	Reporting Officer/Group	Progress to date	Comment
b) Work with social housing tenants with specific housing needs to move to appropriate accommodation.	1. Number of housing tenants moved to appropriate accommodation	Group Manager Environmental & Housing Services		30 properties were let through Choice based lettings during quarter three, of which: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 9 had no housing needs • 21 social housing tenants had specific housing needs: these were assessed as having: significant, urgent or emergency housing needs. These are broke down as follows (below). <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 11 were let due to medical/ welfare needs. • 7 were let due to overcrowding • 1 was let due to under occupying • 2 were let for sheltered accommodation

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Objective 4. Improve the quality of the housing stock

a) Deliver private sector home improvements through the Warm and Well Scheme and through promotion of the governments Green Deal.	1. Promotion of scheme and value of grants delivered	Group Manager Environmental & Housing Services		<p>The Warm & Well scheme is a long established partnership of local authorities in Gloucestershire and South Gloucestershire and managed by Severn Wye Energy Agency (SWEA), located in Highnam. The Warm and Well scheme offers free advice on saving energy and can help older people claim a grant towards the cost of insulation, so reducing fuel poverty and health problems. The types of assistance available have recently changed, including removal of the national Green Deal.</p> <p>The Warm and Well Central Heating Fund is now being delivered in the borough. A bid from a consortium of Gloucestershire authorities, including Tewkesbury Borough Council, was successful and was awarded £3.2 million. SWEA are delivering the scheme. The Central Heating Fund (CHF) is a government programme designed to support local authorities to deliver first time central heating systems to 'fuel poor' households. The local priority is to target homes which are currently heated by 'off peak' electric systems, and replace them with gas central heating using modern energy efficient condensing</p>
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				combination boilers. Headline figures for Tewkesbury borough during quarter three are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 55 enquiries received by Warm and Well • 3 home visits completed • 3 events & briefings attended
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PRIORITY: DEVELOP HOUSING RELEVANT TO LOCAL HOUSING NEEDS

Objective 4. Improve the quality of the housing stock

Actions	Performance tracker	Reporting Officer/Group	Progress to date	Comment
b) Work with Public Health to develop new approaches to enablement and adaptations for disabled people.	1. Number & value of grants delivered	Group Manager Environmental & Housing Services	☺	Between 1 April and 31 December 2015, a total of 82 grants have been approved to a value of £394,850.
	2. Monitor development of new approach		☺	Discussions took place on the draft Disabled Facilities Grants Review Report at the final meeting of the O&S Committee working group on 28 January 2016. The work on how to change is being carried out jointly with Severn Vale Housing Society and Gloucestershire Adult Services. Officers continue to participate in the Gloucestershire Disabled Facilities Grant Forum. Through the council's involvement with the Safe at Home, home improvement agency; officers are currently involved in discussions regarding the possible shape of any future contract.

Key Performance Indicators 2015-16

Quarter 3 Progress Report

Appendix 3

Key:

Traffic light icons:

- ☺ PI on or above target
- ☹ PI below target but likely to achieve end of year target
- ⊗ PI significantly below target and unlikely to achieve target

■ Data not available or required to report

Direction of Travel - comparing current performance with previous years outturn

KPI no.	KPI description	Outturn 2014-15	Target 2015-16	Outturn Q1 2015-16	Outturn Q2 2015-16	Outturn Q3 2015-16	Outturn Q4 2015-16	Direction of Travel	Traffic light icon	Comment	Portfolio Lead / Group Manager
State of the borough indicators											
1	Employment rate 16-64 year olds	78%	■	83.7%	■	■	■	■	■	This is higher than the county rate of 79.2% and national rate of 72.7%. Source ONS (Apr 2014 – March 2015)	Leader Member Economic Development / Julie Wood
2	Claimant unemployment rate	1%	■	1%	1%	0.9%	■	■	■	This is lower than the county rate of 1.0% and the national rate of 1.8%. Source ONS January 2016	Lead Member Economic Development / Julie Wood

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Key Performance Indicators 2015-16

Quarter 3 Progress Report

Appendix 3

KPI no.	KPI description	Outturn 2014-15	Target 2015-16	Outturn Q1 2015-16	Outturn Q2 2015-16	Outturn Q3 2015-16	Outturn Q4 2015-16	Direction of Travel	Traffic light icon	Comment	Portfolio Lead / Group Manager
3	Benefits caseload: a) Housing Benefit b) Council Tax Support	4056 4785		4,092 4,721	4,079 4,705	4,049 4,650				Housing Benefit claims have started to fall below the caseload figure for last year. Council Tax Support claims are consistently falling.	Lead Member Finance and Asset Management / Richard Horton
4	Number of anti-social behaviour incidents	2508		615	1287	1821		↑		<p>The number of anti-social behaviour incidents continues to fall. There has been a decrease of 2% with 552 incidents in Q3 being reported, against the 563 in Q3 2014/15.</p> <p>This trend has continued throughout the year and is an indicator that the pro-active dealing of ASB amongst partner agencies is having an impact.</p>	Lead Member Community/ Richard Kirk

Key Performance Indicators 2015-16

Quarter 3 Progress Report

Appendix 3

KPI no.	KPI description	Outturn 2014-15	Target 2015-16	Outturn Q1 2015-16	Outturn Q2 2015-16	Outturn Q3 2015-16	Outturn Q4 2015-16	Direction of Travel	Traffic light icon	Comment	Portfolio Lead / Group Manager
5	Number of overall crime incidents	2673		782	1533	2297		↓		<p>All reported crime has increased by 14.9% with 764 incidents compared to 665 in Qtr. 3 in 2014-15. Aspects of crime which have considerably increased compared to last year figures (in brackets) are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • criminal damage to vehicles by 53.2 %= 72 incidents (47). • Theft crime by 46% = 165 incidents (113). • criminal damage other 52%= 35 incidents (23) 	Lead Member Community/ Richard Kirk
6	Total number of homeless applications presented	124		35	25	30				The number of homeless applications rose this quarter but this within normal variations and homeless presentations are in line with the out turns of 2014-15.	Lead Member Health and Wellbeing/ Richard Kirk
7	Total number of homeless applications accepted	88		17	12	16				The number of accepted homeless applications has risen from last quarter. This is likely to be because the number of applications rose. Compared to 2014/15 the homeless acceptances have fallen because of homeless prevention activity.	Lead Member Health and Wellbeing/ Richard Kirk

Key Performance Indicators 2015-16

Quarter 3 Progress Report

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KPI no.	KPI description	Outturn 2014-15	Target 2015-16	Outturn Q1 2015-16	Outturn Q2 2015-16	Outturn Q3 2015-16	Outturn Q4 2015-16	Direction of Travel	Traffic light icon	Comment	Portfolio Lead / Group Manager
8	Total number of active applications on the housing register	1729 928 -1 Bed 569 -2 beds 160 - 3 beds 54 - 4 beds 16 -5 beds 2 - 6 beds		1665 871 - 1 bed 563 - 2 bed 162 - 3 bed 57 - 4 bed 10 - 5 bed 2 - 6 bed	1782 941 - 1 bed 573 - 2 bed 196 - 3 bed 60 - 4 bed 12 - 5 bed -	1768 937 - 1 bed 564 - 2 bed 197 - 3 bed 59 - 4 bed 8 - 5 bed 3 - 6 bed				The number of housing applications has fallen slightly on last quarter but remains high compared to the outturn of 2014-2015.	Lead Member Health and Wellbeing/ Richard Kirk
Council Plan Priority: Use resources effectively and efficiently											
9	Percentage of creditor payments paid within 30 days of receipt	93.71%	93.00%	94.54%	93.44%	93.82%		↑	☺	Slight delay in payments due to holidays but still on target to be above target by year end.	Lead Member Finance and Asset Management/ Simon Dix
10	Outstanding sundry debt in excess of 12 months old	£49,735	£50,000	£39,450	£29,605	£53,809		↓	☹	£24,527 relates to one invoice and this is currently being managed. The underlying position is £29,282 which is in line with the previous quarter.	Lead Member Finance and Asset Management/ Simon Dix

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KPI no.	KPI description	Outturn 2014-15	Target 2015-16	Outturn Q1 2015-16	Outturn Q2 2015-16	Outturn Q3 2015-16	Outturn Q4 2015-16	Direction of Travel	Traffic light icon	Comment	Portfolio Lead / Group Manager
11	Average number of sick days per full time equivalent	8.67	7.00	1.23	2.71	5.20		↑	☹	<p>The increase in average sick days has increased which has been a direct result caused by long term sickness. Seven members of staff were on long term sick during Q3.</p> <p>The number of sick days during 2015/16 totals to: 882.5 days.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Q1 = 204.9 • Q2 = 251.6 • Q3 = 426 (210 days of this figure were as a result of long term sick). <p>Although the increase the overall figure is still a decrease compared to Q3 in 2014/15 which was reported as 1364.28 days.</p>	Lead Member Organisational Development/ Graeme Simpson

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12	Percentage of 'major' applications determined within 13 weeks or alternative period agreed with the applicant	82.05%	80%	75%	65.22%	73.17%		↓	☹	<p>Improvement on Q2 reflecting the hard work and commitment of the team as a whole. Performance is still affected by senior officer capacity and the number of large scale, complex major applications being received. The planning review has also absorbed staff resource.</p> <p>This target relates to a relatively small number of application so may be able to hit target by year end.</p> <p>Recruitment process is under way to appoint to a range of posts which will have a positive effect on performance in terms of both quantity and quality in the longer term.</p>	Lead Member Built Environment/ Julie Wood
13	Percentage of 'minor' applications determined within 8 weeks or alternative period agreed with the applicant	90%	90%	70.91%	63.20%	67.02%		↓	☹	<p>See paragraph above relating to performance and recruitment.</p>	Lead Member Built Environment/ Julie Wood
14	Percentage of 'other' applications determined within 8 weeks or alternative period agreed with the applicant	90.28%	90%	79.67%	74.17%	78.57%		↓	☹	<p>See above.</p>	Lead Member Built Environment/ Julie Wood

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15	Average number of days to process new benefit claims	18.75	15.00	15.31	13.18	12.34		↑	☺	Performance is continuing to improve. The third quarter's, new claims performance, is the benefit team's best ever performance in this category. Q3 2014-15 it was reported to be 20.53 days.	Lead Member Finance and Asset Management/ Richard Horton
16	Average number of days to process change in circumstances	10.51	10.00	7.21	7.02	6.61		↑	☺	Performance is continuing to improve. The third quarter's, change in circumstance performance, is the benefit team's best ever performance in this category. Q3 2014-15 it was reported to be 14.87 days.	Lead Member Finance and Asset Management / Richard Horton
17	Percentage of council tax collected	98.03%	98.00%	29.43%	57.45%	85.66%		↑	☺	The percentage collection rate has climbed above last year's third quarter percentage. The good news is that we have collected £913k more than we did last year at the same stage.	Lead Member Finance and Asset Management/ Richard Horton
18	Percentage of NNDR collected	98.72%	98.00%	33.34%	49.42%	84.98%		↑	☺	The business rates collection rate is now above last year's third quarter percentage. The impact of the large reductions in rateable values and refunds has been absorbed.	Lead Member Finance and Asset Management/ Richard Horton

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19	Total enquires logged by the Area Information Centres (AIC)	1539		514	876	1245				Enquiries received at the AIC's as follows for Q1, Q2 and Q3: Q1, Q2, Q3 Bishops Cleeve: 108, 78, 86 Brockworth: 235, 156, 181 Churchdown 84, 66, 61 Winchcombe: 87, 62, 41 <hr/> Total: 514 362 369 During Q3 Christmas closure for all Alcs were w/c 21.12.2015 – 05.01.2016.	Lead member Customer Focus/ Graeme Simpson
Council Plan Priority: Promote economic development											
20	Number of business births	440 (2013 figure)				445 (2014 figure)				Business Births – Represents a slight increase in business birth levels from 2013.	Lead Member Economic Development /Promotion / Julie Wood
21	Number of business deaths	305 (2013 figure)				285 (2014 figure)				Business Deaths - Shows fewer business deaths in 2014 compared to the previous year. Source: ONS Business demography	Lead Member Economic Development /Promotion / Julie Wood
22	Number of visitors to Tewkesbury Tourist Information Centre (TIC)	34,077	31,500	9,441	22,713	27,727		↑	😊	The number of visitors to the Heritage Centre has increased dramatically following introduction of free entry.	Lead Member Economic Development /Promotion / Julie Wood

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23	Number of visitors to Winchcombe Tourist Information Centre (TIC)	9,131	11,200	3,758	8,036	9,285		↑	😊	Winchcombe has had a good year after last year's maintenance work being carried out on the Town Hall - this affected visitor numbers. With the Q3 figure already reaching 2014-15 outturn.	Lead Member Economic Development /Promotion / Julie Wood
Council Plan Priority: Improve recycling and care for the environment											
24	Percentage of waste recycled or composted	51.08%	52%	51.85%	51.68%	51.48%		↑	😐	Whilst there is an increase in the residual waste, this is comparable to Q3 2014-15 and this quarter takes into consideration the Christmas period.	Lead Member Clean and Green Environment/ Richard Kirk
69 25	Residual household waste collected per property in kgs	428kg	450kg	112kg	223kg	326kg		↓	😐	Over this Q3 period composting and recycling figures are showing a downward trend however we will be expecting a rise in this figure during Q4 due to spring and the start of the gardening season.	Lead Member Clean and Green Environment/ Richard Kirk
26	Number of reported enviro crimes	1012	850	305	641	921		↓	😞	280 reported incidents for the Q3 period broken down as; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Noise – 65 (73) Dog fouling – 18 (9) Fly tipping – 144 (215) Abandoned vehicles- 53 (39) (Q2 figures in brackets). Q3 has had the fewest number of envirocrimes so far this year but is still greater than the target.	Lead Member Clean and Green Environment/ Richard Kirk

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										<p>Environmental Health are taking steps such as promotion and enforcement to combat these issues.</p> <p>The increase in abandoned vehicles is not thought to be a local issue. Due to the decrease in demand for scrap metal international the price for scrap metal has dropped and this is thought to be the case.</p> <p>A recommendation from the enviro crimes working group was to receive quarterly information from town and parish councils on dog fouling complaints. A total of 14 confirmed complaints were received in Q3 although some councils reported issues but weren't able to submit precise figures.</p>	
Council Plan Priority: Provide customer focused community support											
27	Total number of people assisted within the borough by Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB)	1457		380	684	1007				<p>Of the 1007 clients seen in the first two quarters of the year heaviest demand has again been from residents in the following wards: Brockworth (157 clients), Priors Park (107 clients), Churchdown St Johns (91 clients), Cleeve St Michaels (73 clients) and Northway (66 clients). The 5 wards represent 49% (494) of clients seen.</p>	Lead Member Economic Development /Promotion / Julie Wood

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71										<p>Some headlines:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 74% of client's advice was given face to face in this quarter. • 80% of these were of working age • 40% of clients were disabled or suffering from long term illness. With 8% having mental health issues <p>The five main areas where advice has been given over the last three quarters are as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Benefits: 496 • Debt: 434 • Employment: 173 • Relationships: 166 • Housing: 131 	
28	Financial gain to clients resulting from CAB advice	£422,869		£59,317	£122,551	£268,262				During the 9 months clients have benefitted from £268,262 of financial gains, of which £191,028 (71%) represent increases in disposable incomes.	Lead Member Economic Development /Promotion / Julie Wood
29	Food establishments in area broadly compliant with food hygiene regulations (%)	90.44%	94%	91.49%	91.97%	92.73%		↑	☺	Although the target has not yet been achieved this quarter, the outturn continues a trend of improvement over the last three quarters and aims to be achieved in Q4.	Lead Member Clean and Green Environment/ Richard Kirk

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									<p>During Q3 2015/16 the total number of known food premises was 895 where the following was found:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Broadly Compliant Commercial Premises - 830 • Non-compliant Commercial Premises - 65 • Un-rated Commercial Premises – 24 <p>The number of unrated commercial premises has decreased by 9 since Q2 2015/16.</p>		
Council Plan Priority: Develop housing relevant to local needs											
30	Number of affordable homes delivered	145	150	46	94	175		↑	😊	<p>We are currently exceeding the 2015-16 150 annual target and it is estimated that 205 new affordable homes will be delivered in 2015/16.</p> <p>Q3 has seen a total of 88 affordable homes delivered across the borough, of which:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Alderton (4) • Bishops Cleeve (31) • Brockworth (31) • Longford (12) • Winchcombe (11) 	Lead Member Health and Wellbeing/ Richard Kirk

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										Across the tenures as follows: Social Rent- 27 Affordable rent- 10 Shared ownership- 52 The largest number delivered since 2007/8.	
31	Total number of homeless prevention cases	94		44	36	47				The number of homeless preventions this quarter exceeds those previously achieved this year. Cumulative preventions this year to date (127) have exceeded the outturn figure of 94 during 2014/2015. Housing officers have been resolving housing crises before and during the application process are considered necessary. This has resulted in the increased number of homeless prevention cases.	Lead Member Health and Wellbeing/ Richard Kirk

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Appendix 4 - Analysis of Budget by Group Manager Unit

	Full Year Budget	Q3 Budget Position	Q3 Actual Position	Budget Under / (over) spend	Budget Variance %	Notes
Chief Executive	0	177,804	175,924	1,880	1	
Employees	233,103	174,935	170,610	4,325	2.5	
Premises	0	0	60	(60)	0.0	
Transport	2,280	1,712	1,997	(285)	(16.6)	
Supplies & Services	1,600	1,157	3,258	(2,101)	(181.6)	
Payments to Third Parties	0	0	0	0	0.0	
Support Services	(236,983)	0	0	0	0.0	
Income	0	0	0	0	0.0	
Deputy Chief Executive	0	86,739	86,661	78	0	
Employees	109,508	82,144	82,197	(53)	(0.1)	
Premises	0	0	0	0	0.0	
Transport	2,450	1,838	1,812	26	1.4	
Supplies & Services	3,300	2,757	2,652	105	3.8	
Support Services	(115,258)	0	0	0	0.0	
Income	0	0	0	0	0.0	
One Legal	0	813,772	796,636	17,136	2	
Employees	1,088,669	817,780	845,407	(27,627)	(3.4)	1
Premises	0	0	0	0	0.0	
Transport	26,280	18,600	8,993	9,607	51.7	
Supplies & Services	95,088	70,912	150,042	(79,130)	(111.6)	2
Payments to Third Parties	10,160	7,845	4,604	3,241	41.3	
Support Services	(270,279)	0	0	0	0.0	
Income	(949,918)	(101,365)	(212,410)	111,045	(109.5)	3
1) The overspend on employees is due to continuing to have unfilled vacancies in the section and therefore using locums to cover these vacancies. However this overspend is then being offset from additional income being recovered from third parties.						
2) The overspend on Supplies and Services is related to disbursements, which is additional work that One Legal have undertaken in the first 9 months of the year. All of these additional costs are being recovered through Income, as costs are recharged back to the various clients. These leaves an overspend mainly on books and publications of £6k making up the remained, although it is expected that the budget for books will not overspend on the full year budget.						
3) After taking account of the additional income on disbursements, the remaining additional income against budget relates to additional work that One legal has done for UBICO, Cheltenham Borough Homes and Worcestershire County Council.						
Democratic Services	1,686,891	659,579	573,258	86,321	13	
Employees	224,000	225,235	212,894	12,341	5.5	4
Premises	0	5,107	5,107	0	0.0	
Transport	18,610	13,960	15,647	(1,687)	(12.1)	
Supplies & Services	549,519	380,241	344,329	35,911	9.4	5
Payments to Third Parties	30,106	37,590	21,559	16,030	42.6	6
Support Services	862,297	0	0	0	0.0	
Depreciation	2,609	0	0	0	0.0	
Income	(250)	(2,554)	(26,279)	23,726	(929.0)	7
4) This is due to Temporary staff employed to cover peak times only whilst the on-going impact of IER (Individual Electoral Registration) is assessed to provide the optimum flexibility to meet the statutory requirements of the service						
5) Supplies and Services are underspent due to flexible use of staff during the elections resulted in an underspend of £24,000 on the election fees budget.						
6) Canvasser Payments in excess of £15,000 usually paid in the 3rd quarter will now be paid in the 4th quarter.						
7) A Gov't grant relating to Individual Electoral Registration (£22,828) has been received which had not been included in the budget.						
Corporate Services	494,834	960,166	870,219	89,947	9	
Employees	844,510	633,206	570,162	63,044	10.0	5
Premises	0	0	0	0	0.0	
Transport	8,610	6,462	4,459	2,003	31.0	
Supplies & Services	389,343	287,019	286,462	557	0.2	
Payments to Third Parties	47,700	36,629	21,145	15,484	42.3	6
Support Services	(836,598)	0	0	0	0.0	
Depreciation	45,769	0	0	0	0.0	
Income	(4,500)	(3,150)	(12,008)	8,858	(281.2)	
5) As members will now be aware, Corporate Services is the new group which combined the Business Transformation and Policy and Performance Teams. Savings in staff costs have been recognised as the budget was set assuming there would be two group managers in 2015/16. Other staff vacancies within the group e.g. Web Development and Internal Audit posts have also contributed to the saving.						
6) This mainly relates to the recoup of monies as a result of apprentices successfully being appointed to post.						
Environmental and Housing	3,876,850	2,525,234	2,479,969	45,265	2	

Employees	937,190	702,991	723,943	(20,952)	(3.0)	7
Premises	3,595	1,968	128	1,840	93.5	
Transport	37,100	27,834	25,736	2,098	7.5	
Supplies & Services	139,126	77,332	77,356	(24)	(0.0)	
Payments to Third Parties	3,737,739	3,139,361	3,162,622	(23,262)	(0.7)	8
Support Services	591,530	0	0	0	0.0	
Depreciation	72,410	0	0	0	0.0	
Income	(1,641,840)	(1,424,252)	(1,509,816)	85,564	(6.0)	9

7) Underspend on staff costs relates to savings from staff on maternity leave and holding vacancies on staff posts. Some of the savings have been used to pay contractors to cover the vacancies, but the overall position continues to show a surplus.

8) Payments to Third Parties principally relates to the contract with UBICO for the provision of waste and recycling services. The overspend relates to additional costs incurred during the year as a result of additional hire of a vehicle and extra crew.

9) Income is up on garden waste, private hire licensing and also incentive grants for recycling from Gloucestershire CC. Positive positions in all these areas of income against budget is helping contribute to a reasonable surplus at the end of Q3

Finance and Asset	1,266,678	1,205,229	1,260,705	(55,477)	(5)	
Employees	2,519,754	1,783,786	1,757,440	26,346	1.5	10
Premises	621,213	446,742	426,182	20,560	4.6	11
Transport	10,580	7,943	8,746	(803)	(10.1)	
Supplies & Services	648,948	359,435	330,176	29,259	8.1	12
Payments to Third Parties	161,450	122,435	139,682	(17,247)	(14.1)	13
Support Services	(780,172)	0	0	0	0.0	
Depreciation	273,946	0	0	0	0.0	
Income	(2,000,206)	(1,397,486)	(1,302,347)	(95,139)	6.8	14
Treasury Mgt Activity	(188,835)	(117,626)	(99,174)	(18,452)	15.7	15

10) Staff savings have been achieved principally at Cascades, where staff levels are matched to demand. Reduced demand at the swimming pool has resulted in reduced staffing levels required and consequently this is offset against a reduced amount of income received. (see point 13). In addition, vacancies and maternity are covered by existing staff rather than reappointing.

11) Savings have been made on responses maintenance requirements on a number of assets, as well as savings on utility costs in the first 6 months against budget

12) Small underspends across a variety of expenditure types such as equipment, goods for resale and postages have resulted in an overall saving to date.

13) Additional expenditure on Burial services has been incurred, but also offset against income. Additional expenditure was also incurred on receiving specialist advice from consultants on undertaking out bank tender.

14) As noted in 8 above income is down on cascades to reflect less demand from users, which has been offset against staff costs, to ensure that overall there is no impact on budget overall for this service. Whilst the council is receiving surplus from car parking and cemeteries (also linked to 11 above), there is a deficit on budget income targets from property investments.

15) Treasury Mgt activity is showing a negative position against the budget. The main reason for this is the reduced investment income from treasury activities as anticipated following £10.7m refund to Virgin Media. An equalisation reserve has been established to balance the budget.

Revenues and Benefits	829,395	610,316	667,679	(57,363)	(9)	
Employees	794,528	595,978	576,815	19,163	3.2	16
Transport	11,610	8,711	8,293	418	4.8	
Supplies & Services	135,092	82,685	94,661	(11,976)	(14.5)	17
Payments to Third Parties	26,750	6,398	7,790	(1,392)	(21.8)	
Transfer Payments - Benefits Service	19,665,790	14,749,343	14,924,000	(174,658)	(1.2)	18
Support Services	426,099	0	0	0	0.0	
Depreciation	9,247	0	0	0	0.0	
Income	(20,239,721)	(14,832,799)	(14,943,881)	111,082	(0.7)	19

16) Savings have been made on employee costs through the first 9 months of the year as there are currently 2 vacant posts in the group and we have not replacing staff as they leave

17) Increase in Bailiff costs carrying out more enforcement against non-payment of local taxes. In addition, we have arranged training for key staff to cover important aspects of revenues and benefits going forward..

18) Demand for benefits has risen slightly over the anticipated budget. Benefit claims are very much demand led. However the impact of welfare reform will mean that Benefit Payments will fall in the longer term.

19) The income covering the cost of the increased payments noted above, has increased to cover the additional benefit payments being made. The additional income received from Central Government does not cover the full increase in payments being made.

Development Services	1,292,867	603,301	(46,097)	649,398	108	
Employees	1,336,035	997,592	970,560	27,032	2.7	20
Premises	41,586	8,061	9,480	(1,419)	(8.9)	
Transport	48,870	35,013	30,175	4,838	16.7	
Supplies & Services	366,707	245,977	179,829	66,148	(6.4)	21
Payments to Third Parties	215,410	122,465	143,553	(21,088)	10.9	22
Support Services	359,364	0	0	0	0.0	
Depreciation	39,897	0	0	0	0.0	
Income	(1,115,002)	(805,807)	(1,379,694)	573,887	(0.6)	23

20) Employee Costs are showing an underspend due to staff turnover and changes in employment patterns in the quarter.

Appendix 5 - Analysis of Capital Budget

	Profile Budget to Q3	Expenditure to Q3	(Over) / Under spend to Q3	% Slippage	Comments
Council Land & Buildings	3,527,358	4,073,500	(546,142)	(15)	- Leisure centre £597k over spend against budget. This is because progress is ahead of schedule on the project. Therefore the payment profile will be earlier than profile. Project is still projected to come within budget. - Roses theatre - Budget was increased to £250k and projected has been completed with capital expenditure meeting this budget figure. - Riverside and town regenerations £50k under budget - no spend as yet as plans are still being developed on how best to utilise this allocated funding.
Equipment	95,000	157,968	(62,968)	(66)	This overspend is due to the need to purchase a new Storage Area Network device that had not been budgeted for in the financial year
Capital Investment Fund	2,010,000	0	2,010,000	100	Assumption was that we would have made our capital investment in Q3 of 15/16 financial year. It now looks as though this will happen late in Q4 or early in the next financial year.
Community Grants	488,039	191,379	296,660	61	There has been slippage in individual organisations starting projects which has resulted in the amount currently invoiced behind profiled budget.
Housing & Business Grants	561,750	799,172	(237,422)	(42)	Additional expenditure is a result of the Flood Repairs grant (£258k) and Deerhurst Flood grant (£24k). These schemes are fully grant funded so no budget for it. However currently there has been no spend on Decent Homes which has a budget of £16k to date
	6,682,147	5,222,019	1,460,128	22	

Appendix 6 - Revenue Reserves for 15/16

Reserve	Balance 31st March 2015	Adjustments	Spent on Reserve Quarter 3	Reserve Remaining	Note
Asset Management Reserve	£296,128		£28,364	£267,764	
Borough Regeneration Reserve	£54,000	-£30,000	£7,631	£16,369	
Business Rates Reserve	£5,433,063		£0	£5,433,063	
Business Support Reserve	£105,554	-£1,611	£13,089	£90,855	
Business Transformation Reserve	£339,822	£175,953	£142,310	£373,466	6
Community Safety Reserve	£2,532		£2,342	£190	
Community Support Reserve	£15,000		£0	£15,000	
Elections Reserve	£9,892		£0	£9,892	
Flood Support and Protection Reserve	£409,230	-£48,389	£143,629	£217,212	1
Health & Leisure Development Reserve	£19,757		£3,140	£16,617	
Housing & Homeless Reserve	£41,260		£5,068	£36,192	
Interest Equalisation Reserve	£150,000	-£58,597	£0	£91,403	
MTFS Equalisation Reserve	£68,178		£0	£68,178	
Organisational Development Reserve	£38,868	-£17,356	£17,226	£4,287	
Development Management Reserve	£243,210		£100,383	£142,827	2
Development Policy Reserve	£470,330		£173,459	£296,871	3
Risk Management Reserve	£47,442		£36,981	£10,461	
Transport Initiatives Reserves	£193,800	-£15,000	£178,800	£0	4
Waste & Recycling development Reserve	£125,000	-£5,000	£60,368	£59,632	5
Uncommitted contingency reserve	£0		£0	£0	
Horsford Reserve	£30,462		-£8,396	£38,858	
Mayors Charity Reserve	£12,436		£12,105	£331	
Planning Obligations Reserve	£2,011,850		£45,482	£1,966,368	
General Fund Working Balance	£450,000		£0	£450,000	
Totals	£10,567,814	£1	£961,981	£9,605,835	

Notes to Reserves

- 1 Expenditure of external funding to support recovery following floods in Winter 2014
- 2 Costs resulting from planning appeals
- 3 Costs relating to Borough Plan and CIL development
- 4 External funding for transport studies passed to Gloucestershire County Council
- 5 One off costs associated with joining Ubico Ltd
- 6 Spend on various projects which have the aim of transforming service delivery

TEWKESBURY BOROUGH COUNCIL

Report to:	Executive Committee
Date of Meeting:	6 April 2016
Subject:	2016/17 Service Plans
Report of:	Graeme Simpson, Corporate Services Group Manager
Corporate Lead:	Mike Dawson, Chief Executive
Lead Member:	Councillor Mrs E J MacTiernan
Number of Appendices:	Seven

Executive Summary:

Each service group has produced a service plan for 2016/17. The service plans contain key, non-daily activities which are intended to be carried out during the year. The service plans detail non-Council Plan actions only. Council Plan actions are allocated to individual services through the Council Plan Performance Tracker. Delivery of actions within the Tracker are monitored by Overview and Scrutiny Committee and its observations are then considered by Executive Committee. When holding team meetings, Group Managers will use both their service plan and Performance Tracker actions in tandem.

Recommendation:

To ENDORSE the 2016/17 service plans.

Reasons for Recommendation:

Service planning is a core part of the Council's performance management framework.

Resource Implications:

None arising directly from this report.

Legal Implications:

None arising directly from this report.

Risk Management Implications:

If services do not have a formal service plan in place then it will be difficult to demonstrate there are adequate performance management arrangements in place to monitor service delivery.

Performance Management Follow-up:

Council Plan actions are formally reported on a quarterly basis through the Performance Tracker. Non-Council Plan actions are monitored individually by the relevant service through management dialogue such as team meetings, 1-2-1 meetings and Lead Member briefings.

Environmental Implications:

None arising directly from this report.

1.0 INTRODUCTION/BACKGROUND

1.1 Each service group has produced a service plan for 2016/17. The service plans contain key, non-Council Plan activities which are intended to be carried out during the year. The service plans detail non-Council Plan actions only. Council Plan actions are allocated to individual services through the Council Plan Performance Tracker. Delivery of actions within the Tracker are monitored by Overview and Scrutiny Committee and their observations then considered by Executive Committee. When holding team meetings, Group Managers will use both their service plan and Performance Tracker actions in tandem.

2.0 SERVICE PLANS

2.1 The service plan template has been kept as simple as possible to complete. The template gives a brief overview of the purpose of the service, the progress made against delivering key 2015/16 actions and the key actions to be undertaken in 2016/17. The service plans can be found in Appendices 1-7. There is a plan for each of the following groupings;

- Corporate Services.
- One Legal.
- Democratic Services.
- Development Services.
- Environmental and Housing Services.
- Finance and Asset Management.
- Revenues and Benefits.

A set of the service plans will be placed in the Member's Lounge and will also be available on the intranet.

3.0 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

3.1 None.

4.0 CONSULTATION

4.1 Group Managers.

5.0 RELEVANT COUNCIL POLICIES/STRATEGIES

5.1 Council Plan.

- 6.0 RELEVANT GOVERNMENT POLICIES**
- 6.1 None.
- 7.0 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS (Human/Property)**
- 7.1 None directly arising from the report.
- 8.0 SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS (Social/Community Safety/Cultural/ Economic/ Environment)**
- 8.1 Group Managers will consider sustainability implications when planning and undertaking individual actions.
- 9.0 IMPACT UPON (Value For Money/Equalities/E-Government/Human Rights/Health And Safety)**
- 9.1 Group Managers will consider the impact of equalities and diversity when planning and undertaking individual actions.
- 10.0 RELATED DECISIONS AND ANY OTHER RELEVANT FACTS**
- 10.1 None.

Background Papers: None.

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Appendices:

1. Corporate Services Service Plan.
2. One Legal Service Plan.
3. Democratic Services Service Plan.
4. Development Services Service Plan.
5. Environmental and Housing Service Plan.
6. Finance and Asset Management Service Plan.
7. Revenues and Benefits Service Plan.

Corporate Service Business Plan 2016-17

1. Service purpose and objectives

- To support the management, monitoring and improvement of the council's performance.
- To provide effective Customer Services.
- To provide an effective ICT function through the best use of current and emerging technology.
- To provide an effective Human Resources function.
- To support the work of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.
- Internal Audit to be an arm of effective management.
- To provide an effective communications and graphic design function.
- To support the council's project management, risk management and equalities frameworks.
- To support development of corporate policies.
- To provide support to the Chief Executive on corporate matters.
- To work with corporate management team and members to support and deliver the council's business transformation programme.
- To champion digital opportunities and potential customer service partnerships.

2. Progress against actions, projects, tasks or targets 2015-16

Non Council Plan actions only, see Performance Tracker for progress against 2015-16 Council Plan actions.

Action	Progress made	Date to be achieved	Complete ✓ or X
Customer Services			
Develop and implement corporate customer service standards.	A Customer Care Strategy was approved at Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 23 February and approval will be sought from Executive Committee on 6 April.	30.09.15	✓
Undertake a review of customer services.	A review of customer services was carried out and completed by September 2015.	30.09.15	✓
To ensure the smooth transition of the garden waste database from Direct Services.	The customer services team now manages the administration of the garden waste database.	30.06.15	✓
Investigate options for the redesign of the reception area and develop customer service partnerships with public services centre partners.	The communications and policy manager is a member of the integrated reception sub group, which is focused on redeveloping the reception area in partnership with our public services centre partners. Customer care will be a priority as this project moves forward. The reception refurbishment forms part of a wider strategic vision for the council offices and will be progressed further during 2016/17.	31.03.16	x
To develop a Digital Strategy	The communications and policy	31.03.16	✓

Corporate Service Business Plan 2016-17

	manager is developing a Digital Strategy in consultation with the lead member and services across the council. The strategy will be taken to Executive Committee in April.		
ICT			
Rollout thin client terminals. (Brought forward from 2014-2015)	All old desktops have been replaced with thin client terminals.	30.06.15	✓
Roll out of new monitors.	All old, small monitors have been replaced with height adjustable widescreen monitors.	30.06.15	✓
Set up new test environment.	A new test environment is in place.	30.09.15	✓
New Storage Area Network (SAN) installation in server room.	A new SAN has been purchased and installed.	30.09.15	✓
Implementation of ITIL processes across ICT function including improvements to the help desk facility. (Brought forward from 2014-2015)	A new ICT helpdesk has been implemented that follows ITIL best practice. All ICT staff have either completed or are booked on the ITIL foundation course.	31.03.16	✓
Work with Democratic Services to ensure Members receive ICT support.	Regular ICT training drop in sessions are in place for members. Members have also been encouraged to trial tablet devices.	31.03.16	✓
Implement a new ICT asset inventory.	Following an adverse internal audit report, a new asset inventory is now in place and will be supported with an annual check of equipment.	31.10.15	✓
Review of website.	As reported to Transform Working Group, options for a new website are starting to be looked at. This work will progress during 2016/17.	31.03.16	x
Development of new ICT strategy.	Improvements to the ICT infrastructure have taken place during the year. Ongoing improvements and the strategic direction of ICT should be communicated through a formal strategy. This work will progress during 2016/17.	31.03.16	x
Human Resources			
Support managers to help ensure all staff receive a PPD during 2015/16.	Support has been given to managers and staff where appropriate. This is the second year of the PPD framework.	31.07.15	✓
To investigate the feasibility of implementing a HR self service module.	A visit to Wychavon District Council was undertaken as they operate a self-service module. Implementation	30.09.15	✓

Corporate Service Business Plan 2016-17

	is resource intensive and it is the intention to undertake a systems review of HR first.		
Investigate options for delivery of occupational health.	This has yet to be investigated and will be carried forward to 2016/17.	31.03.16	x
Implement a new workforce strategy.	This is being undertaken in partnership with Gloucestershire Care Services NHS Trust. Work has commenced but is on hold due to sickness absence of the lead officer. This will be carried forward to 2016/17.	31.10.15	x
Overview and Scrutiny			
Support delivery of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee's review of effectiveness action plan.	A workshop was held on 9 February 2016 with members of the committee. This enabled members to draw on their experiences and consider how the committee can add even greater value. Feedback from the workshop was presented at Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 23 February 2016, including approval of an action plan.	31.03.16	✓
Communications			
Deliver year 2 of the communications strategy.	A new strategy was approved at Executive Committee on 30 April 2014. Delivery of the strategy is reported to Overview and Scrutiny Committee on an annual basis.	31.03.16	✓
Deliver graphics support.	Graphics have made a significant contribution during the year across a wide range of corporate and service related documents and marketing/promotion campaigns.	31.03.16	✓
Implement social media software.	To implement new software to ensure the council's social media channels are appropriately and safely managed. This project will be carried forward to 2016/17.	31.03.16	x
Corporate Support			
Support completion of the Chief Executive unit's restructure and support staff development arising from the restructure.	The restructure took place early 2015/16. Staff are now acclimatised to their new roles and responsibilities. Overall the new corporate services team is performing well in both leading and supporting key projects whilst delivering more routine type work.	31.03.16	✓

Corporate Service Business Plan 2016-17

Support delivery of and monitor the corporate peer review action plan.	The action plan is monitored and reported to Overview and Scrutiny Committee on a six monthly basis.	31.03.16	✓
Support Business Transformation.	The corporate services team provides ongoing support to the Transform Tewkesbury Borough, and report to Transform Working Group on the programme's projects.	31.03.16 (the programme is deliverable over more than 1 year)	✓
Development of new Council Plan.	A timetable for the production of a new Council Plan has been agreed, with a final draft going to Executive Committee and Full Council in April 2016.	31.03.16	✓
To support the testing of the council's Business Continuity arrangements.	A desktop exercise was held for operational managers on 9 February, facilitated by the Civil Protection Officer from Tri Centre, Waterwells. This will provide the catalyst for further business continuity work during 2016/17.	31.10.15	✓
Prepare to undertake a residents' survey in early 2016-17.	This has been included as an action within the Customer Care Strategy. Tentative discussions have taken place over the feasibility of the survey and these will be progressed during 2016/17. Digital supported surveys will be looked at going forward.	31.03.16	x
To review the corporate complaints framework.	A new corporate complaints framework is currently being developed. This will be presented at Executive Committee in April 2016.	31.10.15	✓
To further review project management arrangements.	A new version of Sharepoint has been introduced, which makes it clearer and easier for staff managing projects. An internal programme board has been formed to review projects and this is supported with updated project management guidance and forms which were introduced in late 2015.	30.09.15	✓
Risk Management			
Review the current risk management strategy and overall risk management arrangements.	This will be progressed during 2016/17. Training will be provided around risk appetite and this will inform a new strategy.	31.12.15	x
Internal Audit			
Delivery of internal audit improvement	This has not been looked at in great detail due to the continuity of staffing	31.03.16	x

Corporate Service Business Plan 2016-17

plan.	within the team as a result of maternity leave. The team will be on a firmer footing in 2016/17.		
Equalities			
Development of new equalities policy and action plan.	Initial work has commenced only.	31.03.16	x

3. Work programme 2016-17

Action	What difference will it make?	Date to be achieved
Customer Services		
Deliver Customer Care Strategy year 1 actions	In line with our Council Plan value, our customer care strategy ensures we place the customer at the heart of what we do. Year One actions will be reported to O&S committee in April 2017.	April 2017
Roll out of customer service standards	To ensure our customers are provided with a high level and consistent approach to customer services from across the council.	August 2016
Investigate options for the redesign of the reception area and develop customer service partnerships with public services centre partners. (brought forward from 2015/16)	Integrated reception for all partners which provides a good customer experience.	March 2017
ICT		
Develop new website. (brought forward from 2015/16)	A new, functional website is required that offers ease of use and mobile device compatibility.	October 2016
Development of new ICT strategy. (brought forward from 2015/16)	To outline the aims and actions required to ensure ICT solutions support our business processes and we keep in touch with emerging technologies.	March 2017
Support the proposed One Legal Expansion project.	The proposal is a huge opportunity for the council. If the business case is approved significant ICT support will be required to ensure the success of the project and ongoing support to 40+ new users.	November 2016
Support delivery of emerging digital opportunities.	To move more of our services online and reengineer services to produce efficiency savings.	March 2017
Formalise an ICT replacement programme.	A replacement programme will ensure there is planned maintenance of the ICT infrastructure.	June 2016
Human Resources		

Corporate Service Business Plan 2016-17

Undertake a systems review of HR processes including the feasibility of online recruitment.	Using the principles and skills learnt from other service reviews and look to streamline and eliminate any inefficiency within the HR activities.	December 2016
Support the TUPE process of Cascades staff to Places for People and if the One Legal expansion is approved, the TUPE of incoming legal staff.	Ensure the smooth transfer of staff during uncertain times and protect the reputation of the council.	May 2016 (leisure transfer) November 2016 (legal transfer)
To support delivery of the Timewise improvement plan.	To ensure the council is maximising flexible working and flexible hiring	March 2017
Implement a new workforce development strategy (brought forward from 2015/16)	To have the right people in place to meet the changing needs and future opportunities. The right people are those who are keen, skilled, have the right values and know what they are doing.	October 2016
Investigate options for delivery of occupational health.	To provide effective support to our sickness absence procedure.	September 2016
Support, together with external HR resource, reviews of management and service structure.	Effective planning and delivery of requirements of the council's staffing structure.	December 2016
Overview and Scrutiny		
Support delivery of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee's review of effectiveness action plan.	Ensure the robustness and effectiveness of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.	March 2017
Ensure the performance management framework supports monitoring of the new council plan.	To enable the delivery of the council plan to be effectively monitored by the committee.	June 2016
Communications		
To deliver the actions within the Communications Strategy	A new strategy was approved at Executive Committee on 30 April 2015 with an annual action plan. Delivery of the strategy is reported to Overview and Scrutiny Committee on an annual basis.	April 2016
Implement social media software	To implement new software to ensure the council's social media channels are appropriately and safely managed.	March 2017
Deliver graphics support.	Provide a graphics service to the council's major corporate projects, and other areas where possible.	March 2017
Provide communications support to the Public Services Centre, as required.	To provide internal and external communications support to help develop and grow the Public Services Centre.	March 2017
Corporate Support		

Corporate Service Business Plan 2016-17

Support delivery of and monitor the corporate peer review action plan.	The successful implementation of recommendations will help develop the strengths needed to progress the council's improvement agenda.	March 2017
Business Continuity – to provide support to the review of individual service plans, review of the corporate plan and identification of priority systems.	To ensure the council's arrangements are sufficiently robust in the event of an incident arising.	December 2016
Support Business Transformation including the delivery of the council's emerging digital strategy.	The programme is a programme for change and will contribute significantly to the council's predicted budget deficit.	March 2017
Risk Management		
Review the current risk management strategy and overall risk management arrangements. (b/fwd 2015/16)	To deliver a strategy which supports the council's risk appetite.	September 2016
Internal Audit		
Public Sector Internal Audit Standards (PSIAS) require an external assessment of internal audit every five years – the team need to prepare for this review.	To demonstrate compliance with PSIAS.	March 2017
Equalities		
Development of new equalities policy and action plan (b/fwd 2015/16)	To ensure the council delivers its services in line with the Equalities Act.	March 2017

4. Factors that may affect future service delivery

Factor
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Introduction of any new government policy may alter the vision, priorities or shape of the council.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The nature of the section's work requires corporate 'buy in' from other parts of the organisation – need to ensure there is a 'one team' approach to corporate issues.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The council needs to transform quickly, some outcomes from this are not yet known and this could potentially lead to uncertainty and competing priorities within the organisation.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The potential for a detailed 'in service' review or restructure.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Any long term sickness absence could potentially delay deadlines.

One Legal Service Business Plan 2016-17

1. Service purpose and objectives

- To provide clear and robust corporate advice to officers and elected members
- To be focused on the business needs of our clients
- To work cost effectively and to quality management systems
- To set challenging standards and work to them
- To be innovative and flexible in approach
- To provide a dynamic and supportive environment for team members
- To actively seek out and deliver services to other public bodies

2. Progress against actions, projects, tasks or targets 2015-16

Non Council Plan actions only.

Action	Progress made	Date to be achieved	Complete ✓ or ✗
Contribute to training and/ or review of constitutions of Tewkesbury Borough Council (TBC), Cheltenham Borough Council (CBC) and Gloucester City Council (GCC).	Training and/or assistance given on constitutional changes	31 Dec 2015	✓
Solcase upgrade (Brought forward 2014-2015)	On target (thin client compatibility testing underway)	31 Mar 2016	✓
Advise TBC, CBC and GCC on the implementation of the Public Contracts Regulations 2015 (Brought forward 2014-2015)	Advice given in workshops, training and specific in respect of case files.	31 Oct 2015	✓
Introduce Procedures for Emergency legal processes e.g. injunctions	Processes introduced for unlawful occupiers	31 Dec 2015	✓
Align legal procedures, as far as possible across TBC, CBC and GCC	TBC and CBC contract rules and some alignment of Delegations/Constitutional matters have been undertaken. GCC discussions are ongoing regarding the contract rules.	31 Dec 2015	✓
Renew One Legal Office Manual	The key areas of management/supervision and risk management were reviewed and refreshed.	31 Dec 2015	✓
Review GCC legal records management	Urgent review of files to be retained and destroyed undertaken and system put in place	31 Dec 2015	✓

One Legal Service Business Plan 2016-17

3. Work programme 2016-17

Non Council Plan actions only.

Action	What difference will it make?	Date to be achieved
Contribute to induction training for new Members at CBC and GCC post May elections	Will aid Member understanding and application of constitutional rules and procedures.	31 Aug 2016
Provide training to members and officers on planning processes and procedures	Will aid understanding and application of planning processes and legal requirements.	30 Sept 2016
Align the Contract Rules with GCC. (brought forward 2015-16)	Better informed legal staff and processes for councils.	April 2016
Review the Data Protection Policy	To ensure that the council's practice and procedures are up to date and compliant with the data protection legislation.	October 2016
Review the Whistle-blowing Policy	Will provide the process for employees to follow should they have any serious concerns within the Council without fear of reprisal.	May 2016
Review the Anti-Fraud and Corruption Strategy	To ensure the Council's policies and procedures are in place to respond to suspected fraudulent activity.	May 2016
The following are subject to the new shared service commencing with Gloucestershire County Council (GCoC):		
Implementation of new Case Management system	Will create greater efficiencies and access to case files.	31 Dec 2016
Align legal procedures, as far as possible, across TBC, CBC, GCity and GCoC	Will assist in the delivery of the shared service.	31 Dec 2016
Renew One Legal Office Manual to ensure that it is up to date	Will ensure that processes are fit for purpose for the new service.	31 Dec 2016
Review GCoC legal records management	To aid understanding and integration of record keeping.	31 Dec 2016
Staff restructure/review	To ensure the structure is optimised to deliver on the objectives for the new service.	30 April 2017

One Legal Service Business Plan 2016-17

4. Factors that may affect future service delivery

Factor
• Unforeseen increases in workloads or significant new complex cases/projects
• Opportunities arising for expansion of the service
• Unforeseen loss of staff resources

Democratic Services - Service Business Plan 2016-17

1. Service purpose and objectives

- To support, and promote, the democratic processes of the council.
- To maintain an accurate and up to date Register of Electors in accordance with the legislative requirements.
- To organise Parish, Borough, County, Parliamentary and European Elections in accordance with the statutory requirements.
- To enable effective and efficient decision-making arrangements within the council that are compliant with legislative and constitutional requirements.
- To provide support to members of the council, both in an advisory capacity and through ongoing training and development.
- To organise civic functions.
- To promote a high standard of probity and ethics within the council.

2. Progress against actions, projects, tasks or targets 2015-16

Non Council Plan actions only.

Action	Progress	Date to be achieved	Complete ✓ or ✗
Elections			
Support Boundary Commission on preparation of revised Borough Ward boundaries. (Brought forward from 2014/15)	The Local Government Boundary Commission has recently presented a programme for the review which will commence in March and complete in October 2017.	October 2017 (date was not confirmed in last plan)	✗
Preparation for Police and Crime Commissioner Elections.	Polling Stations have been booked and staff appointment letters despatched.	March 2016	✓
Final transitional IER Canvass.	Complete.	December 2015	✓
Revision of Polling Districts following Polling Station Review.	Following the completion of the Borough Ward Boundary Review, it will be necessary to undertake a Parish Review followed by a Polling District Review.	2018/19 (date was not confirmed in last plan)	✗

Democratic Services - Service Business Plan 2016-17

Member Services			
Review of Scheme of Delegation and Constitution. (Brought forward from 2014/15)	Progress delayed due to operational requirements. Will be put into work programme for 2016/17 to be completed after the EU Referendum.	April 2016.	✘
Register of Interests on the website. (Brought forward from 2014/15)	Will be put into the work programme for 2016-17.	September 2015	✘
Revision of report format. (Brought forward from 2014/15).	Delayed. Will be put into the work programme for 2016-17.	September 2015	✘
Fundamental Review of Members Scheme of Allowances.	Complete.	March 2016	✓
Self-Help IT Group.	Complete.	January 2016	✓
Member Development Plans.	Assessment of 2015/16 Development Programme will be used to inform future development.	October 2015	✘
Delivery of Parliamentary, Borough and Parish Elections.	Complete.	May 2015.	✓
Delivery of Induction Programme.	Complete.	February 2016.	✓
Preparation and Introduction of Scheme for Public Speaking at Planning Committee.	Complete.	May 2015.	✓
Review of Protocol for Councillors and Officers Involved in the Planning Process.	Complete.	May 2015.	✓

Democratic Services - Service Business Plan 2016-17

3. Work programme 2016-17

Non Council Plan actions only.

Action	What difference will it make?	Date to be achieved
Electoral Services		
Support the work of the Boundary Review Working Group in preparing and submitting proposals to the Local Government Boundary Commission in respect of the Borough Ward Boundary Review.	Democratic accountability.	October 2017.
Following completion of the transition to Individual Electoral Registration to conduct the first annual canvass under the new arrangements focussing on improving registration.	Democratic engagement.	December 2016.
Delivery of Police and Crime Commissioner Elections within budget.	Democratic engagement.	May 2016.
Delivery of European Union Referendum.	Democratic engagement.	June 2016.
Delivery of Neighbourhood Plan Referendums for Highnam and Winchcombe.	Democratic engagement.	March 2017.
Member Services		
Register of Interests on the website. (Brought forward from 2015/16).	Democratic accountability.	December 2016.
Revision of report format. (Brought forward from 2015/16).	Improved communication.	November 2016.
Member Development Plans. (Brought forward from 2015/16).	Improved Member information and engagement.	December 2016.
Review of Member Allowances Scheme.	Openness and accountability.	February 2017.
Review of the Revised Protocol for Councillors and Officers involved in the Planning Process.	Openness and transparency.	July 2016.

Democratic Services - Service Business Plan 2016-17

Action	What difference will it make?	Date to be achieved
Member Services		
Review of the Scheme for Public Speaking at Planning Committee.	Democratic engagement.	May 2016.
Update of Constitution. (Brought forward from 2015/16).	Openness and accountability.	December 2016.
Review of the Protocol for Member/Officer Relations.	Openness and accountability.	April 2016.
Member development plans. (Brought forward from 2015/16).	Assessment of 2015/16 Development Programme will be used to inform future development.	December 2016.

4. Factors that may affect future service delivery

Factor
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff Changes.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Political Structure Changes.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unplanned Work.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The number and frequency of the Neighbourhood Plan Referendums in the Borough.

Development Services Service Business Plan 2016-17

1. Service purpose and objectives

Development service consists of the following services;

Community development, tourism, health development, sports development, economic development and tourism (including Winchcombe and Tewkesbury tourist information centres), development management and planning policy.

- To promote healthier lifestyles and tackle causes of poor health.
- To support emerging growth sectors and encourage inward investment.
- To support the borough's economy.
- Work jointly with partners to ensure there is a joined up approach in helping our communities and residents to help themselves.
- To increase the volume and value of tourism in the borough.
- To ensure development within the borough is in accordance with the relevant legislations and policies, which preserves and enhances the historic and natural environment.
- To ensure there is capacity to respond to future housing and employment needs for the borough.
- To produce supplementary planning documents on specific planning issues which will help the borough deliver national and local planning policies.
- To monitor the effectiveness of existing policies.
- To ensure that the interests of the borough are properly represented in the strategic planning process at the national level and more locally across Gloucestershire and neighbouring counties.

2. Progress against actions, projects, tasks or targets 2015-16

Non Council Plan actions only, see Performance Tracker for progress against 2015-16 Council Plan actions.

Action	Progress made	Date to be achieved	Complete ✓ or ✗
Economic Development and Tourism			
To develop a strategy for economic growth and tourism.	Economic and Tourism Strategy Overview and Scrutiny Working Group created and meeting on regular basis. Strategy in development and priorities emerging.	January 2016	✗
To review the current business grant scheme (including its potential link to business rate relief).	Business Grant Scheme currently being reviewed through the Economic and Tourism Strategy Overview and Scrutiny Working Group.	January 2016	✗
Deliver business resilience and marketing support to local businesses affected by flooding.	Business resilience support and marketing support in progress. Gloucestershire Enterprise mentoring and training businesses affected by flooding. Partnership with Mosaïque and Vivid has created new identity, branding and website for floods affected communities.	March 2016	✓
Work with Cotswold Tourism to create a new partnership body.	Cotswold Tourism body in place. Tewkesbury Borough Council working closely to promote the area e.g. new website created.	March 2016	✓

Development Services

Service Business Plan 2016-17

Implement Tewkesbury Heritage and Visitor Centre review outcomes.	Review outcomes now implemented. Budget reductions made. Heritage Centre has tripled number of visitors, now it is free of charge. Volunteers now supporting staff in running the facility.	March 2016	✓
Community Development			
Recruit for Community Funding Post.	Post recruited. Over hundred community groups already worked with.	June 2015	✓
Work with MAIDeN to develop neighbourhood profiling for our communities.	MAIDeN has produced profiles of the three community development areas. New technology will enable more in depth analysis in 2016/17.	Dec 2015	✓
Work with the three Clinical Commissioning Groups within the borough to develop their locality plans.	All three locality plans live. Plans in place for 2 year period 2016-18.	July 2015	✓
Work with Tewkesbury Cluster Clinical Commissioning Group to launch social prescribing.	Social prescribing launched. Over fifty patients referred to SP Co-ordinator.	April 2015	✓
To work with the Financial Inclusion Partnership to provide a single referral system and provide access to services.	Multi-sector partnership formed to help support those in most need from welfare reforms.	March 2016	✓
Work with partners to deliver outcomes from the successful Capacity Fund bid, including a green space strategy and analysis of community infrastructure needs for strategic sites.	Study commissioned and in progress. Report will be presented in May 16.	December 2015	✓
To work with Active Gloucestershire on initiatives to encourage healthy lifestyles, including enabling health walks and delivery of the new Tewkesbury Park Run.	Health Walks in 3 locations, with over 120 walkers weekly. Tewkesbury parkrun launched and has over 100 runners on weekly basis. Looking to extend to other areas of the borough.	March 2016	✓
Development Management			
Carry out a systems review of the Development Management (DM) service.	Ongoing. Commenced with review in June 2015 – completed first phase in January 2016 with new systems embedded.	March 2016	✓
Draft Local Development Orders for Bishops Cleeve/Hucclecote for consultation. (brought forward from 2014-15)	Delayed due to review of DM service.	December 2015	✗
Draft Pre-application member engagement policy. (brought forward from 2014-2015)	Delayed due to review of DM service.	December 2015	✗

Development Services

Service Business Plan 2016-17

Digitising historic planning record plotting sheets.	Completed August 2015. Documents are now electronic following the scanning of the plotting sheets.	September 2015	✓
Produce a planning training programme for Councillors	Formal programme not completed but training has been delivered on a variety of DM related issues.	September 2015	✗
Produce a customer engagement programme	Delayed due to review of DM service. Have carried out some engagement during the review and will use learning from the review to develop the programme.	September 2015	✗
Planning Policy			
Additional Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA) Level 2 work for Tewkesbury Borough site allocations.	SFRA site work dependent on progress off Tewkesbury Borough Plan which has been delayed as a result of the JCS programme. Action has been rolled forward to 2016/17.	October 2015	✗
Annual Monitoring Report (AMR).	AMR completed and published in October 2015	June 2015	✓
Gypsy, Traveller and Travelling Showpeople Site Selection.	Site selection process completed and report published July 2015.	June 2015	✓

3. Work programme 2016-17

Non Council Plan actions only.

Action	What difference will it make?	Date to be achieved
Economic Development & Tourism		
To complete an economic assessment and business survey of the borough	To greater understand business needs and how TBC can best help the business community	September 2016
To launch new Economic Development and Tourism Strategy (bought forward 2015-16)	To develop a vision for growth in the borough	September 2016
To launch revised Business Grants scheme (bought forward 2015-16)	To provide funding assistance to enable businesses to grow	September 2016
To deliver and facilitate projects that contribute to the regeneration of Tewkesbury	To enable Tewkesbury to fulfil its potential	March 2017
To work with Winchcombe Town Council to review and co-ordinate revised approach to tourism marketing in Winchcombe	To market Winchcombe effectively and to use resources more effectively.	December 2016

Development Services

Service Business Plan 2016-17

Community Development		
To embed the place approach across the borough	To enable our communities to help themselves.	April 2016
To deliver the outcomes from the Sports, Social and Open Spaces Assessment and Strategy	To meet the sporting and recreational needs of our community	March 2017
To develop a corporate approach to volunteering	To value and support our volunteers more effectively	December 2016
To review the 2012-16 Health and Wellbeing Strategy and scope future vision/priorities	To contribute to improving the health of our residents	March 2017
To develop an approach to integrating new and existing communities	To encourage residents to know more about their communities, have greater co-ordination and to provide effective support	March 2017
Development Management		
Continue with Review of Development Management Service	Improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the service. Increasing the speed of decisions and improve customer experience.	March 2017
Reintroduce permitted development rights for housing estates in Bishops Cleeve/Hucclecote. (Brought forward from 2015-16)	Improve efficiency by reducing the number of applications received. Positive benefits to customers who would not need to apply for planning permission.	March 2017
Draft Pre-application member engagement policy. (brought forward from 2015-2016)	Early Member engagement can allow for local issues to be identified and considered before an application is submitted. This can ensure better outcomes from the planning process, in particular in the form of less uncertainty for developers; development proposals which are informed through a better understanding of local issues and priorities; and through speedier planning decisions.	December 2016
Review of Development Management pages of Council website	Improve customer service and allow for more self-service, freeing up resources and capacity.	December 2016
Planning Policy		
Ongoing work with communities to progress Neighbourhood Development Plans (NDP). Includes running formal consultation and organising the examination of plans.	A number of communities are at different stages of preparation of their NDPs. TBC needs to provide policy and legal assistance and guidance throughout this process. Any successful NDPs will become part of Tewkesbury development plan with the JCS and Borough Plan.	March 2017
Review of town centre/retail boundaries for Tewkesbury, Bishop's Cleeve and Winchcombe	Review of boundaries needed for the Joint Core Strategy and Tewkesbury Borough Plan.	May 2016

Development Services Service Business Plan 2016-17

Gypsy, Traveller & Travelling Showpeople Needs Assessment Update (Gloucestershire-wide project)	Update on the need for GTTS accommodation to be planned for through the Tewkesbury Borough Plan.	June 2016
Annual Monitoring Report	Provide an up to date assessment of the housing and employment land supply in the Borough. Needed for 5 Year Supply Calculations.	June 2016
Employment Land Review	Provide an assessment of potential new employment land to be considered for allocation through the Tewkesbury Borough Plan.	July 2016
Tewkesbury Borough Plan Green Belt review	Assess the potential for small scale Green Belt areas to accommodate limited local needs growth at villages in the Borough. Will inform site allocations in the Tewkesbury Borough Plan.	August 2016
Additional Strategic Flood Risk Assessment Level 2 work for Tewkesbury Borough Plan site allocations. (Brought forward from 2015-2016)	Potential site allocations through the Tewkesbury Borough Plan need to be assessed for any flood risk to evidence that they are suitable for future development.	October 2016
Additional Transport Assessment work for Tewkesbury Borough Plan site allocations.	Potential site allocations through the Tewkesbury Borough Plan need to be assessed for their transport impact to evidence their deliverability and to identify any infrastructure improvements needed.	October 2016
Strategic Assessment of Land Availability	Annual assessment of land availability within the Borough to provide a picture of future land supply.	February 2017
Sustainability Appraisal of Tewkesbury Borough Plan	Legal requirement for the development of the Borough Plan to be subject to Sustainability Appraisal. Ongoing process throughout the plan making process.	March 2017

4. Factors that may affect future service delivery

Factor

Operation of the Tourist Information Service, including Winchcombe TIC and Tewkesbury Heritage & Visitor Centre. Options for delivery of the service will be considered, working, where practicable, with Winchcombe and Tewkesbury Town Councils. This will impact on staff and wider tourism service delivery

Continued collaboration with Cheltenham and Gloucester (Planning Policy)

The timescale and resource requirement for the Joint Core Strategy. This has a particular impact on work around the Tewkesbury Borough Plan.

The progression of Neighbourhood Development Plans by communities

Potential major planning applications and appeals

Development Services Service Business Plan 2016-17

Continued housing land supply shortfall
Review of the Development Control Service
Potential implementation of Community Infrastructure Levy
Changes to planning guidance/legislation
Resources.
Parish council needs and requirements
Capacity and funding of the Voluntary Community Sector
Continuing review of the Development Control Service
Changes to planning guidance/legislation – particularly the Housing and Planning Bill

Environmental & Housing Services - Service Business Plan 2016-17

1. Service purpose and objectives

- To support the council in the delivery of its statutory duties relating to protecting the public health, safety, amenity and the environment within Tewkesbury borough.
- Work with the Joint Waste Team and UBICO to ensure an effective waste management system is in place.
- To ensure the council meets its statutory duties within the Housing Act, which requires the council to identify and address the housing needs of borough residents.
- To ensure the appropriate safeguarding and community safety measures are in place and are compliant with the Children Act 2004 and The Crime and Disorder Act 1998.
- To lead the council's emergency planning functions and act as district emergency planning liaison officer.

2. Progress against actions, projects, tasks or targets 2015-16

Non Council Plan actions only, see Performance Tracker for progress against 2015-16 Council Plan actions.

Action	Progress made	Date to be achieved	Complete ✓ or ✗
Community Safety			
Hold community days of action involving statutory partners of the Community Safety Partnership in various locations across the borough to raise awareness	The following community days of action were undertaken: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In conjunction with Environment Health, an Enviro crimes day was held in Churchdown – November 2015 • Paws on Patrol events • Fire Safety event in Bishops Cleeve 	March 2016	✓
Direct Services and recycling			
UBICO contract to be monitored and reported on	Regular monitoring meetings have taken place between the Joint Waste Team and Ubico.	March 2016	✓
Environmental Health and Licensing			
Develop a programme of proactive Health & Safety interventions and complete the programme within 12 months.	A programme has been completed. Work included checks on higher risk businesses concentrating on Legionella disease, tackling violence at work, asbestos management etc.	March 2016	✓

Environmental & Housing Services - Service Business Plan 2016-17

Work with local parish councils and partners (police etc.) to carry out at least four activities at various locations within the borough that contribute towards tackling enviro-crimes (e.g. dog fouling, fly-tipping, abandoned vehicles etc.	One activity was carried out this year in Churchdown, billed as a "Day of Action" and combined with information from numerous agencies on community safety issues. Numbers were reduced due to the effects of an internal staff review and reduced resources. Nevertheless Overview and Scrutiny have been informed that the proposed new "days of action" will be further trialled in a new location in Spring 2016	March 2016	x
Review Mobile Home licensing policies and regulations	New guidance on this issue alongside other priorities for the Licensing Committee means that this item will now be carried out by October 2016	Jan 2016	x
Housing			
Increase the Homeless Prevention Option, available to those threatened with homelessness in the Borough, and enables more applicants to avoid homelessness.	All applicants threatened with homelessness receive written housing advice tailored to their individual needs. Deposits and rent in advance are offered to all vulnerable homeless households including those household on a low income	March 2016	✓
Create a broad based Housing Partnership to share issues and develop a joint strategic Action Plan for the borough.	An Affordable Housing Partnership has been created between Gloucester, Cheltenham and Tewkesbury and registered providers to regard to new affordable homes being built on strategic sites within the JCS area. Along with establishing partnership with Rural Development.	March 2016	✓
Work in partnership with the Gloucestershire local authorities and County Council to deliver the recommendations from the Gypsy, Traveller and Travelling Show People Accommodation Assessment (GTTSA) 2013. (brought forward from 2014- 15)	Work has been carried out on delivering the recommendations from the GTTSA. However changes in the government policy have had an impact on delivering all the recommendations. Therefore this action is being carried forward to 2016-17 work programme in order to review these changes.	March 2016	x
Participate in the county wide peer review process for the Gold Standard Challenge. (brought forward from 2014/15)	TBC continue to participate within the Gold Group. The initial peer group reviews commence in March and we are due to undergo review in July 2016.	May 2016	✓

Environmental & Housing Services - Service Business Plan 2016-17

Safeguarding			
Ensure compliance with Section 11 Audit of the Children's Act 2004	Completed- Section 11 Audit was submitted to the Safeguarding board by the requested date. The outcome of this submission is dependant of the feedback received from the board which has yet to be received.	March 2016	✓
Ensure that Safeguarding Adult Policies are embedded across the organisation	Safeguarding adults is incorporated into all new staff inductions and is the subject of staff updates. All members of staff have received a card outlining the safeguarding responsibilities and principle officers	March 2016	✓

3. Work programme 2016-17

Non council plan actions for 2016-17.

Action	What difference will it make?	Date to be achieved
Community Safety		
To support the launch of the Neighbourhood Co-ordination groups in the Borough	To act as the conduit between the community and the community safety partnership, understanding issues in the community and involving the community in resolutions	March 2017
To allocate funding from the PCC's safer neighbourhoods fund	To reduce anti-social behaviour and the perception of anti-social behaviour from young people	March 2017
To support and maintain the function of the anti-social behaviour working group	To tackle specific sources of anti-social behaviour on a multi-agency level in the borough with partner agencies	March 2017
To implement an online ASB database	To monitor and manage anti-social behaviour reports from residents to the council and to identify cases which meet the community trigger	September 2016
Direct Services and Recycling		
Procure new fleet of vehicles	To ensure delivery of service continues efficiently and economically	April 2017
Procure new Material Recycling Facility	To procure an efficient, modern MRF.	April 2017

Environmental & Housing Services - Service Business Plan 2016-17

Environmental Health and Licencing		
Review the Sex Establishment Licensing Policy	To ensure the council is compliant with the statutory requirements.	September 2016
Review the action for Affordable Warmth Strategy 2012-16	Work with other authorities within Gloucestershire to review how the council deliver on affordable warmth issues.	October 2016
Identify and regulate all Houses of Multiple Occupation (HMOs) in the borough	Some HMOs must apply for a licence. By reviewing all HMOs, we will ensure licence requirements are adhered to, help improve the welfare of occupiers and increase the confidence of compliant businesses.	January 2017
Carry out reviews of a further four Environmental Health / Licensing processes as per the methodology used in the Regulatory Services Improvement Project	The Regulatory Services Improvement Project has brought about savings as well as improved service delivery. Further reviews should continue this trend.	March 2017
Develop a programme of proactive Food Safety and Health & Safety inspections / interventions and complete the programme within 12 months.	Such a programme will increase public safety and confidence in local businesses.	March 2017
Work with parish councils to recruit an "environment warden" to help combat environmental crimes	Such a post will provide a visible presence to especially tackle dog fouling and fly tipping, and will also help further boost the good working relationships between parish and borough councils	March 2017
Housing - Enabling		
Liaise with the Homes and communities Agency and RPs to deliver priority schemes and affordable housing within Tewkesbury Borough	Increase/maintain the net number of affordable homes delivered in the year, whilst looking at innovative ideas on how to deliver homes in a different way.	March 17
Continue to actively participate in the affordable housing element of the joint core strategy	To meet the aims and objectives of the strategic allocations	In line with the JCS timescales
Complete the housing and homeless strategy for 2017-2021	To develop housing, homeless and private sector strategy that will meet the needs of the borough.	September 2016

Environmental & Housing Services - Service Business Plan 2016-17

Homelessness and Housing Options		
Complete the procurement of the new Countywide Choice Based Lettings system	To ensure a high quality choice based lettings system is available to residents in the borough.	September 2016
Work with Supporting people and partner providers to extend support services to borough residents in need	Ensure residents are aware and able to access all support services within the borough whether their issues are based around welfare reform, financial, housing, or chaotic lifestyles.	March 2017
Deliver two properties for use as places of safety within the Borough for victims of domestic abuse	To meet the needs of residents fleeing domestic abuse in Gloucestershire	September 2016
To complete a data sharing agreement with the DWP	To access Northgate (housing benefit database) in order to undertake more robust homelessness prevention activities and check affordability of homeless accommodation for sustainable solutions and offer better housing options	March 2017
To deliver a cost effective replacement County Out of hours accommodation service for homeless households following the end of the Emergency Duty Contract in December 2016	The service is currently run by a number of housing officers across the county but is not sustainable long term. We need to continue to meet our statutory out of hour's accommodation duty for homelessness to prevent harm to vulnerable homeless households through cost effective outsourcing whilst maintaining a single point of contact with the rest of the county.	September 2016
To work in partnership with the other districts in Gloucestershire to ensure succession of a countywide assertive homeless outreach service following the end of DCLG funding	To ensure that entrenched and new rough sleepers are encouraged into suitable accommodation and lifestyles.	March 2017
Review the need for emergency and temporary accommodation within the borough	To reduce the amount of bed and breakfast usage and increase the amount of temporary accommodation within the borough	March 2017

Environmental & Housing Services - Service Business Plan 2016-17

To work closely with partners of the Tewkesbury Financial Inclusion Partnership to minimise homelessness through welfare reform changes	To reduce the impact of welfare reform on residents in the borough – to prevent debt and facilitate planned moves to affordable accommodation when current accommodation unsustainable.	March 2017
Work with Severn Vale Housing Society to make available properties to assist in housing vulnerable Syrian refugees	To meet the Borough Council's commitment to the Syrian refugee crisis	September 2016
Complete audit of bed and breakfast establishments used by Tewkesbury Borough Council	To ensure that all emergency accommodation used by Tewkesbury Borough Council is of a satisfactory standard with good management practices	September 2016
To ensure that adequate homelessness prevention funding remains available for homelessness prevention activities	To ensure financial housing options remain available for those in need within the borough.	July 2016
Safeguarding		
To continue to raise awareness of safeguarding children and adults through staff briefing sessions.	To ensure all staff are do not miss signs of children or vulnerable adults being abused, neglected or treated in some other way within the definition of safeguarding.	March 17
To ensure all new staff and members are provided with information cards detailing the telephone numbers of safeguarding help desk and relevant staff to seek advice or help from.	The cards will give confidence to staff and members that they can speak to a colleague regarding any concerns they have which can be reported to the Safeguarding Helpdesk.	March 17

4. Factors that may affect future service delivery

Factor
Change of Government and policies.
As a result of implementing outcomes of the services reviews there may be a period of adjustment for all staff involved with the review.
Introduction of policy, strategy or government legislation that may alter or impact on any of the Environmental and Housing Services team.
Future flooding emergencies and the subsequent impact on the team.

Environmental & Housing Services - Service Business Plan 2016-17

Increase in Mortgage Interest Rates.

Ongoing economic situation – increase in the number of housing clients requiring assistance.

Finance & Asset Management Service Business Plan 2016-17

1. Service purpose and objectives

Financial Services

Financial Services supports the council in delivery of its statutory financial reporting and budget setting. The service provides advice to the council and its officers supports the corporate projects of the council and delivers a wide range of financial services including payroll and treasury management.

Asset Management

Asset Management is responsible for maintaining and improving the asset portfolio of the council as well as the direct delivery of services including Cascades Leisure Centre, cemeteries and car parking enforcement. To do this we aim to provide a quality service which meets the needs of our customers, satisfies statutory requirements and is value for money.

2. Progress against actions, projects, tasks or targets 2015-16

Non Council Plan actions only, see Performance Tracker for progress against 2015-16 Council Plan actions.

Action	Progress made	Date to be achieved	Complete ✓ or ✗
Finance			
Production of statement of accounts including incorporation of new accounting requirements	Statement completed and approved by Audit Committee in September 2015.	30 September 2015	✓
Financial management training for staff (<i>Brought forward from 2013-14</i>)	Training delivered to managers and key staff in September 2015.	31 December 2015	✓
Production of medium term financial projection and balanced budget for 2016/17	MTFS approved by Council in December 2015. Balanced budget signed off by Council in February 2016.	28 February 2016	✓
Procurement of Bankers and cash collection agents	Procurement of bankers carried out resulting in cashable savings for the council. Cash collection will be concluded in the New Year.	31 March 2016	✓
Financial systems upgrade and improvements	System upgraded and a number of system improvements made during the year.	31 March 2016	✓
Asset Management			
Asset management actions such as the build of the new leisure centre and office refurbishment and rationalisation are reported through the council plan performance tracker.	n/a	n/a	n/a

Finance & Asset Management Service Business Plan 2016-17

Develop a long-term asset maintenance programme	Asset maintenance programme delayed until 2016 due to other priorities.	30 December 2015	✘
Riverside Walk and signage	Missing link for walk acquired and works carried out. Signage contractor in place and agreed timescale for delivery by September 2016. Successful funding applications for both aspects of project.	30 September 2015	✔
Roses Theatre – asset refurbishment and long-term lease	Asset refurbishment completed. Heads of terms for new lease agreed.	30 September 2015	✔
Procurement – numerous services including confidential waste, access control and security	Procurement carried out resulting in cashable savings for the council.	31 March 2016	✔
Health and Safety arrangements for authority assets	Management plan for asbestos, legionella, electrical and fire now in place.	31 December 2015	✔

3. Work programme 2016-17

Non Council Plan actions only for 2016-17.

Action	What difference will it make?	Date to be achieved
Finance		
Successful implementation of Construction Industry Scheme	Due to the ongoing level of expenditure on construction projects, the council is required by HMRC to operate CIS in its payments to contractors.	April 2016
Production of statement of accounts including incorporation of new accounting requirements	Unqualified opinion from auditors Grant Thornton leading to continued status as a low risk authority	September 2016
Develop new timetable for quicker closure of accounts in 2017 in line with government requirements	Closure of accounts to be completed by May in 2018. A new timetable will be given a dry-run in 2017 to make sure it is suitable.	January 2017
Production of medium term financial projection and balanced budget for 2016/17	To formulate financial and service delivery plans over the medium term to ensure the council is in a position to set balanced budgets on an annual basis	February 2017
Financial systems improvements	Continued programme of improvements to automate processes, improve control and accountability	March 2017

Finance & Asset Management Service Business Plan 2016-17

Develop proposals for service sustainability and development	To ensure service continuity within the set budget over the medium term	December 2016
Procurement of cash collection agents. (brought forward from 2015-16)	Joint procurement with neighbouring authorities for a value for money solution to cash collection requirements	October 2016
Asset Management		
Develop a long-term asset maintenance programme (brought forward from 2015-16)	Programme detailing asset requirements over the long term to allow for forward planning and resource allocation	September 16
Demolish the Cascades structure	Removal of structure relieves security requirements and paves the way for future development proposals	June 16
Options appraisal and procurement of car parking enforcement contract	To ensure an effective and value for money service for the councils car parks	November 16
Options appraisal for continued cemetery service delivery in Tewkesbury	To ensure plans are in place for the long term service provision	September 16
Develop on-line help desk facility for facilities management	To provide increased support for all users of the Public Service Centre and an effective management tool for service delivery	March 17
Develop proposals to ensure service sustainability and development	To ensure service continuity within the set budget over the medium term	December 16
Explore extended use of asset inspection system including commercial potential	To understand the full capabilities of the technology in relation to inspections and provide a service to partner agencies, capacity permitting	September 16
Review the Procurement Strategy.	Update the existing strategy to reflect new requirements and practices	October 16
Delivery of the Riverside Walk and Signage project.	Delivery of three walks tourist attraction	September 16

4. Factors that may affect future service delivery

Factor

- Ability to retain or recruit sufficiently qualified and experienced staff to meet council requirements
- Growing council requirements for service delivery, particularly in asset management, may not equate to resource levels available
- Insufficient planning and prioritisation of projects may lead to non-delivery

Finance & Asset Management Service Business Plan 2016-17

- Increasing asset portfolio following new developments placing strain on existing resources to maintain portfolio
- Reliance on third parties and partner organisations in delivering asset management aspirations
- Finance available to support asset management and maintenance requirements
- Government policy with regards to local government finance is uncertain
- Supporting the delivery of major projects may affect core service delivery

Revenues & Benefits Service Business Plan 2016-17

1. Service purpose and objectives

To support financial inclusion in the borough by ; ensuing access to council administered benefits , working closely with the Department of Work and Pensions (DWP) and Gloucestershire County Council to ensure effective implementation of welfare reform, actively promoting take-up of the different types of benefit available and collecting monies due to the council.

2. Progress against actions, projects, tasks or targets 2015-16

Non Council Plan actions only.

Action	Progress made	Date to be achieved	Complete ✓ or ✗
The transfer of the Benefits Anti-Fraud functions to the Single Fraud Investigation Service.	The new antifraud single fraud investigation service has been fully implemented. The borough council no longer investigates housing benefit fraud. All investigations passed over to DWP to continue with investigations. Action completed on time.	May 15	✓
The roll out of dual screens for revenues and benefits staff	Dual screens have been successfully rolled out to all revenues and benefits staff. This has had a very positive impact on performance with new claims being processed in 12 days and changes in circumstances in 6 days.	June 2015	✓
The role out of Universal Credit will commence in June 2015	The early stages of Universal Credit roll out have begun. Single clients are being taken on now. Arrangements are in place to help Universal Credit claimants with personal budgeting and support as well as help with accessing services via the web.	June 2015	✓
Financial Inclusion	This is very much a developing theme: 1) We have in place arrangements for personal budgeting and support. 2) We have developed a web page to enable those who need to access help quickly make contact with appropriate welfare organisations.	March 2016	✓
The implementation of the new Anite Server	The Anite Server (document imaging server) has been fully implemented. The old server had reached the end of its life and could not be upgraded or be repaired in the event of it breaking down. The new server has a longer shelf life and operates far more efficiently. The positive impact is that this will help our processing times in revenues and benefits.	August 2015	✓

Revenues & Benefits Service Business Plan 2016-17

Print Project	<p>Printing arrangements are in place and we are achieving positive results.</p> <p>1) All bulk produced mail is being issued by our printers.</p> <p>2) All appropriate documentation for the same recipient is being mail merged and sent in the same envelope.</p> <p>3) We are seeing cost savings and have already achieved a reduction in postage expenditure by £6k in the 2014/15 year.</p> <p>4) At the time of writing was £2k under budget for this financial year.</p>	December 2015	✓
FERIS	<p>The new government scheme to encourage the housing benefit recipient tell us about changes in circumstances is in place. So far the scheme has worked well in achieving reductions in benefit amounting to £87,900.</p>	March 2016	✓

3. Work programme 2016-17

Non Council Plan actions only.

Action	What difference will it make?	Date to be achieved
Council Tax Single Person Discount Review	<p>The revenues section will be working with the Gloucestershire Counter Fraud Hub to review council tax single person discounts. The review will look at over 9,000 accounts to establish whether the recipients are still eligible for the discount.</p>	October 2016
Welfare reform	<p>During 2016/17 the Government will be implementing significant changes to various welfare payments. Housing benefit will be at the forefront of welfare reform. During the year the council will have to implement some significant cuts in housing benefit. The timetable for implementing the changes has not yet been released by DWP. However, all arrangements must be in place by 31 March 2017 :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Freeze on Local Housing Allowance rates. • The revised benefit cap anticipated to come in during the autumn of 2016. • Removal of the family premium in housing benefit. From the 1 May 2016 • Housing benefit backdating will be reduced so that new claims from working age claimants will be backdated for a maximum of four weeks. 	March 2017

Revenues & Benefits Service Business Plan 2016-17

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prepare for the full roll out of Universal Credit when a date has been established. 	
Financial Inclusion	<p>An objective coming from the transformation project has been to create additional capacity within the service to carry out important work on financial inclusion such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide a more joined up service to assist those who are in need. • Carry out a detailed analysis of our housing benefit data and council tax support to identify key areas of need within our borough. • The data will help identify the future impacts of welfare reform and enable us to better assist those households that are under financial pressure. • Create a framework for the delivery of a joined up range of services and this will build upon the work already achieved through the financial inclusion partnership. • Developing personal budgeting and support • Promoting digital inclusion, and the new web page created to help people get in touch with organisations that can help. 	March 2017
National Non Domestic Rates Revaluation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Valuation Office Agency is carrying out a national revaluation of all rateable values in the United Kingdom. The last revaluation was completed in 2010 and the next revaluation is due to be completed before the 31 March 2017 so that future years' rates bills will be assessed on the new values. The borough council will be engaged in the process and must have in place on its revenue's system all new rateable values ready for the 2017/2018 year. This will require testing of the systems and checking of data before going live. 	March 2017
The Council Tax Support Scheme.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Council Tax Support scheme is due to be reviewed. Currently, we operate using the default scheme or the old council tax benefit scheme. We need to ensure that the current scheme is still relevant and affordable. 	March 2017
Unoccupied domestic property reliefs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unoccupied domestic property reliefs are due to be reviewed to ensure that current arrangements are still relevant and appropriate. 	March 2017

Revenues & Benefits Service Business Plan 2016-17

4. Factors that may affect future service delivery

Factor
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Resources are at a premium and the impact of the financial constraint may have an impact on service delivery.
<ul style="list-style-type: none">The significant growth in new domestic properties.
<ul style="list-style-type: none">The impact of the Welfare Reform changes upon those claiming benefits including the implementation of Universal Credit.
<ul style="list-style-type: none">The impact of successful rating valuation appeals on the Council's finances.

TEWKESBURY BOROUGH COUNCIL

Report to:	Executive Committee
Date of Meeting:	6 April 2016
Subject:	Council Plan Year 1 (2016-20)
Report of:	Graeme Simpson, Corporate Services Group Manager
Corporate Lead:	Mike Dawson, Chief Executive
Lead Member:	Councillor R J E Vines
Number of Appendices:	Two

<p>Executive Summary:</p> <p>The Council Plan is a key strategic document which establishes an overarching vision for the Borough and sets out in broad terms the priorities, objectives and actions that the Council will focus upon to work towards the vision. The draft plan (2016-20) contains four priority themes supported by a number of key objectives and actions. As with the previous Council Plan (2012-16), actions will be subject to an annual refresh.</p>
<p>Recommendation:</p> <p>Subject to any amendments from the Executive Committee, the Council Plan is recommended to Council for adoption.</p>
<p>Reasons for Recommendation:</p> <p>The previous Council Plan (2012-16) has now ended and a new Plan is required.</p>

<p>Resource Implications:</p> <p>None arising directly from this report.</p>
<p>Legal Implications:</p> <p>None arising directly from this report.</p>
<p>Risk Management Implications:</p> <p>If the Council does not have an up to date Council Plan then it cannot demonstrate that priorities are being achieved.</p>
<p>Performance Management Follow-up:</p> <p>Delivery of the Council Plan actions are monitored through a Performance Tracker which is reported to Overview and Scrutiny Committee on a quarterly basis.</p>

Environmental Implications:

None arising directly from this report.

1.0 INTRODUCTION/BACKGROUND

1.1 The Council Plan is a key strategic document which establishes an overarching vision for the Borough and sets out in broad terms the priorities, objectives and actions that the Council will focus upon to work towards the vision. The Plan (2016-20) contains four priority themes supported by a number of key objectives and actions. As with the previous Council Plan (2012-16), where appropriate, actions will be subject to an annual refresh. The refresh ensures the Plan is a 'live' document. The Plan (Year 1) is attached in Appendix 1.

2.0 THE COUNCIL PLAN 2016-20 (Year 1)

2.1 As with the previous Council Plan it is proposed that the vision and values remain unchanged. The vision for the Borough is 'a place where a good quality of life is open to all'. The Plan also sets out the values which we will hold as we work to deliver the vision. We are a Council which puts customers first, is positive about working with others and which values its employees.

2.2 The Plan establishes four priorities on which action will be focused to deliver the Council's vision. In delivering the vision the Council will focus upon:

- Finances and resources.
- Economic development.
- Housing.
- Customer-focused services.

Each of the four priorities is supported by a series of key objectives and actions which will focus activity on delivery of the priorities. The majority of actions are linked to key strategies and actions are assigned to Lead Officers through the Council Plan Performance Tracker.

3.0 MEMBER FEEDBACK

3.1 The draft Council Plan was presented to Members at a session held on 9 March 2016. A summary of the feedback can be found in Appendix 2. Overall, Members were supportive of the priorities with only minor amendments being suggested to the supporting actions and general presentation of the Plan.

4.0 MONITORING PROGRESS

4.1 A Performance Tracker is in place to monitor delivery of the Council Plan actions and this is reported to Overview and Scrutiny Committee on a quarterly basis. Outcomes of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee review are then reported to Executive Committee. The Plan itself will be reviewed and, where appropriate, refreshed on an annual basis.

5.0 PROMOTING THE COUNCIL PLAN

5.1 The prime audience for the Council Plan are the Council's Members, staff and key partners. The updated Plan will be available on the Council's website, intranet and in hard copy format on request. Easy print and summary versions will also be available. The Plan will be published in the media and through the Borough News. Poster versions will also be available for use internally.

6.0 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

6.1 None.

7.0 CONSULTATION

7.1 Corporate Leadership Team, Group Managers and Operational Managers.
Member Workshop 9 March 2016.

8.0 RELEVANT COUNCIL POLICIES/STRATEGIES

8.1 Council Plan 2016-20.

9.0 RELEVANT GOVERNMENT POLICIES

9.1 A wide range of government policies underpin actions within the priority themes.

10.0 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS (Human/Property)

10.1 No direct resource implications.

11.0 SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS (Social/Community Safety/Cultural/ Economic/ Environment)

11.1 The Council Plan seeks to ensure economic, social and environmental sustainability.

12.0 IMPACT UPON (Value For Money/Equalities/E-Government/Human Rights/Health And Safety)

12.1 The Council Plan seeks to ensure value for money and equitable service provision.

13.0 RELATED DECISIONS AND ANY OTHER RELEVANT FACTS

13.1 Previous Council Plan approved at Council on 15 May 2012.

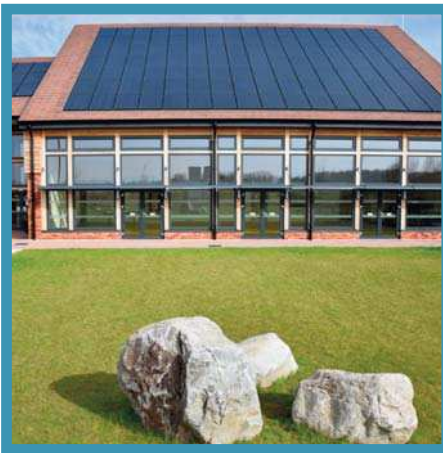
Background Papers: None.

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Appendices: 1 – Draft Council Plan 2016-2020.
2 – Comments from Member Workshop held on 9 March 2016.



Tewkesbury Borough



Council Plan 2016-20



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Foreword

We are pleased to introduce the Council Plan 2016 to 2020. This document is a statement of intent to drive forward our vision:

"Tewkesbury Borough, a place where a good quality of life is open to all."

To deliver this vision and provide focus we have established four priorities:

- Finances and resources
- Economic development
- Housing
- Customer-focused services

The next four years are set to be both exciting and challenging. For a relatively small council we have big ambitions. We continue to face unprecedented financial challenge, which means we are focusing closely on transforming the way we deliver our services and adopting a more commercial approach to income generation, so that we can continue to provide excellent value for money. Our council tax is one of the lowest in the country and has been for many years, so we are experts in doing more with less.

Our Council Plan recognises that there is more of a role for councils than just operational service delivery and the future for Tewkesbury Borough is around issues such as infrastructure, skills and housing delivery. We have a vital role to play in helping to shape our place. We pride ourselves in being agile and flexible and despite the financial challenges; we have maintained our essential role in stewarding our 'place'.

By remaining focused on our priorities we can ensure we use our resources effectively to improve the quality of life for our communities. We work extremely well with others and have taken radical steps to bring together our public sector partners to share our building and our vision for our communities. The focus and commitment of the council's staff, councillors and partners will enable us to overcome the challenges ahead and make our vision and priorities a reality.

We are transforming our business to meet the challenges we face and in everything we do and in the decisions we make, we will be a council that is 'better for customers, better for business'.

This plan builds upon the success of our previous plan. You will see that we have already made a number of achievements under each of our previous priority themes, and these can be found on pages 11-13.



Councillor Robert Vines
Leader of the Council and
Councillor Dave Waters
Deputy Leader of the Council

A snapshot of Tewkesbury Borough

- The borough has a population of around 85,800, with Office for National Statistics (ONS) projections of 93,400 by 2025 and 100,400 by 2037.
- Projections suggest the number of people aged 65 and above will increase to 500 (from 420 per year) per year between 2012 and 2037.
- The proportion of Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) population rose from 1.4% to 2.5% between 2001 and 2011 (lower than the county and national %). 'White Other' population has more than doubled between 2001 and 2011, from 940 to 2,410.
- There are around 3,900 VAT registered businesses accounting for around 14% of the county total and growth over the last five years has been the highest in Gloucestershire. The diverse economy supported some 42,000 employees in 2014.
- The borough has a highly skilled workforce that reflects the nature and demand of a high tech manufacturing and service base, which is projected to grow.
- The manufacturing sector accounted for the largest proportion of total employment in Gloucestershire, which was 23% in 2014.
- The current employment rate of 16-64 year olds is 83.7%, higher than the county rate of 79.2% and the national rate of 72.7%.
- Claimant unemployment is 0.9% which is below the county average of 1.0% and the national rate of 1.8%.
- Life expectancy is slightly higher than the county average, and significantly higher than the national average.
- 16.5% of residents (13,523) reported having a long term health problem or disability, broadly in line with the county average and below the regional and national average.
- Two thirds of the borough are ranked within the 40% least deprived areas in England, accounting for 65% of the population. The borough has small pockets of deprivation ranked in the top 20% deprived areas nationally.
- The borough experiences crime rates much lower to the overall rates for England and Wales, south west region and Gloucestershire county.



Our vision and values 2016-20

Our vision is to make:

"Tewkesbury Borough, a place where a good quality of life is open to all."

Our values

Everything we do is aimed at delivering our vision but the way we deliver services is equally important to us. We have therefore adopted a set of values which we apply across all of our activities. We are a council which:

✓ Puts customers first

We will put the needs of our customers at the heart of what we do and listen to what they say, treating people fairly and without bias.

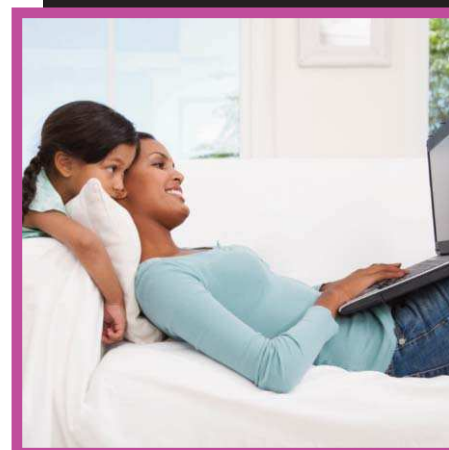
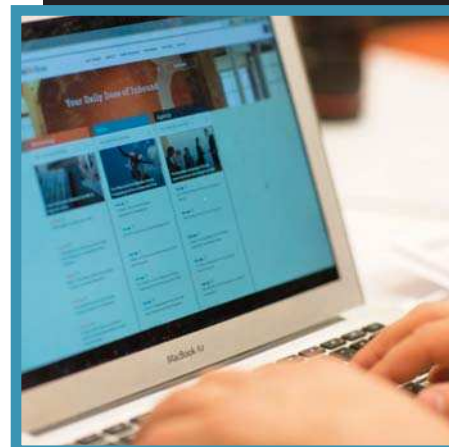
✓ Is positive about working with others

We recognise we cannot achieve our vision by working alone. We will continue to develop productive working relationships with other organisations and our communities, including the voluntary sector, town and parish councils and neighbourhood groups to achieve common goals.

✓ Values our employees

We will support, praise and invest in our workforce to develop our organisation.

Supporting our values we also have an ethos that whatever we do will be 'Better for customers, better for business'.



Our priorities and objectives 2016-20

● Finances and resources

- Start on the path to being financially independent of the government's core grants.
- Maintain a low council tax.
- Investigate and take appropriate commercial opportunities.
- Use our assets to provide maximum financial return.

● Economic development

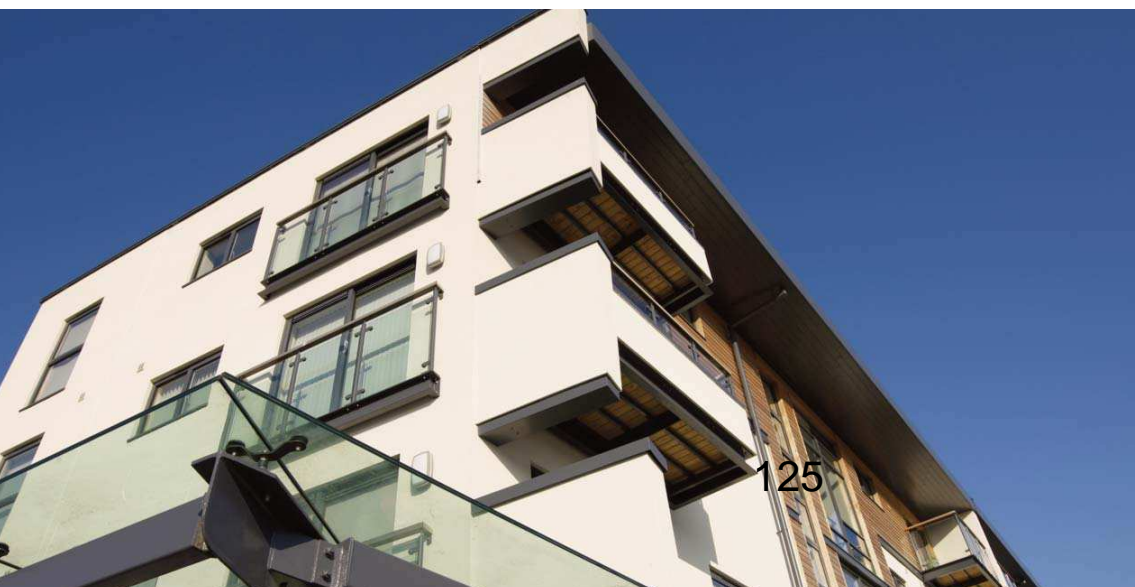
- Be the primary growth engine of Gloucestershire's economy.
- Identify and deliver employment land within the borough, in accordance with the Joint Core Strategy (JCS) and Tewkesbury Borough Plan.
- Maximise the growth potential of the M5 junctions within the borough.
- Deliver regeneration for Tewkesbury town.

● Housing

- Increase the supply of suitable housing across the borough to support growth and meet the needs of our communities.
- Achieve a five year supply of land.
- Deliver the homes and necessary infrastructure to create new sustainable communities in key locations.
- Deliver affordable homes to meet local need.

● Customer-focused services

- Maintain and improve our culture of continuous service improvement.
- Develop our customer service ethos to ensure that we deliver to the needs of residents.
- Further expansion of the Public Services Centre (bring in other partners).
- Improve and expand our partnerships both public and private sector and explore opportunities to do this.
- To improve customer access to our services and service delivery through digital methods.



Why this is a priority

The council has to manage with less money at the same time as seeing costs rise and demand on some services increase. It is therefore important we deliver services which maximise value for money, sustainability and efficiencies. The challenge is to simultaneously transform our services while growing our way out of austerity. Our risk appetite therefore needs to be less risk adverse and include the opportunity to look at and invest in commercial activities.

To deliver this priority our objectives and actions are:

- **Start on the path to being financially independent of the government's core grants.**
 - a) Deliver the council's transformation programme.
 - b) Implement a Fees and Charges Strategy to maximise return in the medium term.
- **Maintain a low council tax.**
 - a) Produce a medium term strategy which ensures that council tax remains in the lowest quartile nationally.
- **Investigate and take appropriate commercial opportunities.**
 - a) Develop a programme of commercial projects, including developing an entrepreneurial-type culture for councillors and staff.
 - b) Produce a business case alongside partner authorities for the formation of a housing development company.
 - c) Undertake a review of the discretionary trade waste service to ensure it is operating on a viable commercial level.
- **Use our assets to provide maximum financial return.**
 - a) Ensure value-for-money procurement of a new waste and recycling fleet.
 - b) Deliver the council's asset plan.



Why this is a priority

Local government has historically been seen as a service delivery organisation but the future of the borough is about factors like infrastructure, skills and housing. We therefore need to be more of a place shaper. The borough is well placed to secure economic growth and we want our local economy to thrive and prosper and provide jobs that people want. Attracting new investment and retaining and strengthening existing business is key to ensuring the future prosperity of the borough.

To deliver this priority our objectives and actions are:

- **Be the primary growth engine of Gloucestershire's economy.**
 - a) Carry out an economic assessment within the borough.
 - b) Produce, deliver and launch a new Economic Development and Tourism Strategy.

- **Identify and deliver employment land within the borough**
 - a) Produce an employment land review of sites within the borough.
 - b) Allocate and deliver employment land through the JCS and Tewkesbury Borough Plan.

- **Maximise the growth potential of the M5 junctions within the borough.**
 - a) Produce a vision for the J9 area.
 - b) Work with our partners, including the JCS partners and the LEP, to promote the M5 Growth Zone.
 - c) Work with partners to build a case for an all-ways M5 junction 10.

- **Deliver regeneration for Tewkesbury town.**
 - a) Put in place a plan to regenerate Spring Gardens, following the opening of the new leisure centre.
 - b) Work with Tewkesbury Regeneration Partnership to progress projects that regenerate Tewkesbury Town.



Why this is a priority

We recognise how important it is for residents to be able to access good quality housing and housing related services that make a real difference to their lives. Not only is housing important for the health and well-being of residents it is also an important part of building and maintaining strong communities and supporting the economic prosperity of the borough.

To deliver this priority our objectives and actions are:

- **Increase the supply of suitable housing across the borough to support growth and meet the needs of our communities.**
 - a) Continue working with our partner councils to ensure the Joint Core Strategy is adopted.
 - b) Develop the Tewkesbury Borough Plan.
 - c) Support Neighbourhood Development Plans across the borough where communities bring them forward.
 - d) Utilise new tools available under the Housing and Planning Bill.

- **Achieve a five year supply of land.**
 - a) Ensure adequate land is allocated within the Joint Core Strategy and Tewkesbury Borough Plan to meet housing need.
 - b) Continue to promote sustainable development throughout the borough.

- **Deliver the homes and necessary infrastructure to create new sustainable communities in key locations.**
 - a) Monitor annually the delivery of homes within the borough.
 - b) Work with partners, infrastructure providers and developers to progress the delivery of key sites.

- **Deliver affordable homes to meet local need.**
 - a) Develop a new Housing and Homelessness Strategy for 2016-2020.
 - b) Deliver 150 affordable homes each year.
 - c) Work in partnership to prevent residents becoming homeless



Why this is a priority

One of our core values is that we will put the needs of our customers at the heart of what we do and listen to what they say. We want to provide the best possible service to all of our customers, particularly in terms of resolving queries at the first point of contact. Digital technology is changing our customers' expectations and we want them to be able to access our services when and where they need it, and we want to join up with our partners to make access to our services easier.

To deliver this priority our objectives and actions are:

- **Maintain and improve our culture of continuous service improvement.**
 - a) Deliver phase two of the planning and environmental health service reviews.
 - b) Consider our approach to enviro-crimes, with a particular focus on fly-tipping and dog fouling.
- **Develop our customer service ethos to ensure that we deliver to the needs of residents.**
 - a) Adopt and promote customer care standards to further improve the quality of service our residents receive.
 - b) Roll out a programme of customer services training for staff across the council.
- **Further expansion of the Public Services Centre (bring in other partners).**
 - a) Work with partners to investigate the potential for a reception refurbishment and integrated customer services team.
 - b) To let out the top floor of the Public Services Centre.
- **Improve and expand our partnerships both public and private sector and explore opportunities to do this.**
 - a) Continued delivery of the proposed One Legal expansion.
 - b) With partners, develop and implement a programme for financial inclusion.
 - c) Work with partners to improve digital links between public services to make life simpler for customers.
- **To improve customer access to our services and service delivery through digital methods.**
 - a) Develop and deliver a Digital Strategy.
 - b) Develop and roll out a new website to reflect our commitment to excellent online services.



Keeping our performance on track

Good performance management is when an organisation knows it is doing the right things well. To monitor how well we are performing, our performance management framework includes a council plan performance tracker. The tracker monitors the progress in delivering the actions which support each priority theme. Progress is reported on a quarterly basis to our Overview and Scrutiny Committee. Supporting the tracker is a set of key performance indicators and a financial summary analysis. The findings from the Overview and Scrutiny Committee review are personally reported by the chair of committee to the council's Executive Committee.

We also have an excellent track record in relation to the low number of complaints we receive. Positive reports continue to be received from the Local Government Ombudsman with no complaints upheld against the council and formal complaints received to do with our services remain low in number. A six monthly complaints report of the number of complaints received, trends etc are reported to Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

As reported through our previous Council Plan we were really buoyed by the feedback received following our corporate peer challenge in November 2014. Facilitated by the Local Government Association, the peer review team concluded we should have much to be proud of and referred to the council 'punching above its weight' at a local, regional and national level. We have not remained complacent and have a formally approved action plan which will ensure further improvements. This is also monitored by Overview and Scrutiny Committee on a six monthly basis.

We look forward to reporting our success factors over the span of the Council Plan (2016-2020) which builds upon the success of our previous plan.

Should you require any further information about the Council Plan, please contact:

Graeme Simpson, Group Manager, Corporate Services

phone: 01684 272002 email: graeme.simpson@teWKesbury.gov.uk



Our achievements 2012-2016

These include;



Use resources effectively

- During the life span of the previous plan we froze council tax - (Band D council tax of £99.36, lowest in county, fifth lowest in England).
- Through rationalisation of our office accommodation we now benefit from an income stream in the order of £160,000 per annum.
- A £1.2m office refurbishment was completed in September 2014, providing a sustainable and fit for purpose Public Services Centre building.
- Through new processes, our Revenues and Benefits team has saved approximately £120,000 and processing times for new benefit claims are now in the top quartile nationally.
- Effective from August 2013, an organisational review was undertaken which created savings in excess of £500,000.
- A very successful corporate peer challenge undertaken by the Local Government Association in November 2014 concluded the council 'punches above its weight' locally, regionally and nationally.



Promote economic development

- We have a massive growth agenda. We secured significant funding to support this. For example, in partnership with Gloucestershire County Council, we were awarded £1.36m capacity funding to deliver some of our most important development sites.
- We have worked with partners to support nearly 900 businesses through start-ups, training and mentoring initiatives, seminars, networking events and enterprise clubs. We have also provided a £50,000 business support grant for each year of the previous Council Plan.
- We secured a flood grant of £475,000 from the Department for Business, Innovation and skills (BIS) to support resilience.
- Working in partnership with the Forest of Dean District Council we have made a successful bid to LEADER European Rural Development Programme totalling £1.4 million.
- In 2013/14, we were winners of the Cotswold Tourism Gold Award for our Vintage and Modern Campaign.
- The proposed Joint Core Strategy supports new jobs up to 2031 and employment land.



Our achievements 2012-2016

✓ **Improve recycling and care for the environment**

- We launched a self-service portal for our garden waste renewal scheme. Nearly, 15,000 customers subscribe to the service.
- Flood Support Grant Scheme and Repair and Renewal Grant Scheme- following the 2014 floods we secured grant funding to support affected business and domestic premises. Over £500,000 grants were awarded.
- The council is now formally a member of the Gloucestershire Joint Waste Committee. Also, effective from 1 April 2015, the council joined Ubico. (Ubico is a local authority owned company specialising in environmental services to the public sector)
- We refreshed the Volunteer Litter Picking Scheme which has over 150 committed volunteers. We have held a series of re-induction events, an annual thank you event, issue a six monthly newsletter and have issued new equipment.
- We have helped sustain a healthy recycling rate of 52%, which is in the top quartile nationally.
- The Flood Risk Action Plan is almost complete with over £500,000 spent on the plan.
- In early 2016 we completed the waste services review and have now started the process of procuring a new vehicle fleet.



✓ **Provide customer focussed community support**

- Developing our Public Services Centre - Job Centre Plus joined us in April 2014 the first such arrangement in the country. Severn Vale Housing, Gloucestershire Fire Brigade and Gloucestershire Rural Community Council also joined during the course of 2014.
- Our new £7.5 million leisure centre will open on 30 May 2016.
- We met our Families First three year target (to engage with 90 families by March 2015) in early 2014. Over 60 families have been 'turned around'.
- We have adopted a 'Place' approach to working with our communities, with the borough split into three areas.
- We provide support to neighbourhood planning of which there are now 11 designated neighbourhood areas across 15 parishes.
- We agreed on-going support to the Citizens Advice Bureau of £50,000 which assisted over 1,400 residents per year, providing advice on issues such as benefits, debt, employment, housing and relationships.
- We have introduced a new post of community funding officer - a great opportunity to help signpost community groups to external funding sources.
- We are undertaking a review of our complaints framework with a new system to be implemented in April 2016.



Our achievements 2012-2016



Develop housing relevant to local needs

- We submitted our Joint Core Strategy (JCS) to the Secretary of State in November 2014 – a significant achievement given the complexities in developing the strategy. The strategy is currently under examination by the Planning Inspectorate.
- The JCS is supported with the development of a Tewkesbury Borough Plan.
- Our Disabled Facility Grant Scheme supports over 100 grants per year, exceeding £600,000 per year.
- With other Gloucestershire districts we were successful in obtaining £3.2 million grant funding for The Warm and Well Central Heating Fund.
- In 2015/2016 we estimate to deliver 205 new affordable homes, the largest number delivered since 2007/08. We have exceeded our affordable homes target – the target is an average of 100 homes over a three year period. 130 were delivered in 2012/13, 155 in 2013/14 and 145 in 2014/15.



Photo index

front cover	Stoke Orchard Community Centre View over borough from Devil's Chimney Brockworth
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page 3	Launchpad, Tewkesbury Snowhill Lavender Witcombe
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page 13	Millennium affordable housing, Tewkesbury

Our contact details: Tewkesbury Borough Council
Council Offices, Gloucester Road
Tewkesbury, GL20 5TT

Phone 01684 295010
email: enquiries@tewkesbury.gov.uk
www.tewkesbury.gov.uk

Feedback resulting from Member presentation held on 9 March 2016

Economic Development

A Member sought clarity on how the Council is committed to this when a significant planning application relating to J9 was recommended for refusal.

Customer Focused Services

A Member referred to the action relating to the Council's approach to enviro-crimes and this should include specific reference to dog fouling. The approach to enviro-crimes generally, may need further review to ensure it is effective. The potential of employing some type of warden, funded by Town & Parish Councils and which has been discussed previously should be developed further and brought back to Members for consideration.

Housing

The action relating to living in safe and affordable homes was raised by one Member to clarify that 'safe' should also be interpreted as safe environment and not just the safety of the home.

One Member felt the actions to deliver this were repetitive and lacked targets. As Lead Member for that Portfolio it was agreed these would be looked at further. A meeting was subsequently held with the Lead Member and the Plan amended to be more inclusive of the activities which fall within that Portfolio.

Clean and Green

One Member would like to see this as a priority theme supported with reference to climate change.

Finance and Economic Development

A Member asserted these are key priorities because of the financial challenges facing the Council but also because of the potential growth opportunities. As a result a commercial outlook is required.

Approach to Council Plan

One Member commented that, although she welcomed this session, a workshop type session should have taken place prior to this to help shape the Plan. The same Member commented on how business and financial driven the Plan was compared to the previous Plan.

General Presentation of the Plan

It was explained at the beginning of the presentation that the Plan was only draft and some of the photographs would be updated. One Member made specific reference to there being no photographs of Bishop's Cleeve and photographs need to reflect equality and diversity. Reference was also made to ensuring the Plan was style guided and dependent upon who the audience was, would they understand terminology such as 'transformation programme' and 'primary growth'.

TEWKESBURY BOROUGH COUNCIL

Report to:	Executive Committee
Date of Meeting:	6 April 2016
Subject:	Formal Complaints Policy
Report of:	Graeme Simpson, Corporate Services Group Manager
Corporate Lead:	Mike Dawson, Chief Executive
Lead Member:	Councillor M Dean
Number of Appendices:	Two

Executive Summary:

The formal complaints policy outlines our approach for dealing and responding to complaints, and how we can use complaints to satisfy our customers, improve our services and learn from any identified lessons.

Recommendation:

To APPROVE the formal complaints policy.

Reasons for Recommendation:

The policy will ensure that the way complaints are managed is effective, compliant and that any lessons learnt are identified and recorded.

Resource Implications:

None directly resulting from this report.

Legal Implications:

None directly resulting from this report.

Risk Management Implications:

Without a clear formal complaints policy, there is a risk to our reputation.

Performance Management Follow-up:

Delivery of the policy is monitored by Overview and Scrutiny Committee on a six monthly basis.

Environmental Implications:

None.

1.0 INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

- 1.1** For a local government organisation, the number of complaints we receive is low. However, a 2015/2016 audit of our complaints process returned limited assurance and recommended “A review of the complaints process should be undertaken with consideration being given to logging, handling, reporting and learning in respect of both formal complaints and online complaints”.
- 1.2** An internal officer Working Group was set up to carry out the review, and found that the existing complaints process was difficult to interpret and the systems being used for managing formal complaints were not fit for purpose.
- 1.3** In light of this, a start from scratch approach was taken and a new policy and supporting customer leaflet drafted to reflect this. The formal Complaints Policy at Appendix 1 outlines our approach for dealing with, and responding to, complaints, and sets out how we can effectively use our complaints process to satisfy our customers, improve our services and learn from any identified lessons.
- 1.4** A customer complaints leaflet, which provides information on what a customer should do if they want to make a complaint, is attached at Appendix 2. The information provided within the leaflet will also be made available on our website.

2.0 THE FORMAL COMPLAINTS POLICY

- 2.1** The policy sets out what the customer should expect when they complain and how and in what timescale we will manage and respond to the complaint. It also details how any appeals will be managed and responded to. The policy was developed in accordance with guidance from the Local Government Ombudsman, to ensure compliance with audit recommendations and data protection requirements.
- 2.2** Part of the review of the complaints process was to improve signposting – both in hardcopy and online - so that customers can understand the distinction between making a formal complaint and reporting service issues. Having this clarity will mean customers receive appropriate and timely responses. Within the policy, a complaint is clearly defined as “an expression of dissatisfaction that requires a response, about the standards of service, actions or lack of action by the Council or its staff”.
- 2.3** Formal complaints can be made either by completing our online form or by writing to us. If a customer contacts us using a different channel, they will be directed to the online form or provided with our complaints postal address.
- 2.4** In terms of responding to complaints, the policy states that a response will be sent within 20 working days, although we will always endeavour to respond as soon as possible. This is a change from 10 working days in the existing complaints procedure. This is to allow officers time to investigate potentially complex complaints thoroughly. This timing change applies to both the initial complaint investigation stage and the subsequent review stage.
- 2.5** In line with up and coming data protection legislation a data retention schedule has been added to the policy to ensure compliance.

3.0 MONITORING OF COMPLAINTS

3.1 Alongside the policy, a new central case management system is being introduced to log and manage all formal complaints. This new system, which is already being used to log and manage our Freedom of Information requests, will help us to ensure that all complaints are handled to the same standard and their progress can be monitored so that responses are sent within the correct timeframe. As part of this new process, our Corporate Services Officer will monitor the progress of complaints and ensure they are responded to on time and any lessons learned are recorded.

4.0 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

4.1 None.

5.0 CONSULTATION

5.1 None.

6.0 RELEVANT COUNCIL POLICIES/STRATEGIES

6.1 The Council Plan and Customer Care Standards.

7.0 RELEVANT GOVERNMENT POLICIES

7.1 None.

8.0 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS (Human/Property)

8.1 None directly.

9.0 SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS (Social/Community Safety/Cultural/ Economic/ Environment)

9.1 None.

10.0 IMPACT UPON (Value For Money/Equalities/E-Government/Human Rights/Health And Safety)

10.1 None.

11.0 RELATED DECISIONS AND ANY OTHER RELEVANT FACTS

11.1 None.

Background papers: None.

Contact Officer: Iain Stark – Programme Officer Tel: 01684 272158
Email: iain.stark@teWKesbury.gov.uk

Appendices:

1. Formal Complaints Policy.
2. Customer “How to complain” leaflet.

Formal Complaints Policy

March 2016

“A formal complaint is an expression of dissatisfaction that **requires a response**”

Formal Complaints Policy

Introduction

This policy outlines our approach for dealing and responding to complaints, and how we can use complaints to satisfy our customers and improve our services.

We aim to deliver all our services correctly first time. However, sometimes things go wrong. We try to encourage our customers to tell us when this happens so that we can put it right and learn lessons to prevent it happening again.

What is a formal complaint?

A formal complaint is an expression of dissatisfaction that requires a response, about the standards of service, actions or lack of action by the council or its staff.

Customers reporting one-off service failures (such as a missed bin) will need to use one of our online service forms rather than our formal complaints process, tewkesbury.gov.uk/doitonline or they can phone our customer services team on 01684 295010.

Formal complaints must be made in writing using our online form or by letter. We do not accept complaints by phone or email. If the customer contacts us by phone or email then

we will direct them to use our website or to send us a letter.

If submitting a complaint by letter, it must be addressed to:

Complaints
Customer Services
Tewkesbury Borough Council
Gloucester Road
Tewkesbury
GL20 5TT

The customer must provide us with their name and address and may provide a phone number and email address if they wish. The customer will be asked to provide a preferred contact method (email or letter). We may telephone the customer to discuss the complaint but will always send full responses in writing.

All complaints will be treated with respect and confidence. Only staff handling the complaint or formally consulted as part of the investigation will be aware of the customer's personal details.

Complaints not handled under our formal complaints policy

Some formal complaints are dealt with under separate statutory procedures, these include:

- Complaints about councillors. Please contact the council's monitoring officer on 01684 295010 or email externalenquiries@tewkesbury.gov.uk
- Allegations of financial impropriety or criminal activity by the council. Please contact the council's Section 151 officer and/or an internal auditor, monitoring officer or chief executive. You can do this on 01684 295010 or email externalenquiries@tewkesbury.gov.uk
- Where there is a separate appeals process, that appeals process should be followed e.g. licensing, planning or parking fines.
- Complaints about national government policy.



Formal Complaints Policy

“Our Customer Services team will **allocate the complaint** to the relevant service manager ”

Handling the complaint

Stage one – investigation by a service manager.

All complaints will be logged in our case management system. The case management system will be used for recording all actions taken during the complaint investigation. Each complaint will be allocated a unique reference. Customers should include this reference in all correspondence with us about their complaint.

All complaints will be acknowledged within two working days of receipt.

If the complaint is about a service which we do not directly provide, then we will respond to the customer with contact details for the organisation responsible.

Our Customer Services team will allocate the complaint to the relevant service manager who will then investigate it.

A full written response will be sent to the customer as soon as possible but within 20 working days. If the complaint requires significant investigation that may exceed this time then we will let the customer know and agree a response date.

Our response will include our decision about whether we agree with the complaint, any action which we will be taking and any remedy

we may make. Details will be given of what the customer can do next if they are not satisfied. If the customer wants to appeal our decision, they must let us know within 30 calendar days of our response.

Stage two – investigation by an independent group manager.

All complaints which go to stage two of our formal complaints policy will be acknowledged within two working days.

The Chief Executive’s PA will allocate the investigation to a member of the management team who is independent from the original investigation.

The response will be sent to the customer as soon as possible but within 20 working days. If the complaint requires significant investigation that may exceed this time then we will let the customer know and agree a response date.

Our response will include our decision about whether we agree with the complaint, any action which we will be taking and any remedy we may make.

This is the last stage in our formal complaints policy. If the customer is still not satisfied then they may refer their complaint to the Local Government Ombudsman.

Ombudsman

Details of how to complain to the Ombudsman will be included with our stage two response. The Ombudsman will only investigate complaints which have already been through our complaints procedure.

Address: PO Box 4771, Coventry, CV4 0EH
Website: www.lgo.org.uk
Ombudsman Advice Team: 0300 061 0614

Lessons learned

As part of our complaints investigation process we will record any lessons learned and each service will be required to review how these lessons have been implemented.

Remedy for formal complaints

When the council is at fault, we must always try to put things right - and we must do this as soon as possible to minimise the inconvenience to the customer and prevent unnecessary escalation.

We must acknowledge the fault, explain what went wrong, what we will do to prevent it happening again and provide a remedy in the form of:

“The complaints procedure will be reviewed annually and will **incorporate issues raised** by officers and member feedback...”

Formal Complaints Policy

- An apology- a written apology will be a matter of course
- Specific action- All lessons learned (including recommendations for improvement/staff training) should be considered and implemented by the appropriate team and any action resulting from the lessons learned should be fed back to the complainant.
- Financial settlement/ refund- reimbursing the person affected (in full or in part) for actual, quantifiable financial loss which has directly resulted from the complaint.

Where it is felt that financial compensation is appropriate we will refer to the Local Government Ombudsman’s latest guidance on Good Practice on Remedies. This will be used as a guide in determining the actual amount of financial settlement and these will be paid as soon as possible following the decision to pay.

The relevant operational/group manager will be responsible for determining the appropriate remedy, including financial settlements/refunds up to £1000. Any financial remedy in excess of £1000 will be referred to the Corporate Leadership Team to agree the appropriate approach, and the lead member will be notified.

Frivolous, vexatious and serial complaints

Any vexatious complaints will be referred to the monitoring officer for consideration prior to responding. Where a complaint of this nature is received, it will be carefully considered to ensure that no new issue has been brought to the council’s attention that should be pursued. A vexatious complaint may be from a serial complainer or from a customer who is known to harass, cause distress, agitate or pursue issues excessively.

Where managers consider that a complaint appears to lack any serious purpose or value, or is designed to cause disruption or annoyance, these will be referred to an appropriate senior manager for consideration prior to responding.

These referrals may lead to the complaint not being investigated. Where this happens, the complainant will be advised of the reasons by the monitoring officer or the appropriate group manager.

Reporting and reviewing

A report on all complaints received will be presented to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee on a six-monthly basis. Any lessons learned from the complaints will also be

reviewed to ensure that they have been implemented.

The Complaints Procedure will be reviewed annually and will incorporate issues raised by officers and member feedback and reports from the Ombudsman.

Informing ward councillors

It is the responsibility of the investigating officer to, where relevant, inform ward councillors of the complaint without divulging personal details about the complainant

Data protection and retention

Data protection

All personal data gathered as part of a formal complaint will be handled in accordance with the council’s Data Protection Policy. Personal data may be shared, where necessary, with third parties where it is appropriate for investigating and resolving a complaint.

Data retention

Complaint records will be retained for two years after the end date of the complaint process and thereafter destroyed.



Ombudsman

If, following our stage two process, you are still not satisfied with our response, you can contact the Local Government Ombudsman:

Address: PO Box 4771, Coventry, CV4 0EH
Website: www.lgo.org.uk
Ombudsman Advice Team: 0300 061 0614

You can also contact your ward councillor or Member of Parliament for advice.

Remedy for formal complaints

We will always try to put things right - and we will do this as soon as possible to minimise the inconvenience to you.

We will acknowledge the fault and apologise, explain what went wrong, what we will do to prevent it happening again and if appropriate, we will also provide a remedy in the form of:

Specific action - all lessons learned (including recommendations for improvement and/or staff training) should be considered and implemented by the appropriate team and any action resulting from the lessons learned should be fed back to the complainant.

Financial settlement and/or refund - reimbursing the person affected (in full or in part) for actual, quantifiable financial loss which has directly resulted from the complaint.

Where it is felt that financial compensation is appropriate we will refer to the Local Government Ombudsman's latest guidance on Good Practice on Remedies. This will be used as a guide in determining the actual amount of financial settlement and these will be paid as soon as possible following the decision to pay.

**Complaints
Customer Services
Tewkesbury Borough Council**
Gloucester Road
Tewkesbury
Glos GL20 5TT

www.tewkesbury.gov.uk



How to make a formal complaint



advice and information on
how to make a complaint

We aim to deliver all our services correctly the first time. However we know that sometimes things go wrong, and when this happens you should tell us so that we can take the appropriate action.

Please read this leaflet completely before submitting your complaint to make sure we can give the best response.

What does a formal complaint mean?

A complaint is an expression of dissatisfaction that requires a response about the standards of service, actions or lack of action, by the council or its staff.

For example where:

- We have not responded to a service request or we have failed to deliver a service to you.
- The service we delivered did not meet your expectation.
- You were treated in an unprofessional manner.

We take formal complaints very seriously. However, many issues can be resolved without the need to make a formal complaint. These can include:

- Day-to-day service requests or faults (such as missed bins, noise complaints, fly tipping etc) which can be reported through our online report it system or by phoning our customer services team on 01684 295010.
- Services provided by other councils or organisations.

If you need to make a general comment, give feedback or pass on any compliments please use the general enquiries form on our website.

Will you deal with all formal complaints?

Some formal complaints are dealt with under separate statutory procedures, these include:

- Complaints about councillors. Please contact the council's monitoring officer on 01684 295010 or email externalenquiries@tewkesbury.gov.uk
- Allegations of financial impropriety or criminal activity by the council. Please contact the council's Section 151 officer and/or an internal auditor, monitoring officer or chief executive. You can do this on 01684 295010 or email externalenquiries@tewkesbury.gov.uk
- Where there is a separate appeals process, that appeals process should be followed (e.g. licensing, planning or parking fines).
- Complaints about national government policy.

How do I make a formal complaint?

Before using our formal complaints process, please try to contact the service or team at the council that has caused your dissatisfaction to see if an informal solution can be found.

The easiest way to make a formal complaint is online at www.tewkesbury.gov.uk/feedback

Alternatively, complaints can be made in writing to:

Complaints
Customer Services
Tewkesbury Borough Council
Gloucester Road
Tewkesbury
GL20 5TT

We do not accept complaints over the phone, by email or social media.

We treat all complaints with respect and in confidence. Any personal data gathered as part of a formal complaint will be

handled in accordance with the council's Data Protection Policy. We may share some personal data, where necessary, with third parties where it is appropriate for investigating and resolving a complaint.

How will you deal with my formal complaint?

Stage one - investigation by a service manager

We will send you an acknowledgement within two working days of receiving your complaint.

Your complaint will be passed to the relevant service manager for investigation.

We aim to respond fully to your complaint as soon as possible and within 20 working days.

If your complaint requires a lot of investigation then we may take longer but we will always keep you informed.

Stage two - investigation by an independent group manager

If you are not happy with the response we have sent to you, you can ask us to review your complaint again. We will acknowledge your request for a second investigation within two working days

Your complaint will be investigated by an independent group manager who was not involved in the original investigation.

We aim to respond fully to your stage two request for a review as soon as possible and within 20 working days.

If your request requires a lot of investigation then we may take longer but we will always keep you informed.

TEWKESBURY BOROUGH COUNCIL

Report to:	Executive Committee
Date of Meeting:	6 April 2016
Subject:	Digital Strategy
Report of:	Graeme Simpson, Corporate Services Group Manager
Corporate Lead:	Mike Dawson, Chief Executive
Lead Member:	Councillor M Dean
Number of Appendices:	One

Executive Summary:

Digital technology is changing our customers' expectations – people want services that are instant, available 24/7 and accessible no matter where they are. At the same time, we continue to face unprecedented financial challenge while still delivering quality front line services.

This Strategy sets out the direction for our digital journey, and makes it clear that before we embark on making big changes to the way we do things, we need to map out our digital requirements and ensure we achieve digital solutions in a joined up and worthwhile way.

Recommendation:

To APPROVE the Digital Strategy.

Reasons for Recommendation:

Digital technology has the potential to transform our Council services and the lives of our residents, while also generating savings and reducing pressure on Council taxpayers.

Resource Implications:

None directly resulting from this report.

Legal Implications:

None directly resulting from this report.

Risk Management Implications:

If we do not keep updated with digital options for our customers, there is a significant risk to our reputation.

Performance Management Follow-up:

Delivery of the policy is monitored by Overview and Scrutiny Committee on a six monthly basis.

Environmental Implications:

None.

1.0 INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

- 1.1** As a Council, we already offer our customers the opportunity to carry out some of our services online. However, we have implemented these in an ad-hoc way with no coordinated approach to delivery. In addition, we have not considered the impact these changes will have to our customers the staff delivering these services.
- 1.2** The Digital Strategy, attached at Appendix A, sets out the way in which we plan to meet the changing expectations of our customers using digital technology in a way which is joined up and worthwhile. The complexities in achieving this should not be underestimated – while there is a vast range of digital opportunities available, the implementation may not always be an easy or comfortable process because of the scale of change that it may introduce.
- 1.3** That said we cannot be left behind in a world which is changing at an unprecedented speed. Councils that can grasp appropriate digital opportunities will be at a major advantage in terms of remaining sustainable for the future – and we want to be one of those.
- 1.4** This Strategy will be complemented by an IT Strategy, which will provide the technical support to deliver the key actions. The IT Strategy will be developed following the approval of this one, to ensure our technological solutions reflect our digital requirements.

2.0 DIGITAL STRATEGY APPROACH

- 2.1** To reflect our customers' demands and expectations, this Digital Strategy outlines our vision for making our services digital, and sets out our approach for making this happen.
- 2.2** The digital vision is:
- We want our customers to be able to access our services when and where they need them, we want to join up with our partners to make access to our services easier, and we want our staff to be equipped with the technology and skills to be able to work effectively in a digital environment.*
- 2.3** Reflecting this vision, the Strategy introduces three digital priorities based around our Council Plan values:
1. Digital services – developing excellent digital services enabling our customers to get the information they need online.
 2. Joining up with our partners – using technology to tackle complex issues and working together seamlessly with our partners to open up access to our services for our communities.
 3. Developing a digital workforce – giving staff the digital tools and skills required to deliver services effectively and efficiently.
- Underneath these three priorities, the Strategy sets out what we are doing now, where we want to be and the key actions needed to deliver this.

- 2.4** To ensure our digital approach is inclusive, effective and pushes us ahead of the game the Strategy introduces five principles underpinning each of our priorities, and these can be found on Page No. 3 of the Strategy.
- 2.5** It is important to note that, in line with our Customer Care Strategy, we will continue to deliver traditional contact methods for our residents who need it. Indeed, by moving those people who can online, we are freeing up our front line customer services staff to deal with those who cannot.
- 3.0 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED**
- 3.1** None.
- 4.0 CONSULTATION**
- 4.1** None.
- 5.0 RELEVANT COUNCIL POLICIES/STRATEGIES**
- 5.1** The Council Plan and Customer Care Standards.
- 6.0 RELEVANT GOVERNMENT POLICIES**
- 6.1** None.
- 7.0 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS (Human/Property)**
- 7.1** None directly.
- 8.0 SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS (Social/Community Safety/Cultural/ Economic/ Environment)**
- 8.1** None.
- 9.0 IMPACT UPON (Value For Money/Equalities/E-Government/Human Rights/Health And Safety)**
- 9.1** None.
- 10.0 RELATED DECISIONS AND ANY OTHER RELEVANT FACTS**
- 10.1** None.

Background papers: None.

Contact Officer: Clare Evans, Communications and Policy Manager.
Tel: 01684 272291 Email: clare.evans@tewkesbury.gov.uk

Appendices: Digital Strategy.

Tewkesbury Borough Council

GOING DIGITAL

April 2016



Transform
Tewkesbury Borough

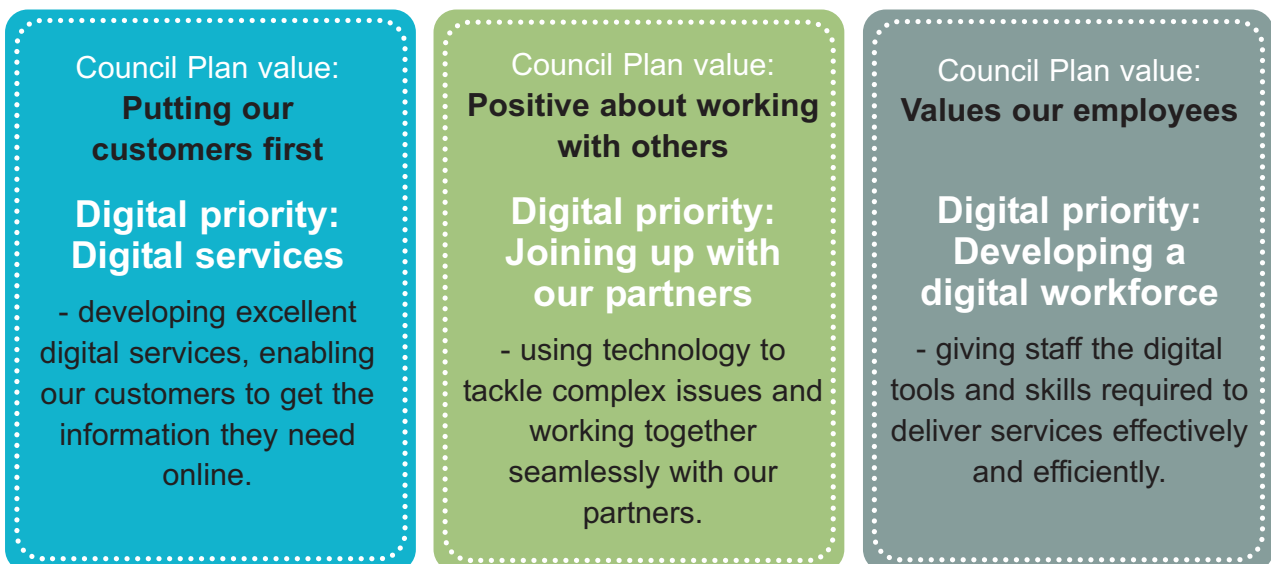


BACKGROUND

Digital technology is changing our customers' expectations. Nowadays, people want services that are instant, available 24/7 and accessible no matter where they are. At the same time, we continue to face unprecedented financial pressure while delivering quality front line services.

To reflect these new demands and expectations, we have developed a strategy, which outlines our vision for making our services digital and sets out our approach for making this happen.

Our strategy has three priorities based around our Council Plan values:



OUR DIGITAL VISION

“ We want our customers to be able to access our services when and where they need it, we want to join up with our partners to make access to our services easier and we want our staff to be equipped with the technology and skills to be able to work effectively in a digital environment. ”

Our Digital Strategy outlines our aims for each priority area including where we are now and what we want to achieve.

WHY DO WE NEED A DIGITAL STRATEGY?

The world around information technology as we have experienced it in public services for the last 20/30 years is facing unprecedented change.

Digital technology has the potential to transform our council services, and the lives of our residents while also generating efficiencies and reducing pressure on council tax payers. For example, a web transaction is far cheaper than a face-to-face visit or even a phone call. Within this complex and shifting environment, we are clear that preserving quality face-to-face services for our most vulnerable customers is a priority. However, for those who have access and a desire to utilise our services digitally, we are committed to making this as easy and effective as possible.

The opening up of the internet has broken the monopoly of the large system providers and opened up access to new technology to support our services. The speed of this change makes keeping up with what is possible very difficult, and in an era of significant financial constraint and a level of access to digital skills within organisations, many public services are missing the opportunities that are opening up.

Councils that can grasp these opportunities will be at a major advantage around their sustainability for the future – and we want to be one of those. This strategy sets the

direction that we want to take in terms of delivering digital services and supporting our customers to go online.

WHAT DOES THIS DIGITAL STRATEGY COVER?

We aren't starting our digital journey from scratch – we have already implemented a number of transformational digital projects, which have changed the way we provide our transactional services and information online, including:

- Report it
- Pay for it
- Garden waste
- FOI process
- Complaints process
- Management of our playgrounds and trees

However, we still have some way to go to make as many of our services and their processes as digital as possible (and that's from both the customers' experience as well as the teams running the services).

The complexities in achieving this in way which is joined-up and worthwhile should not be underestimated. Indeed, while there are a vast range of digital opportunities available, the implementation may not always be an easy or comfortable process – introducing digital technology forces change across all levels of an organisation.

This strategy sets out the direction for our digital journey, and makes it clear that before we embark on making big changes to the way we do things, we need to map out our digital requirements. We need to engage with services and encourage them to think differently about how they might deliver their services in a way which would suit our customers, make access easier and cut down the demand on staff.

Our corporate services team will help to drive forward this agenda.



OUR DIGITAL PRINCIPLES

To ensure our digital approach is inclusive, effective and puts us ahead of the game, we have developed five clear principles, which underpin our three priorities, which are:

- We will provide transactional services and information online in a user-friendly and inclusive way.
- We will use technology to change the way traditional face-to-face services are delivered, enabling us to deliver effective and efficient services for our residents.

- We will create a digital workforce, which is agile, mobile and using the most appropriate technologies to support service delivery.
- With partners, we will support our residents to use digital technology and enable access to technology for those that do not have it.
- We will use digital technology to work and collaborate with our partners seamlessly, including the effective sharing and use of data.

Importantly, in line with our Customer Care Strategy, we will continue to deliver traditional contact methods for our residents who need it. By moving as much of our contact online and through digital methods, our front line customer services staff will be freed up to deal with the customers who really need the face-to-face contact.

This strategy sets the scene for our digital journey and guides us by setting out priorities and key actions. This strategy will be complemented by an IT strategy, which will provide the technical support to help deliver these actions. The IT strategy will be developed following the approval of our digital strategy to ensure our technological solutions reflect our digital requirements.



PRIORITY 1: DIGITAL SERVICES

Where are we now?

Currently, residents can sign up to our online self-serve portal and create an account to handle their council service requests. This provides some really good opportunities to self-serve online, including:

Pay for it

- Council tax
- Garden waste renewal
- Housing benefit debt
- Planning application
- Business rates
- Bulky waste collection

Report it

- Missed bin
- Anti-social behaviour
- Abandoned vehicle
- Noise complaint
- Fly tipping

Apply for it

- Council tax single person discount
- Temporary event notification
- Registration of food business

Last year, 19,300 transactions took place through our self-serve portal and over the next few years, we want this figure to increase significantly.

CASE STUDY - Garden waste renewals

How we used to do things

Our garden waste service is popular, with approximately 15,000 customers opting to use the service.

Until recently, while customers could pay for the service online, the process was unreliable and involved significant officer time reconciling payments manually. There was not automation in the process, subscription reminders were sent out by post (even if the customer had paid online) and customers had to make sure they had all of their subscription information to hand before renewing.

What did we want to change?

We wanted to make the process of renewing garden waste subscriptions easier - both for the customer and for the members of staff involved in the back office processes.

How do we do things now?

Renewals for our popular garden waste service was one of the first areas to use self-service to deliver an end-to-end digital service to our customers.

Now, when a customer is reaching the end of their annual subscription, they automatically receive an email to let them know it's time to pay for next year's subscription.

In the email is a unique link that takes the customer directly to our online garden waste renewal form – with their garden waste reference number already filled in so they don't have to faff around trying to find it.

All the customer has to do is enter their debit or credit card details, and the system automatically updates our garden waste databases and ensures that the UBICO collection crews are kept up-to-date.

If the customer doesn't have an email address then a letter would be sent out instead containing a web address to go to in order to pay.

Garden waste renewals are processed from three different sources - online, phone and cheques. Since the introduction of the self-service portal, there has been a significant downward trend in phone and cheque transactions and an upward trend in self-service transactions.

Garden waste renewals

01/02/14 - 31/12/14			01/01/15 - 31/12/15			01/01/16 - 15/03/16		
Transaction type	No of renewals	%	Transaction type	No of renewals	%	Transaction type	No of renewals	%
Cheque	1903	16.79	Cheque	1455	11.1	Cheque	79	8.48
Phone	4950	43.60	Phone	4638	35.39	Phone	235	25.21
Self	4478	39.52	Self	7013	53.51	Self	618	66.31
Total	11331	100	Total	13106	100	Total	932	100

Applying the SOCTIM channel costs (online - £0.15, telephone – £2.83 and cheque - £5.66) to these different channels year on year, the total cost of garden waste renewals in 2014 was £26,155 and in 2015 was £21,133, creating us a a saving of £5,022 for this service alone.

However, we still have some way to go. We need to find out from our services what more we could be doing online and how we can use digital technology to streamline our processes. In addition, we need to find out what our customers want, and our website needs to be more user-friendly to make it easier for people to carry out their services online.

How will we get to where we want to be?

We need to:

- Map out our current IT ‘estate’ (which software and systems we are using) and work out where efficiencies could be made by using a single digital platform to benefit our service delivery.
- Review our legacy systems, such as our planning and environmental health systems, with the view that these should

only be changed if there is a real financial or efficiency benefits.

- Establish which elements of our services could benefit from being available online - for example, we know there is much more work that we can do with our Revenues and Benefits service online, such as enabling people on benefits to register their change in circumstances online.
- Make sure residents who visit us or contact us over the phone will, where appropriate, be supported to complete the process online in the future.
- Develop and introduce a new website which reflects our digital vision.
- Develop a database of our customers who wish to be contacted via email.
- Reduce the amount of cash and cheque payments made to the council.
- Develop a virtual customer feedback forum.

Key Actions	2016	2017	2018
Redesigned mobile responsive website	→		
Map of current IT estate	→	→	
Legacy system review	→	→	→
Develop action plan to introduce new online services e.g benefits-change of circumstances online	→		
Build database of customer email addresses	→	→	



PRIORITY 2: JOIN FORCES WITH OUR PARTNERS

Many people are already benefitting from the internet, digital TV and mobile communications. These offer opportunities to save money, keep in touch, pursue personal interests and help with learning. They bring services to those who live or work in remote areas or for people who find travelling in order to access services is difficult.

At the same time, some people are not able to take advantage of digital services or choose not to do so. This may be because of a lack of skills or no access to the internet at home - poor broadband speeds can put off even confident users of technology. For some, the cost of home computing is an obstacle. For others, a lack of knowledge of what the internet can offer or poorly designed services means they are not interested in getting connected.

If we want to be successful in providing effective digital services to our customers, then we will need to work more seamlessly and act as an advocate with our partners to share information and to equip residents and businesses with the digital skills and technology they need.

Where are we now?

We have excellent relationships with other public sector organisations, including the police, county council, NHS and Job Centre Plus – and these are fostered well through our Public Services Centre (PSC).

Through our PSC, we are joining up with partners to tackle multi-disciplinary issues. Tewkesbury Financial Inclusion Partnership, for example, sees many of the partners within the PSC - as well as other local organisations - join together to give residents a helping hand to improve their own financial well-being. The aim of the group is to make it easier for people to access financial and support services, such as free debt advice or improved access to affordable credit. The staff working at the front line in health, social care, housing community safety and other areas are regularly sharing information in order to develop joint solutions to issues raised by customers.

Despite these strong partnerships that exist, however, the potential to harness digital technologies to make them more effective is apparent.

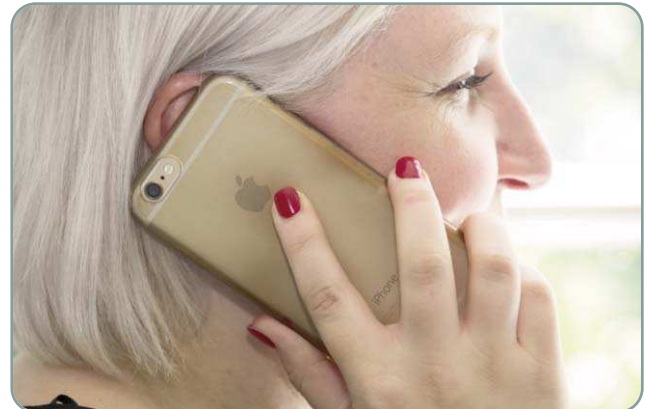
Data and information sharing within the council and between partners can be difficult (partly to ensure compliance with data protection legislation) but there are opportunities around accessing data and transforming it into ways we can improve our services, which we are yet to consider.

In addition, there may be more opportunities to share or procure technology with our partners to save money and use established technology.

We can also work more closely with our partners to open up access to community groups within the borough. These groups offer excellent support for improving digital access and skills. We need to work with our

community development team to tap into this resource and ensure we support our communities where required.

More and more we are working alongside our communities to enable greater capacity and self-help in our localities. Digital methods of communicating and connecting people are an untapped resource to significantly bolster these endeavors and we are keen to explore the opportunities that exist.



CASE STUDY - Connecting Gloucestershire

We are a member of Connecting Gloucestershire - a project, which is currently in its very early stages, aimed at increasing the capacity of local councils in Gloucestershire. The project is led by Gloucestershire Association of Parish and Town Councils (GAPTC).

Connecting Gloucestershire aims to replicate the proven 'Leicestershire Model' which joins up websites and back end systems across the three tiers of local government to provide a county-wide:

- View of undecided planning applications
- Database of local council contacts
- A-Z of Services Directory (combines parish, county and district services)

As parish and town councils become more important as service providers, having an electronic service delivery infrastructure in place will contribute to joining-up the three tiers of local government in Gloucestershire.

This project looks set to be a great example of how tiers of local government can look to utilise technology to open up access to residents across Gloucestershire. Benefits include:

- Greater community awareness of planning applications
- Greater public engagement in the planning process
- Better informed comments on planning applications
- Shared responsibility for publicising applications
- Increased cross-border awareness

Membership of the group includes:

- Gloucestershire Association of Parish and Town Councils (GAPTC)
- 2Commune (website developers)
- Tewkesbury Borough Council
- Stroud District Council
- Cheltenham Borough Council
- Forest of Dean District Council
- Cotswold District Council
- Gloucestershire County Council

An initial meeting with these members has taken place and there was a consensus that this project should be explored further, on the proviso that the project lead is GAPTC, and that there was a solution to the issue of only aligning the project to 2commune based websites.

How will we get to where we want to be?

- Open non-sensitive data up to our partners.
- Look at expanding our communication with our partners to encompass video conferencing, instant messaging and improved data sharing.
- Link up with existing partners who are already working with and have strong links with our communities to improve digital skills.
- Work with other public sector bodies to identify areas to share best practice and increase cross-borough sharing and procurement of technology solutions.
- Support the increase the availability of digital technology and internet access across the borough.
- Encourage third party platforms, including social media, for residents and groups to raise issues.
- Maintain secure systems of internal and external governance of data sharing and storage.
- Look at an integrated reception supported by digital technology e.g. self-serve options.

Key Actions	2016	2017	2018
As part of the reception redesign, work with Public Services Partners to develop and procure digital solutions	→		
Develop data sharing agreements/systems with our partners	→		
Identify links with partners to improve access to digital skills	→		



PRIORITY 3: DEVELOPING A DIGITAL WORKFORCE

For digital services to be effective, staff will need to have access to the devices and software they need to deliver a high level of service, and will be required to have the skills and training to use them. The same principle applies to our councillors – everyone working for the council should be equally enabled to work in a mobile and efficient way.

The council's corporate services team will work with all council services to actively identify opportunities to implement digital technology as part of any service review process, and we will ensure end-users will have a central role in reviewing any technological solutions before implantation.

An essential strand of our improvement journey is to ensure we create the right culture for all staff in the building to join together, share issues and problems, and work together on solutions that benefit our shared customers.

Our staff working at the front line within our communities have the best opportunity to redesign the way they work to reduce inefficient processes and utilise new technology. They are using digital methods in their daily lives and with the right encouragement and support, they are well placed to use their creativity to embrace better ways of working.

Data protection will remain an important element of our work but this will become less obvious to our customers. A large amount of the information and data we hold is neither personal or personally sensitive. Any data security concerns clearly need to be appropriately managed but should not be an excuse for technology solutions that offer our customers a poor user experience. Where possible, we should be using available data to help shape our service planning and policy development.

Where are we now?

Digital opportunities have been identified and implemented successfully in certain areas of the council but this has largely been on an ad-hoc basis rather than forming an integral part of our service planning or mapped out digital journey.

The day-to-day technology used by staff is primarily 'desk-based' with staff using e-mail, internal shared drives and making one-to-one phone calls. This limited use of available technology is reflected in our digital training offer, which primarily focuses on Microsoft Office.

CASE STUDY - Trees

How we used to do things

We have an obligation to inspect and assess all trees on land that is owned by the council, and depending on any identified risks an inspection schedule needs to be created.

Until recently, the process to inspect and assess trees was done by an officer visiting each tree and plotting via pen and paper. Once back in the office, the data would be inputted manually by the officer, taking up a considerable amount of time.

What did we want to change?

Using digital solutions, we wanted to improve the quality of the tree inspection service while reducing the amount of time officers spent on inputting data.

What do we do now?

The service now uses specialist software PSS to manage the location, risk and any actions that need to be taken on any of our trees.

The PSS system is a simple to use mobile app that officers can use out in the field, without the need for paperwork. Once back in the office or at home, the officer can use the system's back office software to see any identified risks so actions can be taken.

The mobile app uses GPS to very accurately map the location of the trees and allows information about the tree to be logged.

Once the inspection is complete, the mobile device then uploads the information to the cloud. This has removed any need for inspection paperwork or to update any systems after the inspection - saving significant officer time.

Using the system's back office software, the full history of inspections and actions about a tree can be viewed and any outstanding risks that need to be managed.

This software is also being used to inspect our parks and play equipment.

How will we get to where we want to be?

- Digital technology and the opportunities it provides will become a key consideration in service planning and policy development across the council.
- Strong governance will be required to review and lead on the delivery of digital technology, and any required training, across the council and councillors will be kept informed of digital developments on a regular basis.
- We will encourage piloting of new technologies at small cost and scale to test new ideas, working with our public sector partners, where appropriate.
- Our communication with colleagues and partners will extend beyond e-mail and telephone, encompassing tools such as video conferencing.
- Look at the potential to introduce a cloud-based email alternative for staff.



Key Actions	2016	2017	2018
Set up appropriate governance to review and lead on digital technology	→		
Digital training for staff	→	→	→
Testing and implementing of digital communications methods for staff e.g. video conferencing	→	→	

Clare Evans
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Tewkesbury Borough Council
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TEWKESBURY BOROUGH COUNCIL

Report to:	Executive Committee
Date of Meeting:	6 April 2016
Subject:	Disabled Facilities Grants Review Report
Report of:	Richard Kirk, Interim Environmental Services and Housing Group Manager
Corporate Lead:	Rachel North, Deputy Chief Executive
Lead Member:	Councillor J R Mason
Number of Appendices:	Two

Executive Summary:

A review of the way in which Tewkesbury Borough Council administers Disabled Facilities Grants (DFG) has been undertaken by a Working Group of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee. The review considered the Council's (and its partners) current approach in administering the grant, and considered what alternative processes could be used instead of and in addition to those currently employed.

The report sets out the findings from the review and makes recommendations in respect of how the grant could be administered in the future.

Recommendations:

To ADOPT the Disabled Facilities Grants Review Report.

Reasons for Recommendation:

At a meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 23 February 2016, it was agreed to adopt the draft Disabled Facilities Grants Review Report and to refer it for consideration by the Executive Committee.

Resource Implications:

Officer time to carry out the review has been met from existing allocated resources. The recommendations contained in the report will be implemented using existing resources.

Legal Implications:

As contained in the report.

Risk Management Implications:

If the Council does not have in place effective arrangements for administering DFGs then there is a reputational risk of failing to comply with statutory requirements, leading to potential interventions from the Ombudsman or judicial review. The Council also contributes capital funds; therefore there are financial risks to not administering grants effectively. There could also be customer dissatisfaction leading to increased complaints.

Performance Management Follow-up:

The recommendations will be monitored by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee every six months.

The number and value of DFGs administered is monitored by means of a performance indicator and this is reported to Overview and Scrutiny Committee on a quarterly basis.

Environmental Implications:

None.

1.0 INTRODUCTION/BACKGROUND

1.1 At a meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 21 July 2015, it was agreed to establish a Working Group to review the Council's approach to DFGs. That report also gave a brief overview of what DFGs are and why Tewkesbury Borough Council administers them. The Group's Terms of Reference are shown at Appendix 1 to this report. At the first meeting, Councillor T A Spencer was elected to Chair the Group. Other Members are Councillors Mrs G F Blackwell, K J Cromwell and Mrs P E Stokes plus the Lead Member for Clean and Green Environment.

2.0 THE REVIEW FINDINGS

2.1 The review was carried out as there were some issues that Members wished to identify and consider, essentially to ensure that the scheme is 'fit for purpose' and cost-effective.

2.2 The Group met three times, on 24 September and 30 November 2015, and finally on 28 January 2016. Meetings have been attended by Officers from the Environmental Health, Finance and the Performance teams. Updates on the progress of the review were given to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

2.3 The Group concentrated on examining the following areas of potential improvement:

1. Better and earlier information being given to those with a disability regarding their options, including assistance to move to a more suitable property when that is their wish, or one that could be more easily adapted.
2. Streamlining the application process and the correspondence sent once the grant has been approved.
3. Potential improvements in the procurement of contractors and equipment, including benefits of using schedules of rates and alternatives to fixed equipment currently being provided.

2.4 Other agencies and partners were kept informed of the review and there were positive contributions by other agencies at an Officer level. Some of the recommendations will involve partner agencies to assist with implementation to achieve ideal outcomes.

2.5 The DFG Working Group report and action plan is attached at Appendix 2. It includes an outline of the review findings, provides an update on the current performance of the service and details the progress of the service improvements being undertaken.

2.6 After considering current methods of delivery, the performance of Tewkesbury Borough Council compared to partners, and good practice that could be implemented, Members concluded that the recommendations contained in the action plan to the report will help improve the effectiveness (including cost effectiveness) of the service and should provide a service that can react better to future predicted demands.

3.0 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

3.1 The Working Group considered a number of options as part of the review.

4.0 CONSULTATION

4.1 Gloucestershire County Council and Severn Vale Housing Society both contributed to the work of the Group and have expressed a wish to positively contribute to the improvement of the DFG process.

5.0 RELEVANT COUNCIL POLICIES/STRATEGIES

5.1 Council Plan 2012-16 – Priority 4 (Improve the quality of the housing stock): ‘Work with Public Health to develop new approaches to enablement and adaptations for disabled people’.

6.0 RELEVANT GOVERNMENT POLICIES

6.1 Housing Grants, Construction and Regeneration Act 1996; Part 1, Chapter 1: ‘Disabled Facilities Grants’.

7.0 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS (Human/Property)

7.1 Implementing the review recommendations can be met from existing resources.

8.0 SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS (Social/Community Safety/Cultural/ Economic/ Environment)

8.1 Effective outcomes will have a positive impact on the most vulnerable people living in the Borough.

9.0 IMPACT UPON (Value For Money/Equalities/E-Government/Human Rights/Health And Safety)

9.1 Effective outcomes will also have a positive impact on the cost of providing adaptations and will help ensure a safe and healthy environment for applicants.

10.0 RELATED DECISIONS AND ANY OTHER RELEVANT FACTS

10.1 None.

Background Papers: None.

Contact Officer: David Steels, Environmental Health Manager Tel: 01684 272172
Email: david.steels@tewkesbury.gov.uk

Appendices: 1: Disabled Facilities Grant Working Group Terms of Reference.
2: Review of Disabled Facilities Grants Report.

Disabled Facilities Grants Review – Terms of Reference

Introduction

An Overview and Scrutiny Working Group will be asked to work with Officers to review the Council's approach to dealing with Disabled Facilities Grants (DFGs).

Purpose of the Review

1. To gain a clear understanding of:
 - a. The statutory and discretionary processes involved in allocating grants and how they are applied locally.
 - b. How grants are funded (including comparisons with other local authorities).
 - c. What agencies are involved in the processes and what role they fulfil (including the involvement of registered providers).
 - d. The potential use of previously adapted properties.
2. To consider the Council's current approach in administering grants, in particular how current practices impact on those who could or do benefit from applying.
3. To look at good practice elsewhere, especially those that provide cost effectiveness and good customer satisfaction.
4. To determine possible ways in which processes can be improved.

Who should we consult?

- Relevant Council Officers (e.g. Environmental Health, Housing, Finance).
- Other agencies involved in the delivery of services (e.g. occupational therapists, Safe at Home improvement agency, works contractors etc).
- Service user representatives.
- Housing providers (e.g. registered providers).
- Neighbouring authorities/good practice authorities.

Support

- David Steels.
- Kevin Wood.
- Corporate Services.
- Democratic Services.

How long will it take?

Aim to start review in September 2015 and complete by December 2015.

Outcomes

To deliver:

- an efficient system;
- best value for the Council; and
- appropriate levels of support for disabled residents.

Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Scrutiny review of disabled facilities grants



February 2016

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Glossary

BCF	Better Care Fund
CCG	Clinical Commissioning Group
CEDM	Community and Economic Development Manager
DFG	Disabled Facilities Grant
EHM	Environmental Health Manager
FM	Finance Manager
GCC	Gloucestershire County Council
HA	Housing Association
HIA	Home Improvement Agency
HTO	Housing Technical Officer
OT	Occupational Therapist
SHM	Strategic Housing Manager
SVHS	Severn Vale Housing Society
TBC	Tewkesbury Borough Council

2. Introduction and background to the report

2.1 Disabled facilities grants (DFGs) help towards the cost of essential adaptations to homes to enable applicants to live more independently. The grant is mandatory for those who need better freedom of movement into and around their home, up to a maximum of £30,000 per applicant. It is subject to a financial means test. It is a statutory function delegated to local housing authorities in England, with Tewkesbury Borough Council's (TBCs) Environmental Health section administering locally. To apply for a grant, applicants will first need to be assessed by an Occupational Therapist (OT) from Gloucestershire County Council (GCC) who will find out if a major adaptation best meets the customer's needs.

2.2 The council receives financial support to deliver the service but in addition, current budgeted capital expenditure is £220,000 per annum.

2.3 At Transform Working Group held on 13 November 2014, a paper on DFGs was presented, with the outcome being to refer a review of DFGs to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee. This was due to changes in the way DFGs were financed, the cost of adaptations, the number of different agencies involved and the increasingly ageing population.

2.4 It was felt appropriate that an Overview and Scrutiny Committee Working Group be formed to review the council's approach to dealing with DFGs. The subject area meets the key criteria for undertaking a scrutiny review:

- The issue impacts upon one or more sections of the community.
- The issue is strategic and significant.
- The scrutiny activity can add value to the process and should lead to effective outcomes.
- It is a community concern.

2.5 Members were informed that DFGs helped towards the cost of essential adaptations to homes to enable applicants to live more independently. It was felt that it was an appropriate time to undertake a review of the council's approach to dealing with DFGs. It was recommended that a small working group be established to conduct the review with the membership drawn from the Overview and Scrutiny Committee and including the Portfolio Holder for Clean and Green Environment, which covers Environmental Health.

3. Terms of Reference

Introduction

An Overview and Scrutiny Working Group will be asked to work with officers to review the council's approach to dealing with DFGs.

Purpose of the Review

The working group will be asked:

1. To gain a clear understanding of;
 - a. The statutory and discretionary processes involved in allocating grants and how they are applied locally.
 - b. How grants are funded (including comparisons with other local authorities).
 - c. What agencies are involved in the processes and what role they fulfil (including the involvement of registered providers).
 - d. The potential use of previously adapted properties.
2. To consider the council's current approach in administering grants, in particular how current practices impact on those who could or do benefit from applying.
3. To look at good practice elsewhere, especially those that provide cost effectiveness and good customer satisfaction.
4. To determine possible ways in which processes can be improved.

Who should we consult?

- Relevant council officers (e.g. Environmental Health, Housing, Finance).
- Other agencies involved in the delivery of services (e.g. OTs, Safe at Home home

improvement agency (HIAs), works contractors etc).

- Service user representatives.
- Housing providers (e.g. registered providers).
- Neighbouring authorities/good practice authorities.

Support

- David Steels - Environmental Health Manager
- Kevin Wood - Environmental Health Technician
- Corporate Services.
- Democratic Services.

How long will it take?

Aim to start review in September 2015 and complete by December 2015.

Outcomes

To deliver;

- An efficient system.
- Best value for the council.
- Appropriate levels of support for disabled residents.

4. Membership and methodology of the task group

4.1 Membership of the task group was:

- Councillor Mrs G F Blackwell
- Councillor K J Cromwell
- Councillor T A Spencer
- Councillor Mrs P E Stokes
- Councillor J R Mason (the Lead Member for Clean and Green Environment.)

4.2 The work of the group was supported by officers across the council and external bodies including Severn Vale Housing Society Ltd (SVHS), and GCC.

4.3 The task group met on 24 September 2015, 30 November 2015 and 28 January 2016. Update feedback was given to meetings of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee after each meeting.

5. Findings

What is a Disabled Facilities Grant?

5.1.1 Mandatory DFGs were first introduced in legislation in 1989 and are available (subject to a financial means test) for essential adaptations to give disabled people better freedom of movement into and around their homes and to give access to essential facilities within the home. The types of work that mandatory DFGs cover is:

- Making it easier to get into and out of the dwelling by, for example, widening doors and installing ramps.
- Ensuring the safety of the disabled person and other occupants by, for example, providing a specially adapted room in which it would be safe to leave a disabled person unattended or improved lighting to ensure better visibility.
- Making access easier to the living room.
- Providing or improving access to the bedroom, and kitchen toilet, washbasin and bath (and/or shower) facilities; for example, by installing a stair lift or providing a downstairs bathroom.
- Improving or providing a heating system in the home which is suitable to the needs of the disabled person.
- Adapting heating or lighting controls to make them easier to use.

- Improving access and movement around the home to enable the disabled person to care for another person who lives in the property, such as a spouse, child or another person for whom the disabled person cares.
- Facilitate access to and from a garden by a disabled occupant or make access to a garden safe for a disabled occupant.

5.1.2 DFGs are monitored at TBC by way of a local performance tracker. Information regularly provided includes numbers of grants and total budget allocated.

5.1.3 A person can apply for a DFG for themselves or someone living in the property if they have a disability. Under the terms of the National Assistance Act 1948 or the Children Act 1989, someone is disabled if:

- Their sight, hearing or speech is substantially impaired.
- They have a mental disorder or impairment of any kind.
- They are physically substantially disabled by illness, injury impairment present since birth, or otherwise.
- They are registered disabled (or could be registered) with the social services department.

5.1.4 Before issuing a DFG we must know that the works are necessary and appropriate to meet the needs of the disabled person and are reasonable and practicable depending on the age and condition of the property. In reaching a decision the authority will consider whether the proposed adaptations or improvements:

- Are needed to provide for a care plan to be implemented which will enable the disabled occupant to remain living in their existing home as independently as possible.
- Would meet, as far as possible, the assessed needs of the disabled person taking into account both their medical and physical needs.
- Distinguish between what is desirable and possible legitimate aspirations of the disabled person, and what is actually needed and for which grant support is fully justified.

5.1.5 We must consult social services authorities in coming to a view on whether the proposed works are ‘necessary and appropriate’ – in addition we must decide whether those works are ‘reasonable and practicable.’ We do this by working with OTs, most of which now work on the ground floor of the Tewkesbury Borough Public Services Centre.

5.1.6 A local authority must give a DFG if the applicant meets the conditions of getting one.

5.2 Finance

5.2.1 The financial test of applicants largely mirrors the system of calculating entitlement to housing benefit. The amount paid is usually based on a financial assessment (a means test) of a person's average weekly income in relation to their outgoings. Even if they have been assessed as in need of an adaptation the grant will be affected if their income and

savings exceeds the limit of the test of resources. They may receive a full grant or may be required to make a contribution towards the cost of the works. The maximum grant limit in England is £30,000. Certain payments to the most seriously disabled service personnel are disregarded for the purposes of assessing eligibility. The means test does not apply where an application for grant is made by the parent or guardian of a disabled child or young person (under 19 years).

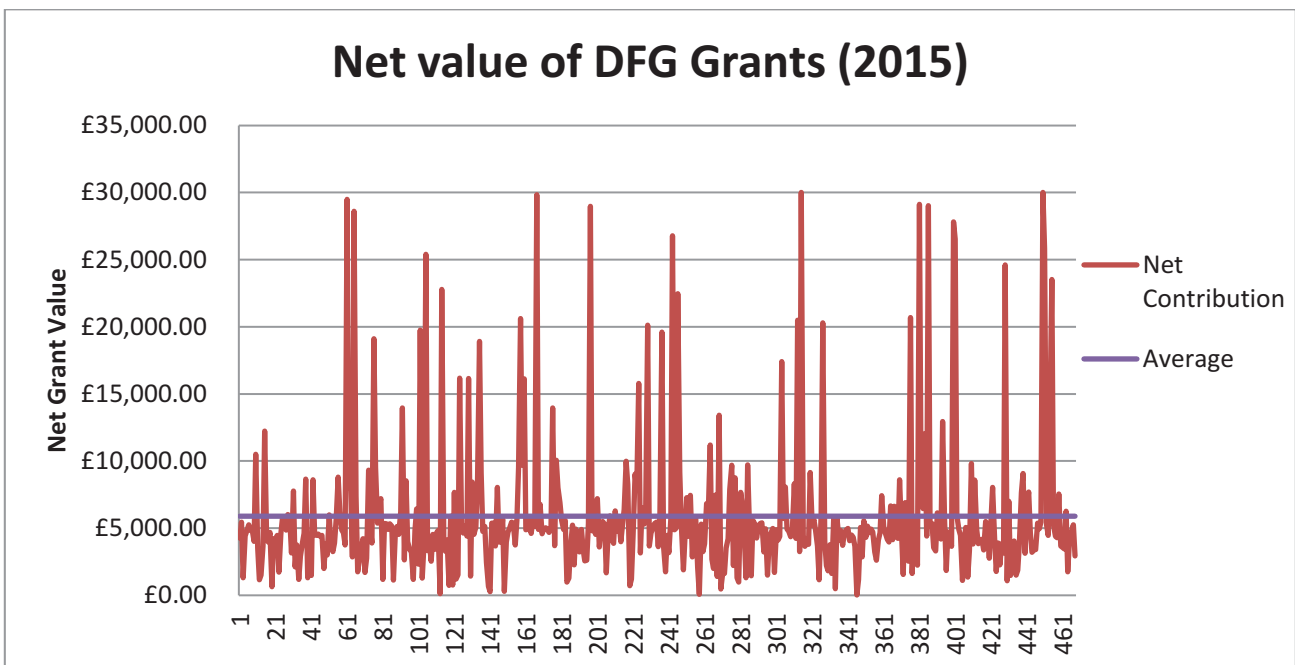
5.2.2 The last major change to grant regulations by government was in 2007. At this time the means test in respect of grants for children was scrapped and subsequently the maximum grant amount was raised from £25,000 to £30,000.

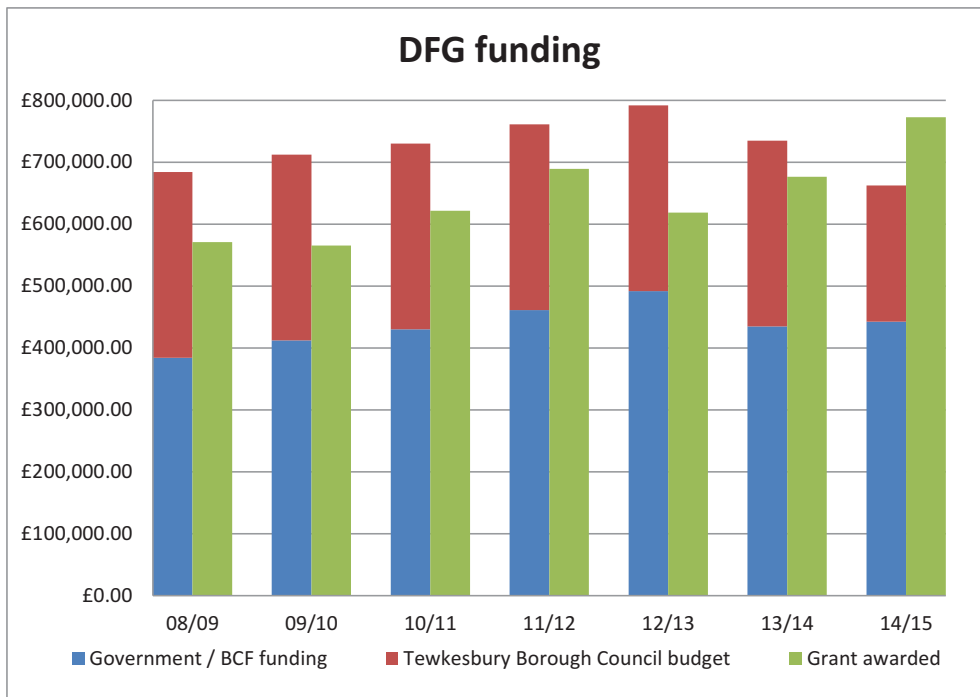
5.2.3 In 2012/13, overall expenditure on DFGs by TBC was £618,521, in 2013/14, it was £676,577 and in 2014/15 it was £772,409.

5.2.4 Although central government funding has gradually risen over the past 15 years it has only kept pace with inflation. Consequently the central government subsidy only accounts for a proportion of the resources LAs put into DFGs. TBCs medium term financial plan offers £220,000 of capital funding over the next five years to meet the local demand (most authorities do the same; all in Gloucestershire do so) but as more capital projects are approved we may have to look at other ways of financing DFGs or find ways of reducing our contribution. The graph on page six shows DFG historical capital allocation over and above the government / Better Care Fund (BCF) (see 5.2.6) allocation compared with the total grant awarded.

“A local authority must give a DFG if the
applicant meets the conditions
of getting one”

	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15
Referrals	157	129	152	162	150
Approvals	115	110	101	117	135
Completed	111	109	108	118	129
Grants completed £1,000 - £5,000	55	69	56	65	78
Grants completed £5,000 - £10,000	44	30	40	42	39
Grants completed over £10,000	12	10	12	11	12
Spend Total	£621,627	£689,192	£618,521	£676,577	£772,409





5.2.5 Housing association (HA) tenants are entitled to apply for a DFG. All do, including SVHS tenants. The cost of the adaptation falls to the local authority and not the HA. Spend on housing association properties averages around 40% per year. Figures in the past two years for other Gloucestershire authorities without their own stock or an ALMO range from 39% to 64% of the budget spent on HA properties.

5.2.6 As part of the June 2013 Spending Review the government announced the creation of a pooled fund to enable the NHS and local authorities to jointly commission health and social care services. The 2015-16 allocations to the Better Care Fund for Gloucestershire have been confirmed by the Gloucestershire Health and Wellbeing Board as follows: Total: £39.948m comprising £35.989m from the Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) to the Better Care Fund; £1.409m Social Care Capital

Grant; and £2.550m DFG. This year the funding allocation to all districts for DFGs has been ring-fenced at the capital levels from 2014/15, however, this ring-fence ceases next financial year, i.e. the administrators of the fund are not obliged to specifically provide funding for DFGs. Nevertheless the direction of travel is a move to more planned care and to avoid unplanned admissions to hospitals and care homes where care can be provided more effectively in people’s homes or the community.

5.2.7 It is ultimately the health service rather than local authorities that benefit financially from the preventative measures of DFGs and funding mechanisms need to reflect this reality. A number of studies have recognised that there is a financial benefit to the government as a whole in providing DFGs that enable applicants to remain in their own homes. When weighed

up against the cost of a place in a residential home, the cost of a DFG which allows an applicant to remain in their own home makes financial sense.

making any contributions over and above that amount if the situation remains unchanged.

5.2.8 The CCG have no intention of recommending a reduction of the ring fenced funding identified for DFGs in the Better Care Fund moving forward. However, they have expressed a firm view that HAs should be funding adaptations in their own stock through revenue contributions and would not therefore be

5.2.9 There is already pressure on the DFG budget across the whole of the country and this will only increase as people are living longer and the percentage of the older population increases.

5.3 Staffing by Tewkesbury Borough Council

Officer	Description of work	Approx. weekly hours spent on DFGs
Environmental Health Manager	Operational Management Grant approvals Payments Authorise completion	2
Technical Housing Officer	Means test Property surveys Liaising with contractors Liaising with OTs “Snagging” visits Advice and Information Completion visits	30
Administrative Officer	Advice and information Correspondence Arrange for payments	15

5.4 Demographics

5.4.1 In Gloucestershire, the number of people aged 75 and over (the ages at which home adaptations and other service support is most likely to be required) is projected to increase each year by an average of 1,500 between 2010 - 2020 and by 2,300 each year between 2020 and 2035.

5.4.2 According to 2012 population projections, numbers aged over 65 in Tewkesbury borough will rise from 20,000 in 2016 to 30,000 in 2037.

5.5 The application process

5.5.1 The group considered the process below which describes the method whereby a grant applicant's home is adapted. It describes a 'usual' process which most grants follow, however it is recognised that many projects could be subject to additional steps due to their unusual nature. These tend to be bespoke and therefore impossible to describe for every situation in this report. Stairlifts are an example of a type of adaptation which tends to involve less of the process due to OTs obtaining quotations for work.

5.5.2 The initial approach to social services can be either from the person themselves or a referral from elsewhere such as a GP. An OT will arrange to visit the applicant to assess their needs and will produce a report with recommendations for the specific work that needs to be carried out.

5.5.3 The OT will refer the case to TBC on a (countywide agreed) referral form. This will provide address and personal details.

5.5.4 The applicant will be visited by an officer who will help complete the application form and will collect information to help complete the means test and identify both the applicant and the owner of the property to be adapted. The officer will also identify if and how the wishes of the OT can be realised in the applicant's home.

5.5.5 The assumption is made that the applicant will receive a DFG. Officers make enquiries as to if the applicant would like to move, but it was felt that this happens too late in the process and few options are offered to the applicant. It was recognised that moving may not be the answer for everyone as they may be in the most suitable accommodation for them. Also the applicant may not want to move and there is no way to either force someone to move or to threaten not to pay a grant if they are eligible.

5.5.6 The officer will carry out the means test and inform the applicant if they have any contribution to make. The officer will complete a schedule of works and ask the client or their agent to see two quotations for the work required.

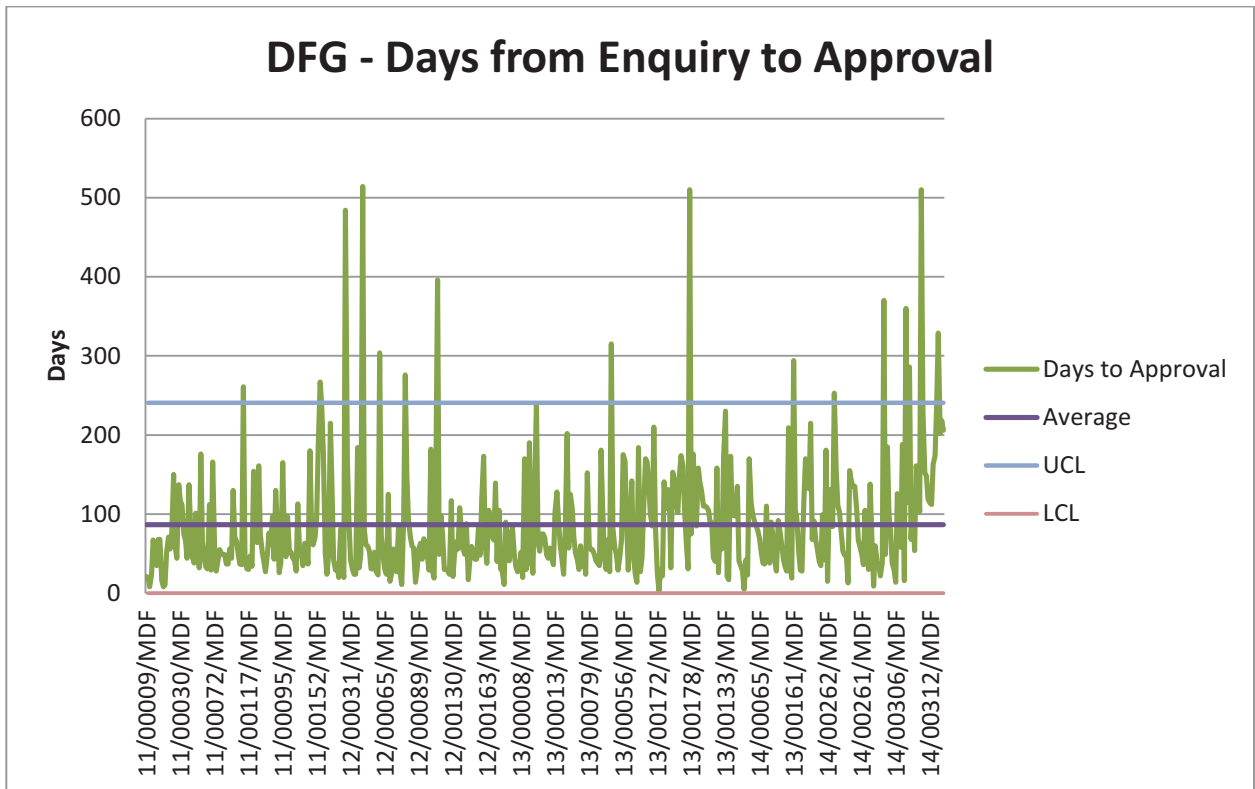
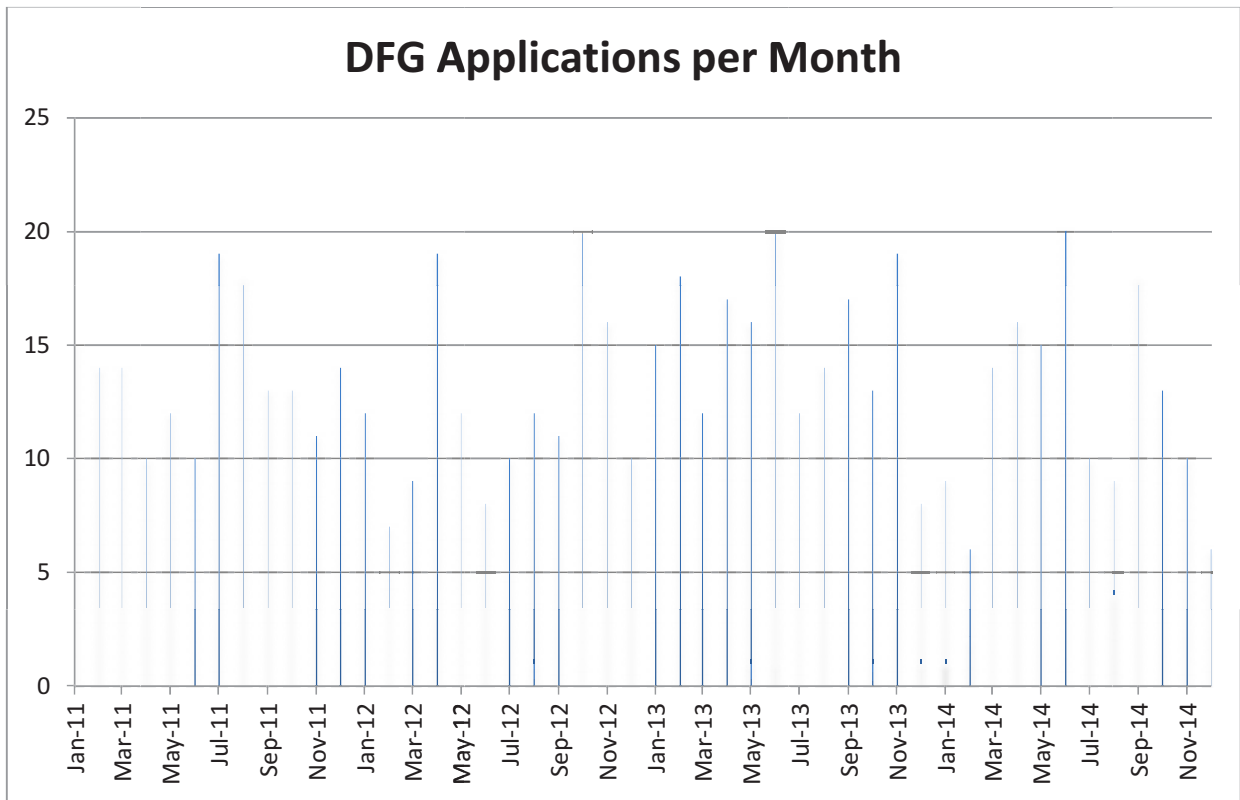
5.5.7 The OT is invited to pass opinion as to if the schedule will meet the needs of the applicant.

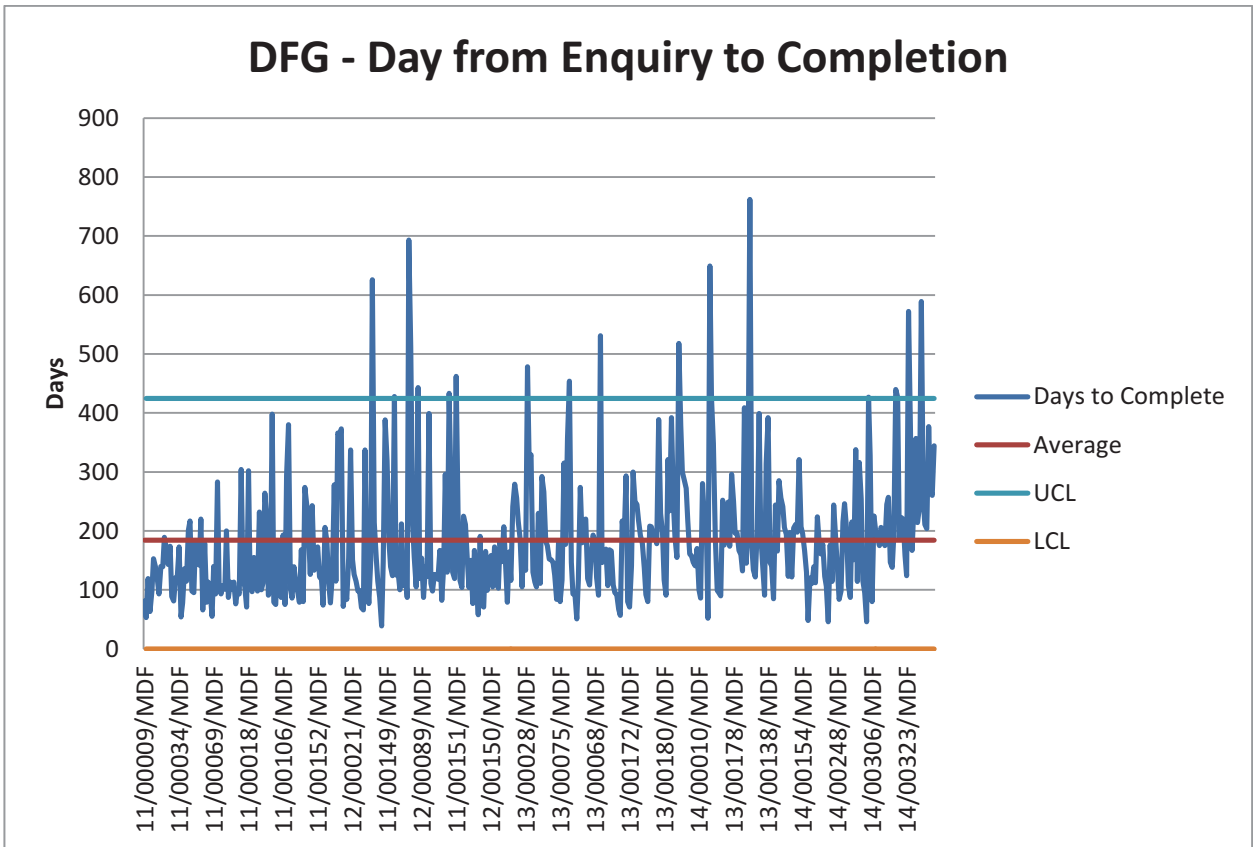
- 5.5.8** Once valid quotations are received, the grant is approved.
- 5.5.9** The applicant or their agent arranges for the work to be carried out.
- 5.5.10** For larger jobs, builders may ask for interim payments which are honoured if the work is seen to be satisfactorily complete. Progress checks may also be made on all jobs.
- 5.5.11** Once complete, the work is checked that it meets the requirements of the schedule. The OT is also invited to comment (sometimes a joint final visit is made to make sure the works meet the needs of the applicant although this is not always necessary).
- 5.5.12** Systems have been built up over time which means that all parties are kept informed, however this means that there is a lot of paperwork, some of which, although desirable isn't always necessary (e.g. there is no statutory requirement to carry it out). Also there has been no review carried out to see if the information meets the needs of the applicant.
- 5.5.13** Where the applicant is elderly, the time taken for the whole process to be completed has meant that they have little time to benefit from the adaptation before their requirements change. This may result in them applying again or reopening an existing grant application.

- 5.5.14** The group felt that currently there was a lot of duplication of work and effort, for instance completing forms on site and re-entering information on the back office computer database when back in the office.
- 5.5.15** The Gloucestershire Safe at Home HIA service is available for applicants to use, to help with the work involved in adapting their home. They tend to be used by the most vulnerable people who are unable to find contractors themselves.

5.6 Statistics

- 5.6.1** For applications approved between 1/4/2011 and 31/12/2014: Numbers of passported applications (i.e. applicant in receipt of a qualifying benefit):
- 312 applications approved
 - 244 passported
 - 78.2%
- 5.6.2** For applications approved between 1/4/2011 and 31/12/2014: Applications approved where the applicant has a financial contribution to pay:
- 312 applications approved
 - 38 with a contribution to make
 - 12.2%
 - 30 with no contribution to make
 - 9.6%



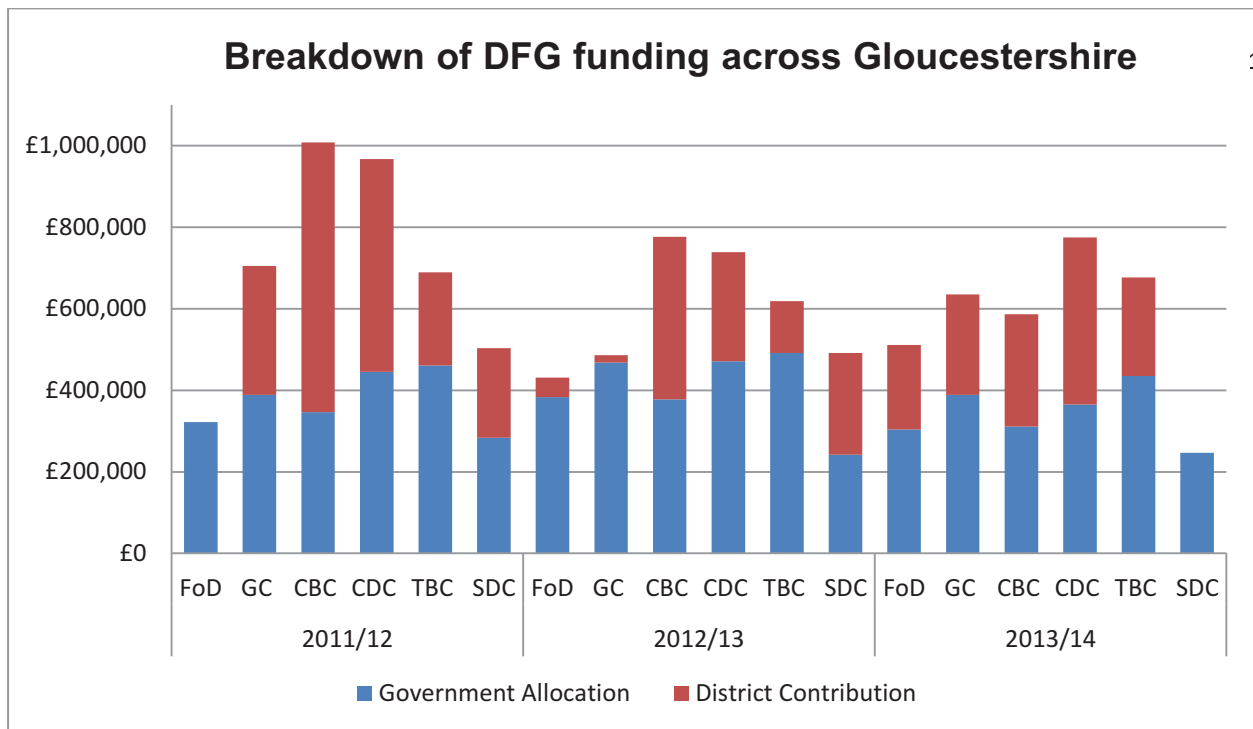


5.7 Benchmarking

5.7.1 The following tables provide information for comparison on the delivery of DFGs in all Gloucestershire districts.

		Cheltenham Borough Council	Cotswold District Council	Forest of Dean District Council	Gloucester City Council	Stroud District Council	Tewkesbury Borough Council
2013/14	Total DFG budget spend	£586,665	£ 775,250	#####	£635,429	£167,379	£676,577
	Total Net DFG budget spent on HA	£85,273	£494,998	£248,311	£56,413	£3,719	*
	% DFG budget spent on HA	15%	64%	49%	9%	2%	*
	Additional ALMO or Council HRA spend on adaptations	£439,587			£368,380	£300,261	
2012/13	Total DFG budget Spend	£490,516	£738,913	£431,552	£485,835	£276,328	£618,521
	Total Net DFG budget spent on HA	£36,399	£426,666	£166,901	£136,222	£3,124	£237,948
	% DFG budget spent on HA	7%	58%	39%	28%	1%	38%
	Additional ALMO or Council HRA spend on adaptations	£286,203			£393,826	£215,101	
2011/12	Total DFG budget Spend	£689,336	£967,148	£322,213	£704,736	£307,571	£689,192
	Total Net DFG budget spent on HA	£111,190	£487,009	£126,262	£121,232	£18,407	£334,619
	% DFG budget spent on HA	16%	50%	39%	17%	6%	49%
	Additional ALMO or Council HRA spend on adaptations	£318,741			£338,909	£195,569	

“Close co-operation between all partners will produce **consistency of service** and improved communication”



6. Conclusions

6.1 The Task Group reflected on the information and evidence they had considered throughout the review and arrived at the following conclusions:

6.2 TBC officers work closely with OTs and other districts in Gloucestershire to offer as joined-up a service as possible and as such many joint processes and procedures have been developed over time. It was noted by the group that one other district in Gloucestershire has shown interest in the work of the group and officers.

6.3 Long delivery times from enquiry to delivery are not desirable and we should explore ways to address them.

6.4 The cost of providing each type of adaptation should be reduced where possible.

6.5 Some of the paperwork can be complicated and unnecessary; this should be simplified wherever possible.

6.6 Close co-operation between all partners will produce consistency of service and improved communication.

6.7 Housing options for potential applicants should always be explored, including if it is better for the applicant (and less of an impact on the budget) for them to move into suitably adapted (or more easily adapted) accommodation if that is what they want. This would include offering a grant both to move and to adapt the accommodation they are moving to if this would cost less than adapting the existing property.

- 6.8** Officers are reliant on technology to produce letters, to calculate the financial means test and to track progress. In the past 12 months paperwork has been minimised by relying on electronic methods of communicating and scanning in paper documents. However there has been a reluctance to completely abandon paper. Therefore further use of technology to speed up the process and assist applicants should be explored.
- 6.9** The delivery of DFGs involves a number of agencies and council departments working closely together for the best outcome. The work carried out as part of this review can therefore be used as a way to inform similar processes that may require agencies to work together on health and wellbeing issues. Therefore this review can be used as a learning tool for when health and wellbeing strategies, policies and processes need reviewing.
- 6.10** In addition, the successful delivery of the action plan must involve a (continued) close working partnership between officers at TBC, GCC and SVHS as well as other agencies in order to deliver the best possible outcomes for applicants. This may also include fostering new operational relationships when this improves the service.

Disabled Facilities Grant Working Group Action Plan January 2016			
Action Number	Recommendation details	Delivery date	Delivered by
1	Those enquiring who may be eligible for DFG, to be supported to see if a possible move to more suitable accommodation would be a better outcome for them, and to provide suitable assistance and support to help make this happen, should the person so wish.	March 2016	EHM / SHM / SVHS / OT
2	Look at methods of procuring work, such as (but not limited to) schedules of rates and preferred contractors, as ways that could reduce the time taken for a contractor to be on site.	May 2016	EHM / HTO
3	Review all existing paperwork connected with the DFG process at TBC: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Eliminate unnecessary paperwork b. Review the content of the DFG application form and the way it is completed c. Combine documents into one where this is possible d. Use electronic methods of communication wherever possible e. Work with stakeholders to identify any communication gaps where additional advice or information could be given. 	May 2016	EHM / HTO
4	Explore the further use of technology (by officers and applicants) to speed up the process and assist applicants.	July 2016	EHM
5	Use the learning gained from this review to inform local health and wellbeing plans, strategies and processes.		
6	Review the effect of the actions in 1 to 5 above on the costs of delivering the service and subsequently reduce the TBC capital contribution due to depleting capital resources	August 2016	EHM/FM



TEWKESBURY BOROUGH COUNCIL

Report to:	Executive Committee
Date of Meeting:	6 April 2016
Subject:	Draft Response to Technical Consultation on the Implementation of Planning Changes contained in the Housing and Planning Bill
Report of:	Julie Wood, Development Services Group Manager
Corporate Lead:	Rachel North, Deputy Chief Executive
Lead Member:	Councillor D M M Davies
Number of Appendices:	Two

Executive Summary:

The Department for Communities and Local Government are consulting on views on the proposed approach to implementing the planning provisions in the Housing and Planning Bill (the Bill) and some other planning measures.

The proposals contained in the Housing and Planning Bill contain several proposed changes to the way planning is delivered which, if adopted in their current form, could fundamentally change the way that the planning service in local government is delivered. It is therefore important that the Council responds to these proposals at this stage in the process of the Bill.

Recommendation:

To APPROVE the response to the consultation, as set out in Appendix 1, for submission to the Department of Communities and Local Government.

Reasons for Recommendation:

It is important that Tewkesbury Borough Council responds to the consultation to set out both comments in support of the proposed changes and those raising concerns to the proposed changes.

Resource Implications:

As contained within the response document.

Legal Implications:

None directly related to this report.

Risk Management Implications:

None directly in relation to this report.

Performance Management Follow-up:

None.

Environmental Implications:

None in relation to this report.

1.0 INTRODUCTION/BACKGROUND

1.1 The Department for Communities and Local Government issued a consultation on the planning provisions contained in the Housing and Planning Bill and some other planning measures on 18 February 2016. The closing date for responses is 15 April 2016. This consultation relates only to those planning provisions and measures and not to other provisions contained in the Housing and Planning Bill

2.0 CONSULTATION TO THE PROPOSED PROVISIONS

2.1 The provisions contained in the Housing and Planning Bill include some proposals for major changes to the way planning is delivered. The consultation covers the following areas:

- Changes to planning application fees.
- Permission in principle.
- Brownfield Register.
- Small Sites Register.
- Neighbourhood planning.
- Local plans.
- Expanding the planning performance regime.
- Testing competition in the processing of planning applications.
- Information about financial benefits.
- Section 106 dispute resolution.
- Permitted development rights for state-funded schools.
- Changes to statutory consultation on planning applications.

2.2 Some of the main proposals are highlighted below:

Changes to planning application fees

- Planning fees to adjust in line with inflation but only in areas where the local planning authority is performing well.

Permission in principle

- The introduction of a new 'permission in principle' route for obtaining planning permission. This is designed to separate decision making on 'in principle' issues (such as land use, location and amount of development) from matters of technical detail (such as what the buildings will look like). The Bill provides for permission in principle to be granted on sites in plans (local plans and neighbourhood plans) and Brownfield Registers, and for minor sites on application to the local planning authority.

Brownfield Register

- The introduction of a Brownfield Register where Brownfield Registers become a qualifying document to grant permission in principle. Authorities will be expected to take a positive, proactive approach when including sites in their Registers, rejecting potential sites only if they can demonstrate that there is no realistic prospect of sites being suitable for new housing. There is an expectation that the large majority of sites on Registers that do not already have an extant planning permission will be granted permission in principle, and technical details consent subsequently, for housing.

Small Sites Register

- The requirement to publish a Small Sites Register has particular utility in areas of high demand for self-build and custom housebuilding, as Councils will be required to permit sufficient serviced land to match demand.

Neighbourhood Planning

- Proposals to set the various time periods for local planning authority decisions on neighbourhood planning; to set the procedure to be followed where the Secretary of State chooses to intervene in sending a plan or Order to a referendum; and to introduce a new way for neighbourhood forums to better engage in local planning.

Local Plans

- Proposals to prioritise intervention in local plans where:
 - the least progress in plan-making has been made;
 - there is under delivery of housing in areas of high housing pressure;
 - policies in plans have not been kept up-to-date;
 - there is higher housing pressure; and
 - intervention will have the greatest impact in accelerating local plan production.

Expanding the Approach to Planning Performance

- Extending the approach to planning performance to include applications for non-major development, to ensure that all applicants can have certainty in the level of service to be provided. The consultation includes revised thresholds for assessing the quality of performance on applications for major development and new thresholds for non-major development for both speed and quality; the approach to designation and de-designation for non-major development; and, which applications may be submitted to the Secretary of State in areas that are designated for their handling of non-major development.

Testing Competition in the Processing of Planning Applications

- Introducing powers to enable the testing of competition in the processing of planning applications. The consultation proposes that, in a number of specific geographic areas across the country, for a limited period of time, a planning applicant would be able to apply to either the local planning authority for the area or an ‘approved provider’ (a person who is considered to have the expertise to manage the processing of a planning application) to have their planning application processed. This does not prevent local planning authorities from continuing to process planning applications nor does it force them to outsource their development management service – it means that other approved providers will be able to compete to process planning applications in their area. A number of companies already provide outsourced processing services for local planning authorities. Local planning authorities, in addition to processing planning applications in relation to land in their area, would also be able to apply to process planning applications in other local authorities’ areas. Decisions on applications, however, would remain the responsibility of the local planning authority. An approved provider would be able to process the application, having regard to the relevant statutory requirements for notification, consultation and decision making, and make a recommendation to the planning authority giving their view on how the application should be decided. It would be for the local planning authority to consider the recommendation and make the final decision, ensuring no loss of democratic oversight in planning decisions.

Information about Financial Benefits

- The Bill proposes to place a duty on local planning authorities to ensure that planning reports, setting out a recommendation on how an application should be decided, record details of financial benefits that are likely to accrue to the area as a result of the proposed development. It also explicitly requires that planning reports list those benefits that are “local finance considerations” (sums payable under Community Infrastructure Levy and grants from central government, such as the New Homes Bonus). The Bill also provides for the Secretary of State to prescribe, through regulations:
 - other financial benefits beyond “local finance considerations”, that must be listed in planning reports if they are likely to be obtained as a result of the proposed development;
 - information about a financial benefit that must be recorded in a planning report; and
 - a financial benefit to be listed in the planning report where it is payable to another person or body other than to the authority making the planning decision.

The following should also be listed in planning reports where it is considered likely they will be payable if development proceeds:

- Council tax revenue.
- Business rate revenue.
- Section 106 payments.

Section 106 Dispute Resolution

- Introduction of a dispute resolution mechanism for Section 106 Agreements. It is intended that this will be provided by a body on behalf of the Secretary of State, concluded within prescribed timescales and to provide a binding report setting out the appropriate terms where these had not previously been agreed by the local planning authority and the developer.

Permitted Development Rights for State-Funded Schools

- The government is committed to ensuring that there is sufficient provision to meet growing school places and, therefore, where there is an identified need for school places, schools can open quickly on temporary sites and in temporary buildings while permanent sites are secured and developed. The intention is also to allow larger extensions to be made to school buildings in certain cases without the need for planning permission.

3.0 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

3.1 None.

4.0 CONSULTATION

4.1 None.

5.0 RELEVANT COUNCIL POLICIES/STRATEGIES

5.1 None directly as a result of this report.

6.0 RELEVANT GOVERNMENT POLICIES

6.1 This is a consultation on proposed changes to government policy.

7.0 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS (Human/Property)

7.1 None.

8.0 SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS (Social/Community Safety/Cultural/ Economic/ Environment)

8.1 None.

9.0 IMPACT UPON (Value For Money/Equalities/E-Government/Human Rights/Health And Safety)

9.1 None.

10.0 RELATED DECISIONS AND ANY OTHER RELEVANT FACTS

10.1 None.

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Appendices: 1. Consultation Response.
2. Consultation Document.

Chapter	Question	Suggested response
<p>One – changes to planning application fees</p> <p>(Pages 7 – 9)</p>	<p>Question 1.1: Do you agree with our proposal to adjust planning fees in line with inflation, but only in areas where the local planning authority is performing well? If not what alternative would you suggest?</p> <p>(page 8)</p>	<p>Planning fees should adjust in line with inflation for all authorities, irrespective of the performance of an authority. However, more focus should be given to local authorities being able to recover the full costs of planning applications as the costs of local planning decisions are substantially higher than the planning fee income received and the opportunity to locally set planning fees should be considered alongside the possibility of agreements with developers, particularly for large and complex planning applications (see comment below). Local authorities are currently failing to recruit into planning posts which is hampering performance and is therefore not achieving the government’s aim which is to deliver sustainable planning growth. The government should be addressing the need for support to local authorities and not seeing this as a stick to beat struggling authorities with. It is vital that all authorities are given the support to improve their performance to ensure a more effective/efficient service.</p> <p>The government should legislate for authorities to set fees which recover the full cost of providing the service to ensure it is not cross subsidised from other areas or from the general council tax payer. Those who use the service, should pay the full cost of the service. If the government will not consider this sensible step, then as a minimum the government should consider resetting the planning fees on a national scale before allowing annual RPI uplifts in the revised fees. The government should also consider setting a floor and ceiling so that increases don’t fall below say 1% or go above say 4% to protect both local authorities</p>
<p>One – changes to planning application fees</p> <p>(Pages 7 – 9)</p>	<p>Question 1.2: Do you agree that national fee changes should not apply where a local planning authority is designated as underperforming, or would you propose an alternative means of linking fees to performance? And should there be a delay before any change of this type is applied?</p>	<p>Should this proposal be supported then the question isn’t whether planning fees should rise with inflation, only if the authority is not an underperforming authority, but whether a top up should be applied to those authorities that perform well. There should be encouragement not penalty. See comment above about an alternative being the ability for a local planning authority to be able to recover the full cost of an application.</p>

	<i>(page 8)</i>	In terms of delay, yes there should be a delay to allow local authorities to look at their services and to realign any resources and improve processes
One – changes to planning application fees <i>(Pages 7 – 9)</i>	Question 1.3: Do you agree that additional flexibility over planning application fees should be allowed through deals, in return for higher standards of service or radical proposals for reform? <i>(page 9)</i>	The opportunity to introduce flexibility is welcomed but the devil is in the detail. PPAs already exist between developers and local authorities to help ensure that resources are targeted but smaller applicants and builders might not be able to afford such an approach. Opportunities to provide a fast-track services for minor and other applications at a premium could be seen as a positive move for applicants as at that level, speed of decisions can be crucial to the applicant and the person carrying out the work.
One – changes to planning application fees <i>(Pages 7 – 9)</i>	Question 1.4: Do you have a view on how any fast-track services could best operate, or on other options for radical service improvement? <i>(page 9)</i>	A fast track approach could be offered for small planning applications which are non-contentious, for example, those that conform to a site allocated in a neighbourhood plan. Sites where a comprehensive masterplan has been agreed could include a fast track agreement
One – changes to planning application fees <i>(Pages 7 – 9)</i>	Question 1.5: Do you have any other comments on these proposals, including the impact on business and other users of the system? <i>(page 9)</i>	None

Chapter	Question	Suggested response
<p>Two - Enabling planning bodies to grant permission in principle for housing development on sites allocated in plans or identified on brownfield registers, and allowing small builders to apply directly for permission in principle for minor development</p> <p>(pages 10 – 20)</p>	<p>Question 2.1: Do you agree that the following should be qualifying documents capable of granting permission in principle?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) future local plans b) future neighbourhood plans; c) brownfield registers <p>(page 13)</p>	<p>This puts a lot of onus on the planning policy documents and could slow the process down rather than speed it up. These processes would need looking at in much more detail and the implications for communities and LPAs. Once the PiP is approved then there is no going back – this could lead to appalling design and infrastructure problems, for example, what if the density set through the PiP simply doesn't work in practice because there is a need for more open space, flood risk mitigation etc. Should PiP be accompanied by an agreed masterplan on large allocated sites? The current system of outline permission and reserved matters approval is not broken and there is no need to fix it.</p> <p>The broad acceptability of development on brownfield land is a policy matter which is addressed through the NPPF. If this policy position needs to be strengthened then it can be most effectively done through the NPPF/PPG. Nevertheless, there is no evidence that the change in process would be likely to result in more brownfield sites being developed. Sites which do not require EIA, which are deliverable; free of constraint (that cannot be mitigated); capable of development; and capable of supporting 5 or more dwellings on sites 0.25ha and above are often subject to full planning applications in any event as, on any analysis of policy, the principle is likely to be acceptable. As such PiP would be likely to add further complication to the process rather than simplify it.</p> <p>Notwithstanding the above, the process as proposed could deliver false certainty to developers who proceed on the basis of the PiP only for unforeseen issues, e.g. previously unidentified contamination, to arise during the Technical Detail Consent stage. It is much preferable to developers to gain this certainty at outline stage.</p> <p>It is unclear what the change in process would add to allocated sites over and above their allocation in a development plan in terms of providing certainty to developers.</p>

PiP could serve to undermine democracy and local decision making in the planning process with local communities becoming disengaged from the process as they feel that a decision is a *fait accompli* following permission in principle.

b) future neighbourhood plans; Yes – subject to the detail as above and comments below. The scope of the Neighbourhood Plan Examination may need to change to consider soundness, in the same way that an Examiner in a Local Plan EiP does, rather than just that the plan meets the current basic conditions. Other proposals for Neighbourhood Plans is aimed at speeding up and simplifying the process but this would do the opposite and add work and complexity in screening for the need to carry out EIA and Habitats assessments for specific sites and undertaking those assessments if deemed necessary.

c) brownfield registers.

Brownfield registers seem to be Local plans-lite! Like a local plan they will essentially allocate land through providing a form of outline planning permission. However, they won't be subject to the same in-depth process as local plans in terms of consultation and examination. Furthermore, the register places a very strong emphasis on housing on brownfield sites above other uses, reducing viability for other uses such as employment. Notwithstanding this, it will put a further resource burden on authorities as it seems that authorities will need to put more work into the identification and consultation on sites and also site assessment and evidence to make sure that the right recommendations are made in terms of uses and capacities.

The consultation also proposes 'measures' to ensure that progress on planning permission on brownfield sites is made (governments wish that 90% of brownfield sites have pp by 2020. Not all brownfield sites will be suitable for housing development

<p>Two - Enabling planning bodies to grant permission in principle for housing development on sites allocated in plans or identified on brownfield registers, and allowing small builders to apply directly for permission in principle for minor development (pages 10 – 20)</p>	<p>Question 2.2: Do you agree that permission in principle on application should be available to minor development? (page 14)</p>	<p>This would add little to the existing process as minor development is likely to be subject to a full application and is likely to be acceptable in broad policy terms anyway. The Technical Detail Consent would be likely to be as complex (or as simple!) as a full application so it would be likely to add little by way of certainty to developers.</p>
<p>Two - Enabling planning bodies to grant permission in principle for housing development on sites allocated in plans or identified on brownfield registers, and allowing small builders to apply directly for permission in principle for minor development (pages 10 – 20)</p>	<p>Question 2.3: Do you agree that location, uses and amount of residential development should constitute 'in principle matters' that must be included in a permission in principle? Do you think any other matter should be included? (page 15)</p>	<p>This constrains any negotiations on layouts and could lead to problems. There should, at least be a caveat, that this can be amended should the delivery of any infrastructure, community facilities or good design be affected. Once these are set – that would not enable, for example, the ability to amend the quantum of open space, flood mitigation measures, good road layout. There would need to be a lot more emphasis put on master planning work on sites at an early stage to ensure that sites also provide for sufficient employment, open space, community facilities and highway infrastructure.</p> <p>There is a risk that, if something isn't specified at the plan stage, then we won't be able to ask for it later. There should be flexibility built in so that this does not preclude us from dealing with any issues that may arise at the time of application.</p>
<p>Two - Enabling planning bodies to grant permission in principle for housing development on sites allocated in plans or identified on brownfield registers, and allowing small builders to apply directly for permission in principle for minor development (pages 10 – 20)</p>	<p>Question 2.4: Do you have views on how best to ensure that the parameters of the technical details that need to be agreed are described at the permission in principle stage? (page 15)</p>	<p>These should be able to be more flexible Particularly for the brownfield register, we may not know all the technical details, such as infrastructure, that need to be addressed at the application stage. We won't be able to have the level of background work and evidence for sites included in a brownfield register or neighbourhood plans as we would for our own local plans.</p> <p>Councils could have standard 'checklists' of the technical details available to advise of the issues to be addressed through all developments, and what level of detail would be required. It is likely that most LPAs would take a precautionary approach on this and require, rightly, the level of detail that would be required for a full application. As such the process would add nothing to the existing planning application process.</p>

<p>Two - Enabling planning bodies to grant permission in principle for housing development on sites allocated in plans or identified on brownfield registers, and allowing small builders to apply directly for permission in principle for minor development</p> <p><i>(pages 10 – 20)</i></p>	<p>Question 2.5: Do you have views on our suggested approach to a) Environmental Impact Assessment, b) Habitats Directive or c) other sensitive sites?</p> <p><i>(page 17)</i></p>	<p>For PiPs in Local Plans local authorities go through the SEA/Habitats assessment process anyway to look at any environmental impacts however the general proposal to require LPAs to carry out EIA puts significant new burdens onto Councils. LPAs do not have the resources to carry out such work and in some areas do not have the expertise. Similarly, those who advise LPAs on detailed matters such as the Environment Agency, Natural England, Highways England, do not have the resources to support LPAs in carrying out EIA.</p> <p>The brownfield register is concerning as it may lead to local authorities having to do further SEA work around any site submitted to us through this process and add an extra resource burden. However, as the brownfield register would be essentially allocating sites then this level of work would be required.</p>
<p>Two - Enabling planning bodies to grant permission in principle for housing development on sites allocated in plans or identified on brownfield registers, and allowing small builders to apply directly for permission in principle for minor development</p> <p><i>(pages 10 – 20)</i></p>	<p>Question 2.6: Do you agree with our proposals for community and other involvement?</p> <p><i>(page 17)</i></p>	<p>The integrity of the planning system is based around public consultation and the added value that this can bring to development proposals. Local knowledge can be crucial to making high quality decisions and as such it is imperative that legislation requires consultation on all matters relating to PiP (if it is introduced) including the technical matters.</p>
<p>Two - Enabling planning bodies to grant permission in principle for housing development on sites allocated in plans or identified on brownfield registers, and allowing small builders to apply directly for permission in principle for minor development</p> <p><i>(pages 10 – 20)</i></p>	<p>Question 2.7: Do you agree with our proposals for information requirements?</p> <p><i>(page 19)</i></p>	<p>Certainty for all involved, including developers, the local community and the LPA is best achieved through the current planning application process. Without proper assessment of the technical details normally required at outline stage, PiP would not be of value as the technical details required under para 2.40 of the consultation document could prevent development.</p> <p>Supporting the current process rather than radical reform which potentially only serves to alienate local communities, should be the focus of attention for all involved in the development process.</p>

<p>Two - Enabling planning bodies to grant permission in principle for housing development on sites allocated in plans or identified on brownfield registers, and allowing small builders to apply directly for permission in principle for minor development</p> <p><i>(pages 10 – 20)</i></p>	<p>Question 2.8: Do you have any views about the fee that should be set for a) a permission in principle application and b) a technical details consent application?</p> <p><i>(page 19)</i></p>	<p>The fee should reflect the fee for a full planning application given the breadth of the information required to be assessed by the LPA.</p>
<p>Two - Enabling planning bodies to grant permission in principle for housing development on sites allocated in plans or identified on brownfield registers, and allowing small builders to apply directly for permission in principle for minor development</p> <p><i>(pages 10 – 20)</i></p>	<p>Question 2.9: Do you agree with our proposals for the expiry of on permission in principle on allocation and application? Do you have any views about whether we should allow for local variation to the duration of permission in principle?</p> <p><i>(page 20)</i></p>	<p>Yes. We support the suggestion for local variation</p>
<p>Two - Enabling planning bodies to grant permission in principle for housing development on sites allocated in plans or identified on brownfield registers, and allowing small builders to apply directly for permission in principle for minor development</p> <p><i>(pages 10 – 20)</i></p>	<p>Question 2.10: Do you agree with our proposals for the maximum determination periods for a) permission in principle minor applications, and b) technical details consent for minor and major sites?</p> <p><i>(page 20)</i></p>	<p>No. determination periods should reflect those for planning applications to allow for proper consultation with the local community; proper consideration of the issues by the LPA, consultees and the local community; and consideration of applications for PiP by the relevant Planning Committee.</p>

Chapter	Question	Suggested response
<p>Three - Introducing a statutory register of brownfield land suitable for housing development</p> <p>(Pages 22 – 30)</p>	<p>Question 3.1: Do you agree with our proposals for identifying potential sites? Are there other sources of information that we should highlight?</p> <p>(page 24)</p>	<p>Notwithstanding views on the role of brownfield registers, we would agree that SHLAAs are probably the most appropriate starting point for identifying sites for such a register. We do this annually anyway (as the consultation suggests should happen) and we already record when land is brownfield. We of course do a certain level of assessment for sites in the SHLAA so we have a decent baseline.</p> <p>The main unknown and, perhaps, concern here is that the consultation is suggesting that we undertake a call for sites aimed at a ‘wide an audience as possible’. We already undertake a call for sites which is publicised on our website. We would be interested to know the thinking in terms of what we may need to do for any additional publicity.</p>
<p>Three - Introducing a statutory register of brownfield land suitable for housing development</p> <p>(Pages 22 – 30)</p>	<p>Question 3.2: Do you agree with our proposed criteria for assessing suitable sites? Are there other factors which you think should be considered?</p> <p>(page 25)</p>	<p>The consultation states that we should only reject brownfield sites if we can demonstrate that there is no realistic prospect of sites being suitable for new housing. Therefore, the emphasis is very much on establishing why a site isn’t suitable for housing rather than why a site might be more suitable for other uses i.e. employment. This immediately puts a residential hope value on all brownfield sites and reduces the viability and attractiveness of them for any other uses. Particularly as most brownfield sites would have a realistic prospect for new housing. It also then puts the burden on the LPA to argue why a site isn’t suitable for housing rather than a promoter putting forward why it should be.</p> <p>The assessment criteria are really pretty loose and don’t really provide anything that would enable authorities to make a decision that a site would be unsuitable for the register. The ‘capable of development’ criteria allow the consideration of constraints that can’t be mitigated. However it says that authorities need to support decisions about constraints with strong evidence. This means that there is a burden for providing additional evidence towards a brownfield register which is much wider in scope than a local plan and can include any number of sites. There is a concern regarding how much additional evidence and assessment will be needed for sites on a brownfield register – which links to other similar comments on work needed to establish a Permission in Principle.</p>

		The consultation sets out that where a site is subject to an allocation for a use other than housing in an 'up to date' local plan it is unlikely that the site would be regarded as being suitable for housing. Does this imply that where a site is allocated for employment, for example, in a not 'up to date' local plan would therefore be suitable for housing?
Three - Introducing a statutory register of brownfield land suitable for housing development (Pages 22 – 30)	Question 3.3: Do you have any views on our suggested approach for addressing the requirements of Environmental Impact Assessment and Habitats Directives? (page 26)	There is concern here regarding the resources needed to undertake such work. It means that authorities will be responsible for undertaking EIA screening of any speculative sites put forward, potentially leading to an EIA including consultation. Could this responsibility to provide this evidence be passed to the site promoters if the development falls within the EIA regulations?
Three - Introducing a statutory register of brownfield land suitable for housing development (Pages 22 – 30)	Question 3.4: Do you agree with our views on the application of the Strategic Environment Assessment Directive? Could the Department provide assistance in order to make any applicable requirements easier to meet? (page 27)	As above, concerns over additional resources needed to undertake an SEA.
Three - Introducing a statutory register of brownfield land suitable for housing development (Pages 22 – 30)	Question 3.5: Do you agree with our proposals on publicity and consultation requirements? (page 27)	The consultation states a requirement for LPAs to carry out consultation and 'other procedures' on their registers. If the registers are to be updated annually then this means an annual consultation process. What level of consultation that would be required for this? This could have substantial resource issues. It would appear that brownfield registers are essentially allocating sites outside of the regular plan making process in which sites would usually be subject to consultation and independent examination. What if there is disagreement on whether a site should be included or, for example, on the quantum of housing included.

<p>Three - Introducing a statutory register of brownfield land suitable for housing development</p> <p>(Pages 22 – 30)</p>	<p>Question 3.6: Do you agree with the specific information we are proposing to require for each site?</p> <p>(page 28)</p>	<p>One piece of information proposed for the register is an estimate of the number of homes that the site would likely support. However, one of key rationales of granting permission in principle is that you cannot then open issues again at a future application stage. Therefore if we are stating a number or range of houses on a site then would we be held to this in future applications. Deciding on an appropriate level of housing will therefore be key and, again, a resource issue</p>
<p>Three - Introducing a statutory register of brownfield land suitable for housing development</p> <p>(Pages 22 – 30)</p>	<p>Question 3.7: Do you have any suggestions about how the data could be standardised and published in a transparent manner?</p> <p>(page 29)</p>	<p>No particular issue with this.</p>
<p>Three - Introducing a statutory register of brownfield land suitable for housing development</p> <p>(Pages 22 – 30)</p>	<p>Question 3.8: Do you agree with our proposed approach for keeping data up-to-date?</p> <p>(page 29)</p>	<p>Registers should be reviewed once a year at the most, linked to the publishing of the SHLAA.</p>
<p>Three - Introducing a statutory register of brownfield land suitable for housing development</p> <p>(Pages 22 – 30)</p>	<p>Question 3.9: Do our proposals to drive progress provide a strong enough incentive to ensure the most effective use of local brownfield registers and permission in principle?</p> <p>(page 30)</p>	<p>The consultation seems to propose that authorities will be assessed against the 90% target set out by the Government. It is important that it should be 90% of <u>suitable</u> brownfield sites. However the key argument is going to be what is judged as suitable. Authorities should not have an issue in providing permission in principle on sites which they think are suitable but there is the potential for many sites to be considered unsuitable by the authority but which others disagree on. How does the Government factor this into the 90% calculation?</p> <p>It is a concern because if we are judged not to be meeting the target then we are risk of not being able to claim an up to date 5 year supply when considering applications for brownfield development. There is a risk that, at applications, developers will bring the argument that we are not meeting our 90% target and take this to appeal to say we don't have a 5 year supply.</p>

Three - Introducing a statutory register of brownfield land suitable for housing development (Pages 22 – 30)	Question 3.10: Are there further specific measures we should consider where local authorities fail to make sufficient progress, both in advance of 2020 and thereafter? (page 30)	Providing positive support to local authorities which are struggling to cope with demand. Also, developers sitting on huge land banks with planning permissions should be 'encouraged' to build
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Chapter	Question	Suggested response
Four - Creating a small sites register to support custom build homes (Pages 31 – 32)	Question 4.1: Do you agree that for the small sites register, small sites should be between one and four plots in size? (page 32)	
Four - Creating a small sites register to support custom build homes (Pages 31 – 32)	Question 4.2: Do you agree that sites should just be entered on the small sites register when a local authority is aware of them without any need for a suitability assessment? (page 32)	This would be a list of small sites that are not necessarily suitable and would need normal planning permission. We are struggling to really see the value in it, particularly for the extra administrative effort it would involve to keep it.
Four - Creating a small sites register to support custom build homes (Pages 31 – 32)	Question 4.3: Are there any categories of land which we should automatically exclude from the register? If so what are they? (page 32)	There needs to be controls to prevent building on every green space in an area, for example orchards and wildlife areas. Could conflict with NPs. Not sure parishes would like this approach
Four - Creating a small sites register to support custom build homes (Pages 31 – 32)	Question 4.4: Do you agree that location, size and contact details will be sufficient to make the small sites register useful? If not what additional information should be required? (page 32)	Yes – but still concerns over the proposal as above

Chapter	Question	Suggested response
Five - Speeding up and simplifying neighbourhood planning and giving more powers to neighbourhood forums (Pages 33 – 39)	Question 5.1: Do you support our proposals for the circumstances in which a local planning authority must designate all of the neighbourhood area applied for? (page 34)	Proposals regarding the designation of Neighbourhood Forums do not have an impact on us as a parished authority – we know who our qualifying bodies are.
Five - Speeding up and simplifying neighbourhood planning and giving more powers to neighbourhood forums (Pages 33 – 39)	Question 5.2: Do you agree with the proposed time periods for a local planning authority to designate a neighbourhood forum? (page 35)	As a parished Authority this does not affect us.
Five - Speeding up and simplifying neighbourhood planning and giving more powers to neighbourhood forums (Pages 33 – 39)	Question 5.3: Do you agree with the proposed time period for the local planning authority to decide whether to send a plan or Order to referendum? (page 36)	We haven't been through this process yet so it's difficult to know, however, we take some comfort that the average is 5-6 weeks although it depends on the complexity of the plan and the issues raised in the Inspector's report. If we have worked effectively to ensure that the NDP proposal, which we accept and go out to Reg 16 consultation on, meets the basic conditions and the requirements of the 1990 Act then an issue will only arise if the Examiner makes/recommends substantive changes to the plan which we cannot agree to. Otherwise the 5 weeks suggested for the decision to be taken seems reasonable though organising the referendum (depending upon electoral services workload may take longer)
Five - Speeding up and simplifying neighbourhood planning and giving more powers to neighbourhood forums (Pages 33 – 39)	Question 5.4: Do you agree with the suggested persons to be notified and invited to make representations when a local planning authority's proposed decision differs from the recommendation of the examiner? (page 36)	Yes although would add that statutory consultees should be included as recommendations made by an examiner may relate to the interests of such bodies.

<p>Five - Speeding up and simplifying neighbourhood planning and giving more powers to neighbourhood forums</p> <p><i>(Pages 33 – 39)</i></p>	<p>Question 5.5: Do you agree with the proposed time periods where a local planning authority seeks further representations and makes a final decision?</p> <p><i>(page 36)</i></p>	<p>Six weeks further consultation followed by 5 weeks to issue a final decision seems on the face of it reasonable but the resource implications of achieving this will depend on the level of response received to the consultation and the complexity of the issues raised.</p>
<p>Five - Speeding up and simplifying neighbourhood planning and giving more powers to neighbourhood forums</p> <p><i>(Pages 33 – 39)</i></p>	<p>Question 5.6: Do you agree with the proposed time period within which a referendum must be held?</p> <p><i>(page 37)</i></p>	<p>The ability to arrange a referendum depends upon the other demands being placed upon electoral services at the time. For example in 2016 we have the Police and Crime Commissioner elections in May and the EU referendum in June making other referenda difficult to accommodate. This is one occasion where ‘as soon as possible’ would provide an acceptable level of flexibility. The three exceptions suggested, however, do provide some discretion – in particular in agreement with the qualifying body.</p>
<p>Five - Speeding up and simplifying neighbourhood planning and giving more powers to neighbourhood forums</p> <p><i>(Pages 33 – 39)</i></p>	<p>Question 5.7: Do you agree with the time period by which a neighbourhood plan or Order should be made following a successful referendum?</p> <p><i>(page 37)</i></p>	<p>The caveat regarding unresolved legal challenges suggests that this should be 8 weeks from the deadline for legal challenges (6 weeks) following the referendum.</p>
<p>Five - Speeding up and simplifying neighbourhood planning and giving more powers to neighbourhood forums</p> <p><i>(Pages 33 – 39)</i></p>	<p>Question 5.8: What other measures could speed up or simplify the neighbourhood planning process?</p> <p><i>(page 37)</i></p>	<p>Speed and simplicity may seem to be the answer to getting Neighbourhood Plans in place but quality and community ownership are far more important.</p>

<p>Five - Speeding up and simplifying neighbourhood planning and giving more powers to neighbourhood forums</p> <p><i>(Pages 33 – 39)</i></p>	<p>Question 5.9: Do you agree with the proposed procedure to be followed where the Secretary of State may intervene to decide whether a neighbourhood plan or Order should be put to a referendum?</p> <p><i>(page 39)</i></p>	<p>This in effect introduces a right of appeal to the qualifying body, in our case Town or Parish Council's, if we determine that we are unable to adopt/make the plan or order following examination and recommended modifications of the Examiner. If plans are properly developed to be in conformity with higher level plans (adopted/saved and emerging) this shouldn't be a problem.</p>
<p>Five - Speeding up and simplifying neighbourhood planning and giving more powers to neighbourhood forums</p> <p><i>(Pages 33 – 39)</i></p>	<p>Question 5.10: Do you agree that local planning authorities must notify and invite representations from designated neighbourhood forums where they consider they may have an interest in the preparation of a local plan?</p> <p><i>(page 39)</i></p>	<p>No comment – as a parished area.</p>

Chapter	Question	Suggested response
<p>Six - Introducing criteria to inform decisions on intervention to deliver our commitment to get local plans in place</p> <p>(Pages 40 – 44)</p>	<p>Question 6.1: Do you agree with our proposed criteria for prioritising intervention in local plans?</p> <p>(page 43)</p>	<p>We don't have particular issues with the criteria being set out for when intervention may be necessary. However, we would comment that in some circumstances there are issues that are beyond the local authorities control that may cause the under delivery or housing. We would urge the Government to explore the reasons for under delivery with the local authority before considering whether interventions are necessary.</p> <p>For instance, Tewkesbury, in order to boost housing delivery, made decisions on planning applications to approve two sites that form part of the strategic allocations contained within the JCS. One of these sites, at Brockworth for 1500 dwellings, has been subject to an SoS call in and a subsequent public inquiry. The application was called in on 24th November 2014 and the LPA are still awaiting the decision. If there is an under delivery of housing as a result of circumstances such as this then is it really reasonable for intervention from the Government?</p> <p>Further on this point is the issue of resources. We are being asked to produce plans as quickly as possible and keep them up to date. However, local authorities have consistently facing worsening resource issues which actively work against them being able to do this.</p> <p>We would also ask that they do look carefully at where intervention would have the greatest impact on speeding up plan production. The JCS is a good example where the authorities have positively and actively progressed the plan as soon as quickly as they have been able.</p> <p>We are now in a situation where the plan would have been in examination for almost 2 years before we receive an Inspectors report and be able to progress it further towards adoption. We struggle to see how Government intervention, at the local authority level, would assist in speeding up this process.</p> <p>Many of delays experienced in the plan making process have been due to changes in guidance, evidence and regulations that have provided uncertainty for local authorities. Authorities spend a considerable amount of time and resource building extensive evidence to support the development of local plans. Establishing the objectively assessed need for housing is a particular example where new evidence, released mid-examination, can cause significant delay where a local authority is sent back to do further work. This has been the experience of the JCS which</p>

		<p>was submitted on the basis of the latest available evidence at the time. In these type of circumstances I would question how intervention by the Government would speed up the plan making process.</p> <p>We have also have new and changing Government guidance in the form of Gypsy & Travellers and Affordable Housing as well as various ongoing consultation documents (such as this one) and various statements made by ministers that are constantly brining in new ideas and (potentially) legislation and duties on councils. This all adds uncertainty to the plan making process that causes further delays as we all work out what these may or may not mean for our plans. These issues are even more acute when the plan is mid-examination. A key intervention that the Government could make is to be clearer on transitional arrangements for plans while these policies are being brought forward so they we don't have to come to a stop or delay while we deal with the uncertainty. This is also an issue for keeping plans up-to-date as it would be unfair to render a recently adopted plan out of date on the basis that Government has subsequently implemented new guidance or policy.</p>
<p>Six - Introducing criteria to inform decisions on intervention to deliver our commitment to get local plans in place</p> <p><i>(Pages 40 – 44)</i></p>	<p>Question 6.2: Do you agree that decisions on prioritising intervention to arrange for a local plan to be written should take into consideration a) collaborative and strategic plan-making and b) neighbourhood planning?</p> <p><i>(page 43)</i></p>	<p>Yes-although see above comments</p>
<p>Six - Introducing criteria to inform decisions on intervention to deliver our commitment to get local plans in place</p> <p><i>(Pages 40 – 44)</i></p>	<p>Question 6.3: Are there any other factors that you think the government should take into consideration?</p> <p><i>(page 43)</i></p>	<p>Yes – see above</p>

<p>Six - Introducing criteria to inform decisions on intervention to deliver our commitment to get local plans in place</p> <p><i>(Pages 40 – 44)</i></p>	<p>Question 6.4: Do you agree that the Secretary of State should take exceptional circumstances submitted by local planning authorities into account when considering intervention?</p> <p><i>(page 44)</i></p>	<p>Yes, we would agree that the LPA should be provided the opportunity to set out the individual circumstances experienced that have caused on delay in the plan making or the under delivery of housing.</p>
<p>Six - Introducing criteria to inform decisions on intervention to deliver our commitment to get local plans in place</p> <p><i>(Pages 40 – 44)</i></p>	<p>Question 6.5: Is there any other information you think we should publish alongside what is stated above?</p> <p><i>(page 44)</i></p>	<p>None</p>
<p>Six - Introducing criteria to inform decisions on intervention to deliver our commitment to get local plans in place</p> <p><i>(Pages 40 – 44)</i></p>	<p>Question 6.6: Do you agree that the proposed information should be published on a six monthly basis?</p> <p><i>(page 44)</i></p>	<p>No comment</p>

Chapter	Question	Suggested response
<p>Seven - Extending the existing designation approach to include applications for non major development</p> <p><i>(Pages 45 – 48)</i></p>	<p>Question 7.1: Do you agree that the threshold for designations involving applications for non-major development should be set initially at between 60-70% of decisions made on time, and between 10-20% of decisions overturned at appeal? If so what specific thresholds would you suggest?</p> <p><i>(Page 47)</i></p>	<p>No objection to the threshold for non-major applications. There should be no threshold in terms of decisions overturned at appeal. It is right that the planning system allows for decisions to be set locally. If a Council can justify its reason to refuse applications, notwithstanding whether they are overturned by a Planning Inspector or the Secretary of State then it should not be penalised for exercising its judgement on matters which affect its local area. If a Council cannot justify its opposition to a proposal then an Inspector has three options of awarding costs against the Council for unreasonable behaviour. There needs to be no further penalty than this.</p>
<p>Seven - Extending the existing designation approach to include applications for non major development</p> <p><i>(Pages 45 – 48)</i></p>	<p>Question 7.2: Do you agree that the threshold for designations based on the quality of decisions on applications for major development should be reduced to 10% of decisions overturned at appeal?</p> <p><i>(Page 47)</i></p>	<p>As set out above, there should be no threshold for decisions overturned at appeal.</p>

<p>Seven - Extending the existing designation approach to include applications for non major development</p> <p><i>(Pages 45 – 48)</i></p>	<p>Question 7.3: Do you agree with our proposed approach to designation and de-designation, and in particular</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) that the general approach should be the same for applications involving major and non-major development? (b) performance in handling applications for major and non-major development should be assessed separately? (c) in considering exceptional circumstances, we should take into account the extent to which any appeals involve decisions which authorities considered to be in line with an up-to-date plan, prior to confirming any designations based on the quality of decisions? <p><i>(Page 48)</i></p>	<p>Agreed subject to the comments in 7.1 above.</p> <p>Agreed subject to the comments in 7.1 above.</p> <p>Agreed subject to the comments in 7.1 above.</p>
<p>Seven - Extending the existing designation approach to include applications for non major development</p> <p><i>(Pages 45 – 48)</i></p>	<p>Question 7.4: Do you agree that the option to apply directly to the Secretary of State should not apply to applications for householder developments?</p> <p><i>(Page 48)</i></p>	<p>Agreed</p>

Chapter	Question	Suggested response
<p>Eight - Testing competition in the processing of planning applications</p> <p><i>(Pages 49 – 52)</i></p>	<p>Question 8.1: Who should be able to compete for the processing of planning applications and which applications could they compete for?</p> <p><i>(Page 50)</i></p>	<p>It is likely to be only the large planning consultancies who could offer a cost effective replacement for the LPA service and these firms have broad relationships with developers across the country. There would be too much potential for conflicts of interest which would harm the public perception of the planning system. Local communities are often suspicious of the relationships between developers and agents. Decisions are based on recommendations provided by Planning Officers who know their area and understand the potential impacts on specific local communities. Having a recommendation affecting a historic Cotswolds village from a private consultant based in Inverness or Carlisle with no prior knowledge of the area could lead to poor quality decisions. Decisions are best made locally and the best decisions are made on the basis of local knowledge and expertise which can only be provided by those who live and work in an area. This would potentially be disastrous for the concept of Localism.</p> <p>The use of private consultants could also add delays to the process with locally elected members wanting to call applications to Committee rather than allowing applications to be dealt with under delegated powers as at present. There is a significant element of trust between Councillors and their planning teams which could not be replicated if applicants could choose any private consultant to deal with their application.</p> <p>There are huge question marks over such an approach; for example, who would be liable for costs at appeal, for example in circumstances where costs are awarded for unreasonable behaviour, or where a high court challenge of a decision is successful. It is impossible for a consultant with no previous experience of working in the area to properly understand all the material considerations relating to an application. An understanding of the local area means that locally based officers can sometimes favourably recommend developments that appear on the face of it to be unacceptable on policy grounds. The proposal would be likely to add unnecessary complication to the planning application process when efforts should be focussed on supporting high quality local decision-making.</p>

<p>Eight - Testing competition in the processing of planning applications</p> <p><i>(Pages 49 – 52)</i></p>	<p>Question 8.2: How should fee setting in competition test areas operate?</p> <p><i>(Page 51)</i></p>	<p>The LPA needs to be able to cover the cost of processing the application, i.e. the administrative costs and those relating to the decision making process, whether this be under delegated powers or by committee.</p> <p>The alternative provider's fee must be approved by the LPA to ensure that there is no suggestion of 'buying' a recommendation. It is difficult to know how alternative providers will propose a fee given the potentially iterative process involved in many applications. Considerable amounts of officer time can be spent, even on relatively minor applications, discussing applications with the local community and local councillors. It is difficult to see how this could be picked up in a fixed fee proposal at the outset of an application.</p> <p>The proposal seems to completely misunderstand the role of the LPA planning officer.</p>
<p>Eight - Testing competition in the processing of planning applications</p> <p><i>(Pages 49 – 52)</i></p>	<p>Question 8.3: What should applicants, approved providers and local planning authorities in test areas be able to?</p> <p><i>(Page 51)</i></p>	
<p>Eight - Testing competition in the processing of planning applications</p> <p><i>(Pages 49 – 52)</i></p>	<p>Question 8.4: Do you have a view on how we could maintain appropriate high standards and performance during the testing of competition?</p> <p><i>(Page 52)</i></p>	<p>See earlier comments</p>

<p>Eight - Testing competition in the processing of planning applications</p> <p><i>(Pages 49 – 52)</i></p>	<p>Question 8.5: What information would need to be shared between approved providers and local planning authorities, and what safeguards are needed to protect information?</p> <p><i>(Page 52)</i></p>	<p>See earlier comments</p>
<p>Eight - Testing competition in the processing of planning applications</p> <p><i>(Pages 49 – 52)</i></p>	<p>Question 8.6: Do you have any other comments on these proposals, including the impact on business and other users of the system?</p> <p><i>(Page 52)</i></p>	<p>See earlier comments</p>

Chapter	Question	Suggested response
<p>Nine - Information about financial benefits</p> <p><i>(Pages 53 – 55)</i></p>	<p>Question 9.1: Do you agree with these proposals for the range of benefits to be listed in planning reports?</p> <p><i>(Page 54)</i></p>	<p>Agree in principle with including information about estimated financial benefits. However, the ability to estimate meaningfully the likely impact of council tax, new homes bonus and business rates based on the information contained within a planning application is extremely difficult particularly for the complexities involved in estimating business rate valuations. In addition, small district councils carry neither the capacity or skills to make the required meaningful judgements in terms of banding domestic properties or estimating the valuation of a business. Consideration should be given to making the applicant engage with the Valuation Office Agency as part of the planning application process to provide likely council tax bandings and business rate valuations to aid the local authority in including reasonable financial information within the planning report</p>
<p>Nine - Information about financial benefits</p> <p><i>(Pages 53 – 55)</i></p>	<p>Question 9.2: Do you agree with these proposals for the information to be recorded, and are there any other matters that we should consider when preparing regulations to implement this measure?</p> <p><i>(Page 55)</i></p>	<p>See 9.1 above</p>

Chapter	Question	Suggested response
Ten - Introducing a Section 106 dispute resolution service <i>(Pages 56 – 59)</i>	Question 10.1: Do you agree that the dispute resolution procedure should be able to apply to any planning application? <i>(Page 56)</i>	No. The mechanism is already in place to resolve disputes over s106 through the appeal process. If a LPA does not consider a proposal to constitute sustainable development because the s106 proposal by the developer does not adequately mitigate the impact on the local community then the developer has the opportunity to appeal. Rather than set up a new process, further complicating the planning system, more resources should be made available to PINS to deal with such matters.
Ten - Introducing a Section 106 dispute resolution service <i>(Pages 56 – 59)</i>	Question 10.2: Do you agree with the proposals about when a request for dispute resolution can be made? <i>(Page 57)</i>	See above
Ten - Introducing a Section 106 dispute resolution service <i>(Pages 56 – 59)</i>	Question 10.3: Do you agree with the proposals about what should be contained in a request? <i>(Page 57)</i>	These timescales are consistent with the timescales for appeals against non-determination; nevertheless if there has been no substantive pre-application discussions with the LPA regarding s106 matters then the procedure should not be open to the applicant.
Ten - Introducing a Section 106 dispute resolution service <i>(Pages 56 – 59)</i>	Question 10.4: Do you consider that another party to the section 106 agreement should be able to refer the matter for dispute resolution? If yes, should this be with the agreement of both the main parties? <i>(Page 57)</i>	No. As with planning appeals, this should be limited to the applicant. If another party to the s106 agreement, e.g the landowner, disagrees with the detail, the agreement cannot be concluded. It is up to the parties to reach an agreement.
Ten - Introducing a Section 106 dispute resolution service <i>(Pages 56 – 59)</i>	Question 10.5: Do you agree that two weeks would be sufficient for the cooling off period? <i>(Page 57)</i>	Do not understand the need for a formal cooling off period. The parties can agree at any stage in the process and proceed with a grant of permission.

<p>Ten - Introducing a Section 106 dispute resolution service (Pages 56 – 59)</p>	<p>Question 10.6: What qualifications and experience do you consider the appointed person should have to enable them to be credible? (Page 57)</p>	<p>The appointed person should be a fully trained planning inspector.</p>
<p>Ten - Introducing a Section 106 dispute resolution service (Pages 56 – 59)</p>	<p>Question 10.7: Do you agree with the proposals for sharing fees? If not, what alternative arrangement would you support? (Page 58)</p>	<p>No. It is the applicant's proposal. The fee should be paid by the applicant, consistent with all planning application matters. The introduction of the process would be adding a new burden to the LPA, adding a fee to this new burden would be bizarre in the context of the planning system.</p>
<p>Ten - Introducing a Section 106 dispute resolution service (Pages 56 – 59)</p>	<p>Question 10.8: Do you have any comments on how long the appointed person should have to produce their report? (Page 58)</p>	<p>Consistent with current PINS guidance and practice.</p>
<p>Ten - Introducing a Section 106 dispute resolution service (Pages 56 – 59)</p>	<p>Question 10.9: What matters do you think should and should not be taken into account by the appointed person? (Page 58)</p>	<p>All material planning considerations should be taken into account by a planning inspector to decide whether the proposed development, including the proposed s106 obligations, constitutes sustainable development.</p>
<p>Ten - Introducing a Section 106 dispute resolution service (Pages 56 – 59)</p>	<p>Question 10.10: Do you agree that the appointed person's report should be published on the local authority's website? Do you agree that there should be a mechanism for errors in the appointed person's report to be corrected by request? (Page 58)</p>	<p>All matters relating to planning applications should be available on the planning register, therefore the Council's website. All decisions are already open to challenge, with appeal decisions also subject to the slip rule whereby minor errors can be amended.</p>
<p>Ten - Introducing a Section 106 dispute resolution service (Pages 56 – 59)</p>	<p>Question 10.11: Do you have any comments about how long there should be following the dispute resolution process for a) completing any section 106 obligations and b) determining the planning application? (Page 59)</p>	<p>As soon as possible within an extension of time agreement between the applicant and developer.</p>

<p>Ten - Introducing a Section 106 dispute resolution service <i>(Pages 56 – 59)</i></p>	<p>Question 10.12: Are there any cases or circumstances where the consequences of the report, as set out in the Bill, should not apply? <i>(Page 59)</i></p>	<p>No comment</p>
<p>Ten - Introducing a Section 106 dispute resolution service <i>(Pages 56 – 59)</i></p>	<p>Question 10.13: What limitations do you consider appropriate, following the publication of the appointed person's report, to restrict the use of other obligations? <i>(Page 59)</i></p>	<p>None, if these are properly agreed between the LPA and parties to the agreement, and are consistent with the CIL regulations.</p>
<p>Ten - Introducing a Section 106 dispute resolution service <i>(Pages 56 – 59)</i></p>	<p>Question 10.14: Are there any other steps that you consider that parties should be required to take in connection with the appointed person's report and are there any other matters that we should consider when preparing regulations to implement the dispute resolution process? <i>(Page 59)</i></p>	<p>No</p>

Chapter	Question	Suggested response
<p>Eleven - Facilitating delivery of new state-funded school places, including free schools, through expanded permitted development rights</p> <p><i>(Pages 60 – 61)</i></p>	<p>Question 11.1: Do you have any views on our proposals to extend permitted development rights for state-funded schools, or whether other changes should be made? For example, should changes be made to the thresholds within which school buildings can be extended?</p> <p><i>(Page 61)</i></p>	<p>Schools can create significant problems to local communities in relation to noise and traffic impacts. Consistent with other developments of a significant scale, full planning permission should be required to ensure that all the proposed impacts are properly considered and subject to full consultation to take place.</p>
<p>Eleven - Facilitating delivery of new state-funded school places, including free schools, through expanded permitted development rights</p> <p><i>(Pages 60 – 61)</i></p>	<p>Question 11.2: Do you consider that the existing prior approval provisions are adequate? Do you consider that other local impacts arise which should be considered in designing the right?</p> <p><i>(Page 61)</i></p>	<p>See above</p>

Chapter	Question	Suggested response
<p>Twelve - Improving the performance of all statutory consultees</p> <p><i>(Page 62)</i></p>	<p>Question 12.1: What are the benefits and/or risks of setting a maximum period that a statutory consultee can request when seeking an extension of time to respond with comments to a planning application?</p> <p><i>(Page 62)</i></p>	<p>Many statutory consultees are under-resourced. The key issue is ensuring that bodies like the Environment Agency, Highways Agency and Local Highway Authority, as well as in-house specialisms within LPAs are properly resourced so that they can provide a fit-for-purpose service. This is no criticism of those bodies whose staff wish to provide a high quality service but at times find themselves unable to do so. A maximum time period would be of great benefit to LPAs as the decision maker but only if the consultee has the ability and resources to provide a properly considered response that addresses the concerns of the local community.</p> <p>The corollary of this is that decisions are informed by hastily prepared advice that leads poor quality development and leaves the decision-maker open to challenge or liable to costs at appeal, further slowing down the planning process and the delivery of much need housing/commercial development.</p>
<p>Twelve - Improving the performance of all statutory consultees</p> <p><i>(Page 62)</i></p>	<p>Question 12.2: Where an extension of time to respond is requested by a statutory consultee, what do you consider should be the maximum additional time allowed? Please provide details.</p> <p><i>(Page 62)</i></p>	<p>There should be no maximum period set down in the legislation. The time required for consultees to respond should reflect the complexity of the issues and the need for iterative discussions with the LPA and developer. If the developer is unhappy with delay beyond the statutory time period then the developer can appeal non-determination. If the LPA is unhappy with the delay then it can determine the application on the basis of information available to it at the time. If the developer has not provided the necessary information then the application can be refused on that basis. If any party has acted unreasonably then then an appeal inspector can award costs against that party.</p>

Chapter	Question	Suggested response
Thirteen - Public Sector Equality Duty <i>(Pages 63 – 64)</i>	Question 13.1: Do you have any views about the implications of our proposed changes on people with protected characteristics as defined in the Equalities Act 2010? What evidence do you have on this matter? Is there anything that could be done to mitigate any impact identified? <i>(Page 64)</i>	No comment
Thirteen - Public Sector Equality Duty <i>(Pages 63 – 64)</i>	Question 13.2 Do you have any other suggestions or comments on the proposals set out in this consultation document? <i>(Page 64)</i>	No comment



Department for
Communities and
Local Government

Technical consultation on implementation of planning changes



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Scope of the consultation

Topic of this consultation:	<p>This consultation seeks views on the proposed approach to implementing the planning provisions in the Housing and Planning Bill, and some other planning measures. It covers the following areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Changes to planning application fees• Permission in principle• Brownfield register• Small sites register• Neighbourhood planning• Local plans• Expanding the planning performance regime• Testing competition in the processing of planning applications• Information about financial benefits• Section 106 dispute resolution• Permitted development rights for state-funded schools• Changes to statutory consultation on planning applications
Scope of this consultation:	<p>We are seeking views of all parties with an interest in the proposals, so that relevant views and evidence can be taken into account in deciding the way forward.</p>
Geographical scope:	<p>These proposals relate to England only.</p>
Impact assessment:	<p>We have included a summary of the Equality Statements prepared to support these policies. We are keen to receive feedback on the evidence in this document, and to receive any other relevant evidence that should be considered.</p>

Basic Information

To: This is a public consultation and anyone with an interest in the proposals may respond.

Responsibility: This consultation is being run by the Planning Consultation Team in the Department for Communities and Local Government.

Duration: This consultation will run from Wednesday 17 February and will conclude on Friday 15 April 2016.

After the consultation: A summary of responses to each of the consultations contained within this document will be published on the Department's website within three months of the closing date.

How to respond to this consultation

To respond to this consultation use the following link:

<https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/HZHX8H9>

Introduction

The purpose of planning is to help achieve sustainable development. It is important that the planning system supports delivery of the high quality new homes and supporting infrastructure that the country needs.

This consultation is seeking views on the proposed approach to implementation of measures in the Housing and Planning Bill, and some other planning measures. Responses to the consultation will inform the detail of the secondary legislation which will be prepared once the Bill gains Royal Assent. We are setting out proposals in the following areas:

Chapter 1: Changes to planning application fees;

Chapter 2: Enabling planning bodies to grant permission in principle for housing development on sites allocated in plans or identified on brownfield registers, and allowing small builders to apply directly for permission in principle for minor development;

Chapter 3: Introducing a statutory register of brownfield land suitable for housing development;

Chapter 4: Creating a small sites register to support custom build homes;

Chapter 5: Speeding up and simplifying neighbourhood planning and giving more powers to neighbourhood forums;

Chapter 6: Introducing criteria to inform decisions on intervention to deliver our commitment to get local plans in place;

Chapter 7: Extending the existing designation approach to include applications for non-major development;

Chapter 8: Testing competition in the processing of planning applications;

Chapter 9: Information about financial benefits;

Chapter 10: Introducing a Section 106 dispute resolution service;

Chapter 11: Facilitating delivery of new state-funded school places, including free schools, through expanded permitted development rights; and,

Chapter 12: Improving the performance of all statutory consultees.

Chapters 1-12 are structured to allow respondents to comment on consultation proposals which are most relevant to them. We are also seeking views on whether proposals impact on protected groups as described in chapter 13, to ensure that we take into account all relevant evidence in our consideration.

Chapter 1: Changes to planning application fees

- 1.1. Fees for making planning applications are set nationally at present¹, and make an important contribution to meeting the costs of development management services. They were last revised, in line with inflation, in 2012. This consultation sets out proposals for amending fees to reflect changes since 2012, but in ways which link more effectively to the service which is provided.
- 1.2. We are particularly keen to encourage innovation and improvement in the way that planning services operate, for the benefit of both applicants and authorities. For example, some councils have successfully entered into partnerships with commercial providers that have enabled savings to be made while allowing the service to draw on a wider pool of staff. Opportunities exist to go much further, and the proposals in this consultation are designed to enable radical reform where authorities identify the scope for significant improvements.

What are we proposing?

National fees

- 1.3. We are proposing that national fees are increased by a proportionate amount, in a way which is linked to both inflation and performance. The national fee schedule would be revised in line with the rate of inflation since the last adjustment in 2012, with the exact level of increase reflecting when the change comes into effect². We also propose to make future adjustments on an annual basis, if required, to maintain fee levels relative to inflation.
- 1.4. We are clear that any changes in fees should go hand-in-hand with the provision of an effective service. Consequently, we are proposing that any increase in national fees would apply only to those authorities that are performing well. One approach would be to not apply an increase where an authority is designated as under-performing in its handling of applications for major development (or, in future, applications for non-major development)³. However we are interested in views on other approaches that could be employed, such as limiting increases to those authorities that are in the top 75% of performance for both the speed and quality of

¹ By regulations made under section 303 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990; see the Town and Country Planning (Fees for Applications, Deemed Applications, Requests and Site Visits) (England) Regulations 2012 S.I. 2012/2920, as amended.

² This will need to follow the passage of the Housing and Planning Bill and revised fees regulations, so will not be before Autumn 2016. An amendment to the Bill will, once enacted, make it easier for different fee scales to be applied in different areas.

³ Designations made or revoked in accordance with section 62B of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990, and the published criteria for designation and de-designation (for current version see <http://tinyurl.com/nj7sn67>). The Housing and Planning Bill proposes to extend this approach to the handling of applications for non-major development.

their decisions⁴. Whatever approach is taken, we also wish to consider whether this change should be implemented as quickly as possible – so that under-performing authorities do not receive the next available increase – or whether authorities should be given a period of grace before the policy applies, so that there is further time to improve before any fee increases are withheld.

- 1.5. Where an authority is not eligible for a particular national increase, the pre-existing fee would continue to apply until the authority's performance improves to the point at which it becomes eligible for increases again, and the fees regulations are next revised (we expect that this would be on an annual basis, to implement any inflation-related adjustments in national fees). At that time the most recently-revised national fee would apply in that area.

Question 1.1: Do you agree with our proposal to adjust planning fees in line with inflation, but only in areas where the local planning authority is performing well? If not what alternative would you suggest?

Question 1.2: Do you agree that national fee changes should not apply where a local planning authority is designated as under-performing, or would you propose an alternative means of linking fees to performance? And should there be a delay before any change of this type is applied?

- 1.6. As an alternative to future increases in national fees linked to performance, we have considered whether fees should be set locally in all areas. However, as planning authorities are, at present, solely responsible for the planning service in their area, this approach risks unintended consequences: increases in fees might not be linked sufficiently to improved performance, and in some cases could even rise to a level that dissuades applications from coming forward. Nevertheless we believe that opportunities do exist for more locally-led approaches where there is a clear link to improvement.

Local flexibility and performance

- 1.7. We have embarked on a radical programme to decentralise power from Whitehall: using deals to give every part of the country the opportunity to innovate, improve services and show how funding can go further. Through this process we are keen to see proposals for ambitious reforms in the way that planning services are delivered, and which can enable greater flexibility in the way that fees are set.
- 1.8. Proposals need to be locally-led, and we wish to encourage a wide range of measures that can streamline the process for applicants and accelerate decisions. However, we are particularly interested in ideas that would:

⁴ This could, for example, be assessed annually against data that the Department would publish on performance over the most recent two-year period, across all application types.

a) provide applicants with the choice of a fast-track service (or services) in return for a proportionate fee. Such proposals would need to maintain the minimum standards for notification and representations set out in legislation⁵, while offering decisions in less time than the current statutory periods⁶. We are interested in your views on whether any fast track standards should be set out in regulations (and applied in specific areas that pursue this approach), or whether local performance agreements could be used to provide sufficient assurance of the enhanced service to be offered.

b) test the potential for, and benefits of, competition in application processing. Clauses in the Housing and Planning Bill will, if enacted, allow competition to be trialled in specific areas, with applicants having the choice of applying to the local planning authority or one of a range of approved providers (which could be other planning authorities). The final sign-off for decisions would remain with the local planning authority. A competitive market for processing applications would require the ability for providers – including the local planning authority – to set their own fees and service standards. Chapter 8 sets out our proposals for how competition could work.

1.9. Given the potential impacts of any changes in fees, service standards and suppliers of planning services, we would expect the local business community to be involved in formulating any proposals of this type, with the Local Enterprise Partnerships having an important role in this engagement.

Question 1.3: Do you agree that additional flexibility over planning application fees should be allowed through deals, in return for higher standards of service or radical proposals for reform?

Question 1.4: Do you have a view on how any fast-track services could best operate, or on other options for radical service improvement?

1.10. We consider these proposals will benefit users in a number of ways: by encouraging radical improvements in development management processes, improving choice in the services on offer and linking any changes in fees to performance. However we are interested in your views on the potential impacts of the changes.

Question 1.5: Do you have any other comments on these proposals, including the impact on business and other users of the system?

⁵ See articles 14–16 (publicity), 18–21 (consultation) and 24–26 (representations and notifications) of the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015 S.I. 2015/595 (the “DMPO”).

⁶ See article 34 of the Development Management Procedure Order.

Chapter 2: Permission in principle

- 2.1 The Housing and Planning Bill, currently being considered by Parliament, introduces a new 'permission in principle' route for obtaining planning permission. This is designed to separate decision making on 'in principle' issues (such as land use, location and amount of development) from matters of technical detail (such as what the buildings will look like). The Bill provides for permission in principle to be granted on sites in plans and registers, and for minor sites on application to the local planning authority.
- 2.2 By improving how matters of basic principle are dealt with in the planning system, we can help make the process more effective and support the delivery of new homes. The current system can often require too much information to be produced upfront before there is reliable certainty that a development can go ahead in principle. Greater certainty about whether land is suitable for development can bring benefits for all, especially when it is given early in the process.

Background

- 2.3 Two key issues with the present system are:
- It allows in principle decisions to be revisited at multiple points in the process. Local planning authorities, parishes and designated neighbourhood planning forums frequently identify land and assess its suitability for development when they propose the allocation of sites in plans. Even where land is allocated in a local plan, decision makers will reassess the basic principles of site suitability when a planning application is submitted.
 - It requires applicants to invest heavily in the finer detail of a scheme without sufficient certainty that a site is suitable in principle. Alongside uncertainty of outcome, the system requires applicants to invest upfront in producing information related to a wide variety of detailed technical matters, such as detailed design. The cost of producing this information can be considerable and the time spent considering it can be significant for local authorities and others, including consultees and communities, who are asked to comment on proposals. Even where only outline planning permission is sought with all matters reserved, an applicant often needs to invest heavily in illustrative detail (e.g. showing detailed layouts and other design features).
- 2.4 Our proposals aim to give greater certainty and predictability within the planning system by ensuring that the principle of development only needs to be established once. More certainty should be available earlier in the process, before heavy investment is made in costly technical details. At the same time we need to ensure an appropriate assessment of the development proposed against local and national policy, and the opportunity for involvement of communities and other interested parties.
- 2.5 We consider that permission in principle will have a number of benefits: it will increase the likelihood of suitable sites being developed; it will also improve the efficiency of the planning system by reducing the number of detailed applications that are unsuitable in

principle; and it will limit the amount of time spent reappraising the principle of development at different points in the process.

- 2.6 The Bill sets the overarching framework for permission in principle to be granted in two ways:
- on allocation in a locally supported qualifying document that identifies sites as having permission in principle; and,
 - on application to the local planning authority.
- 2.7 The primary decisions about when to grant permission in principle will be locally driven, taking account of national and local policy. Permission in principle must be followed by an application for technical details consent to agree the details of the scheme before the applicant obtains full planning permission and can start work on site.

Permission in principle on allocation in a locally supported qualifying document

- 2.8 The three key requirements that need to be met in order for permission in principle to be granted by this route are:
- a) the site must be allocated in locally produced and supported documents that have followed an effective process of preparation, public engagement, and have regard to local and national policy;
 - b) the document must indicate that a particular site is allocated with permission in principle. The choice about which sites to grant permission in principle in a qualifying document will be a local one, but our expectation is that it will be used in most cases. Allocations in existing plans cannot grant permission in principle i.e. it will not apply retrospectively;
 - c) the site allocation must contain 'prescribed particulars'. These are the core 'in principle' matters that will form the basis of the permission in principle.
- 2.9 The result of a grant of permission in principle is that the acceptability of the 'prescribed particulars' cannot be re-opened when an application for technical details consent is considered by the local planning authority. Local planning authorities will not have the opportunity to impose any conditions when they grant permission in principle. It will therefore be important for the development granted in principle to be described in sufficient detail, to ensure that the parameters within which subsequent application for technical details consent must come forward is absolutely clear.

Permission in principle on application for small sites

- 2.10 The Bill also makes provision for permission in principle to be granted following an application made to the local planning authority. An application can be used to establish the acceptability of the 'core in principle' matters for a particular site and a grant of permission in principle will have the same effect as described above. Applications for permission in principle will require less information upfront than an outline application, as the consent authorising the development (i.e. the planning permission subject to any conditions) is not secured until technical details consent is obtained.

- 2.11 Applications for permission in principle must be determined having regard to the development plan and any other material considerations, in the same way an application for planning permission is considered. Where it is justified a local planning authority can refuse permission in principle and in those circumstances the applicants will have a right to appeal.

Technical details consent

- 2.12 Whether permission in principle is granted on allocation or application, full planning permission will only be secured once technical details consent has been obtained by applying to the local planning authority. We expect that the parameters of the technical details that need to be agreed will have been described at the permission in principle stage. An application for technical details consent must:
- a) relate to a site where permission in principle is in place;
 - b) propose development in accordance with the permission in principle; and
 - c) be contained in a single application (i.e. not broken down into a series of applications).
- 2.13 An application for technical details consent for a site must be determined in accordance with the permission in principle in force at the time. This means that the question of whether the 'in principle matters' are acceptable cannot be re-opened. It does not prevent consideration of the technical details of the scheme against local and national policy and other relevant material considerations. A refusal of technical details consent can be appealed. Any conditions needed can be imposed when technical details consent is obtained. Technical details consent will also be the stage at which planning obligations will be negotiated and the Community Infrastructure Levy will apply.
- 2.14 The process for applying for technical details consent will draw on some of the key elements of information submission and consideration, engagement and decision making used for applications for outline planning permission, with some variation to avoid unnecessary requirements or duplication at the permission in principle and technical details consent stages. These elements of the process are considered further below. We expect that decisions on applications for technical details consent will be made efficiently as they will focus on whether the detail is acceptable, rather than re-appraising the principle of the development.

What are we proposing?

- 2.15 The Housing and Planning Bill sets the overarching framework for permission in principle. The detailed operation of it will be set out in a Development Order⁷. We are keen to hear views about our detailed proposals for how permission in principle will

⁷ A development order is made way of secondary legislation used to implement powers given in primary legislation – for example, the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015 sets out the procedure connected with planning applications.

operate to help shape the secondary legislation. The areas for consultation can be broken down into eight areas:

- a) the qualifying documents that can grant permission in principle on allocation
- b) permission in principle on application
- c) the 'in principle matters'
- d) sensitive areas
- e) involvement of the community and others
- f) information requirements
- g) durations of permission in principle and technical details consent
- h) maximum determination periods

The locally supported qualifying documents that can grant permission in principle on allocation

2.16 Permission in principle can only be granted on allocation where it is identified in a qualifying document. The choice about whether to grant permission in principle should be locally driven and reinforces our commitment to a plan-led system. We therefore propose that qualifying documents should be:

- a) future local plans;
- b) future neighbourhood plans;
- c) brownfield registers⁸.

2.17 We think that using these as qualifying documents to grant permission in principle will allow local planning authorities, parishes, and designated neighbourhood groups⁹ to propose sites to be granted permission in principle as part of an effective process for identifying and assessing sites that are suitable for development. Central to this will be the consideration of in principle matters against local and national planning policy. Appropriate community engagement and involvement of other relevant consultees is also ensured.

2.18 Using plans and registers to grant permission in principle will make better use of the detailed work that already goes into making a plan. It will reinforce the allocation of sites in plans by ensuring that they send the strongest possible signal about which land is suitable locally for development.

Question 2.1: Do you agree that the following should be qualifying documents capable of granting permission in principle?

- a) future local plans;

⁸ See Chapter 3 of this consultation on brownfield – brownfield registers are being introduced by clause 137 of the Housing and Planning Bill 2015.

⁹ Parishes and designated neighbourhood groups for the purpose of neighbourhood plans only.

- b) future neighbourhood plans;
- c) brownfield registers.

Permission in principle on application

- 2.19 We recognise that developers of smaller sites can face particular challenges with the planning system due to lack of certainty. This is because the sites they want to develop often do not have the benefit of a plan allocation and developers of small sites can struggle to get access to timely pre-application advice. To help address these concerns, we propose that applicants for minor development¹⁰ should be able to apply directly to the local planning authority for permission in principle, submitting a minimum amount of information.
- 2.20 Permission in principle applications could also be of benefit to applicants for major development. As major development can involve greater information requirements, before making this route available we want to ensure that it would provide a sufficiently distinct option from existing outline planning permission. We therefore propose to consider the case for this following a closer examination of the operation of outline permission.

Question 2.2: Do you agree that permission in principle on application should be available to minor development?

The ‘in principle matters’ that should be covered in a grant of permission in principle

- 2.21 We want to make an appropriate distinction between decision making on ‘in principle matters’ and technical detail. The former will consist of the ‘prescribed particulars’ which must be included in a permission in principle, while the latter will focus on matters of technical detail to be agreed as part of a subsequent application for technical details consent.
- 2.22 The ‘in principle matters’ are the core elements underpinning the basic suitability of a site for development. We want to ensure that these core elements are established by a grant of permission in principle. We recognise that there is a careful balance to be struck between delivering the greater certainty that is needed and avoiding overloading a permission in principle with too many matters of detail that may undermine its fundamental purpose.
- 2.23 We propose that the only ‘in principle matters’ that should be determined as part of a permission in principle should be the location, the uses and the amount of development. These are described further below:

Location	We propose that this would be a red line plan drawn to a scale that clearly identifies the location
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¹⁰ Development that is not major development or a householder application as defined in Article 2 Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015.

	and parameters of the site.
Uses	We propose that permission in principle should be given for proposals that are housing led. Retail, community, and commercial uses that are compatible with a residential use can also be granted permission in principle where they form part of a housing led development.
Amount of residential development	To achieve a good balance between ensuring upfront certainty and flexibility, it is proposed that permission in principle will specify a minimum and maximum level of residential development that is acceptable. This range will be indicated either by the number of units or by the dwellings per hectare. Using a range will allow some flexibility to address issues emerging at the technical details consent stage. The amount of non-residential development will not have to be specified.

2.24 We propose that anything other than location, use, and amount of development are not included in the permission in principle and will be regarded as technical details. These matters will need later agreement through an application for technical details consent. We expect that the parameters of the technical details that need to be agreed, such as essential infrastructure provision, will have been described at the permission in principle stage and will vary from site to site.

2.25 Examples of technical details include the provision of infrastructure, fuller details of open space, affordable housing, alongside matters of design, access, layout and landscaping. If the technical details are not acceptable for justifiable reasons, the local planning authority could justify a refusal at the technical details stage, and the applicant would have the right of appeal. The local planning authority may not use the technical details consent process to reopen the 'in principle' issues that have been approved in the permission in principle.

Question 2.3: Do you agree that location, uses and amount of residential development should constitute 'in principle matters' that must be included in a permission in principle? Do you think any other matter should be included?

Question 2.4: Do you have views on how best to ensure that the parameters of the technical details that need to be agreed are described at the permission in principle stage?

The approach to sensitive sites

2.26 Permission in principle will help bring forward suitable sites for development more quickly, while reducing the amount of time that the planning system spends considering the detail of development that is unsuitable in principle. We recognise that sites can have particular constraints and sensitivities - such as

proximity to heritage assets, contamination, and flood risk.

- 2.27 Permission in principle will not remove the need to assess the impact of development properly before full planning permission is granted. We are clear that the assessment of all sites against local and national planning policy is at the heart of both the decision to grant permission in principle and the subsequent agreement of technical details.
- 2.28 We expect that in most cases it should be possible to decide whether or not to grant permission in principle. In a small number of cases, the site might be suitable, but the extent or nature of development is highly constrained due to the sensitivity of the site or its surroundings. Where allocation is being considered in these circumstances, a decision may be taken to allocate a site, but not grant permission in principle. If it is an application, the local planning authority may decide that it cannot grant permission in principle given the sensitivity of the site.
- 2.29 When considering an application for technical details consent, the local planning authority will be able to consider the detailed proposals for how the development will be delivered on the site, having regard to local and national policy. In line with other permissions, it will be possible to impose conditions or seek planning obligations to mitigate impacts of the development, and where it is justified refuse planning permission.
- 2.30 Permission in principle will also not remove obligations in relation to European Directives. We would welcome views on options for addressing the requirements of the Environmental Impact Assessment Directive¹¹ including how this could be done alongside requirements such as Strategic Environment Assessment undertaken as part of plan production. We propose that where development on a site falls within Schedule 2 of the 2011 Regulations¹², it may only be granted permission in principle on allocation or application where:
- the local planning authority has sufficient information about the proposed development on that site to be able to screen it and as a result of screening the project, the authority determines that an environmental impact assessment is not required; or
 - as a result of screening, the authority decides that the development would be EIA development, that it carries out an Environmental Impact Assessment, including consultation, of all its significant effects, and ensures that permission in principle is only granted if any measures needed to address the significant effects of the proposal are in place.
- 2.31 The requirements of the Habitats Directive¹³ will also need to be met where they apply. The Habitats Directive provides protection for Special Areas of Conservation and Special Protection Areas. Plans or projects which are likely to have a significant effect on either of these areas, but are not directly connected with or necessary to the management of that area, must be subject to an

¹¹ EIA directive 85/337/EEC, as amended and consolidated.

¹² <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukxi/2011/1824/contents/made> as amended by http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukxi/2015/660/pdfs/ukxi_20150660_en.pdf.

¹³ Directive 92/43/EEC on the conservation of natural habitats and of wild fauna and flora.

appropriate assessment of its implications for the site. A plan or project may only proceed if it will not adversely affect the integrity of the site concerned.

Question 2.5: Do you have views on our suggested approach to a) Environmental Impact Assessment, b) Habitats Directive or c) other sensitive sites?

Involvement of the community and others

- 2.32 We want to ensure that, whether permission in principle is granted on allocation or application, communities and other interested parties have the opportunity to comment on the principle of whether a site should be developed for housing and the appropriate scale of development on the site. We also want to ensure that an appropriate opportunity for further engagement is available when the technical details are considered, while minimising any unnecessary duplication.
- 2.33 Where permission in principle is proposed on allocation in local and neighbourhood plans, the government considers that existing consultation arrangements provide an appropriate framework for involving communities and appropriate specialist bodies such as the Environment Agency and Natural England. We are seeking views on proposals relating to the brownfield register in Chapter 2.
- 2.34 For permission in principle applications, it is proposed to set consultation arrangements for involvement of communities and statutory consultees that are in line with requirements for planning applications¹⁴.
- 2.35 Before an application for technical details consent is determined, we do not propose to require by secondary legislation that local planning authorities consult with the community and others before making a decision. We would welcome views about giving local planning authorities the option to carry out further consultation with such interested persons as they consider appropriate. This would be based on their judgement and would be informed by the engagement that took place when permission in principle was granted. While we think that it is important for appropriate further engagement to take place at the technical details consent stage, we consider that centrally mandating what should be done risks unnecessarily repeating engagement and takes away an important local flexibility. We do propose that it should be mandatory for applicants to notify landowners and agricultural tenants of the application (as is currently the case with a planning application).

Question 2.6: Do you agree with our proposals for community and other involvement?

Information requirements

¹⁴ As set out in the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015.

- 2.36 We want to ensure that local planning authorities have the information needed to determine an application for permission in principle or technical details consent. We also recognise that it is extremely important to ensure information requirements are proportionate and justified.
- 2.37 Local planning authorities, parishes and designated neighbourhood planning groups already produce information as part of plan production. We think that this will provide a sound basis from which to make decisions about the ‘in principle matters’ on allocation and whether permission in principle can be granted to a site, subject to further information being produced to agree the technical details later.
- 2.38 Where an applicant submits an application for permission in principle to the local planning authority for minor development, we think that a decision about whether the development is acceptable in principle should be possible with minimal information. It is proposed that that applications will include:
- a nationally prescribed application form;
 - a plan which identifies the land to which the application relates (drawn to an identified scale and showing the direction of north); and
 - a fee which we would expect to be set at a level that is consistent with similar types of applications in the planning system.
- 2.39 For applications for technical details consent, it is proposed that an application will include:
- a nationally prescribed application form (including an ownership certificate¹⁵);
 - plans and drawings necessary to describe the technical details of the development;
 - a fee which we would expect to be set at a level that is consistent with similar types of applications in the planning system.
- 2.40 The technical details to be agreed will vary from site to site depending on the parameters set by the permission in principle. We believe that most details can be broadly categorised as relating to either the design of the development or its impact. Accordingly, it is proposed that applications for technical details consent should be limited to only require two further sets of information:
- a design statement, which should contain information relating to design matters including layout, access and architectural detail; and
 - an impact statement, which should include:
 - i. required further assessments e.g. contamination study and flood risk assessment
 - ii. mitigation e.g. remediation and drainage schemes.

¹⁵ A certificate which applicants must complete that confirms that notice of an application or planning permission has been served on any landowners etc. See article 14 of the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015.

Question 2.7: Do you agree with our proposals for information requirements?

Question 2.8: Do you have any views about the fee that should be set for a) a permission in principle application and b) a technical details consent application?

The respective duration of permission in principle and technical details consent

2.41 The duration of permission in principle will set the maximum amount of time an applicant is given to submit an application for technical details consent before the permission in principle expires. The date a permission in principle is granted will be:

- the date that a plan that allocates land with permission in principle is adopted or approved;
- the date that land allocated as having permission in principle granted to it is formally placed on the brownfield register; or
- the date that an application for permission in principle is granted.

Duration of permission in principle on allocation

2.42 Where local planning authorities, parishes and designated neighbourhood planning groups propose to grant permission in principle through their plans and registers, we propose that it will have a maximum duration of 5 years. In order to grant permission in principle for a duration beyond 5 years, the plan or register granting it would need to be reviewed.

2.43 We are keen to hear views about whether we should allow for some local variation to the duration to facilitate plan led development – for example, to allow different start dates based on triggers like delivery of infrastructure and to allow the expiry date to be locally set.

Expiry of permission in principle on application

2.44 For expiry of permission in principle granted on application, we are considering setting a nationally prescribed period. Two alternative options for this are:

Option A – to set the expiry of a permission in principle granted on application at three years. This would achieve consistency with outline planning permissions.

Option B – to set the expiry at one year. This is to encourage applicants to bring forward an application for technical details consent quickly after receiving permission in principle.

2.45 We would welcome views about also giving local authorities the ability to vary the duration of permission in principle for shorter or longer periods, having regard to the provisions of the development plan and other material considerations, in a

similar way to section 91 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990.

Expiry of permission of technical details consent

2.46 When technical details consent is granted by a local planning authority, the same standard condition limiting the duration of planning permission to three years will be implied as is the case for other planning permissions (unless the local planning authority provides otherwise). This is because a grant of technical details consent is a form of planning permission, so the existing provisions apply.

Question 2.9: Do you agree with our proposals for the expiry of on permission in principle on allocation and application? Do you have any views about whether we should allow for local variation to the duration of permission in principle?

The maximum determination periods for permission in principle on application and technical details consent

2.47 The maximum determination period is the timeframe set by government for the local planning authority to decide applications. It is used as the trigger point for when appeals can be made against non-determination and for monitoring the performance of local planning authorities.

2.48 In order to consider the most appropriate determination periods for permission in principle on application and technical details consent, we have examined other determination periods in the planning process. For example, an application for outline planning permission has a determination period of 8 weeks for minor applications, and a further 8 weeks for subsequent applications for reserved matters.

2.49 We think that the early certainty given by permission in principle about the acceptability of a development offers the potential to improve the efficiency of planning system overall. Reflecting this, we propose that permission in principle applications and applications for technical details consent should be subject to the following maximum determination periods:

Application:	Determination period:
Permission in principle minor application	5 weeks
Technical details consent for minor sites	5 weeks
Technical details consent for major sites	10 weeks

Question 2.10: Do you agree with our proposals for the maximum determination periods for a) permission in principle minor applications, and b) technical details consent for minor and major sites?

Chapter 3: Brownfield register

- 3.1 Brownfield land has an important role to play in meeting the country's need for new homes. We are supporting the regeneration of brownfield land for housing through a range of measures, including the creation of a £2 billion Long Term Housing Development Fund to unlock housing development and providing £1.2 billion to unlock at least 30,000 Starter Homes on brownfield land.
- 3.2 The National Planning Policy Framework sets out that planning policies and decisions should encourage the effective use of land by reusing brownfield sites, provided they are not of high environmental value, and that local planning authorities may set locally appropriate targets for the use of brownfield land. Planning Practice Guidance also stresses the importance of bringing brownfield land back into use.
- 3.3 We want to go further to maximise the number of new homes built on suitable brownfield land. We have set out our commitment to introduce a statutory brownfield register, and ensure that 90% of suitable brownfield sites have planning permission for housing by 2020. Through brownfield registers, a standard set of information will be kept up-to date and made publicly available to help provide certainty for developers and communities and encourage investment in local areas.

Background

- 3.4 Local planning authorities and communities share our ambition to maximise the use of brownfield land, and we are supporting them in a number of ways to drive up the number of permissions for new homes on suitable sites including:
- through brownfield registers which we propose will be a vehicle for granting permission in principle for new homes on suitable brownfield sites;
 - by offering financial support to authorities that are piloting the preparation of brownfield registers ahead of the proposed statutory requirement; and,
 - by supporting authorities that are spearheading the use of local development orders for housing. These orders help speed up the planning process and provide investor certainty. They are a valuable tool to help local planning authorities get planning permissions in place.
- 3.5 As set out in the previous chapter, we propose that brownfield registers should be a qualifying document to grant permission in principle¹⁶. We expect authorities to take a positive, proactive approach when including sites in their registers, rejecting potential sites only if they can demonstrate that there is no realistic prospect of sites being suitable for new housing. We also expect that the large majority of sites on registers that do not already have an extant planning permission will be granted permission in

¹⁶ See Chapter 2 Permission in Principle.

principle, and technical details consent subsequently, for housing. In a small number of cases, we recognise that it may not be appropriate for local registers to grant permission in principle, for example because there is a proposed planning application or local development order in the pipeline; or where the development raises environmental impacts or habitats issues that would be more appropriately dealt with through a planning application. We will publish Planning Practice Guidance to confirm our expectations on how brownfield registers should be drawn up and kept under review.

What are we proposing?

- 3.6 This consultation seeks views on proposals for preparing brownfield registers and keeping them up to date. This section sets out our proposals for identifying suitable sites, publicity and consultation, the proposed content of the registers and our intended requirements for publishing and updating the data.
- 3.7 Brownfield registers will comprise a comprehensive list of brownfield sites that are suitable for housing, including housing led schemes where housing is the predominant use with a subsidiary element of mixed use.

Preparing registers of brownfield land suitable for housing

Identifying provisional sites

- 3.8 Local planning authorities currently identify sites suitable for housing development as part of the evidence for their local plans and to demonstrate a five year supply. This plays a central role in meeting their communities' housing need. A key component of the evidence base for this work is the Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment process which identifies a future supply of land that is suitable, available and capable of being developed for housing.
- 3.9 We are proposing that local planning authorities should use existing evidence within an up to date Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment as the starting point for identifying suitable sites for local brownfield registers. To support this, we will encourage authorities to consider whether their Assessments are up to date and, if not, to undertake prompt reviews.
- 3.10 While sites contained within the Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment are a useful starting point, we will encourage local authorities to ensure they have considered any other relevant sources if these are not included in their Assessments. This could include sites with extant planning permission and sites known to the authority that have not previously been considered (for example public sector land).
- 3.11 We will also expect authorities to use the existing call for sites process to ask members of the public and other interested parties to volunteer potentially suitable sites for inclusion in their registers. We propose that this would be a short targeted exercise aimed at as wide an audience as is practicable. That will enable windfall sites to be put forward by developers and others for consideration by the authority.

3.12 Authorities that have recently undertaken a full Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment may not consider this to be necessary when initially compiling a register. However, in areas without up to date evidence and for all authorities completing subsequent annual reviews of their register, the process of volunteering potentially suitable sites will play an important role in refreshing the evidence base and help ensure all suitable sites, including windfall sites, are included.

Question 3.1: Do you agree with our proposals for identifying potential sites? Are there other sources of information that we should highlight?

Identifying brownfield land that is suitable for housing

3.13 Brownfield or previously developed land is defined in Annex 2 of the National Planning Policy Framework¹⁷. Sites on brownfield registers will be required to meet this definition of previously developed land. This is a very broad definition and, apart from the exclusions, covers all land in England where there are or have been buildings or other development. Much of this land is already in productive use and would not be suitable for new housing.

3.14 We also intend to require potential sites to be assessed against specific criteria that we will set out in regulations to ensure that they are suitable for housing. In deciding whether to include a site on the register authorities will have to have regard to the National Planning Policy Framework and Planning Practice Guidance.

3.15 Authorities should also have regard to their local plan. Where a brownfield site is subject to an allocation for a use other than housing in an up to date local plan and there is compelling evidence supporting that allocation, it is unlikely that the site would be regarded as being suitable for housing.

3.16 Authorities should adopt a positive, proactive approach and consider both large and small sites. They should only reject potential sites if they can demonstrate that there is no realistic prospect of sites being suitable for new housing.

3.17 In defining the criteria in regulations we intend to draw from policy in the National Planning Policy Framework. To be regarded as suitable for housing our proposed criteria are that sites must be:

- Available. This means that sites should be either deliverable or developable¹⁸. Sites that are deliverable should be available and offer a suitable location for development now and be achievable with a realistic prospect that housing will be delivered on the site within five years and in particular that development of the site is viable. To be considered developable sites are likely to come forward later on (e.g. between six and ten years). They should be in a suitable location for housing development and there should be a reasonable prospect the site will be available and that it could be viably developed at the point envisaged. Consideration about site viability should be proportionate having

¹⁷ See <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-planning-policy-framework--2>

¹⁸ See National Planning Policy Framework footnotes 11 and 12.

regard to the particular circumstances of the site and any other relevant factors. Sites that are not allocated in the local plan should be included in local registers where they meet the relevant criteria and local planning authorities conclude that they will come forward over a reasonable period of time.

- Capable of supporting five or more dwellings or more than 0.25 hectares. This approach to defining a minimum site size threshold is intended to be proportionate and is in line with Planning Practice Guidance on conducting Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessments. Authorities should also aim to seek suggestions for smaller sites from the public and other interested parties and include these sites in their registers whenever possible because of their valuable contribution to overall housing supply.
- Capable of development. Local authorities should ensure that sites are suitable for residential use and free from constraints *that cannot be mitigated*. The National Planning Policy Framework has strong policies for conserving and enhancing both the natural and the historic environment which should be taken into account, together with other specific policies in the Framework that indicate development should be restricted. Authorities will need to support decisions about potential constraints with strong evidence and appropriate mitigations should be considered wherever possible to enable sites to be included on the register.

Question 3.2: Do you agree with our proposed criteria for assessing suitable sites? Are there other factors which you think should be considered?

The approach to development raising environmental impacts or habitats issues

Environmental Impact Assessment and Habitats Directives

3.18 When compiling brownfield registers, local planning authorities will need to have in mind obligations in relation to European Directives. We are considering options for addressing the requirements of the EIA Directive¹⁹. We propose that where development on a site falls within Schedule 2 of the EIA Regulations²⁰, it may only be included in local registers as a site suitable for a grant of permission in principle where:

- the local planning authority has sufficient information about the proposed development on that site to be able to screen it (i.e. the authority is in a position to determine the main or significant effects of the development) and as a result of screening the project, the authority determines that an environmental impact assessment is not required; or

¹⁹ EIA directive 85/337/EEC, as amended and consolidated.

²⁰ Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2011, SI 2011/1824, as amended.

- as a result of that screening, the authority decides that the development would be EIA development, that it carries out an Environmental Impact Assessment, including consultation, and if it determines that development should be included on the register, notes as part of the information to be contained on the register any measure necessary to address the significant impacts of that proposal.

3.19 The Habitats Directive²¹ will be of relevance when preparing registers. The Directive provides protection for Special Areas of Conservation and Special Protection Areas. Plans or projects which are likely to have a significant effect on these areas, but are not directly connected with or necessary to the management of that area, must be subject to an appropriate assessment of its implications for the site. A plan or project may only proceed if it will not adversely affect the integrity of the site concerned. It would be inappropriate for a site to be placed on the register if its development would be prohibited by the Habitats Directive.

Question 3.3: Do you have any views on our suggested approach for addressing the requirements of Environmental Impact Assessment and Habitats Directives?

Strategic Environmental Assessment

3.20 The Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004²² which transpose the requirements of the Strategic Environment Assessment Directive require an environmental assessment to be carried out for certain plans and programmes which are likely to have significant environmental effects. The directive requires an assessment for plans or programmes which:

- set the framework for future development consent of projects listed in the EIA Directive; or
- have been determined to require a Habitats Regulations Assessment.

3.21 The regulations also say that plans and programmes which determine the use of small areas at local level, and minor modifications to plans and programmes, require an environmental assessment only where they are likely to have significant environmental effects. The Supreme Court has recently considered the circumstances in which a plan or programme will be subject to the requirements of the directive.

3.22 Depending on the content of brownfield registers, there may be potential for the regulations to apply. We are considering this and how this might be handled. Our initial assessment is that in cases where it did apply, given the nature of the register, the content of the environmental assessment is likely to be limited in scope. It may also be appropriate in some cases to use the environmental assessment undertaken during the preparation of the local plan to assess the likely environmental effects of the register. Subsequent reviews of a register would only need an environmental assessment if it is considered likely that this would lead to significant effects.

²¹ Directive 92/43/EEC on the conservation of natural habitats and of wild fauna and flora

²² SI 2004/1633, as amended.

Question 3.4: Do you agree with our views on the application of the Strategic Environment Assessment Directive? Could the Department provide assistance in order to make any applicable requirements easier to meet?

Publicity and consultation requirements

3.23 A key purpose of brownfield registers is to provide transparent information about suitable sites to local communities, developers and others. We propose that information about potentially suitable sites should be available at local authority offices and online. Once local authorities have considered representations on their proposed list of sites, we will encourage them to publicise their decisions, including reasons why sites have or have not been granted permission in principle.

3.24 We intend, through regulations, to require local planning authorities to carry out consultation and other procedures on their registers. This will give communities and other interested parties the opportunity to have their views heard or provide specialist advice where sites on brownfield registers are being considered for permission in principle for housing development. Engagement should be proportionate and follow the approach set out for our proposals for permission in principle.

3.25 Where a site is included in a register but is not suitable for a grant of permission in principle, the Housing and Planning Bill also contains a provision, which we intend to use, for the Secretary of State to give local authorities the discretion to consult their local communities and other interested parties, such as those who can offer specialist advice, about those sites. This recognises that local planning authorities are best placed to determine whether consultation with local communities and others would be helpful, and it provides authorities with flexibility to adapt their approach to particular circumstances. If planning permission for housing on suitable sites is to be granted through a planning application or local development order, separate consultation arrangements will apply.

Question 3.5: Do you agree with our proposals on publicity and consultation requirements?

Content of brownfield registers

3.26 Once local planning authorities are satisfied that sites are suitable for housing, they will be required to include them in their brownfield registers. This section sets out our proposals for the content of registers.

3.27 Brownfield registers will improve the availability and transparency of information on brownfield land that is suitable for housing. Authorities will be expected to include all sites considered suitable irrespective of their planning status and registers should include sites that:

- have extant outline or full planning permission or permission granted by local development order where sites have not yet been developed, and sites where

planning permissions are under consideration and local development orders are being prepared;

- have permission in principle for housing;
- are suitable for housing but have no form of existing permission.

3.28 The usefulness of local brownfield registers will be maximised if the data held across all local authority areas is consistent. We therefore propose that for each site in the brownfield register local planning authorities will be required to provide:

- site reference - Unique Property Reference Number (UPRN)
- site name and address
- grid reference
- size (in hectares)
- an estimate of the number of homes that the site would likely to be support, preferably a range of provision
- planning status (including link to details held elsewhere of planning permissions, permission in principle/associated technical details consents, and local development orders)
- ownership (if known and in public ownership)

3.29 In addition local planning authorities will be expected to include any other information that is considered useful, such as information on site constraints and site history.

3.30 We propose to work with local authorities to establish standards which define and describe which data items comprise a local register, and how they will be structured, organised and made openly available. This national standard will meet 'Open Data' principles (see below) and result in the data held in registers being freely available for aggregation and use by everyone with an interest in brownfield land that is suitable for housing.

Question 3.6: Do you agree with the specific information we are proposing to require for each site?

Published data requirements

3.31 We propose to require local planning authorities to meet 'Open Data' standards²³ by publishing their brownfield registers online on their own local websites, in an agreed standard form. This standardised uniform approach has various benefits including allowing data to be aggregated at local and national levels. We also propose that links to these local registers will be recorded or advertised via established data portals²⁴, so that there are opportunities for users to discover and re-use the data held in registers from multiple local authorities.

²³ See <https://www.gov.uk/service-manual/technology/open-data.html>

²⁴ Examples of potential data portals for recording links to local registers are data.gov.uk and the LGA's Local Open Data site.

Question 3.7: Do you have any suggestions about how the data could be standardised and published in a transparent manner?

Updating brownfield registers

3.32 As sites are developed and new sites become available, authorities will need to review their stock of brownfield land and its permission status on a regular basis. We expect this to be at least once a year. This will require a review and update of the information on sites already in registers. It will also require the addition of new sites that have been identified and assessed as suitable since registers were last updated, including sites that have come forward following local authority requests for potential sites to be identified by the public, developers and others on a voluntary basis.

Question 3.8: Do you agree with our proposed approach for keeping data up-to-date?

Assessing progress

3.33 We expect authorities to drive progress in getting permission for housing in place on suitable brownfield land, in particular through entering sites on registers in order for those sites to gain a grant of permission in principle and by timely consideration of the subsequent stage of technical details consent.

3.34 The Chancellor's Mansion House Speech in June 2014 made a commitment to maximising the use of suitable brownfield land for new homes, and for measures to underpin this ambition. The Government wishes to ensure that 90% of suitable brownfield sites have planning permission for housing by 2020.

3.35 It is our intention to assess data held in brownfield registers annually from 2017 to track progress against this 90% commitment. We propose that both the baseline against which local authorities are making progress and their achievement against that baseline will be rolling rather than set against a fixed point in 2017, given that new land is likely to become available over time. Permission in principle will be treated as a planning permission when assessing progress given the degree of certainty that it provides.

3.36 We intend to introduce measures that will apply where additional action is needed to ensure that sufficient progress is being made. These measures could include a policy based incentive which would mean that local planning authorities that had failed to make sufficient progress against the brownfield objective would be unable to claim the existence of an up-to-date five year housing land supply when considering applications for brownfield development, and therefore the presumption in favour of sustainable development would apply.

3.37 We propose that the measures we adopt would take effect fully from 2020, and would apply to any local planning authority that had not met the 90% commitment by that date. However, in light of the need for local planning authorities to make continuous

progress towards the 90% commitment, we are also interested in views on any intermediate objectives and actions that might apply.

Question 3.9: Do our proposals to drive progress provide a strong enough incentive to ensure the most effective use of local brownfield registers and permission in principle?

Question 3.10: Are there further specific measures we should consider where local authorities fail to make sufficient progress, both in advance of 2020 and thereafter?

Chapter 4: Small sites register

4.1 Development on small sites, whether in rural or urban locations, can deliver a range of economic and social benefits, including:

- providing opportunities for smaller companies or individuals interested in self-build and custom housebuilding to enter the development market;
- increasing residential build out rates (especially if they can make use of existing infrastructure);
- creating local jobs and sustaining local growth, particularly in rural areas; and,
- making effective use of land which can be developed.

4.2 In particular, small sites of between one and four plot size play an important role in helping meet local housing need and are often ideally suited to self-build and custom housebuilding. In many other European countries individuals commission over half of new build housing, whereas in England this number is still below 10%. We believe there is significant demand for self-build and custom housebuilding in England which, if realised, would increase housing supply in general and has the potential to lead to higher quality housing.

4.3 There are still many challenges in bringing forward small sites for development. In particular, they are less likely to be part of the local plan process. Areas which have a neighbourhood plan are, however, more likely to allocate specific small sites for development. We are currently consulting on how to best use national policy to support proposals for sustainable development on small sites of less than 10 units²⁵.

What are we proposing?

4.4 We consider that a published list of small sites will make it easier for developers and individuals interested in self-build and custom housebuilding to identify suitable sites for development, and will also encourage more land owners to come forward and offer their land for development. A small sites register has particular utility in areas of high demand for self-build and custom housebuilding, as councils will be required to permission sufficient serviced land to match demand. A small sites register will also have a wider utility and support development on small sites more generally. Sites on the register will not necessarily have been subject to an assessment of their suitability for development therefore anyone wishing to develop a site on the register will need to apply for planning permission in the usual way. This will ensure that inappropriate development, for example in back gardens, does not occur. The Housing and Planning Bill contains a power to make regulations requiring local planning authorities in England to keep and publish a register of particular types of land in the authority's area. We are proposing to use this power to require local planning

²⁵ <https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/national-planning-policy-consultation-on-proposed-changes>

authorities to have a part of their register dedicated to “small sites”. We believe that the definition of small sites for this purpose should be sites which are between one and four plots in size.

Question 4.1: Do you agree that for the small sites register, small sites should be between one and four plots in size?

4.6 So as not to discourage landowners from offering their sites for potential development or place an unreasonable burden on local authorities, we consider that there should be no need for any suitability assessment associated with placing a site on the register. Although this will mean that there is no guarantee that land on the register can be used for development, it will still achieve its overall objective of increasing awareness of the location of small sites.

Question 4.2: Do you agree that sites should just be entered on the small sites register when a local authority is aware of them without any need for a suitability assessment?

4.7 We would be interested in understanding whether local planning authorities should be permitted to exclude sites from the register which they deem completely unsuitable for development. If so, we are keen to understand views on what level of screening should be carried out in a way which imposes minimal expectations on local planning authorities.

Question 4.3: Are there any categories of land which we should automatically exclude from the register? If so what are they?

4.8 We consider that the minimum information which the register should contain is:

- the location of the site (such as a six figure grid reference);
- the approximate size of the site (number of square metres); and
- contact details for the owner.

Question 4.4: Do you agree that location, size and contact details will be sufficient to make the small sites register useful? If not what additional information should be required?

Chapter 5: Neighbourhood planning

5.1 The Localism Act 2011 gave communities direct power to shape the development and growth of their local area through a neighbourhood plan or neighbourhood development order. By the start of January 2016, over 1,730 communities across England have taken up their new neighbourhood planning powers²⁶. There have been 135 neighbourhood planning referendums, all of which have been successful, with an average yes vote of 89%. We would like to see many more communities make use of their neighbourhood planning powers.

Background

5.2 In July 2014, we consulted on a number of proposals to make it easier for residents and businesses to come together to produce a neighbourhood plan or Order²⁷. In response to the consultation, steps were taken to speed up the first stage of the process by setting a period of time within which local authorities must decide applications to designate a neighbourhood area. This earlier consultation also sought views on whether there are other stages in the process where time periods may be beneficial. Greater use of time periods for decisions was supported by 50% of respondents from organisations that are, or could be, neighbourhood groups²⁸ and by 54% of those with a development interest.

5.3 We want to encourage communities already engaged in neighbourhood planning to complete the process successfully, and assist others to draw up their own plans or Orders. The Housing and Planning Bill will give new powers for government to set time periods for various local planning authority decisions, and give a new power for the Secretary of State to intervene to send a plan or Order to referendum.

What are we proposing?

5.4 We are proposing to set the various time periods for local planning authority decisions on neighbourhood planning; to set the procedure to be followed where the Secretary of State chooses to intervene in sending a plan or Order to a referendum; and to introduce a new way for neighbourhood forums to better engage in local planning.

²⁶ Based on informal monitoring using automatic reporting of updates from local authority websites, media and other sources.

²⁷ See gov.uk/government/consultations/technical-consultation-on-planning

²⁸ See <http://planningguidance.planningportal.gov.uk/blog/guidance/neighbourhood-planning/who-leads-neighbourhood-planning-in-an-area/>

Designation of neighbourhood areas

- 5.5 The first stage in the process is for an application to be made by a neighbourhood planning group²⁹ to the local planning authority for a neighbourhood area to be designated. Currently when a parish or town council apply for designation of the whole of their parish area, the authority has eight weeks to decide the application, and they have discretion to amend the boundary. Where the proposed boundary falls within two or more authority areas, the period is 20 weeks. In all other cases a decision must be made within 13 weeks of the application first being publicised.
- 5.6 We are now proposing that in certain circumstances a local planning authority must designate all of the neighbourhood area applied for, with no discretion to amend the boundary. The circumstances we propose are when:
- a parish council applies for the whole of the area of the parish to be designated as a neighbourhood area, or applies to enlarge an existing designation of part of the parish to include the whole of the parish area; or
 - in other cases, a local planning authority has not determined an application for designation of a neighbourhood area within the current time periods described above.
- 5.7 There would be an exception if any of the area had already been designated (other than where a parish want to enlarge an existing designated area), or if there was an outstanding application for designation. This is to avoid boundary changes that could impact on neighbourhood plans or Orders in preparation or already made.
- 5.8 Ninety per cent of all applications to designate a neighbourhood area are from parish councils and 90% of those applications are for the whole parish area. Experience suggests that nearly all such applications are successful. The changes would mean that a local planning authority's current requirement to consider parish applications and make a decision within eight weeks (with four weeks of publicity) will no longer apply. Instead, the designation should be made as soon as possible, once the authority is satisfied that the application is valid and complete. Our proposals would also act as a safeguard where a local planning authority is not meeting its statutory duty to decide other types of applications for neighbourhood areas within the current time periods, so that communities are not disadvantaged by the delay.

Question 5.1: Do you support our proposals for the circumstances in which a local planning authority must designate all of the neighbourhood area applied for?

²⁹ a parish council, a town council, or a prospective neighbourhood forum, or a community organisation in the case of a Community Right to Build Order

Designation of neighbourhood forums

- 5.9 When a community wants to take up the opportunities offered by neighbourhood planning and there is no parish council, a 'neighbourhood forum' must be designated by the local planning authority to lead the process. To be designated as a neighbourhood forum, the community group must meet certain conditions³⁰.
- 5.10 Based on information gathered in 2015, it appears to be taking local planning authorities on average 26 weeks to take decisions on applications to designate a neighbourhood forum³¹. 30 per cent of decisions took longer than six months. A number of communities have waited more than a year for a decision on their forum application.
- 5.11 We propose that local planning authorities should reach a decision on an application to designate a neighbourhood forum within 13 weeks. Where the application must be submitted to more than one local planning authority, we propose that this time period should be 20 weeks to allow time for the authorities to cooperate in considering the application. The proposed time periods for designating a neighbourhood forum are the same as the time periods for considering applications for a neighbourhood area to be designated, as these applications are often submitted and considered together. The time period would run from the date immediately following that on which the application is first publicised by a local planning authority (which must be as soon as possible after receiving the application). The local planning authority has to be satisfied that the application is valid and complete before publicising it.
- 5.12 There would be an exception to the time period where more than one neighbourhood forum application has been made in relation to the same or overlapping areas, including any under consideration. This will give groups, with the help of the local planning authority, time to resolve competing applications.

Question 5.2: Do you agree with the proposed time periods for a local planning authority to designate a neighbourhood forum?

Consideration by a local planning authority of the recommendations made by an independent examiner

- 5.13 An independent examiner of a neighbourhood plan or Order must send their report to the local planning authority, who must then decide what action to take in response to each of the report's recommendations. If the local planning authority is satisfied that a draft neighbourhood plan or Order meets the basic conditions and other legal tests (or would with modifications), then a referendum must be held.

³⁰ These are set out in [section 61F\(5\) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990, as applied to neighbourhood plans by section 38C\(1\) and \(2\)\(a\) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004](#) (these provisions were inserted by Schedule 9 to the Localism Act 2011 <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2011/20/schedule/9/enacted>). No conditions have yet been prescribed for designation under section 61F(5)(e) or (6) of the 1990 Act.

³¹ As of June 2015, the average time taken to designate a forum is 26 weeks (based on a sample of 72). 26 forums took longer than 6 months (26 weeks) to designate.

5.14 Information gathered earlier this year suggests that, on average, local planning authorities are taking between five and six weeks to issue their decision on whether to submit a neighbourhood plan or Order to a referendum³². There have been instances where authorities have taken over three months to reach a decision and in one case no decision had been taken a year after receiving an examiner's report.

5.15 Based on this average, we propose that there should be a time period of five weeks (from the date the authority receive the examiner's report) within which this decision must be taken. The exceptions to this would be when:

- a local planning authority proposes to make a decision which differs from that recommended by the examiner.
- a local planning authority and a neighbourhood group agree that more time than the proposed five week period will be required to reach a decision.

Question 5.3: Do you agree with the proposed time period for the local planning authority to decide whether to send a plan or Order to referendum?

5.16 When an authority's proposed decision differs from that recommended by the examiner the Secretary of State may prescribe people who must be notified and consulted. We propose that these should be the neighbourhood planning group and anyone who made representations during the period the plan was publicised by the local planning authority. This would also apply when the Secretary of State has intervened following a request from a neighbourhood planning group as set out below.

Question 5.4: Do you agree with the suggested persons to be notified and invited to make representations when a local planning authority's proposed decision differs from the recommendation of the examiner?

5.17 When a local planning authority comes to a different view to that of the examiner, this should not mean that there are long delays. We propose that the period during which further representations can be made should be limited to six weeks; and that the local planning authority should issue its final decision within five weeks of the end of that period (unless the authority considers it appropriate to refer the issue to independent examination).

Question 5.5: Do you agree with the proposed time periods where a local planning authority seeks further representations and makes a final decision?

Setting the referendum date

5.18 Before a neighbourhood plan or Order can come into force, it must be voted on by the local community in a referendum. Where the neighbourhood area has been designated as a business area, there is an additional referendum for the businesses in the area. We propose that local planning authorities should hold a referendum within ten weeks

³² Based on 52 cases as at January 2015.

of the decision that a referendum should be held (or 14 weeks where there is also a business referendum).

5.19 We propose three exceptions to this. First, where a neighbourhood planning referendum can be combined with another poll that is due to be held within three months of the end of the 10 or 14 week period described above. Secondly, where there are unresolved legal challenges to the decision to hold a referendum. Thirdly, where a local planning authority and the neighbourhood group agree an alternative time period.

Question 5.6: Do you agree with the proposed time period within which a referendum must be held?

Bringing neighbourhood plans into force

5.20 A local planning authority is required to make a neighbourhood plan or Order as soon as reasonably practicable after a successful referendum (or referendums). This brings the plan or Order into legal force as part of the development plan for an area, with the same legal status as the local plan. New powers in the Housing and Planning Bill allow the Secretary of State to set a date by which this must be done. We propose that this should be eight weeks from the date of the referendum or referendums, unless there are unresolved legal challenges to the decision to hold either referendum or around the conduct of either referendum³³.

Question 5.7: Do you agree with the time period by which a neighbourhood plan or Order should be made following a successful referendum?

Question 5.8: What other measures could speed up or simplify the neighbourhood planning process?

Requests for the Secretary of State to intervene

5.21 Once an examiner's report has been considered by the local planning authority, they have to decide if the draft plan or Order meets the 'basic conditions'³⁴ and other legal requirements (or would with modifications) and if so, they must put the plan to a referendum. New powers in the Housing and Planning Bill would enable the Secretary of State to intervene in this process, at the request of a neighbourhood planning group, in three circumstances:

- where the local planning authority has failed to take a decision within the period prescribed, or
- where the local planning authority do not accept all of the examiner's recommendations; or

³³ This will not affect the very narrow circumstances in which a local planning authority is required to make the plan or Order, where they consider this would be incompatible with EU law or Convention rights.

³⁴ <http://planningguidance.communities.gov.uk/blog/guidance/neighbourhood-planning/the-basic-conditions-that-a-draft-neighbourhood-plan-or-order-must-meet-if-it-is-to-proceed-to-referendum/>

- where the local planning authority propose to modify the plan or Order proposal in a way that was not recommended by the examiner.

5.22 These measures provide communities with an alternative route to a decision where the local planning authority disagrees with the report of the examiner, or when they do not make a timely decision. Such cases are currently extremely rare and we expect this to remain the case.

5.23 Following a decision to intervene, the Secretary of State could direct the local planning authority to send a neighbourhood plan or Order to referendum with any modifications made by the Secretary of State, or to refuse the proposal. The Secretary of State may also extend the referendum area.

5.24 The local planning authority may be required to notify certain persons of any decision the Secretary of State proposes to make that is not in accordance with the examiner's recommendations. We propose that these should be the same people set out in paragraph 5.16 above. The Secretary of State also has the option of requiring the local planning authority to refer the issue to a further examination.

5.25 The Secretary of State may prescribe the form and content of a request for intervention by a neighbourhood group and the date by which it must be made. We propose that a request for intervention must be made in writing, giving clear reasons why the proposed decision of the local planning authority should be reconsidered by the Secretary of State. In considering a request, the Secretary of State will consider whether the plan or Order plans positively for local development needs, taking account of the latest evidence. For instance where a neighbourhood plan allocates sites or contains policies for the supply of housing, the Secretary of State would expect that the neighbourhood plan has fully taken into account the latest, up-to-date evidence of housing need. In cases where the local planning authority has failed to make a decision within the set time period, the length and reasons for the delay and the likelihood of an imminent decision would also be taken into account. Each case would be considered on its individual merits.

5.26 In cases where the neighbourhood group is making the request because the local planning authority decides not to follow a recommendation of the examiner; or makes modifications that the examiner has not recommended, we propose that the request must be submitted within six weeks of the date that the authority publish their decision.

5.27 We also propose using new powers to prevent a local planning authority from taking their final decision on whether a neighbourhood plan or Order should proceed to a referendum until the Secretary of State has decided whether to intervene.

5.28 Once the Secretary of State has decided whether to intervene, we propose that the neighbourhood planning group and the local planning authority will be informed and invited to make representations. Views will also be sought from those who made representations during the original publicity period.

5.29 We propose using new powers to enable the Secretary of State to appoint a planning inspector to take the decision on the Secretary of State's behalf.

5.30 New powers allow certain matters to be set out, that the Secretary of State or an inspector must take into account when taking the decision on whether a neighbourhood plan or Order should proceed to referendum; and require a local planning authority to provide certain information to the Secretary of State or an inspector. We propose that the information provided should include: the examiner's report; all the documents submitted by the neighbourhood group with a neighbourhood plan or Order; any other documents submitted to the local planning authority by the neighbourhood group in relation to a neighbourhood plan or Order; any representations that were sent to the examiner; representations made in response to a local planning authority's proposal to depart from the examiner's recommendation; and the local planning authority's decision statement.

5.31 New powers allow for the Secretary of State, or a local planning authority on the direction of the Secretary of State, to notify certain persons and to publish the decision made on sending the plan or Order to referendum, as well as the reasons for making those decisions, and other matters relating to those decisions. We propose that the Secretary of State must notify the neighbourhood planning group and the local planning authority of the decision and reasons for it; publish the decision and the reasons for it; and send, to any person who had asked to be notified of the decision in relation to the neighbourhood plan or Order, a notice explaining that the decision has been made, and where details can be found.

Question 5.9: Do you agree with the proposed procedure to be followed where the Secretary of State may intervene to decide whether a neighbourhood plan or Order should be put to a referendum?

Engagement in local planning

5.32 Finally, we propose to amend existing regulations to include designated neighbourhood forums as consultation bodies that local planning authorities must notify and invite representations from where they consider the forum may have an interest in the preparation of a local plan. This proposal complements the measure in the Housing and Planning Bill which would enable neighbourhood forums to request notification of planning applications in their area, in the same way that parish councils can.

Question 5.10: Do you agree that local planning authorities must notify and invite representations from designated neighbourhood forums where they consider they may have an interest in the preparation of a local plan?

Chapter 6: Local plans

- 6.1 We have made clear our expectation that all local planning authorities should have a local plan³⁵ in place. Local plans are the primary basis for identifying what development is needed in an area and for deciding where it should go, providing the certainty communities and businesses deserve.
- 6.2 Local planning authorities have had more than a decade since the introduction of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (the 2004 Act) to prepare a local plan, and most have done so. At the end of January 2016, 84% had published a local plan and 68% had adopted a local plan³⁶.
- 6.3 We expect local plans to be kept up-to-date to ensure policies remain relevant. The National Planning Policy Framework is clear that housing policies should not be considered up-to-date if the local planning authority cannot demonstrate a five-year supply of deliverable housing sites³⁷. Furthermore, guidance sets out clearly that most local plans are likely to require updating in whole or in part at least every five years³⁸. At the end of Jan 2016, 45% of authorities had a local plan which had been adopted in the last 5 years³⁹.
- 6.4 Local plans adopted since the National Planning Policy Framework was published in March 2012 allocate substantially more housing than those adopted before the Framework was published. The average post- National Planning Policy Framework plan makes provision for 109% of household projections⁴⁰ compared to only 86% for pre-Framework plans.
- 6.5 We have set out our commitments to take action to get plans in place and ensure plans have up-to-date policies by:
- publishing league tables, setting out local authorities' progress on their local plans;
 - intervening where no local plan has been produced by early 2017, to arrange for the plan to be written, in consultation with local people, to accelerate production of a local plan⁴¹; and
 - establishing a new delivery test on local authorities, to ensure delivery against the number of homes set out in local plans⁴²

³⁵ The local plans referred to in this consultation are development plan documents adopted or approved under the 2004 Act that set the strategic planning policies for a local planning authority's area.

³⁶ Planning Inspectorate Data reporting on local plans <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/local-plans>

³⁷ The National Planning Policy Framework, paragraph 49, https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/60777/2116950.pdf

³⁸ The National Planning Policy Framework, paragraph 49, https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/60777/2116950.pdf

³⁹ A further 23% of authorities have a Local Plan compliant with the 2004 Act which was adopted over 5 years ago (before 1st Jan 2016), a number of which have adopted or are in the process of preparing a Local Plan review

⁴⁰ Household projections are from census data indicating future household formation

⁴¹ Fixing the foundations: Creating a more prosperous nation 2015 (HM Treasury)

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/443898/Productivity_Plan_web.pdf

⁴² https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/479749/52229_Blue_Book_PU1865_Web_Accessible.pdf

Background

6.6 We are consulting on criteria that will inform our decision on whether to intervene to deliver our commitment to get plans with up-to-date policies in place. We want to engage with authorities early on, and therefore we do not expect any authority to be surprised if we are considering intervention. We want to see local government take action to get plans in place and would be interested to receive details of examples of where authorities have worked collaboratively, including where one authority has supported another to bring forward local plans.

6.7 In those instances where progress is not being made, we will intervene to ensure plans with up-to-date policies are put in place in consultation with local communities. The Secretary of State can intervene in local plans using his powers under the 2004 Act⁴³. He may direct a local planning authority to review their existing plan, or to modify an emerging plan or submit the document for his approval. He may also arrange for a document to be prepared or revised for a local planning authority that is failing to do so and must be reimbursed by the authority for any costs incurred. We envisage that where it is necessary to intervene in this way, we will appoint an external party to undertake the work and we are considering potential sector-led approaches to this work.

6.8 In many instances, where the Secretary of State intervenes under these powers, the only option is to take over responsibility for the remaining process of plan-making. Measures in the Housing and Planning Bill refine these powers, enabling the Secretary of State to intervene in a more proportionate way, allowing responsibility for plan-making to be retained by the local planning authority wherever possible, while still ensuring that local plans are in place.

6.9 Where we have to intervene to get local plans in place or ensure that policies are up-to-date, because an authority has not done so, this should not compromise effective community engagement. Local plans, including those prepared or revised following intervention, are subject to a legal requirement to consult the public and others, along with the right to make representations on the plan. This provides a strong framework for protecting rights of public participation.

What are we proposing?

6.10 We are proposing to prioritise intervention where:

- the least progress in plan-making has been made;
- policies in plans have not been kept up-to-date;
- there is higher housing pressure;
- intervention will have the greatest impact in accelerating local plan production.

6.11 We propose that decisions will also be informed by the wider planning context of an area. We propose to publish information on each authority which shows the age of

⁴³ See sections 21, 26 and 27 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2004/5/contents> (section 21 is amended by section 112(5) of the Localism Act 2011: <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2011/20/section/112/enacted>). The Housing and Planning Bill amends sections 21 and 27: <http://services.parliament.uk/bills/2015-16/housingandplanning.html>.

the existing local plan, and measures of local plan-making progress, on a six monthly basis.

Criteria that will inform decisions on government intervention

- 6.12 National planning guidance is clear that local plans should be kept up-to-date if they are to be effective⁴⁴. The date a local plan was adopted or last reviewed provides a clear indication of how relevant the policies in the plan are.. Authorities without a local plan in place, and authorities which have not kept the policies in their local plan up-to-date will be a high priority for intervention.
- 6.13 In July 2011 the government asked local planning authorities to keep the Planning Inspectorate up-to-date on the progress of their local plan-making⁴⁵. The Planning Inspectorate publishes this information for all authorities across England. We intend to use this data to identify the date a local plan was adopted. Where the Planning Inspectorate does not hold this data for an authority, we will obtain this information from the authority's website.
- 6.14 Local planning authorities are required⁴⁶ to publish and keep up to date a local development scheme which sets out the documents which will comprise their local plan⁴⁷. The National Planning Policy Framework makes clear that wherever possible there should only be a single local plan, and any additional documents need to be clearly justified.
- 6.15 Local development schemes set out when an authority expects to reach key milestones in the plan-making process. Explanations of these milestones and stages of the plan-making process can be found in our planning guidance⁴⁸. We will establish when an authority expects to publish, submit and adopt its new or reviewed local plan from its local development scheme. By comparing this information against information on plan progress published by the Planning Inspectorate⁴⁹ we will establish whether an authority is meeting the timetable it has set itself. We will also compare this information against any subsequent updates to an authority's local development scheme to identify any slippage or acceleration in plan-making progress. We propose to take into account slippage against the timetable authorities have set for themselves when assessing the extent of progress.
- 6.16 Local planning authorities play a key role in supporting housing delivery. Getting a plan in place and ensuring that the policies in it remain up-to-date is particularly important in areas of high housing demand. We propose that in taking decisions

⁴⁴ Planning Practice Guidance <http://planningguidance.communities.gov.uk/blog/guidance/local-plans/preparing-a-local-plan/>

⁴⁵ Planning Inspectorate Data reporting on local plans <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/local-plans#monitoring-local-plans>.

⁴⁶ Section 15 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2004/5/contents> (as amended by: section 30 of the Greater London Authority Act 2007 <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2007/24/section/30>; section 180(2) of, and Schedule 13 to, the Planning Act 2008 <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2008/29/contents>; and section 111(3) of, and Part 17 of Schedule 25 to, the Localism Act 2011 <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2011/20/contents/enacted>), The Housing and Planning Bill amends section 15(4): <http://services.parliament.uk/bills/2015-16/housingandplanning.html>.

⁴⁷ Planning Practice Guidance <http://planningguidance.communities.gov.uk/blog/guidance/local-plans/preparing-a-local-plan/>

⁴⁸ Planning Practice Guidance <http://planningguidance.communities.gov.uk/blog/guidance/local-plans/local-plans-key-issues/>

⁴⁹ Planning Inspectorate monitoring data at <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/local-plans#monitoring-local-plans>.

about prioritising our intervention, we will take into account the extent of housing pressure and performance on housing delivery.

Question 6.1: Do you agree with our proposed criteria for prioritising intervention in local plans?

Wider planning context

6.17 In reaching decisions on prioritising our intervention in local plan-making, we also intend to take the following wider planning context into consideration:

6.18 Collaborative and strategic plan-making: we recognise the advantages of strong strategic plan-making across local planning authority boundaries, in particular in addressing housing need across housing market areas. Many authorities successfully achieve this through the duty to cooperate and others are putting forward proposals to work strategically through devolution deals. We propose to have regard to how authorities are working cooperatively to get plans in place, including progress that has been made in devolution deal areas.

6.19 Neighbourhood planning: without a local plan with up-to-date policies, work on neighbourhood plans is more challenging. Local authorities that fail to bring forward or fail to update their local plan limit the opportunities for communities to participate in the planning and long-term design of their areas. We propose to take into account the potential impact that not having a local plan has on neighbourhood planning activity.

Question 6.2: Do you agree that decisions on prioritising intervention to arrange for a local plan to be written should take into consideration a) collaborative and strategic plan-making and b) neighbourhood planning?

Question 6.3: Are there any other factors that you think the government should take into consideration?

Exceptional circumstances

6.20 Before taking decisions on intervention in a local plan, we will give authorities an opportunity to explain any exceptional circumstances which, in their view, would make intervention at the proposed time unreasonable. What constitutes an 'exceptional circumstance' cannot, by its very nature, be defined fully in advance, but we think it would be helpful to set out the general tests that will be applied in considering such cases. We propose these should be:

- whether the issue significantly affects the reasonableness of the conclusions that can be drawn from the data and criteria used to inform decisions on intervention;
- whether the issue had a significant impact on the authority's ability to produce a local plan, for reasons that were entirely beyond its control.

Question 6.4: Do you agree that the Secretary of State should take exceptional circumstances submitted by local planning authorities into account when considering intervention?

Publishing local planning authorities' progress in plan-making

6.21 We have made clear our intention to provide increased transparency for local communities on local authorities' progress in plan-making. We propose to publish the information set out below for each local planning authority in England:

- the date that the local plan was adopted or last reviewed (for areas without an adopted local plan it would be the date of their last plan prior to the 2004 Act)
- for the publication and submission stages of the plan-making process, the date these stages have been achieved
- for each stage in the plan-making process (publication, submission, adoption) that has not been achieved:
 - a) the forecast date for achieving that stage as set out in the authority's local development scheme at a baseline date (likely to be April 2016)
 - b) for subsequent publications of this information, the most recent forecast dates. If this remains the same as the baseline date it will still be published to show the authority is meeting their timetable
 - c) any slippage or acceleration between the original baseline date and the most recent forecast dates.

6.22 Local development schemes may be formatted differently, so to measure slippage or acceleration consistently we intend to rationalise how we present information on dates. We propose to translate dates from local development schemes so that they are presented as quarters of the financial year.

6.23 We aim to publish our data on plan-making performance from June 2016, on a six monthly basis. We will give local planning authorities an opportunity to confirm the accuracy of the data prior to its publication.

Question 6.5: Is there any other information you think we should publish alongside what is stated above?

Question 6.6: Do you agree that the proposed information should be published on a six monthly basis?

Chapter 7: Expanding the approach to planning performance

- 7.1 Timely and well-considered decisions on planning applications are a key part of delivering an effective planning service. Applicants and local communities should be confident that a decision on development proposals will be reached within a reasonable time – whether that is within the statutory timescale or a longer period agreed transparently with the local planning authority.
- 7.2 Equally, everyone should have confidence in the quality of the development decisions being made by local planning authorities – that all relevant considerations are being taken into account, and that the weight being given to different considerations is reasonable in the context of national and local policies.
- 7.3 The Growth and Infrastructure Act 2013 introduced the existing performance approach for applications for major development:
- This assesses the speed⁵⁰ and quality⁵¹ of decisions taken by local planning authorities against thresholds set out in a [Criteria Document](#);
 - If local planning authorities do not meet either (or both) performance standards, they risk being designated as underperforming, once any data corrections and other exceptional circumstances have been taken into account;
 - An authority that is designated by the government as underperforming is required to produce an action plan to address areas of weakness. Also, applicants for major development in that authority's area have the choice of submitting their application direct to the Secretary of State instead of to the authority;
 - Designation lasts for at least a year and is subject to review before the year ends, so a designated authority has an opportunity to improve its performance so that the designation can be lifted.
- 7.4 This approach has been effective in speeding up decisions on applications for major development⁵².

What are we proposing?

- 7.5 Through the Housing and Planning Bill, we are extending this approach to include applications for non-major development, to ensure that all applicants can have certainty in the level of service to be provided. The assessment of applications for

⁵⁰ Speed is assessed as the percentage of applications determined in the statutory period (including any agreed extended period) over a two year period.

⁵¹ Quality is assessed as the proportion of all decisions on applications for major development that are overturned at appeal, over a two year period.

⁵² 79% of major applications were decided on time in July to September 2015, compared with 57% in July to September 2012, the quarter in which the designation approach was first announced.

non-major development would run alongside the existing performance approach to assessing applications for major development. Autumn Statement published on 25 November also set out a proposal to reduce the threshold for assessing the quality of local planning authorities' decisions to 10 per cent of applications for major development overturned at appeal, subject to considering an authority's appeal decisions prior to confirming designation on the basis of this measure.

7.6 We are now consulting on:

- revised thresholds for assessing the quality of performance on applications for major development and new thresholds for non-major development for both speed and quality;
- the approach to designation and de-designation for non-major development; and,
- which applications may be submitted to the Secretary of State in areas that are designated for their handling of non-major development.

7.7 We consider 'non-major development' to constitute applications for minor developments, changes of use (where the site area is less than one hectare) and householder developments⁵³. This is consistent with the data we have been publishing since March 2015 on the speed and quality of decisions on non-major development⁵⁴.

Thresholds for assessing performance

7.8 In considering the minimum performance thresholds for handling applications for non-major development, we wish to take into account both existing levels of performance and the scope for further improvement. In the two years to the end of September 2015, nationally an average of 79% of applications for non-major development were decided on time, and the average proportion of decisions on non-major development overturned at appeal was around 1%⁵⁵.

7.9 Against this background we think that the thresholds at which authorities would become liable for designation in relation to non-major development should fall within the following ranges:

- speed of decisions: where authorities fail to determine at least 60-70 per cent of applications for non-major development on time⁵⁶, over the two year assessment period, they would be at risk of designation
- quality of decisions: where authorities have had more than 10-20 per cent of their decisions on applications for non-major development overturned at appeal, they would be at risk of designation.

⁵³ This is set out in the the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015 http://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2015/595/pdfs/ukxi_20150595_en.pdf

⁵⁴ ⁵⁴ [Live tables P153 and P154 https://www.gov.uk/government/statistical-data-sets/live-tables-on-planning-application-statistics](https://www.gov.uk/government/statistical-data-sets/live-tables-on-planning-application-statistics)

⁵⁵ This is the figure for local planning authority decisions up to September 2014, and related appeal decisions up to June 2015.

⁵⁶ i.e. within the relevant statutory period, including any agreed extension of time

7.10 Prior to any initial designations the Housing and Planning Bill will need to be enacted, regulations made and the criteria for designation laid before Parliament. The earliest that the first designations would be made is therefore the final calendar quarter of 2016

7.11 For applications for major development, we have raised the designation threshold for the speed of decisions to 50 per cent made on time, and will continue to keep this under review. The threshold for the quality of decisions on applications for major development has remained at 20 per cent since 2013. The threshold needs to be at a level that drives improvement and safeguards against genuinely poor performance, and the Autumn Statement proposed that the threshold could now be reduced to 10 per cent of decisions on applications overturned at appeal.

Question 7.1: Do you agree that the threshold for designations involving applications for non-major development should be set initially at between 60-70% of decisions made on time, and between 10-20% of decisions overturned at appeal? If so what specific thresholds would you suggest?

Question 7.2: Do you agree that the threshold for designations based on the quality of decisions on applications for major development should be reduced to 10% of decisions overturned at appeal?

Approach to designation and de-designation

7.12 We are proposing that the general approach to designating and de-designating authorities for non-major development should mirror that which exists already for major development, as set out in the current criteria document⁵⁷: for example, taking into account performance data over a rolling two year period, allowing for data corrections and exceptional circumstances, and the tests that are required to be satisfied before an authority may be de-designated. This will include taking into account applications that are subject to Planning Performance Agreements and Extension of Time Agreements and setting the same thresholds for exempting authorities from designation in circumstances where very few applications have been submitted.

7.13 The data for major and non-major applications will not be aggregated, so the designation and de-designation processes for major and non-major development would be conducted separately (so that an authority could be designated on the basis of handling applications for major development, or non-major development, or both). This ensures the existing approach can continue and suitable thresholds can be applied to different categories of application.

7.14 However, there is one change we are proposing in the assessment of any exceptional circumstances that relate to the quality of decisions (for applications involving both major and non-major development): we would in future take into

⁵⁷ Improving planning performance: criteria for designation (July 2015) <http://tinyurl.com/odqu8v8>

account any situations where appeals have been allowed despite the authority considering that its initial decision was in line with an up-to-date plan⁵⁸. This is to ensure that this measure does not inadvertently discourage any authorities from making decisions that they believe to be in line with an up-to-date local plan or neighbourhood plan.

Question 7.3: Do you agree with our proposed approach to designation and de-designation, and in particular

- (a) that the general approach should be the same for applications involving major and non-major development?
- (b) performance in handling applications for major and non-major development should be assessed separately?
- (c) in considering exceptional circumstances, we should take into account the extent to which any appeals involve decisions which authorities considered to be in line with an up-to-date plan, prior to confirming any designations based on the quality of decisions?

Effects of designation in respect of applications for non-major development

7.15 Applicants can only apply directly to the Secretary of State for the category of applications to which a designation relates. As with the approach to major development, we are proposing that applicants would have a choice of applying directly to the Planning Inspectorate (on behalf of the Secretary of State) where an authority is designated for its performance in handling applications for non-major development. However we are proposing that this ability would be limited to applications involving minor development and changes of use, and not include householder development.

7.16 We consider that due to the small sized and high volume of householder applications, they are best dealt with at the local level. This does not, however, mean that under-performance in such areas would not be addressed: where authorities are designated on the basis of non-major development we will want to make sure that all aspects of their service improve, including then handling of applications for householder developments. We would therefore require a detailed improvement plan which focuses on improving processes for householder developments from designated authorities, where this relates to the reasons for their under-performance.

Question 7.4: Do you agree that the option to apply directly to the Secretary of State should not apply to applications for householder developments?

⁵⁸ An up-to-date Development Plan Document

Chapter 8: Testing competition in the processing of planning applications

8.1 It is important that the planning process is resourced in a way that allows an efficient and effective service to be provided. Chapter 1 of this consultation proposes changes to planning application fees, linked to performance and the provision of innovative services. One form of innovation that we are keen to explore is competition in the processing of planning applications. This will not include any changes to decision-making on planning applications which will remain with the local authority whose area the application falls within. Nor is this about preventing local authorities from processing planning applications or forcing them to outsource their processing function. This section seeks views on how we could implement a programme to test how we can most effectively introduce competition in the processing of planning applications.

Background

8.2 Outsourcing and shared services are common for some local authority services. Some authorities have introduced such approaches to planning application processing, and shown that performance can be improved and costs reduced. The majority of research studies suggest cost savings of up to 20 per cent for competitively tendered or shared services⁵⁹.

8.3 Choice for the user also has an important part to play in the provision of effective public services⁶⁰. In Building Control, applicants can choose to have their building work checked by the local authority or an approved inspector. Approved inspectors were first introduced in 1985, and now roughly 80 per cent of housing and 50 per cent of non-housing work is carried out by them.

8.4 We think there is merit in drawing on this experience, to test the benefits of competition in the processing of planning applications. These benefits could include giving the applicant choice, enabling innovation in service provision, bringing new resources into the planning system, driving down costs and improving performance.

What are we proposing?

8.5 The Housing and Planning Bill contains powers to enable the testing of competition in the processing of planning applications. We are proposing that in a number of specific geographic areas across the country, for a limited period of time, a planning applicant would be able to apply to either the local planning authority for the area or an 'approved provider' (a person who is considered to have the expertise to manage

⁵⁹ Domerberger et al in 1986 found that competitive tendering reduced the costs of refuse collection services by broadly 20 per cent, irrespective of whether contracts were awarded to the private sector or in-house teams. Hodge in 1999 concluded that outsourcing could achieve savings of between 6 and 12 per cent, while DeAnne Julius in 2008 concluded that the rigorous work on cost savings associated with contracting showed savings of around 20 per cent. The Confederation of British Industry claimed in 2012 that further outsourcing could secure cost savings of 10 per cent.

⁶⁰ 2009 research from the British Social Attitudes (BSA) survey, reported by the Institute for Government in 2013, concluded 'There is widespread public support for the idea that people should be able to exercise choice when using public services'.

the processing of a planning application) to have their planning application processed. This does not prevent local planning authorities from continuing to process planning applications nor does it force them to outsource their development management service – it means that other approved providers will be able to compete to process planning applications in their area. A number of companies already provide outsourced processing services for local planning authorities. Local planning authorities, in addition to processing planning applications in relation to land in their area, would also be able to apply to process planning applications in other local authorities' areas.

- 8.6 The democratic determination of planning applications by local planning authorities is a fundamental pillar of the planning system. This will remain the case - decisions on applications would remain with the local planning authority. However, an approved provider would be able to process the application, having regard to the relevant statutory requirements for notification, consultation and decision making, and make a recommendation to the local planning authority giving their view on how the application should be decided. But, it would be for the local planning authority to consider the recommendation and make the final decision, ensuring no loss of democratic oversight of local planning decisions.
- 8.7 We are consulting now on the broad principles for how this would operate.

Scope

- 8.8 The final decision on individual planning applications would remain the responsibility of the local planning authority, based on a report and recommendations from their own officers or from an approved provider where the applicant has chosen to go to one.
- 8.9 Competition can be tested in different ways within this overall approach. More innovation may be possible and better use of resources, efficiency and performance, with full competition involving both approved private providers and local authorities competing for the processing of all planning applications in test areas. However, competition could be limited to just local authorities or specific types of planning application.

Question 8.1: Who should be able to compete for the processing of planning applications and which applications could they compete for?

Fees

- 8.10 A market for planning application processing might operate best by allowing approved providers and the local planning authority in test areas to set their own fee levels, enabling them to set different levels of fee for different levels of service⁶¹. The legislation would allow us to intervene if we considered that excessive fees were being charged and the market was not self-regulating them. It will also allow for fees

⁶¹ We currently have no plans to change the legislative time limit for determination of planning applications: 8 weeks (minor development) and 13 weeks (major development) and 16 weeks (Environmental Impact Assessment development).

to be returned to the applicant where promised service and performance standards are not met by approved providers and/or the local planning authority in test areas.

- 8.11 However, in competition test areas we could, as an alternative approach, restrict approved providers and local planning authorities to setting fee levels within a range. Local authorities could be limited to charging no more than cost recovery for processing planning applications. A requirement for providers in test areas to provide a low-cost processing option could also be explored. It is likely that even where an approved provider processes a planning application the local planning authority will incur small costs, for example reviewing the provider's report and recommendation to be able to take a decision. A balance will need to be struck between ensuring costs can be recovered fairly but without introducing duplication and additional costs to the applicant.

Question 8.2: How should fee setting in competition test areas operate?

The role of applicants, approved providers and local planning authorities in competition test areas

- 8.12 In competition test areas, applicants would select who they want to process their planning application and pass it direct to the provider with the appropriate fee.
- 8.13 We envisage an approved provider will undertake all the tasks a local planning authority would ordinarily undertake. This includes, for example, checking and validating the application, posting site and neighbour notices, undertaking site visits, undertaking statutory consultation⁶², carrying out informal engagement with the community, seeking more information from the applicant, negotiating section 106 agreements and undertaking Environmental Impact Assessment screening⁶³. Local people and councillors will need to be able to comment on planning applications as they can at the moment. An approved provider would not be able to decide the planning application – they would need to pass a report and recommendation to the local planning authority for decision.
- 8.14 When a local planning authority in a test area receives a report and recommendation from an approved provider for a decision, it would be required to take the decision within a short specified period (perhaps a week or two); we will ensure that the application could not be delayed unreasonably. Authorities would continue to process in the normal way any planning applications they received directly from applicants.

Question 8.3: What should applicants, approved providers and local planning authorities in test areas be able to do?

Standards and performance

- 8.15 Approved providers would not be able to process applications in which they and the member(s) of staff dealing with the application have an interest. They would also

⁶² Under the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015 (made under section 74 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990).

⁶³ Under section 62 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990.

need to demonstrate that they have the professional skills and capabilities to process planning applications on behalf of applicants, and we are interested in your views on how this should be established. We would expect high levels of performance both from approved providers and local planning authorities involved in the test, but may need to relax the current designation approach⁶⁴ for local planning authorities participating in the testing of competition, given the different circumstances in which they would be operating.

Question 8.4: Do you have a view on how we could maintain appropriate high standards and performance during the testing of competition?

Information

- 8.16 Local planning authorities and approved providers would need to share information so that planning applications are processed effectively during the test. Local planning authorities would need to provide an approved provider with the planning history for the site relevant to the application, so the provider could for example ascertain whether it is a repeat application⁶⁵ and whether there are any other outstanding planning permissions in relation to the site.
- 8.17 Approved providers would need to provide summary details to the relevant local planning authority of any planning applications they receive directly, so that the application could be listed on the planning register. We intend to provide that information can only be shared between providers and planning authorities for the purposes of processing planning applications during the testing of competition and must not be disclosed to any other persons.

Question 8.5: What information would need to be shared between approved providers and local planning authorities, and what safeguards are needed to protect information?

- 8.18 Competition could benefit both communities and applicants. A more effective and efficient planning system would be better able to secure the development of the homes and other facilities that communities need. Improved choice in the services on offer would mean that applicants would be able to shop around for the services which best met their needs.

Question 8.6: Do you have any other comments on these proposals, including the impact on business and other users of the system?

⁶⁴ Under section 62A of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990.

⁶⁵ Under section 70A of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990.

Chapter 9: Information about financial benefits

9.1 The potential financial benefits of planning applications are not always set out fully in public during the course of the decision making process, particularly for larger, more significant or controversial applications which are more likely to be considered by a planning committee. This has a negative impact on local transparency and prevents local communities from both understanding the full benefits that development can bring and fully holding their authority to account for the decisions it makes.

9.2 Financial benefits can accrue to local areas as a result of development, which can influence how local communities perceive development. An evaluation of the New Homes Bonus found that the bonus has had a positive impact on local authority attitudes towards new housing⁶⁶. The 2013 British Social Attitude survey found that people might be more supportive of the development of new homes in their area if they thought that local authorities might receive more funding⁶⁷.

9.3 Despite amending Planning Practice Guidance to make clear that local finance considerations may be cited for information in planning committee reports (even where they are not material to the decision), we remain concerned that potential financial benefits may not be being fully set out publicly in planning committee reports⁶⁸. This prevents local communities from seeing the financial benefits of development, potentially preventing a change in attitudes towards development. We are addressing this issue through the Housing and Planning Bill.

What are we proposing?

9.4 The Housing and Planning Bill proposes to place a duty on local planning authorities to ensure that planning reports, setting out a recommendation on how an application should be decided, record details of financial benefits that are likely to accrue to the area as a result of the proposed development. It also explicitly requires that planning reports list those benefits that are “local finance considerations”⁶⁹ (sums payable under Community Infrastructure Levy and grants from central government, such as the New Homes Bonus).

9.5 The Bill also provides for the Secretary of State to prescribe, through regulations:

- other financial benefits beyond “local finance considerations”, that must be listed in planning reports if they are likely to be obtained as a result of the proposed development;

⁶⁶ Evaluation of the New Homes Bonus, DCLG, December 2014 - around 40 per cent of planning officers agreed the Bonus had resulted in officers and their elected members being more supportive of new homes.

⁶⁷ People were asked if they would be more supportive of new homes if the government provided local authorities with more money to spend on services for each new home that is built. 47 per cent of respondents stated that this would result in them becoming more supportive of new homes.

⁶⁸ Evaluation of the New Homes Bonus – 56 per cent of officers said that they never took into account Bonus revenues when considering planning applications. The research found that views on the Bonus are evolving and consideration of it in the context of planning applications was likely to change.

⁶⁹ Section 70 of the Town and Country Planning Act as amended by section 143 of the Localism Act 2011.

- information about a financial benefit that must be recorded in a planning report; and,
- A financial benefit to be listed in the planning report where it is payable to another person or body other than to the authority making the planning decision.

Other financial benefits that should be listed

9.6 The Bill proposes a requirement for “local finance considerations” to be listed in planning reports. However, new development can bring a number of other financial benefits beyond “local finance consideration”. New homes will be chargeable for council tax and therefore bring additional revenue to the relevant local authority. New business development will be subject to business rates and similarly bring additional revenue to the relevant local authority. Also section 106 agreements⁷⁰ can require a sum or sums to be paid to mitigate the impact of development.

9.7 We are therefore proposing that, alongside “local finance considerations” as defined in section 70 of the Town and Country Planning Act, the following benefits should be listed in planning reports where it is considered likely they will be payable if development proceeds:

- Council tax revenue;
- Business rate revenue;
- Section 106 payments.

Question 9.1: Do you agree with these proposals for the range of benefits to be listed in planning reports?

Information about a financial benefit that must be recorded

9.8 Local communities may be particularly interested in the estimated level of the financial benefits that might result from a proposed development and we are proposing that this should be reported for each financial benefit that is listed in a planning report. However, this needs to be proportionate and in practice a report to a planning committee will include an estimate of what appears to the person making the report to be the likely value of the benefit to be obtained (i.e. the best estimate at the time the report is produced). This is likely to mean:

- Community Infrastructure Levy - the tariff from the authority’s charging schedule that is likely to be applied for the proposed development;
- government grant⁷¹ – calculating an estimate of the of the likely grant to be received;
- council tax revenue – making a broad judgement about the likely council tax band for new properties and subsequently estimating the likely additional council tax revenue, or for existing properties estimating the impact of the development on the current council tax band;

⁷⁰ Under section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990. Section 106 agreements may only be a reason for granting planning permission if they meet the tests that they are necessary to make the development acceptable in planning terms, directly related to the development, and fairly and reasonably related in scale and kind. Such payments should be material to a planning decision and therefore already included in a planning report.

⁷¹ Under “local finance considerations” such as the New Homes Bonus.

- business rates revenue – making a broad judgement about the potential rateable value for the property following development and subsequently estimating the likely additional business rate revenue; and,
- section 106 payments – the payment level that has been negotiated with the developer where this has taken place at the time of the report.

Other persons or bodies receiving a financial benefit

9.9 A financial benefit might accrue to a local authority or body other than the one making the planning decision. For example, a National Parks Authority or the Broads Authority may grant planning permission but the additional council tax or business rate revenue from the development will go to the relevant local authority. In addition to any payments made to the local planning authority making the decision, we are therefore proposing to prescribe that financial benefits accruing to any local authority, or if and where relevant a Combined Authority or Community Infrastructure Levy charging authority⁷², should be listed in the planning report, recognising that authorities may need to liaise to collate some of the information required to be reported in the planning report.

9.10 In a few circumstances, developers may make financial payments to a local community where they propose to develop a site as for example, shale gas companies are committed to doing or for wind development. We are, therefore, interested to hear if there are other beneficiaries, such as a local community, that we should be considering when preparing regulations and the type of developments they might receive benefits or payments from.

Question 9.2: Do you agree with these proposals for the information to be recorded, and are there any other matters that we should consider when preparing regulations to implement this measure?

⁷² Section 206 of the Planning Act 2008 provides for the Mayor of London to be a charging authority for the Community Infrastructure Levy.

Chapter 10: Section 106 dispute resolution

10.1 We are introducing a new dispute resolution mechanism for section 106 agreements, to speed up negotiations and allow housing starts to proceed more quickly. This consultation seeks views on some of the detail about our proposals for how this new process will work, including the proposed scope, processes for commencing and running the dispute resolution, appointed persons and post-dispute resolution.

Background

10.2 Obligations under section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 help mitigate the impact of development to make it acceptable in planning terms. Policy and law on this is set out within the National Planning Policy Framework and in the Community Infrastructure Levy Regulations 2010. Delays in granting planning permission slow the rate at which new development is delivered and can increase costs.

What are we proposing?

10.3 We are introducing a dispute resolution mechanism for section 106 agreements through the Housing and Planning Bill. The dispute resolution process is intended to be provided by a body on behalf of the Secretary of State, concluded within prescribed timescales, and to provide a binding report setting out appropriate terms where these had not previously been agreed by the local planning authority and the developer.

Scope of the dispute resolution process

10.4 The dispute resolution process will potentially apply to any planning application where the local planning authority would be likely to grant planning permission where there are unresolved issues relating to section 106 obligations. Regulations may set a size threshold or other criteria that applications must meet in order to be eligible for dispute resolution, though we propose not to set any thresholds or criteria at this stage. This would mean that the dispute resolution process would be available in a broad range of cases, including some small scale ones with relatively simple section 106 obligations. We consider that delays to section 106 agreements may affect smaller developers particularly acutely and that they should also benefit from measures to speed up the process.

Question 10.1: Do you agree that the dispute resolution procedure should be able to apply to any planning application?

Commencing the dispute resolution process

10.5 The dispute resolution process can be initiated at the request of the applicant, the local planning authority or another person as set out in regulations, by making a request to the Secretary of State. We consider that the existing statutory timeframes (8 weeks for a minor application, 13 weeks for a major application and 16 weeks for an application accompanied by an Environmental Impact Assessment), with

extensions possible where agreed, are the most appropriate time limits before the dispute resolution process can be triggered.

10.6 The regulations can set out when requests for dispute resolution can be made as well as their form and manner. We consider that such requests should be made in writing, provide full details of the planning application in question (including plans and supporting documents), a draft section 106 agreement and a statement clearly setting out the matters which are the subject of dispute.

10.7 Upon receiving a request, there would be a statutory duty on the Secretary of State to appoint someone to help resolve any section 106 issues that are still in dispute. This would only apply if the Secretary of State considers that the local planning authority were likely to grant planning permission if satisfactory planning obligations were entered into. The new duty would not apply where the relevant planning application is being appealed or is before the courts, or has been called in by the Secretary of State for determination.

10.8 Where a request is made to initiate the dispute resolution process, it is intended that there will be a short 'cooling off' period prior to a person being appointed. This will give the local planning authority and applicant a final opportunity to focus minds and resolve outstanding issues. Where this is achieved the party requesting dispute resolution can withdraw the request. . We consider that two weeks would be an appropriate length of time for the cooling off period, striking a balance between allowing a late agreement on matters of dispute and enabling a speedy process.

Question 10.2: Do you agree with the proposals about when a request for dispute resolution can be made?

Question 10.3: Do you agree with the proposals about what should be contained in a request?

Question 10.4: Do you consider that another party to the section 106 agreement should be able to refer the matter for dispute resolution? If yes, should this be with the agreement of both the main parties?

Question 10.5: Do you agree that two weeks would be sufficient for the cooling off period?

Appointed person to deliver the dispute resolution process

10.9 We intend that the dispute resolution process would be undertaken by an independent body on behalf of the Secretary of State. We envisage that this body will consider requests and appoint people who will help resolve outstanding issues once the dispute resolution process has been requested. There is scope for the level of qualifications of the appointed person to be set out in the regulations.

Question 10.6: What qualifications and experience do you consider the appointed person should have to enable them to be credible?

Running the dispute resolution process

- 10.10 The Secretary of State will have discretion, through regulations, to set the level of fees payable. Regulations could also give the appointed person the ability to award costs where, for example, either side does not engage in the resolution process or if one party is found to have acted unreasonably. We propose that fees should be set in such a way that in normal circumstances the costs of the process would be shared evenly between the local planning authority and the applicant.
- 10.11 The appointed person would have a set time for producing a report. We envisage that in many cases they could produce their report in four weeks. We would like to explore through consultation what the maximum time should be for the appointed person to prepare their report and send it. The local planning authority and applicant would be required to cooperate with the appointed person throughout the process, comply with requests for information and to participate in any meetings that are arranged. Regulations can also set out what the appointed person must and must not take account of as part of their consideration of the matter and how corrections can be made to the report. We consider that the matters open to be considered by the appointed person should be limited to those in dispute between the parties.
- 10.12 The appointed person's report would set out the matters in dispute, the steps taken to resolve these and the terms of the section 106 (if both sides are in agreement) or recommendations as to what the appropriate terms would be (if parties continue to disagree). The regulations will also set out the manner and timing of the appointed person's report. We propose that the report should be published on the local planning authority's website as soon as reasonably practical to ensure the transparency of the process.
- 10.13 In circumstances where there may be an error in the appointed person's report, we consider that there should be a mechanism for this to be corrected. This is so that the validity of the report and its recommendations are not undermined. It is acknowledged that there is a risk that such a process, framed too broadly, could act like an informal appeal process, delaying the outcome of dispute resolution. We therefore propose that either party would be able to request the correction of errors.

Question 10.7: Do you agree with the proposals for sharing fees? If not, what alternative arrangement would you support?

Question 10.8: Do you have any comments on how long the appointed person should have to produce their report?

Question 10.9: What matters do you think should and should not be taken into account by the appointed person?

Question 10.10: Do you agree that the appointed person's report should be published on the local authority's website? Do you agree that there should be a mechanism for errors in the appointed person's report to be corrected by request?

Post-dispute resolution

10.14 We would like to explore through consultation what the most appropriate maximum time should be for entering into section 106 obligations and determining the planning application following the issuing of the report, which we consider could be between two and four weeks after the report is received. Regulations could allow for different periods to be set to take account of circumstances, including the scale and complexity of certain section 106s. The parties can still enter into an agreement during the prescribed period with terms that differ from the report as long as the parties agree.

10.15 The range of decisions that the authority can take after the report is received will be limited. As such, the local planning authority would be unable to refuse the application on a ground that relates to the appropriateness of the terms of the section 106, except in prescribed cases or circumstances. If no section 106 obligation is completed within the prescribed period, permission would have to be refused. Where the application is subsequently appealed following dispute resolution, the Inspector (or Secretary of State) must have regard to the report issued by the appointed person.

10.16 There may be circumstances where the local planning authority seeks to grant the application and make the grant conditional on the other party undertaking other obligations not specified in the section 106 agreement, for example through use of section 278 (Highways Agreements). We are considering whether to restrict this through regulations.

Question 10.11: Do you have any comments about how long there should be following the dispute resolution process for a) completing any section 106 obligations and b) determining the planning application?

Question 10.12: Are there any cases or circumstances where the consequences of the report, as set out in the Bill, should not apply?

Question 10.13: What limitations do you consider appropriate, following the publication of the appointed person's report, to restrict the use of other obligations?

Question 10.14: Are there any other steps that you consider that parties should be required to take in connection with the appointed person's report and are there any other matters that we should consider when preparing regulations to implement the dispute resolution process?

Chapter 11: Permitted development rights for state-funded schools

- 11.1 The government is committed to opening at least 500 new state-funded free schools during this Parliament, which could provide up to 270,000 new school places. To support this ambition, we are proposing to increase current permitted development rights that support delivery of new state-funded schools and the expansion of current schools.
- 11.2 Existing permitted development rights allow certain buildings to change use to a state-funded school, allow for extensions to be added to existing schools, and allow the temporary use of buildings as state-funded schools for up to one academic year, without the need to apply for planning permission.
- 11.3 The government is committed to ensuring there is sufficient provision to meet growing demand for state-funded school places, increasing choice and raising educational standards. The current permitted development rights have been developed over recent years to support the delivery of these aims, by making it easier for new schools to open, good schools to expand and all schools to adapt and improve their facilities.

What are we proposing?

- 11.4 Our proposals seek to build on these rights. They seek to ensure that where there is an identified need for school places, schools can open quickly on temporary sites and in temporary buildings while permanent sites are secured and developed. It is also the intention to allow larger extensions to be made to school buildings in certain cases without the need for a planning application.
- 11.5 The proposals are to:
- Extend from one to two academic years the existing temporary right to use any property within the use classes for a state-funded school;
 - Increase from 100 m² to 250 m² the threshold for extensions to existing school buildings (but not exceeding 25% of the gross floorspace of the original building); and,
 - Allow temporary buildings to be erected for up to three years on cleared sites where, had a building not been demolished, the existing permitted development right for permanent change of use of a building to a state funded school would have applied.
- 11.6 Free schools on temporary sites contribute to the delivery of new school places, and so these measures will further support the roll out of the free schools programme. In particular, they will help avoid delays for those wishing to set up a new school, and enable providers to respond quickly and flexibly to local demands, while planning permission for a permanent site is being sought.

Extending temporary rights to use any property within the use classes for a state-funded school will also better reflect the lead in time necessary for bringing on stream permanent school sites.

- 11.7 Before changing use of a building or land to a state-funded school for a single year, approval must be sought from the relevant Minister to use the site as a school, who must notify the local authority of the approval. When permanently changing use of a building to a state-funded school, prior approval must be sought from the local planning authority as to highways, noise, and contamination impacts.
- 11.8 As there are often space restraints on existing sites, we would also be interested in views on whether other changes should be made to the thresholds within which school buildings could be extended, such as reducing the limit on building extensions within 5 metres of a boundary of the curtilage of the premises.

Question 11.1: Do you have any views on our proposals to extend permitted development rights for state-funded schools, or whether other changes should be made? For example, should changes be made to the thresholds within which school buildings can be extended?

Question 11.2: Do you consider that the existing prior approval provisions are adequate? Do you consider that other local impacts arise which should be considered in designing the right?

Section 12: Changes to statutory consultation on planning applications

12.1 In certain circumstances, consultation must take place between a local planning authority and certain organisations, prior to a decision being made on a planning application. The organisations in question, known as statutory consultees, are under a duty to respond to the local planning authority within 21 days (or a longer period if agreed with the local authority) and must provide a substantive response to the application in question.

What are we proposing?

Improving the performance of all statutory consultees

12.2 Statutory consultees are required to report their performance in terms of responding to consultation requests about planning applications each year. The most recent performance data, provided by statutory consultees that respond to the majority of planning application consultee requests, indicates that for between 5 and 12% of cases they requested and received additional time from the local planning authority to respond beyond the 21 day statutory period.

12.3 The government considers that requests for extension of time may affect the ability of local planning authorities to reach timely decisions on applications and that there is scope to reduce them.

12.4 To address this issue, the government is interested in hearing views on the benefits and risks of setting a maximum period that a statutory consultee can request when seeking an extension of time. The performance data indicates that the average extension period is between 7 and 14 days and therefore a period of 14 days may be an appropriate maximum period to set for any extension sought.

Question 12.1: What are the benefits and/or risks of setting a maximum period that a statutory consultee can request when seeking an extension of time to respond with comments to a planning application?

Question 12.2: Where an extension of time to respond is requested by a statutory consultee, what do you consider should be the maximum additional time allowed? Please provide details.

Chapter 13: Public Sector Equality Duty

13.1 The proposals covered in this consultation have been assessed by reference to the public sector equality duty contained in the Equality Act 2010. The overall aim of these proposals is to speed up and simplify the planning system and ensure it is supporting the delivery of new homes that the country needs. None of the proposals are specifically aimed at persons with a protected characteristic and we have not identified any adverse cumulative impact of these proposals. The measures covered by this consultation are:

- proposals to link fees for planning applications more effectively to the service which is provided;
- details of the proposed approach to enabling planning bodies to grant permission in principle for housing development on sites allocated in local and neighbourhood plans or identified on brownfield registers; and allowing small builders to apply directly for permission in principle for minor development;
- proposals to require local authorities to have a statutory register of brownfield land that is suitable for housing development and improving the availability and transparency of up-to-date information;
- proposals for creating a small sites register to achieve a doubling in the number of custom build homes by 2020;
- proposals to speed up and simplify neighbourhood planning and giving more powers to neighbourhood forums;
- proposals for criteria to inform decisions on intervention if local plans are not produced by early 2017 together with the content of league tables
- proposals extending the existing designation approach to include applications for non-major development;
- proposals for testing competition in the processing of planning applications;
- detailed proposals for putting the economic benefits of proposals for development before local authority planning committees;
- detailed proposals for a Section 106 dispute resolution service;
- proposals for facilitating delivery of new state-funded school places, including free schools, through expanded Permitted Development Rights; and,

- proposals for improving the performance of all statutory consultees.
- 13.2 These proposals are focused on streamlining and speeding up the planning system and supporting a general increase in housing delivery for the benefit of all groups of people. For example, an increase in house building may reduce demand for rental properties helping to reduce upward pressures on rents. We do not envisage a significant differential impact of any of these proposals on protected groups (those who share a “protected characteristic”; namely race, sex, disability, sexual orientation, religion and belief, age, marriage and civil partnership, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity).
- 13.3 Proposals to speed up and simplify the planning system include the measures on neighbourhood plans, permission in principle, the brownfield and small sites register, the s106 dispute resolution service and proposals for improving the performance of statutory consultees. These proposals will improve and speed up the overall operation of the planning system. We have not identified any adverse equalities impacts of these proposals but will be interested to hear views on these proposals and any potential equalities impacts through this consultation.
- 13.4 The proposed criteria to inform decisions on intervention if local plans are not produced by early 2017 and our proposals to extend the designation approach to include non-major developments are focused on improving the performance of local authorities, whilst the proposals for putting the economic benefits of proposals for development before local planning authority committees seeks to enhance local decision making. These proposals will improve the performance of local planning authorities.
- 13.5 We have also included a proposal to support the delivery of free schools through expanded permitted development rights. These changes are intended to facilitate the development of state-funded schools.
- 13.6 There is limited data available about the involvement of protected groups in the planning process or as developers. We are keen to hear about any potential impacts of these new proposals on those with a protected characteristic, suggestions for any appropriate mitigation together with any supporting evidence which can assist in deciding the final policy approach in due course.

Question 13.1: Do you have any views about the implications of our proposed changes on people with protected characteristics as defined in the Equalities Act 2010? What evidence do you have on this matter? Is there anything that could be done to mitigate any impact identified?

Question 13.2 Do you have any other suggestions or comments on the proposals set out in this consultation document?

TEWKESBURY BOROUGH COUNCIL

Report to:	Executive Committee
Date of Meeting:	6 April 2016
Subject:	Severn Vale Housing Society Asset Disposal Strategy
Report of:	Rachel North, Deputy Chief Executive
Corporate Lead:	Rachel North, Deputy Chief Executive
Lead Member:	Councillor D M M Davies
Number of Appendices:	Two

Executive Summary:

In common with other Registered Providers of social housing, Severn Vale Housing Society (SVHS) is required to develop an Asset Disposal Strategy and to review its stock of properties on a regular basis.

A recent review carried out by SVHS has concluded that nine individual properties located within Tewkesbury Borough are recommended for disposal on the open market. Each property has been assessed using a framework developed by the Homes and Communities Agency against its level of repair, energy efficiency and details of how the proceeds will be used.

Capital receipts from disposals will finance the Society's development programme for new affordable housing. The Society may also use capital receipts from disposals to improve specific schemes and estates that require additional investment. SVHS is clear that any proceeds will, where possible, be channelled into the development of new affordable homes in key locations within Tewkesbury Borough.

While the Borough Council has no formal role in approving the disposals which are determined by the Secretary of State, the local authority is asked by the Homes and Communities Agency for its view as part of the Ministerial consideration.

Officers within the Borough Council have thus assessed the nine properties against the identified housing need in each locality and the current and future availability of affordable homes and considered the individual assessments carried out by SVHS. Local Ward Members have also been engaged to consider local issues.

As a result, and with the clear commitment to work with the Borough Council to reinvest any proceeds to provide affordable homes in key locations within the Borough, the Council is comfortable to support the nine disposals as recommended by SVHS.

Members are asked to endorse the conclusions reached as part of the local authority view.

Recommendation:

1. That the Executive Committee endorses the view that the nine asset disposals recommended by Severn Vale Housing Society (SVHS) are appropriate and the Borough Council welcomes the active support of SVHS in utilising any proceeds of these disposals to support the replacement of essential affordable homes in key rural locations.
2. That delegated authority be given to the Deputy Chief Executive, in consultation with the Portfolio Holders for Built Environment and Finance and Asset Management, to determine any future consideration of asset disposals by Registered Providers operating in the Borough.

Reasons for Recommendation:

The Borough Council is asked for a considered view by the Home and Communities Agency on any stock disposals recommended by Registered Providers of social housing within the Borough.

Resource Implications:

There are no direct resource implications for the Borough Council within this consideration.

Legal Implications:

The Council does not have direct power to refuse or consent to Severn Vale's proposal to dispose of some of the properties transferred to it by the Council as part of the Large Scale Voluntary Transfer of the Council's housing stock in 1998. However, the Society must apply to the relevant Government Department for consent to anything other than relatively minor disposals. The Council's representations in respect of such proposed disposal may influence whether or not consent is forthcoming from the Government and, if so, the conditions upon which such consent is given.

Risk Management Implications:

There are no direct risks inherent in this consideration.

Performance Management Follow-up:

Details as to the delivery performance of new affordable homes is a key indicator within the Council Plan and is regularly monitored.

The delivery of new affordable homes within Tewkesbury Borough is a key priority in Severn Vale Housing Society's Corporate Plan and will be monitored by the Borough Council Members on the Society's Board.

Environmental Implications:

None.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 In common with all Registered Providers of social housing, Severn Vale Housing Society (SVHS) is required to develop an Asset Disposal Strategy and to review its housing stock against the criteria within the strategy on a regular basis.

1.2 Any review of stock is supported with clear guidance from the Homes and Communities Agency which requires the Housing Society to take into account a rationale or case for disposal, details as to why disposal is in the best interest of the Housing Society and clear information on how any proceeds will be used.

1.3 The Borough Council has no formal role in approving any disposal but is required to provide a local authority view to aid the Secretary of State in his deliberations.

2.0 SEVERN VALE HOUSING SOCIETY ASSET DISPOSAL

2.1 The provision of affordable homes across the Borough is a key Borough Council priority and the Council is keen to maximise the number of affordable homes available to local people wherever possible.

2.2 The Borough Council thus uses Section 106 Agreements proactively on all new developments and works closely within the Gloucestershire Rural Housing Partnership to develop new affordable homes in our rural settlements utilising 'Exception to Local Plan' policies and other mechanisms to secure appropriate affordable homes.

The properties identified for disposal are all located within the east area of the Borough where affordability is particularly acute.

2.3 The Properties

2.3.1 Following a review by SVHS, nine properties with significant disrepair and modernisation needs have been identified. These properties are failing to deliver modern standards of energy efficiency and the cost of returning these units to effective use are deemed to outweigh the benefits. Disposal onto the open market is likely to secure reasonable capital sums which could be utilised to provide more affordable homes of an appropriate standard to meet local needs.

2.3.2 Detailed assessments as carried out by SVHS are attached at Appendix 1.

- 4 Severn Way, Apperley.
- 2 Glebe Cottages, Hawling.
- 3 Cleeve View, Stoke Orchard.
- 42 Church Lane, Toddington.
- 44 Church Lane, Toddington.
- 50 Church Lane, Toddington.
- 5 Tythe Terrace, Winchcombe.
- 1 Orchard Cottages, Wormington, Parish of Dumbleton.
- 4 Orchard Cottages, Wormington, Parish of Dumbleton.

2.4 Assessment of Housing Need

2.4.1 All of these properties are located in the east area of Tewkesbury Borough and are not occupied on any long term basis.

2.4.2 In order to fulfil the Borough Council's role in coming to a view, Officers have assessed these proposals against the identified housing need and available affordable stock in each locality using data from the Housing Register. Detailed information is attached at Appendix 2.

2.4.3 Table 1 Housing Need from the Tewkesbury Borough Housing Register

	1-bed	2-bed	3-bed	4-bed	5-bed	6-bed	Total
All TBC	950	589	195	60	9	3	1806
Dumbleton	2	0	0	0	0	0	2
Hawling	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Orchard	1	1	1	0	0	0	3
Deerhurst	3	1	1	0	0	0	5
Winchcombe	50	35	12	2	0	0	99
Toddington	1	0	0	0	0	0	0

2.4.4 The Housing Register captures current and future levels of housing need based on where those registered would prefer a property. Except for Winchcombe where the level of demand is relatively high, the above illustrates a low level of demand overall in these locations.

2.4.5 In Winchcombe the Registered need for one bedroomed property is high across the working age population and despite a high number of new and re-lets occurring over the last eight years the loss of this property is disappointing. However the value inherent in this property would allow for any reinvestment to produce more than one unit and thus will increase the overall supply of one bedroomed properties in this key location.

2.4.6 In addition in these locations there has been a significant level of new development over recent years which has included a percentage of affordable homes for rent and sale to meet local needs. One example is in Stoke Orchard where 55 new affordable properties have been delivered over the last three years. These were a mixture of social rented and shared ownership homes and a further 16 affordable units are expected in this village over the 12 months.

2.4.7 Given the Borough Council's assessment each disposal is deemed appropriate given this cost of bringing the individual properties to a modern level of repair and energy efficiency and the level of need and availability of alternative social housing stock in the localities.

In Winchcombe given the high level of demand for one bedroomed property SVHS has agreed to reinvest any proceeds from this disposal to re-provide essential one bed homes.

2.4.8 The Borough Council would however expect any proceeds received by SVHS to be utilised in partnership with the Council to re-provide suitable affordable homes in the key locations identified in this report.

2.5 Rural Housing Partnership

- 2.5.1** Tewkesbury Borough Council is an active partner within the Gloucestershire Rural Housing Partnership, working with the Rural Housing Enabler to secure new affordable homes across the rural communities of Gloucestershire. This requires utilising exception to Local Plan policies, working closely with Parish Councils to identify land and creative funding solutions to cross subsidise affordable units with limited units for market sale.
- 2.5.2** The delivery of such rural affordable housing schemes is relatively difficult and can take some time to come to fruition given the need to identify potential developable land, the need to evidence local housing need and the creation of viable funding packages to bring schemes forward. As such the county partnership approach championed by the Borough Council working closely with a specialist Rural Housing Enabler is a key tool to maximise outcomes.
- 2.5.3** The Partnership is currently addressing several constraints to rural exception development. This includes funding where, via the Homes and Communities Agency, government will fund shared ownership housing but not rented housing moving forward. In addition we are working with the District Valuer Services to overcome viability constraints caused by limited funding and how including open market housing on rural exception developments can aid delivery of affordable housing.
- 2.5.4** SVHS among other Registered Providers are also active within this county partnership and will aim to use capital receipts from sales of social housing to develop new affordable homes or reinvest these receipts into improvements and regeneration of current stock.
- 2.5.5** At present, the Strategic Housing and Enabling Officer is working with the Rural Housing Enabler to deliver affordable housing in several key locations including Service Villages such as Minsterworth, Norton and Leigh and other rural areas include Down Hatherley, Twigworth, and Snowhill. In addition, work is ongoing with SVHS to look at how Council-owned garage sites in Ashleworth, Brockworth, Shurdington, Staverton, Tewkesbury Town and Winchcombe can bring about new homes.
- 2.5.6** Proposed development across the Borough presents the Council with the opportunity to deliver much needed affordable housing through planning contributions rather than the heavily time-consuming and expensive route of exception schemes. However, rural exception schemes are necessary in many parts of the Borough, particularly the east area where Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and Greenbelt constraints prevent development in the normal way. The Council must continue to work with Registered Providers to deliver affordable housing in locations where there is little chance of new affordable homes otherwise.
- 2.5.7** Where Registered Providers, including SVHS can utilise the capital receipts delivered by their disposals to support further new build affordable units in key areas is to be welcomed. Active involvement with Tewkesbury Borough Council within the Rural Housing Partnership in order to further these plans would be an essential prerequisite of the Borough Council's support of these disposals.

2.6 Summary

- 2.6.1** As a result of the analysis carried out by the Housing Team to review both the latent demand in these locations, and the level of new affordable stock entering the market to meet this need, the Borough Council is generally comfortable with the disposals as proposed. The high cost of modernisation required within these properties and the opportunity for SVHS to redirect any proceeds to the provision of new affordable units in this area of the Borough concludes general support for the disposals as recommended.

2.7 Future Disposals

- 2.7.1** Given the Government's intention to continue to encourage Registered Providers to examine their stock holdings regularly to dispose of costly units to help support the greater delivery of new affordable homes it is likely the Borough Council will be asked for a view on such disposals more regularly.

In order to comply with the need to form a view it is recommended that the Deputy Chief Executive be given the delegated authority to determine the local authority view through consultation with both the Portfolio Holder's for Built Environment and Finance and Asset Management on any future Registered Providers asset disposals.

As an essential part of this delegated authority consultation will also take place with the local Ward Members for any disposal to ensure the local perspective is adequately captured and taken into account.

3.0 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 3.1** None.

4.0 CONSULTATION

- 4.1** Local Ward Members for the communities where properties have been identified for disposal have met with SVHS to discuss the assessment and consider the local issues.

Members were comfortable with the proposals given the context in which SVHS is required to operate and welcome active support from SVHS to develop new schemes to re-provide affordable housing units in the Borough.

5.0 RELEVANT COUNCIL POLICIES/STRATEGIES

- 5.1** Council Plan - Increase the supply of affordable homes across the Borough.

6.0 RELEVANT GOVERNMENT POLICIES

- 6.1** None.

7.0 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS (Human/Property)

- 7.1** None.

8.0 SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS (Social/Community Safety/Cultural/ Economic/ Environment)

- 8.1** None.

9.0 IMPACT UPON (Value For Money/Equalities/E-Government/Human Rights/Health And Safety)

9.1 Given the costs of refurbishing these properties to a modern standard and the likely value on the open market, disposal and utilisation of the proceeds to provide new affordable units would be effective value for money.

10.0 RELATED DECISIONS AND ANY OTHER RELEVANT FACTS

10.1 None.

Background Papers: None.

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Appendices: 1 – SVHS Property Assessments.
2 – Housing Need Assessments.

ASSET DISPOSAL SUMMARY REPORT
PROPERTY ADDRESS 4 SEVERN WAY APPERLEY
1.0 Introduction

The purpose of this report is to detail the reasons to dispose 4 Severn Way Apperley in accordance with the Society's Asset Disposal Procedure document

2.0 Background

A three bedroom semi-detached brick built house with a tiled roof. The property was built between 1930 and 1949. The windows are not original as they have been replaced with UPVC. On the ground floor there is an entrance Hall, living room and a kitchen. On the first floor there is a landing with two double bedrooms, one single bedroom and a family bathroom.

Outside there are gardens that surround the property with pedestrian access.

3.0 Asset Management – Data collated from Keystone

The property is in disrepair, however it does now need major updating, improving and central heating provided. Mains water, electricity, gas and drainage are connected.

The SAP rating for the property is 34 as stipulated in the Energy Performance Certificate dated 5th May 2015. The assessment has made recommendations to improve the SAP which includes.

Recommended measures	Indicative costs	Typical Savings per year	Rating after improvement	Green deal finance
Cavity wall insulation	£500 - £1,500	£318	E48	Yes Full
Floor insulation (suspended floor)	£800-£1,200	£74	E51	Yes Full
Low energy lighting	£25	£18	E52	No
Heating Controls	£350 - £450	£39	E54	Part contribution
Solar water heating	£4,000-£6,000	£35	D55	Part contribution
Replacement glazing units	£1,000 - £1,400	£67	D59	Part contribution
High performance external doors	£1,000	£25	D60	Part contribution
Solar photovoltaic panels	£5,000-£8,000	£290	B81	Part contribution

Data extracted from the Energy Performance Cert

***The indicative cost to improve the SAP rating to 85 has been estimated at £19,575 based on the data given above. The cost does not include any professional fees, building regulations and planning.**

The property currently complies with the Housing Quality Standard and is non-compliant by year 2017 as a result of major components requiring replacement such as roof and heating system.

The windows at the property have been replaced with PVCU during 1999 and renewal has been programmed for 2024.

The planned maintenance cost has been estimated at £26,130 profiled over the 30 years and 18 repairs have been reported since 2003. The majority of the repairs have been mainly plumbing repairs and general maintenance owing to the age of the property.

The Disposal Strategy determines not to invest further capital cost on this property as a result of the low SAP rating. It is considered that the funds generated from the disposal of this asset can be re-invested to provide new affordable housing which would be thermally efficient and meet current building regulations.

4.0 Finance

The weekly rent as from 1st April 2015 is £103.26 (52 weeks)

There is no service charge for the property.

The property has been void since 27th April 2015

5.0 Development Opportunities

The property would not be suitable for any development opportunity.

6.0 Housing Stock

The Society has thirty one affordable homes within the village of Apperley and Deerhurst although the disposal of properties will reduce this to thirty properties. As a member of the Gloucestershire Rural Partnership the Society will work with the rural enabler to seek new opportunity. The capital receipt which is generated from the disposal of this property can be used to fund new affordable housing within the Parish.

PROPERTY ADDRESS 2 GLEBE COTTAGES HAWLING.

1.0 Introduction

The purpose of this report is to detail the reasons to dispose of 2 Glebe Cottages Hawling in accordance with the Society’s Asset Disposal Procedure document

2.0 Background

The property is a 3 bedroom semi-detached solid wall sandstone property, built circa 1900’s. The windows are not original as they have been replaced with UPVC. On the ground floor there is an entrance hall, living room. Kitchen/diner and downstairs bathroom. On the first floor leading off the landing is two double bedrooms, one single bedroom.

Outside is a good sized front and rear garden with shared pedestrian access to 1 Glebe Cottages.

3.0 Asset Management – Data collated from Keystone

The property is in disrepair, it does now need major updating, improving and central heating required. Mains water, electricity and drainage are connected.

The SAP rating for the property is 51 as stipulated in the Energy Performance Certificate dated 1st February 2015. The assessment has made recommendations to improve the SAP which includes.

Recommended measures	Indicative costs	Typical Savings per year	Rating after improvement	Green deal finance
Add additional 80mm jacket to hot water cylinder	£15-£30	£21	D56	Yes Full
Floor insulation (solid floor)	£4,000-£6,000	£103	D55	Part contribution
Low energy lighting	£35	£36	D57	No
High heat retention storage heaters	£2,000-£3,000	£312	C69	Yes Full
Solar water heating	£4,000-£6,000	£54	C71	Part contribution
Solar photovoltaic panels	£5,000-£8,000	£290	B81	Part contribution

Data extracted from the Energy Performance Cert

***The indicative cost to improve the SAP rating to 85 has been estimated at £23,030 based on the data given above. The cost does not include any professional fees, building regulations and planning.**

The property currently complies with the Housing Quality Standard and is non-compliant by year 2029 as a result of major components requiring replacement such as roof and heating system.

The windows at the property have been replaced with PVCU during 2000 and renewal has been programmed for 2025.

The property is reported to have asbestos presumed in the hallway and external store.

The planned maintenance cost has been estimated at £24,490 profiled over the 30 years and 30 repairs have been reported since 2003. The majority of the repairs have been mainly plumbing repairs and general maintenance owing to the age of the property.

4.0 Finance

The weekly rent as from 1st April 2015 is £141.31 (52 weeks)

There is no service charge for the property.

5.0 Development Opportunities

The property would not be suitable for any development opportunity.

6.0 Housing Stock

The Society has two affordable homes within the village of Hawling although the disposal of properties will reduce this to one property. The Society are a member of the Gloucestershire Rural Partnership and will work with the rural enabler to seek new opportunity. The capital receipt which is generated from the disposal will be used to fund new affordable housing within the Parish.

PROPERTY ADDRESS 3 CLEEVE VIEW STOKE ORCHARD

1.0 Introduction

The purpose of this report is to detail the reasons to dispose of 3 Cleeve View Stoke Orchard in accordance with the Society’s Asset Disposal Procedure document

2.0 Background

The property is an older style property, built in about 1950, end terrace brick built with a tiled roof. The windows are not original as they have been replaced with UPVC. On the ground floor there is an entrance hall, living room and a kitchen/diner. On the first floor there is a landing with two double bedrooms, one single bedroom and a bathroom.

Outside is a good sized garden to the front and rear with off road parking.

3.0 Asset Management – Data collated from Keystone

The property is in disrepair, it does now need generally updating, improving and central heating provided. Mains water, electricity and drainage are connected.

The SAP rating for the property is 51 as stipulated in the Energy Performance Certificate dated 1st February 2015. The assessment has made recommendations to improve the SAP which includes.

Recommended measures	Indicative costs	Typical Savings per year	Rating after improvement	Green deal finance
Add additional 80mm jacket to hot water cylinder	£15-£30	£21	D56	Yes Full
Floor insulation (solid floor)	£4,000-£6,000	£103	D55	Part contribution
Low energy lighting	£35	£36	D57	No
High heat retention storage heaters	£2,000-£3,000	£312	C69	Yes Full
Solar water heating	£4,000-£6,000	£54	C71	Part contribution
Solar photovoltaic panels	£5,000-£8,000	£290	B81	Part contribution

Data extracted from the Energy Performance Cert

***The indicative cost to improve the SAP rating to 85 has been estimated at £23,065 based on the data given above. The cost does not include any professional fees, building regulations and planning.**

The property currently complies with the Housing Quality Standard and is non-compliant by year 2029 as a result of major components requiring replacement such as roof and heating system.

The windows at the property have been replaced with PVCU during 2000 and renewal has been programmed for 2025.

The planned maintenance cost has been estimated at £24,660 profiled over the 30 years and 66 repairs have been reported since 2003. The majority of the repairs have been mainly plumbing repairs and general maintenance owing to the age of the property.

4.0 Finance

The weekly rent as from 1st April 2015 is £124.25 (52 weeks)

There is no service charge for the property.

5.0 Development Opportunities

The property would not be suitable for any development opportunity.

6.0 Housing Stock

The Society has eleven affordable homes within the village of Stoke Orchard although the disposal of properties will reduce this to ten properties. As a member of the Gloucestershire Rural Partnership the Society will work with the rural enabler to seek new opportunity. The capital receipt which is generated from the disposal of this property can be used to fund new affordable housing within a sustainable location of Stoke Orchard and the surrounding Parishes if the opportunity arises.

PROPERTY ADDRESS 42 CHURCH LANE TODDINGTON

1.0 Introduction

The purpose of this paper is to detail the reasons to dispose 42 Church Lane Toddington in accordance with the Society’s Asset Disposal Procedure document

2.0 Background

The property is an older style end of terrace three bedroom house with a tiled roof, built in about 1950’s. The windows are not original as they have been replaced with UPVC. On the ground floor there is a living room and a kitchen/dining room. On the first floor there is a landing leading to two double bedrooms, one single bedroom and a family bathroom.

Outside is there are gardens that surround the property with pedestrian access.

3.0 Asset Management – Data collated from Keystone

The property is in disrepair, it does now need generally updating, improving and central heating provided. Mains water, electricity, gas and drainage are connected.

The SAP rating for the property is 70 as stipulated in the Energy Performance Certificate dated 30th June 2015. The assessment has made recommendations to improve the SAP which includes.

Recommended measures	Indicative costs	Typical Savings per year	Rating after improvement	Green deal finance
Floor insulation (solid floor)	£4,000-£6,000	£49	C72	Part contribution
Low Energy Lighting	£25	£26	C73	
Heating Controls	£350 - £450	£26	C74	Part contribution
Solar water heating	£4,000-£6,000	£32	C75	Part contribution
Solar photovoltaic panels	£5,000-£8,000	£266	B85	Part contribution

Data extracted from the Energy Performance Cert

***The indicative cost to improve the SAP rating to 85 has been estimated at £22.475 based on the data given above. The cost does not include any professional fees, building regulations and planning.**

The property currently complies with the Housing Quality Standard and is non-compliant by year 2017 as a result of major components requiring replacement.

The windows at the property have been replaced with PVCU during 1998 and renewal has been programmed for 2023.

The property is reported to have asbestos presumed within the loft space, external ground walls and kitchen.

The planned maintenance cost has been estimated at £25,000 profiled over the 30 years and repairs have been reported since 2003. The majority of the repairs have been mainly plumbing repairs and general maintenance owing to the age of the property.

4.0 Finance

The weekly rent as from 1st April 2015 is £72.58 (52 weeks)

There is no service charge for the property.

The property has been void since 16/06/2014.

5.0 Development Opportunities

The property would not be suitable for any development opportunity.

6.0 Housing Stock

The Society has eleven affordable homes within the village of Toddington although the disposal of properties will reduce this to ten properties. As a member of the Gloucestershire Rural Partnership the Society will work with the rural enabler to seek new opportunity. The capital receipt which is generated from the disposal of this property can be used to fund new affordable housing within the village and the surrounding Parishes if the opportunity arises.

PROPERTY ADDRESS 44 CHURCH LANE TODDINGTON

1.0 Introduction

The purpose of this report is to detail the reasons to dispose 44 Church Lane Toddington in accordance with the Society’s Asset Disposal Procedure document.

2.0 Background

The property is an older style property, built around 1950 to 1965, end of terrace house built in brick with a tiled roof. The windows are not original as they have been replaced with UPVC. On the ground floor there is a living room and a kitchen/ diner. On the first floor there is a landing with two double bedrooms, one single bedroom and a family bathroom. To the rear of the property there is attached a brick built store that has a W.C.

Outside is a good sized garden to the front and rear of the property with a shared pedestrian front access.

3.0 Asset Management – Data collated from Keystone

The property is in disrepair, it does now need major updating, improving and central heating provided. Mains water, electricity, gas and drainage are connected.

The SAP rating for the property is 71 as stipulated in the Energy Performance Certificate dated 7th September 2015. The assessment has made recommendations to improve the SAP which includes.

Recommended measures	Indicative costs	Typical Savings per year	Rating after improvement	Green deal finance
Floor insulation (solid floor)	£4,000-£6,000	£44	C73	Part contribution
Solar water heating	£4,000-£6,000	£34	C75	Part contribution
Solar photovoltaic panels	£5,000-£8,000	£278	B85	Part contribution
Low Energy lighting	£25	£26	C74	

Data extracted from the Energy Performance Cert

***The indicative cost to improve the SAP rating to 85 has been estimated at £20,000 based on the data given above. The cost does not include any professional fees, building regulations and planning.**

The property currently complies with the Housing Quality Standard and is non-compliant by year 2022 as a result of major components requiring replacement such as roof and heating system.

The windows at the property have been replaced with PVCU during 1998 and renewal has been programmed for 2023.

The property is confirmed to have asbestos in cement downpipes and hopper, kitchen and living room walls.

The planned maintenance cost has been estimated at £29,123 profiled over the 30 years and 54 repairs have been reported since 2003. The majority of the repairs have been mainly plumbing repairs and general maintenance owing to the age of the property.

4.0 Finance

The weekly rent as from 1st April 2015 is £113.19 (52 weeks)

There is no service charge for the property.

The property has been void since 24th August 2015

5.0 Development Opportunities

The property would not be suitable for any development opportunity

6.0 Housing Stock

The Society has eleven affordable homes within the village of Toddington although the disposal of properties will reduce this to ten properties. As a member of the Gloucestershire Rural Partnership the Society will work with the rural enabler to seek new opportunity. The capital receipt which is generated from the disposal of this property can be used to fund new affordable housing within the village and surrounding Parishes if the opportunity arises.

PROPERTY ADDRESS 50 CHURCH LANE TODDINGTON

1.0 Introduction

The purpose of this report is to detail the reasons to dispose 50 Church Lane Toddington in accordance with the Society’s Asset Disposal Procedure document

2.0 Background

The property is an older style property, built around 1950 to 1965, end of terrace built in brick with a tiled roof. The windows are not original as they have been replaced with UPVC. On the ground floor there is a living room and a kitchen/diner. On the first floor there is a landing with two double bedrooms, one single bedroom and a family bathroom. To the rear of the property attached the house is a brick built store and a w.c.

Outside is a good sized garden to the front and rear of the property with a shared pedestrian front access.

3.0 Asset Management – Data collated from Keystone

The property is in disrepair, it does now need major updating and improving. Mains water, electricity, gas and drainage are connected.

The SAP rating for the property is 72 as stipulated in the Energy Performance Certificate dated 28th July 2015. The assessment has made recommendations to improve the SAP which includes.

Recommended measures	Indicative costs	Typical Savings per year	Rating after improvement	Green deal finance
Floor insulation (solid floor)	£4,000-£6,000	£43	C73	Part contribution
Solar water heating	£4,000-£6,000	£34	C75	Part contribution
Solar photovoltaic panels	£5,000-£8,000	£278	B85	Part contribution

Data extracted from the Energy Performance Cert

***The indicative cost to improve the SAP rating to 85 has been estimated at £20,000 based on the data given above. The cost does not include any professional fees, building regulations and planning.**

The property currently complies with the Housing Quality Standard and is non-compliant by year 2022 as a result of major components requiring replacement such as roof and heating system.

The windows at the property have been replaced with PVCU during 2000 and renewal has been programmed for 2025.

The property is reported to have asbestos presumed in the dining room, walls, rainwater goods and kitchen.

The planned maintenance cost has been estimated at £29,075 profiled over the 30 years and 95 repairs have been reported since 2003. The majority of the repairs have been mainly plumbing repairs and general maintenance owing to the age of the property.

4.0 Finance

The weekly rent as from 1st April 2015 is £113.29 (52 weeks)

There is no service charge for the property.

The property has been void since 20th July 2015

5.0 Development Opportunities

The property would not be suitable for any development opportunity.

6.0 Housing Stock

The Society has eleven affordable homes within the village of Toddington although the disposal of properties will reduce this to ten properties. As a member of the Gloucestershire Rural Partnership the Society will work with the rural enabler to seek new opportunity. The capital receipt which is generated from the disposal of this property can be used to fund new affordable housing within the village and surrounding Parishes if the opportunity arises.

PROPERTY ADDRESS 5 TYTHE TERRACE WINCHCOMBE

1.0 Introduction

The purpose of this report is to detail the reasons to dispose of 5 Tythe Terrace Winchcombe in accordance with the Society's Asset Disposal Procedure document.

2.0 Background

The property is an older style property, built in about 1935, mid terraced house built in Cotswold stone with a tiled roof. The windows are not original as they have been replaced with UPVC. On the ground floor there is one reception room and a kitchen. On the first floor there is a landing with one double bedroom and a bathroom.

Outside to the front is a pedestrian access over a small garden and to the rear is a small garden with access from a rear communal gate. There is no vehicular access.

3.0 Asset Management – Data collated from Keystone

The property is in poor condition, it does now need major updating, improving and central heating provided. Mains water, gas, electricity and drainage are connected.

The SAP rating for the property is 31 as stipulated in the Energy Performance Certificate dated 20th October 2015. The assessment has made recommendations to improve the SAP which includes.

Recommended measures	Indicative costs	Typical Savings per year	Rating after improvement	Green deal finance
Internal or external wall insulation	£4,000 - £14,000	£383	E50	Yes Full
Floor insulation (solid floor)	£4,000-£6,000	£49	C72	Part contribution
Additional 80mm insulation on hot water cylinder	£15 - £30	£22	E54	Yes Full
High heat retention storage heaters and dual immersion cylinder	£800 - £1,200	£371	C75	Yes Full
High performance external doors	£1,000	£22	C79	Part contribution
Solar water heating	£4,000-£6,000	£32	C75	Part contribution
Solar photovoltaic panels	£5,000-£8,000	£266	B85	Part contribution

Data extracted from the Energy Performance Cert

***The indicative cost to improve the SAP rating to 90 has been estimated at £36,230 based on the data given above. The cost does not include any professional fees, building regulations and planning.**

The property currently complies with the Housing Quality Standard and is non-compliant by year 2017 as a result of major components requiring replacement such as roof and heating system.

The windows at the property have been replaced with PVCU during 2001 and renewal has been programmed for 2026.

The property is presumed to have asbestos although it is inaccessible.

The planned maintenance cost has been estimated at £18,914 profiled over the 30 years and 21 repairs have been reported since 2003. The majority of the repairs have been mainly plumbing repairs and general maintenance owing to the age of the property.

The Disposal Strategy determines not to invest further capital cost on this property as a result of the low SAP rating. It is considered that the funds generated from the disposal of this asset can be re-invested to provide new affordable housing which would be thermally efficient and meet current building regulations.

4.0 Finance

The weekly rent as from 1st April 2015 is £113.19 (52 weeks)

There is no service charge for the property.

The property has been void since 29th June 2015

5.0 Development Opportunities

The property would not be suitable for any development opportunity.

6.0 Housing Stock

The Society has a number of affordable homes within Winchcombe and the disposal of this property will have minimal impact in stock numbers. The Society are actively offering on development opportunities with major developers procuring projects within the town and surrounding areas.

PROPERTY ADDRESS 1 ORCHARD COTTAGES WORMINGTON

1.0 Introduction

The purpose of this report is to detail the reasons to dispose of 1 Orchard Cottages Wormington in accordance with the Society’s Asset Disposal Procedure document

2.0 Background

The property is an older style property, built in about 1950, semi-detached built in brick with a tiled roof. The windows are not original as they have been replaced with UPVC. On the ground floor there is an entrance hall, two reception rooms and a kitchen. To the side of the property is a coal house. On the first floor there is a landing with two double bedrooms, one single bedroom and a bathroom.

Outside is a good sized garden with a shared pedestrian front access and shared vehicular access at the rear. There is a block of 4 garages which it is assumed was originally built by Tewkesbury Borough Council. Although, it is believed that the detached garage within the garden was built by the tenant at number 1 some time ago.

3.0 Asset Management – Data collated from Keystone

The property is in disrepair, it does now need generally updating, improving and central heating provided. Mains water, electricity and drainage are connected. There is evidence of structural movement.

The SAP rating for the property is 42 as stipulated in the Energy Performance Certificate dated 1st February 2015. The assessment has made recommendations to improve the SAP which includes.

Recommended measures	Indicative costs	Typical Savings per year	Rating after improvement	Green deal finance
Cavity wall insulation	£500-£1,500	£428	D59	Yes full
Floor insulation (solid floor)	£4,000-£6,000	£89	D63	Part contribution
Low energy lighting	£20	£17	D64	No
High heat retention storage heaters	£2,000-£3,000	£149	C70	Part contribution
Solar water heating	£4,000-£6,000	£64	C73	Part contribution
Solar photovoltaic panels	£5,000-£8,000	£285	B85	Part contribution

Data extracted from the Energy Performance Cert

***The indicative cost to improve the SAP rating to 85 has been estimated at £24,250 based on the data given above. The cost does not include any professional fees, building regulations and planning.**

The property currently complies with the Housing Quality Standard and is non-compliant by year 2029 as a result of major components requiring replacement such as roof and heating system.

The windows at the property have been replaced with PVCU during 2000 and renewal has been programmed for 2025.

The property is reported to have asbestos presumed in bedroom 1 floor covering, walls and roof eaves although it is inaccessible.

The planned maintenance cost has been estimated at £26,000 profiled over the 30 years and 53 repairs have been reported since 2003. The majority of the repairs have been mainly plumbing repairs and general maintenance owing to the age of the property.

The Disposal Strategy determines not to invest further capital cost on this property as a result of the low SAP rating. It is considered that the funds generated from the disposal of this asset can be re-invested to provide new affordable housing which would be thermally efficient and meet current building regulations.

4.0 Finance

The weekly rent as from 1st April 2015 is £113.19 (52 weeks)

There is no service charge for the property.

The property has been void since 26th January 2015

5.0 Development Opportunities

The property would not be suitable for any development opportunity as 3 Orchard Cottages is privately owned.

6.0 Housing Stock

The Society has seven affordable homes within the village of Wormington although the disposal of properties will reduce this to five properties. As a member of the Gloucestershire Rural Partnership the Society will work with the rural enabler to seek new opportunity. The capital receipt which is generated from the disposal of this property can be used to fund new affordable housing within a sustainable location of Dumbleton and the surrounding Parishes if the opportunity arises.

PROPERTY ADDRESS 4 ORCHARD COTTAGES WORMINGTON

1.0 Introduction

The purpose of this report is to detail the reasons to dispose of 4 Orchard Cottages Wormington in accordance with the Society’s Asset Disposal Procedure document

2.0 Background

The property is an older style property, built in about 1950, semi-detached built in brick with a tiled roof. The windows are not original as they have been replaced with UPVC. On the ground floor there is two reception rooms and a kitchen. On the first floor there is a landing with two double bedrooms, one single bedroom and a bathroom. To the side with its own access door from the front and to the side is a brick built store with a W.C. and Belfast sink.

Outside is a good sized garden to front & rear with a shared pedestrian front access.

3.0 Asset Management – Data collated from Keystone

The property is in disrepair, it does now need generally updating, improving and central heating provided. Mains water, electricity and drainage are connected.

The SAP rating for the property is 51 as stipulated in the Energy Performance Certificate dated 1st February 2015. The assessment has made recommendations to improve the SAP which includes.

Recommended measures	Indicative costs	Typical Savings per year	Rating after improvement	Green deal finance
Add additional 80mm jacket to hot water cylinder	£15-£30	£21	D56	Yes Full
Floor insulation (solid floor)	£4,000-£6,000	£103	D55	Part contribution
Low energy lighting	£35	£36	D57	No
High heat retention storage heaters	£2,000-£3,000	£312	C69	Yes Full
Solar water heating	£4,000-£6,000	£54	C71	Part contribution
Solar photovoltaic panels	£5,000-£8,000	£290	B81	Part contribution

Data extracted from the Energy Performance Cert

***The indicative cost to improve the SAP rating to 85 has been estimated at £23,065 based on the data given above. The cost does not include any professional fees, building regulations and planning.**

The property currently complies with the Housing Quality Standard and is non-compliant by year 2028 as a result of major components requiring replacement such as roof and heating system.

The windows at the property have been replaced with PVCU during 2000 and renewal has been programmed for 2025.

The property is reported to have asbestos presumed in the walls and roof eaves although it is inaccessible.

The planned maintenance cost has been estimated at £24,000 profiled over the 30 years and 69 repairs have been reported since 2003. The majority of the repairs have been mainly plumbing repairs and general maintenance owing to the age of the property.

The Disposal Strategy determines not to invest further capital cost on this property as a result of the low SAP rating. It is considered that the funds generated from the disposal of this asset can be re-invested to provide new affordable housing which would be thermally efficient and meet current building regulations.

4.0 Finance

The weekly rent as from 1st April 2015 is £113.19 (52 weeks)

There is no service charge for the property.

The property has been void since 7th December 2015

5.0 Development Opportunities

The adjoining property at 3 Orchard Cottages is privately owned and there could be negotiations with the owner to provide an improved vehicular access to the rear.

6.0 Housing Stock

The Society has seven affordable homes within the village of Wormington although the disposal of properties will reduce this to five properties. As a member of the Gloucestershire Rural Partnership the Society will work with the rural enabler to seek new opportunity. The capital receipt which is generated from the disposal of this property can be used to fund new affordable housing within a sustainable location of Dumbleton and the surrounding Parishes if the opportunity arises.

Tewkesbury Borough Council Analysis of Housing Need / Availability of Affordable homes in each location

4 Severn Way, Apperley (1 x 3 bed house)

Affordable stock numbers are high in this location and while housing need is identified the Borough Council considers the remaining stock to be sufficient.

2 Glebe Cottages, Hawling (1 x 3 bed house)

The Borough Council has no registered need in this area and recognises that investment in more sustainable locations such as Winchcombe, Bishop's Cleeve and Alderton which have adequately replaced stock numbers over recent years.

3 Cleeve View, Stoke Orchard (1 x 3 bed house)

This area is an identified area of housing need but generous delivery of new affordable units in the village over recent years has adequately met past need and additional homes to be developed at Banady Lane by the end of 2016 will meet the current and projected small need housing need.

42, 44 and 50 Church Lane Toddington (3 x 3 bed houses)

Toddington is an area of high property values and thus a lack of affordability and as such the loss of 3 fairly sized units here is significant. The Borough Council recognises however the high costs of tackling the current disrepair and in addition the housing waiting list demand in this area is not for this house type. The council thus welcomes the opportunity to work with SVHS to utilise any proceeds in adjoining sustainable locations to meet the identified need more effectively.

5 Tythe Terrace, Winchcombe (1 x bed house)

While an area of relatively high demand the remaining stock numbers are significant and additional units have increased supply in this area. Over the last 8 years, there have been 200 new lets and re-lets of affordable rented homes in Winchcombe; the majority of which being for 1-bed and 2-bed accommodation.

There is a significant requirement for 1-bed accommodation in Winchcombe with an age breakdown as follows:

Age	Number of households registered for 1-bed housing in Winchcombe
Under 35	19
Age 36 – 59	19
60+	12
Total	50

The final 10 new build completions to come through from development in Winchcombe (between May 2016 and August 2016) are:

- 1-bed flat = 5
- 2-bed flat = 2
- 2-bed house = 1
- 3-bed house = 2

1 Orchard Cottages / 4 Orchard Cottages, Wormington (2 x 3-bed houses)

There is some registered housing need in this locality and this area, the parish of Dumbleton, is one in which affordability is of particular concern. The council notes that the disposal of these properties would leave 5 affordable homes in the village which is an adequate supply to meet identified need. Furthermore the housing need in Dumbleton shows a requirement for small accommodation namely 1-bedroomed houses or bungalows and not 3 bed houses.

A recent opportunity to provide affordable housing (6 dwellings) from a market-led development was proposed in this locality but was rejected at planning committee and further dismissed at appeal.

Proceeds of this sale would be directed to re provision and the Tewkesbury Borough Council Strategic Housing and Enabling Officer would seek to work proactively with the Rural Housing Enabler at GRCC and SVHS to identify a potential scheme to maintain levels of affordable homes in this part of our borough.

TEWKESBURY BOROUGH COUNCIL

Report to:	Executive Committee
Date of Meeting:	6 April 2016
Subject:	Review of the Revenues and Benefits Write-Off Policy
Report of:	Richard Horton, Revenues and Benefits Group Manager
Chief Officer:	Rachel North, Deputy Chief Executive
Lead Member:	Councillor D J Waters
Number of Appendices:	One

<p>Executive Summary:</p> <p>The Revenues and Benefits Write-Off Policy is due to be reviewed by the Executive Committee.</p>
<p>Recommendation:</p> <p>That the revised Revenues and Benefits Write-Off Policy is ADOPTED.</p>
<p>Reasons for Recommendation:</p> <p>There have been changes since the Policy was last adopted and these have been reflected in the new Policy.</p>

<p>Resource Implications:</p> <p>To continue to pursue debt when it is not cost effective to do so is an ineffective use of resource.</p>
<p>Legal Implications:</p> <p>The Council should ensure that such debts are only written off in accordance with the Council's Financial Procedure Rules and the Revenues and Benefits Write-off Policy. All appropriate avenues of collection must be considered and where appropriate applied before the debt is written off.</p>
<p>Risk Management Implications:</p> <p>All appropriate avenues of recovery will be followed to ensure that the debt is collected.</p>
<p>Performance Management Follow-up:</p> <p>Details of all write-offs are maintained so that if the claimant's circumstances should improve, or in the case where the debtor has absconded and a new address is identified, consideration is given to recover the debt.</p>

Implications for Biodiversity:

None directly affecting the Policy.

1.0 INTRODUCTION/BACKGROUND

1.1 The Revenues and Benefits Write-Off Policy is due to be reviewed by the Executive Committee. The changes to the have been highlighted in grey in Appendix 1.

- Since the Policy was first written there have been changes to job titles and these have been reflected in the revised Policy.
- The Council's Finance and Asset Management Group Manager has delegated authority to write-off a debt of up to and including £15,000.
- A debt greater than £15,000 has to be authorised for write-off by the Council's Executive Committee.
- The Revenues Team Leader and Revenues Officers need to be named as having delegated authority to write-off irrecoverable debts of up to £55.00.

The Revenues and Benefits Write-Off Policy allows Revenues and Housing Benefit debts to be written off as irrecoverable. The reasons can be where the debtor has absconded or died, or where it is not cost effective to pursue the debtor.

2.0 MONITORING OF WORKLOAD

2.1 Write offs are monitored to see if the debtors circumstances have changed. Where circumstances have changed and it is appropriate to do so action is taken to recover the debt.

3.0 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

3.1 None.

4.0 CONSULTATION

4.1 None.

5.0 RELEVANT COUNCIL POLICIES/STRATEGIES

5.1 Revenues and Benefits Write-Off Policy and Council's Financial Procedure Rules.

6.0 RELEVANT GOVERNMENT POLICIES

6.1 None.

7.0 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

7.1 To continue to pursue debt when it is not cost effective to do so is an ineffective use of resource.

8.0 SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS (Social/Community Safety/Cultural/ Economic/ Environment)

8.1 None.

9.0 IMPACT UPON (Value For Money/Equalities/E-Government/Human Rights/Health And Safety)

9.1 The Policy has had an Equality Impact Assessment and no issues have been identified.

10.0 RELATED DECISIONS AND ANY OTHER RELEVANT FACTS

10.1 Please see attached documents.

Background Papers: None.

Contact Officer: Richard Horton, Revenues and Benefits Group Manager
Tel: 01684 272119 Email: richard.horton@teWKesbury.gov.uk

Appendices: 1 Write-Off Policy.

REVENUES & BENEFITS WRITE-OFF POLICY

Introduction

The Council will seek to collect all Council Tax, Non-Domestic Rate and Housing Benefit debts that are legally due and payable to the authority as efficiently and promptly as possible within the existing legislation.

There will be occasions when some debts become irrecoverable. This can be for a number of reasons, such as insolvency or where the debtor has absconded or died. There may be occasions when it is no longer cost effective to pursue a debt or it is not in the public interest to do so. In these cases the only remaining option is to have the debt written off.

Write-off of debts will only be considered when all other options for recovering the debt have been explored.

Housing Benefit debts which are more than two years old are monitored regularly and decisions made as to whether it is appropriate to write off those which have been inactive for a period of time.

All write-offs for debts in respect of Council Tax, Non Domestic Rates and Housing Benefit shall be dealt with in accordance with this Policy.

Authority to Write-Off Debts

The Council's Finance and Asset Management Group Manager has delegated authority to authorise the write-off of a debt up to and including £15,000.

A debt greater than £15,000 has to be authorised for write-off by the Council's Executive Committee.

The Finance and Asset Management Group Manager has delegated authority to write-off a debt arising out of a debtor being declared insolvent, irrespective of the amount.

The Revenue's Team Leader and Revenues Officers have been given delegated authority to write off debts up to £55.00.

Submission of Write-offs

All accounts that are being submitted for write-off shall be accompanied by a pro-forma which identifies the following:

- Name & address of debtor.
- Amount due for write-off.
- How the outstanding amount has arisen.
- Period to which the outstanding amount relates.
- Reason for write-off.
- Details of the checks that have been carried out to validate that the debt is irrecoverable.

The completed pro-formas should be submitted to the Revenues and Benefits Group Manager, together with any relevant supporting documentation, for approval.

The Revenues and Benefits Group Manager should only submit write-offs to the Finance and Asset Management Group Manager or the Executive Committee for authorisation when he is satisfied that all appropriate checks have been carried out and that the debt is irrecoverable.

Recording and Monitoring

No debt should be written off unless a valid authorisation has been obtained.

All debts submitted for write-off will be recorded in a register and reconciled on a regular basis with a final reconciliation being carried out at year-end.

Periodic checks will be made of the entries on the write-off register and if a debtor is subsequently traced the debt will be restored and normal recovery action continued.

RH April 2016

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