

15 January 2024

<b>Committee</b>	Council
<b>Date</b>	Tuesday, 23 January 2024
<b>Time of Meeting</b>	6:00 pm
<b>Venue</b>	Tewkesbury Borough Council Offices, Severn Room

## **ALL MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL ARE REQUESTED TO ATTEND**

### **Agenda**

#### **1. ANNOUNCEMENTS**

1. 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 (during office hours staff should proceed to their usual assembly point; outside of office hours proceed to the visitors' car park). 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. To receive any announcements from the Chair of the Meeting and/or the Chief Executive.

#### **2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

**3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Pursuant to the adoption by the Council on 24 January 2023 of the Tewkesbury Borough Council Code of Conduct, effective from 1 February 2023, as set out in Minute No. CL.72, Members are invited to declare any interest they may have in the business set out on the Agenda to which the approved Code applies.

**4. MINUTES**

5 - 18

To approve the Minutes of the meeting held on 12 December 2023.

**5. ITEMS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC**

- a) To receive any questions, deputations or petitions submitted under Council Rule of Procedure.12.

*(The deadline for public participation submissions for this meeting is Wednesday 17 January 2024.)*

- b) To receive any petitions submitted under the Council's Petitions Scheme.

**6. MEMBER QUESTIONS PROPERLY SUBMITTED IN ACCORDANCE WITH COUNCIL PROCEDURE RULES**

To receive any questions submitted under Rule of Procedure 13. Any items received will be circulated by 5pm Monday 22 January 2024.

*(Any questions must be submitted in writing to Democratic Services by, not later than, 10.00am on Monday 15 January 2024).*

**7. APPOINTMENT OF CIVIC HEADS FOR THE MUNICIPAL YEAR****(a) Mayor**

It is usual practice that the current Deputy Mayor be appointed Mayor for the ensuing Municipal Year.

**(b) Deputy Mayor**

To receive nominations for the appointment of Deputy Mayor for the ensuing Municipal Year.

## 8. RECOMMENDATIONS FROM EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

The Council is asked to consider and determine recommendations of a policy nature arising from the Executive Committee as follows:-

### (a) Treasury and Capital Management

19 - 52

At its meeting on 10 January 2024, the Executive Committee **RECOMMENDED TO COUNCIL** that the following be **ADOPTED**:

- Capital Strategy 2024/25
- Investment Strategy 2024/25
- Minimum Revenue Provision Statement 2024/25; and
- Treasury Management Statement 2024/25.

### (b) Cheltenham, Gloucester and Tewkesbury Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) Joint Committee

53 - 74

At its meeting on 10 January 2024, the Executive Committee **RECOMMENDED TO COUNCIL** that establishment of a Community Infrastructure Levy Joint Committee with the Terms of Reference as set out at Appendix 1 to the report, including the pooling of strategic Community Infrastructure Levy monies by Cheltenham Borough, Gloucester City and Tewkesbury Borough Councils be **APPROVED**; that the amended Infrastructure List, as set out at Appendix 2 to the report, be **APPROVED** for publication; and that engagement with a wide range of infrastructure providers e.g. NHS, emergency services, Environment Agency be **ENDORSED** in order to identify any wider infrastructure priorities to be considered by the Community Infrastructure Levy Joint Committee.

### (c) Gloucestershire Statement of Common Ground

75 - 112

At its meeting on 10 January 2024, the Executive Committee **RECOMMENDED TO COUNCIL** that the revised version of the Gloucestershire Statement of Common Ground be **APPROVED** with the dashes in the "agreements" section removed and the removal of Appendix 3 to the previously approved version; and that authority be delegated to the Executive Director: Place, in consultation with the Lead Member for Built Environment, to make those amendments along with any necessary minor amendments, corrections and additions to in respect of any spelling, grammatical, cross-referencing, typographical errors and/or factual updates prior to signing by the Leader or Chief Executive.

## 9. REVIEW OF POLLING DISTRICTS AND POLLING PLACES/STATIONS

113 - 184

To approve the recommendations set out in Appendix 1 to the report in relation to polling districts and polling places/stations within the borough; pending any further formal review, to delegate authority to the Returning Officer to make any further polling place and/or polling station changes as is necessary to enable the efficient and effective conduct of elections; and to delegate authority to the Registration Officer to make any changes as are necessary to the Register of Electors.

	<b>Item</b>	<b>Page(s)</b>
<b>10.</b>	<b>SCHEME OF MEMBER ALLOWANCES 2024/25</b>	185 - 194
	To determine the Scheme of Allowances to take effect on 1 April 2024 until 31 March 2025 having regard to the recommendations of the Independent Remuneration Panel.	
<b>11.</b>	<b>SCHEDULE OF MEETINGS 2024/25</b>	195 - 200
	To approve the Schedule of Meetings 2024/25.	

### **Recording of Meetings**

In accordance with the Openness of Local Government Bodies Regulations 2014, 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 Mayor 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.

### **Executive Director: Resources**

## TEWKESBURY BOROUGH COUNCIL

**Minutes of a Meeting of the Council held at the Council Offices, Gloucester Road, Tewkesbury on Tuesday, 12 December 2023 commencing at 6:00 pm**

### **Present:**

The Worshipful the Mayor  
Deputy Mayor

Councillor I Yates  
Councillor P N Workman

### **and Councillors:**

N D Adcock, C Agg, H J Bowman, T J Budge, C M Cody, M Dimond-Brown, S R Dove, P A Godwin, M A Gore, D W Gray, S Hands, D J Harwood, E J MacTiernan, G C Madle, J R Mason, H C McLain, C E Mills, J P Mills, K Pervaiz, E C Skelt, J K Smith, P E Smith, R J G Smith, R J Stanley, M R Stewart, H Sundarajoo, M G Sztymiak, R J E Vines and M J Williams

### **CL.68 ANNOUNCEMENTS**

- 68.1 The evacuation procedure, as noted on the Agenda, was advised to those present.
- 68.2 The Mayor indicated how sorry he was to hear of the recent passing of Honorary Alderman Pearl Stokes who had been a great servant of both the Borough Council and Churchdown Parish Council; she was well known and well loved and would be missed. These sentiments were echoed by Members and the Leader of the Council, Councillor Vines and Councillor Sztymiak shared their memories of Honorary Alderman Stokes. It was agreed that the Mayor would send a letter of condolence to her family on behalf of the Council.

### **CL.69 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

- 69.1 Apologies for absence were received from Councillors C L J Carter, C F Coleman, A Hegenbarth, M L Jordan, P D McLain, P W Ockelton and G M Porter.

### **CL.70 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

- 70.1 The Committee's attention was drawn to the Tewkesbury Borough Code of Conduct which was adopted by the Council on 24 January 2023 and took effect on 1 February 2023.
- 70.2 There were no declarations made on this occasion.

### **CL.71 MINUTES**

- 71.1 The Minutes of the meeting held on 26 September 2023 and the Extraordinary meeting held on 21 November 2023, copies of which had been circulated, were approved as correct records and signed by the Mayor.
- 71.2 The Minutes of the Special meeting, held on 7 November 2023 was approved as a correct record, subject to an amendment to record apologies for Councillor P D McLain, and signed by the Mayor.

**CL.72 ITEMS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC**

72.1 There were no items from members of the public.

**CL.73 MEMBER QUESTIONS PROPERLY SUBMITTED IN ACCORDANCE WITH COUNCIL PROCEDURE RULES**

73.1 The following question was received from Councillor Cody to the Lead Member for Clean and Green Environment, Councillor Sarah Hands. The answer was given by the Lead Member for Clean and Green Environment and was taken as read without discussion.

**Question 1**

The Gloucestershire Local Nature Partnership held a Whole Partnership Gathering on 28 November 2023. The Forest of Dean, Stroud, Cheltenham and Cotswold Districts, plus County all had officers present.

Additionally, GFirst LEP held a Gloucestershire Net Zero Conference on 29 November at which Tewkesbury Borough Council didn't appear to have any officers either.

As we have now extended our climate emergency to include the whole borough as well as an ecological emergency, please could we make sure that there is officer representation and engagement at events such as these in the future.

**Answer**

The Council will always endeavour to ensure attendance at partner led meetings by appropriate officers from across the Council where resources are available and existing commitments do not take priority.

73.2 The Mayor invited a supplementary question and the Member asked the following which was answered by the Lead Member for Clean and Green Environment:

**Supplementary Question**

I appreciate it may not always be possible to send representation; however, it was quite embarrassing to hear that it is often Tewkesbury Borough Council and Gloucester City Council who do not send Officers to these types of events, the merits of which are many: collaboration, sharing ideas and best practice, support and information. Nature, ecology and the climate emergency have no borders; we need to work together and forge good relationships. Tewkesbury Borough Council has some excellent new initiatives to share, therefore, I implore the Council to make sure that Officers are present; learning and showing that we understand the importance of what we have signed up to. What assurances can the Lead Member give me please?

**Answer**

In January, Tewkesbury Borough Council will be advertising for a new Climate Officer to add to the team and, with these additional resources, the Council will be better able to ensure Officers can attend these events. Officers are in regular contact so, whilst the resources may not always be available to send someone to meetings, there is collaboration before and after events.

**CL.74 RECOMMENDATIONS FROM EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE****Medium Term Financial Strategy**

- 74.1 At its meeting on 29 November 2023, the Executive Committee considered the Medium Term Financial Strategy 2024/25-2028/29 and recommended to Council that it be adopted.
- 74.2 The report which was considered by the Executive Committee had been circulated with the Agenda for the current meeting at Pages No. 28-50.
- 74.3 As Chair of the Executive Committee, the Leader of the Council proposed the recommendation of the Executive Committee and it was seconded by the Lead Member for Finance and Resources. The Leader of the Council indicated that Members would be well aware of the financial challenges faced by all local authorities and Tewkesbury Borough Council, having a particularly low Council Tax, was no exception to this. It was important to understand that, although the report referred to a budget deficit of £6.14m over the next five years, that was based upon a set of assumptions which at this point were unknown. Many Members would have attended other sessions in the past two weeks on this key piece of financial planning for the Council, either in a stand-alone briefing, at Executive Committee or the Transform Working Group. It was very important at this point to note the comment at Page No. 31, Paragraph 1.5 of the report, which stated that the Council was not in immediate danger of a S114 notice being required and that the next two budgets looked manageable as long as a range of sensible and careful decisions were made. The Lead Member went on to explain that this was an update to the MTFS approved at Council in January 2023 and reflected the latest information and financial assumptions. The strategy had been brought forward to set the scene for Members ahead of the 2024/25 budget round which was about to begin in earnest. He stressed that it was merely a financial forecast and its approval did not bind the Council to anything, for example, setting Council Tax for the next five years or staffing budgets. Local government funding continued to remain uncertain with no assurance over any funding stream in the medium term and the MTFS focused on a 'likely' funding scenario based on previous government communication and consultations which resulted in a £3.5m funding 'cliff edge' in 2026/27. Given uncertainties, there were potentially many different scenarios – some worse but many better. Costs had been projected forward using latest estimates of inflation and reflecting known unavoidable cost increases such as external audit and the Materials Recovery Facility (MRF) gate fee. Whilst the Council had a £3m reserve which could support the financial challenges faced, 2026/27 going into 2027/28 looked particularly challenging based on current funding projections. This Council, along with many others, would be reliant on the government finding a longer term solution for funding. The Chancellor's Autumn Statement had indicated that no additional funding would be coming forward to help local government and an article in The Times on Monday had focused on the "Council crisis being faced in an election year" which made claims that the Local Government Association had written to the Chancellor sharing that 90% of Councils would need to dip into reserves to maintain statutory services; since 2010, Council budgets had been cut by an average of 27%; and a wave of local authorities were expected to declare in 2024 that they could not balance the books – Tewkesbury Borough Council was clearly not alone in facing this and Nottingham City Council had effectively declared itself bankrupt when this item was being discussed by the Executive Committee last month; undoubtedly, more would follow.

- 74.4 A Member asked how this information would be communicated to the wider public and what communication strategy was proposed in that regard. In response, the Leader of the Council advised that this question had been raised in other arenas and it had been recognised it would need to be handled sensitively. Challenges were faced across the board after many years of austerity and there were other Councils making the point that this was not over for local authorities. Tewkesbury Borough Council did have reserves so, whilst the position was not comfortable, it was not at immediate risk of collapse as some Councils would be facing. The Executive Director: Resources confirmed that a press release would be issued immediately, should the MTFs be approved by Members this evening, followed up by a further press release in the New Year, with communications further built up as budget approval approached.
- 74.5 During the debate which ensued, a Member commended Officers on this extremely important piece of work and felt that the rolling programme of work in terms of looking at the Council's strategy and finances was important for residents to know that the Council took its duties extremely seriously and invested the appropriate time in assessing its position. There was nationally recognised uncertainty and a debate about how Council services would be financed in the future whatever the political landscape. He felt it was worth recognising that Tewkesbury Borough Council was in a position of relative strength with a sound financial position having been wise in its past judgements of not exposing the authority to risks others had in terms of investments. The overall message in his view was that there was financial uncertainty but the Council was starting from a strong position and needed to continue to be wise in its decision making and not take risks which would benefit short term finances but expose it to greater uncertainty in the long term. The Leader of the Council agreed that Tewkesbury Borough Council certainly had long term challenges, particularly due to the low Council Tax which dated back to the 1990s and had also been a problem for the previous administration and lost planning appeals which had cost the Council over £500,000 in the last year. Some decisions were external and faced by all Councils but others had been made by Tewkesbury Borough Council, albeit in good faith at the time, and it was important they did not take their eye off the ball and to take care regarding finances going forward.
- 74.6 Upon being put to the vote, it was  
**RESOLVED** That the Medium Term Financial Strategy be **APPROVED**.

### **Tewkesbury Garden Town Programme Delegations**

- 74.7 At its meeting on 29 November 2023, the Executive Committee considered the Tewkesbury Garden Town programme delegations and recommended to Council that authority be delegated to the Chief Executive to prepare bids for external revenue funding to support the delivery of the Garden Town programme; accept grants of external revenue funding of up to £50,000 and agree any terms and conditions associated with those awards; seek specific Council approval for the acceptance of grants of external revenue funding of over £50,000 and any terms and conditions associated with those awards; deploy the revenue resources in line with the funding bids and the Garden Town programme following the Council's normal procedures for procurement and the appointment of staff; ensure continued stakeholder engagement related to the programme takes place informed by production of a Tewkesbury Garden Town Charter for subsequent, specific approval by Council in February 2024; undertake activities to progress the Garden Town programme, including sourcing potential partner capital funding, whilst seeking specific Council approval for: acceptance of any partner grant for capital works and acting as lead for delivery of infrastructure elements of the programme where



necessary; and in consultation with the Leader of the Council and the Lead Member for Built Environment, provide quarterly update reports to Council on progress with the Garden Town programme.

- 74.8 The report which was considered by the Executive Committee had been circulated with the Agenda for the current meeting at Pages No. 51.54.
- 74.9 As Chair of the Executive Committee, the Leader of the Council proposed the recommendation of the Executive Committee and it was seconded by the Lead Member for Clean and Green Environment. The Leader of the Council indicated that Members would be aware that delegations had been brought back to Council following the gateway review of the Garden Town. Since that time, a significant amount of work had been undertaken as part of the Council's new approach, with community engagement at its heart; the Garden Town team was now reporting to a new Executive Director: Place and there was a new governance structure, which gave openness and transparency to the key stakeholders, including the local Parish Councils. Community groups and landowners/developers were also represented via specific liaison groups. He was pleased to report there had been a huge amount of work undertaken by the team, led by the Chief Executive working closely with the Associate Director: Transformation, and he thanked them for their hard work on this. The Assurance Board and the Oversight Board had both had their first meetings and the new draft charter outlining Council and community expectations of any new garden communities was now out for consultation. The Charter was an important part of creating a vision and set of expectations that could be measured against any proposals brought forward by developers. It was a positive sign of the renewed confidence from Homes England that it had recently awarded the Council £214,000 which would continue funding the project at its current capacity until March 2024. This recent progress stood the Council in good stead for future funding but, to ensure it was prepared for all outcomes, as Lead Member he had asked that Officers bring a paper to Members setting out the options post-March to debate at that point. Homes England had recently met with the Garden Town team, senior Officers, the Lead Member for Built Environment and himself as Leader where they had expressed their support and acknowledged the significant positive changes in the project. The work to build trust and confidence was an ongoing process and he accepted that some Members may have continued concerns about aspects of the project and the challenges around infrastructure and the Council's housing position. Those challenges remained but the Council was now on a firmer footing to be able to face them. Tonight Members were being asked to approve the delegations to the Chief Executive in order that the project could continue to progress. The Lead Member for Clean and Green Environment pointed out that the Garden Town Member Engagement Forum was being held the next evening and would be an opportunity for Members to raise any questions so far regarding the Garden Town.
- 74.10 A Member noted that the recommendation on the Agenda was slightly different to that outlined in the Executive Committee report and sought clarification on this. In response, the Chief Executive advised that an additional delegation had been included at the request of the Executive Committee to ensure that specific Council approval was sought for the acceptance of grants of external revenue funding of over £50,000 and any terms and conditions associated with those awards in order for all Members to determine how that was spent and it was now proposed for the quarterly progress reports to Council to be done in consultation with the Leader of the Council and the Lead Member for Built Environment. Another Member drew attention to Page No. 52, Paragraph 1.1 of the report which gave a definition of a Garden Town and he asked where that was taken from as there was no footnote to that effect. The Leader of the Council confirmed this was the Homes England definition. In response to a question as to how Members would debate the options paper regarding future financing of the Garden Town and if that would be taken in separate business at Council, the Leader of the Council indicated it was too early to

say – all that had been done to date was to request that the options paper be brought forward for Members in order to avoid a situation where funding ran out and there was a risk that the project could not continue. The Chief Executive explained that work had been undertaken looking at a range of options for further external funding; Members needed to know how it was intended to maintain momentum depending on the level of available funding. The message from Homes England was positive as it was not awarding funding across the board, only to those projects moving forward at pace, so he did not believe the risk was high; however, it would be remiss not to furnish Members with all options depending on the level of funding available. The Leader of the Council indicated that he had requested this paper prior to the Homes England meeting and whilst it may not get to that point, it was prudent for Members to have the information necessary to make that decision if necessary.

74.11 Upon being put to the vote, it was

**RESOLVED**

That authority be delegated to the Chief Executive to:

- i) prepare bids for external revenue funding to support the delivery of the Garden Town programme;
- ii) accept grants of external revenue funding of up to £50,000 and agree any terms and conditions associated with those awards;
- iii) seek specific Council approval for the acceptance of grants of external revenue funding of over £50,000 and any terms and conditions associated with those awards;
- iv) deploy the revenue resources in line with the funding bids and the Garden Town programme following the Council's normal procedures for procurement and the appointment of staff;
- v) ensure continued stakeholder engagement related to the programme takes place informed by production of a Tewkesbury Garden Town Charter for subsequent, specific approval by Council in February 2024;
- vi) undertake activities to progress the Garden Town programme, including sourcing potential partner capital funding, whilst seeking specific Council approval for:
  - acceptance of any partner grant for capital works; and
  - acting as lead for delivery of infrastructure elements of the programme where necessary; and
- vii) in consultation with the Leader of the Council and the Lead Member for Built Environment, provide quarterly update reports to Council on progress with the Garden Town programme.

**Infrastructure Funding Statement and Annual Community Infrastructure Levy Rate Summary Statement**

74.12 At its meeting on 29 November 2023, the Executive Committee considered the Infrastructure Funding Statement (IFS) relating to the financial year ending 31 March 2023 and the Annual Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) Rate Summary Statement and recommended to Council that their publication, by 31 December 2023, be approved.

- 74.13 The report which was considered by the Executive Committee had been circulated with the Agenda for the current meeting at Pages No. 55-105.
- 74.14 As Chair of the Executive Committee, the Leader of the Council proposed the recommendation of the Executive Committee and it was seconded by the Lead Member for Clean and Green Environment. The Leader of the Council advised that the Executive Committee had recommended that the Council approve the publication of this year's IFS for the financial year ending 31 March 2023; and the annual CIL Rate Summary Statement, stating the impact that inflation has had on the rates for the calendar year ahead. The CIL Regulations required both to be published by 31 December each year. The IFS contained three chapters: the CIL Report – answering set questions on income and expenditure during the reported year; the Section 106 Report – answering questions set in the regulations on agreements entered into and undertakings made, contributions received and spent; and non-financial obligations secured and delivered; and an infrastructure list – a statement of the infrastructure projects or types of infrastructure which the charging authority intended would be, or may be, wholly or partly funded by CIL. A summary of CIL and Section 106 income and expenditure was provided at Page No. 57, Paragraph 2 of the report, with greater detail at Appendix 1. The Leader stressed that the purpose of this report was not to forensically examine specific Section 106 income or projects, nor Section 106 processes or approach. Any queries about specific Section 106 Agreements could be taken away from the meeting. An internal audit had recently been carried out in relation to Section 106 processes and Officers were considering the draft findings with a view to reporting back to the Audit and Governance Committee early in 2024. It should be borne in mind that the infrastructure list included was not exhaustive or definitive; the projects had been compiled by Officers at Cheltenham Borough, Gloucester City and Tewkesbury Borough Councils and decisions around CIL spend would be made by the Joint CIL Governance Committee which was in the process of being set up with a separate report due for consideration by the Executive Committee and Council in January 2024. Finally, it was important to point out the new Strategic and Local Plan would be underpinned by a lot of detailed work on infrastructure planning and would identify the long term infrastructure requirements to support planned development. This would include working with communities to understand aspirations. CIL charges would also be reviewed to ensure that the Councils were maximising the planning gain that could be secured through new developments.
- 74.15 A Member asked how much CIL money was available for offsite affordable housing and what plans were in place for spending that. The Executive Director: Place indicated that a written response would be provided outside of the meeting. Another Member noted that the training session on CIL and Section 106 included in the Member Induction Programme had been postponed and she asked when this would now take place. The Executive Director: Place provided assurance that a programme was underway and a new date for the session would be arranged early in the New Year.
- 74.16 Upon being put to the vote, it was
- RESOLVED**
1. That publication of the Infrastructure Funding Statement, relating to the financial year ending 31 March 2023, by 31 December 2023, be **APPROVED**, subject to appropriate amendments to the IFS if necessary to clarify what had been brought forward, received, spent and allocated for future maintenance thereby arriving at the closing balance.
  2. That the Annual Community Infrastructure Levy Rate Summary Statement be published alongside the Infrastructure Funding Statement by 31 December 2023.

**CL.75 NOTICES OF MOTION****Ban on Pets as Prizes**

- 75.1 The Mayor referred to the Notice of Motion, as set out on the Agenda, and indicated that, in accordance with the Rules of Procedure, it was necessary for the Council firstly to decide whether it wished to debate and determine the Motion at this evening's meeting, or whether it wished to refer the Motion, without debate, to a Committee for consideration with authority either to make a decision on the matter or bring a recommendation back to Council.
- 75.2 Upon being proposed and seconded, it was
- RESOLVED** That the Motion would be discussed at this evening's meeting.
- 75.3 It was proposed and seconded that England's local authorities have the opportunity to ban the giving of live animals as prizes on Council-owned land to ensure the welfare of these animals is not compromised. They can also assist by raising public awareness of the issue and can lead the way in terms of prohibiting this outdated practice. Animal ownership is a big responsibility - one that should be planned and well thought out. Animals often do not have their welfare needs met prior to, during and after being given as prizes. Because of this, the Council actively discourages people against taking on an animal in a spontaneous, ill-planned manner. Prospective owners should have a clear understanding of their responsibilities involved in animal ownership, they should carefully consider whether they have the necessary facilities, time, financial means and level of interest to care for these animals. This is often not the case when an animal is suddenly thrust into your hand as a prize. Being given away as a prize can be extremely detrimental to the welfare of an animal. Sadly, many goldfish will die before even getting back to their new homes, or shortly after. RSPCA England believes the current legislative provisions under the Animal Welfare Act 2006 do not go far enough, and would like to see England introduce legislation similar to Scotland's. The Animal Health and Welfare (Scotland) Act 2006 makes it an offence to give an animal as a prize to anyone, regardless of their age, except within the family context - such as a parent rewarding their child's achievements with a new pet, for example. By issuing an outright ban of such activities on Council-owned or operated land, or their properties, the Council will send a clear message of its commitment to ensure the welfare of animals and help reinforce the message that these practices are no longer desirable in our community, these small changes could make a big difference; 36 of England's local authorities have already taken this step. As a local authority, Tewkesbury Borough Council has an ideal opportunity with this Motion to ban the giving of live animals as prizes on all Tewkesbury Borough owned land. This Council is concerned about the number of cases reported to the RSPCA each year regarding pets given as prizes via fairgrounds, social media and other channels; is concerned about the welfare of those animals being given as prizes; recognises that many cases of pets being as prizes may go unreported each year; and supports a move to ban the giving of live animals as prizes, in any form, in Tewkesbury Borough. The Council therefore agrees to ban outright the giving of live animals as prizes, in any form, on Tewkesbury Borough land and write to the UK Government, urging an outright ban on the giving of live animals as prizes on both public and private land.
- 75.4 In speaking to the Motion, the proposer of the Motion advised that the Animal Welfare Act was introduced in England and Wales in 2006 in a bid to improve animal welfare across the two countries and, whilst this legislation remained one of the most important pieces of legislation ever introduced for animals, it could go further in protecting the welfare of pets currently issued as prizes. Under Section 11 of the Act - Transfer of animals by way of sale or prize to persons under 16 - it was

an offence to give an animal as a prize to anyone under the age of 16, unless they were accompanied by someone over the age of 16 or it was within the family context. Animals were being kept and transported in conditions which did not meet their needs, often resulting in their death before the new owners even got them home. As such, she advocated a law which stated that it was an offence for an animal to be given as a prize regardless of age, except where given within the family context. Despite the current law, many were also being given to individuals aged under 16, potentially highlighting issues around enforcement of the existing provision and the need to rethink. Whilst a range of animals were given as prizes each year, goldfish were the animal most commonly associated with pets as prizes. Goldfish were easily stressed and, very often, fish won as prizes suffered miserably from shock and oxygen starvation, or died from changes in water temperature. As someone who owned tropical fish and had previously worked in the aquarist sector she knew how to look after fish properly and people who were given goldfish as prizes did not normally have an aquarium set up so may keep them in unsuitable environments, such as fish bowls, and some fish may even get illegally dumped in local waterways. Unsuitable environments provided limited or no opportunities for enrichment, shelter, company or a stable temperature, all of which were important factors in providing fish with a suitable living environment. Local authorities had the opportunity to ban the giving of live animals as prizes on Council owned land, ensuring the welfare of these animals was not compromised, as well as raising public awareness of the issue. Due to strong public opinion, the licence for the Mop Fair was updated in 2019 to ban the use of pets as prizes but this did not change policy.

- 75.5 The seconder of the Motion indicated that animal ownership was a big responsibility that needed to be planned and well-thought out in order to help provide the best quality of life for that animal, not a spur of the moment event resulting from a game. To put it into context, 57% of UK households were pet owners so this issue was important to a lot of constituents. Acquiring an animal to be kept as a pet should be the result of careful planning and prior consideration. The prospective owner should have a clear understanding of the responsibilities involved and carefully consider whether they had, and would continue to have, the facilities, time, financial means and level of interest necessary to ensure a satisfactory standard of care for their animal prior to acquiring it. Ultimately, the introduction of an outright ban on animals as prizes on both public and private land by the UK government was the most effective means to prevent animals being given thoughtlessly as prizes and therefore ensuring the welfare of these animals; however, in implementing a ban on Council-owned land, local authorities could deliver a powerful message to the local community, the government and their counterparts elsewhere on the importance of this issue. Councils not only had the opportunity to ban the giving of live animals as prizes on their land, but also, in the process, to raise wider public awareness as to the impact that this practice has on the welfare of the animals.
- 75.6 A Member asked whether it was possible to write to Town and Parish Councils to ask them to extend this to Parish-owned land. The Leader of the Council suggested that the letter to the UK government should go out in his name and this could be shared with Town and Parish Councils to ask for their support and potentially put their names to the letter. Another Member felt that Gloucestershire County Council should also be included given that Winchcombe Mop Fair was on County Council land. The Leader of the Council indicated that he had spoken to the Mop Fair organisers who had confirmed they had stopped the practice of offering pets as prizes some time ago due to concerns over animal welfare so this would not be putting any of the local travelling community in a difficult position. The proposer and seconder of the Motion confirmed they were happy with that approach and this subsequently became part of the substantive Motion. Another Member asked if there were issues in any particular parts of the borough and the Leader of the Council advised that there were no operators offering pets as prizes within the

borough as far as he was aware so this Motion was more about sending a very strong message

75.7 During the discussion which ensued, a Member indicated that she had previously received many complaints from residents regarding the Mop Fair offering goldfish as prizes and she was pleased this was no longer the case; however, there were other events, such as circuses, and she felt it was important to note that the Council did not allow any live animals in circuses in the borough.

75.8 Accordingly, the substantive Motion was proposed and seconded and it was

**RESOLVED**

That it be **AGREED** that:

- i. the outright the giving of live animals as prizes, in any form, be banned on Tewkesbury Borough land; and
- ii. the Leader of the Council write to the UK Government urging an outright ban on the giving of live animals as prizes on both public and private land and the letter be sent to Town and Parish Councils and Gloucestershire County Council asking for their support and to add their names to the letter.

**Ban on Puppy Farms**

75.9 The Mayor referred to the Notice of Motion, as set out on the Agenda, and indicated that, in accordance with the Rules of Procedure, it was necessary for the Council firstly to decide whether it wished to debate and determine the Motion at this evening's meeting, or whether it wished to refer the Motion, without debate, to a Committee for consideration with authority either to make a decision on the matter or bring a recommendation back to Council.

75.10 Upon being proposed and seconded, it was

**RESOLVED**

That the Motion would be discussed at this evening's meeting.

75.11 It was proposed and seconded that Tewkesbury Council believes puppy farms – in which dogs are bred purely for profit with little concern for their welfare – are cruel and inhumane. They are often run illegally without the correct licensing and monitoring from the local Council. Dogs on puppy farms are more likely to be over-bred, kept in poor conditions and not receive adequate food or vet care. Research from the Naturewatch Foundation estimates that 400,000 farmed puppies are brought every year in the UK. Tewkesbury Borough Council fully supports efforts to crack down on illegal puppy farms, such as the introduction of 'Lucy's Law' in 2020 banning the third-party sale of puppies in the first six months of their life. Tewkesbury Borough Council expresses its disappointment in the Government's decision in May 2023 to break its promise to introduce a 'Kept Animals Bill' to add further protections to prevent dogs from being exploited on puppy farms. Tewkesbury Borough Council recognises the legal role it has to provide licenses to all dog breeders who sell puppies for a profit. Tewkesbury Borough Council further believes it can help make sure those wishing to buy puppies do so from reputable, licensed breeders. The Council therefore agrees to publish an up to date list of locally licensed dog breeders on its website so local residents who wish to buy a puppy are signposted to reputable breeders; undertake a dedicated publicity campaign to raise awareness of illegal puppy breeding and signs to look for when buying a puppy that suggest it might come from a puppy farm, and how to report suspicious activity and instruct the Chief Executive to write to the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs calling for the Kept Animals Bill to be revived to make it more difficult for puppy farmers to operate.

- 75.12 In speaking to the Motion, the proposer of the Motion stated that the UK was a nation of animal lovers and many of her fellow Councillors in this room would have a pet; they brought them into their homes and most treated them like one of the family. As an owner-servant of rescued animals she could not imagine the trauma they may have faced in their young lives and the lack of understanding of what was happening to them. Dogs in puppy farms could lose their fur from the stress and their teeth from horrific neglect. Female dogs often spent their entire lives in puppy farms, knowing no love and being able to give no love as their puppies were often taken immediately after birth. Puppy farms were a money-making machine only, the pups and parents were often, if not always, cared for improperly and ended up with behavioural issues and other medical issues. This was an appalling way to treat animals and must not be allowed to continue. It was estimated that up to 25% of puppies sold in the UK were born in puppy farms according to the RSPCA. Illegal breeders could make millions of pounds rearing pups in dirty conditions, without food or water. They would not have seen a vet or had important preventative healthcare like vaccines or treatment for fleas and worms. There had been cases involving sick or dying puppies that were sold to unsuspecting members of the public for hundreds of pounds each. Members could help point potential dog owners in the right direction towards certified breeders and support Lucy's Law which stated that anyone wanting to get a new puppy or kitten in England must now buy direct from a breeder, or consider adopting from a rescue centre instead; they could help put puppy farmers, who put their profit before the welfare of their animals, out of business. She felt Members must also push for the revival of the Kept Animal Bill; they had a duty of care to animals and wildlife in this country, in their homes or legal businesses and that duty care must be enshrined in law.
- 75.13 The seconder of the Motion felt it was imperative that Members supported the public as they made decisions on where to get their pets and support Lucy's Law in guiding them to certified breeders. The main animal welfare problems associated with puppy farms included, but were not limited to, lack of safety, space, basic essentials, housing and care which could lead to lasting trauma. Due to lack of testing and the intense breeding these dogs suffered incurable conditions such as heart and kidney disease, joint disorders, respiratory disorders, epilepsy and neurological disorders, all of which had a high risk of being passed onto their puppies. Furthermore, puppy farmers sold the puppies at an early age to third party suppliers without the presence of their mother. This could put mother and her puppies through a lot of stress, meaning many developed social and behavioural problems later in life. Studies also showed that over a third of puppies bought after viewing online, or from a newspaper, were a spur of the moment decision. Soon after, owners had a change of heart and realised they were not suitable and the dog was taken to the rescue centre, or worse. If they could support people in making better decisions and put those farms out of business it would help stop this barbaric business.
- 75.14 A Member questioned what checks were carried out by the Council in order for a licence to be issued and whether that was evidence they were a reputable breeder. The Lead Member for Clean and Green Environment indicated that she would obtain a written answer following the meeting. The Member indicated that, having carried out her own investigations, she was concerned that the Council was signposting people to reputable breeders when it was not necessarily best placed to do so. The Kennel Club had an excellent website which listed reputable breeders along with information to help people decide whether it was right for them to have a puppy; whilst it did not cover mixed breeds, that information was available from the RSPCA or Dog's Trust websites. The Leader of the Council indicated that he had sought assurance from the Director: Communities prior to the meeting and he had confirmed he was happy with the Motion and felt it was a good proposal. The Member raised concern that the conditions of premises inspected by Council Officers once a year could change over time, as could the number of dogs etc.

which was why she was concerned the Council could be giving the impression they were reputable breeders when they may not be. Another Member questioned what enforcement measures were available to the Council as she was aware of a puppy farm in her area which had been reported but no action had been taken. The Leader indicated that this Motion would not address that issue in and of itself as national change and resource was needed to enforce. The seconder of the Motion explained that the Motion intended to influence the buyer – if they were aware of the concerns when puppies were being sold, they were more likely to go to a better establishment. A Member indicated that, whilst the Motion was commendable and she was passionate about how animals were looked after, she raised concern that, even if people were being encouraged to go to reputable breeders, some puppy farmers were very good at covering up what was going on behind closed doors so she asked how it could be monitored. The Leader of the Council explained that he did not think it could be monitored as such, and he was not suggesting this Motion would solve all of the issues, but supporting it with its best endeavors was as much the Council could do at this point.

75.15 The Leader of the Council went on to suggest an amendment to the Motion in order for the letter to the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs to be written by himself, rather than the Chief Executive, and the proposer and seconder of the Motion confirmed they were happy with that. Another Member indicated that she felt it would be more appropriate for the Council to signpost local residents to relevant websites, such as the Kennel Club and the Dog's Trust which were experts on these matters, rather than publishing a list of breeders and suggested an amendment to the Motion on that basis. The proposer and seconder of the Motion confirmed they were also happy to make that change. A Member raised concern there was a suggestion that the Council's licensing arrangements were inadequate and he asked if that was the case. In response, the Lead Member for Clean and Green Environment indicated that it was not the case that the processes in place were inadequate; however, the Council could inspect a premises and issue a licence one day but there was no way of knowing that breeder would remain reputable until it was next inspected, unless a breach was reported.

75.16 A Member was delighted to see this Motion come forward and happy to support it. She noted that part of the Motion was in relation to a dedicated publicity campaign to make sure people knew the signs to look for when buying a puppy to suggest it may have come from a puppy farm. She pointed out that veterinary practices did a lot of good work around this as when puppies and dogs became unwell they were usually taken to the vets who were able to better identify the signs they may be from a puppy farm. She felt it was important to encourage people to do the right thing but agreed that a licence was akin to a Disclosure and Barring Service check in that it was only accurate at a particular point in time. A Member indicated that, although he was supportive of the Motion, as a separate matter he would like to know how many licences had been rescinded by the Council and what follow-up procedures were in place once a licence had been granted. Another Member asked whether breeders could be made to register with the Kennel Club etc. as part of the conditions of their licence and the Lead Member for Clean and Green Environment advised that it was not possible to force people to register with other bodies but she undertook to seek responses to the queries raised regarding licensing procedures and the number of licences granted and rescinded etc.



75.17 The substantive Motion was proposed and seconded and, upon being put to the vote, it was

**RESOLVED**

That it be **AGREED** that the Council:

- i. signpost local residents who wish to buy a puppy to relevant websites, such as the Kennel Club and Dog's Trust, in order for them to find reputable breeders;
- ii. undertake a dedicated publicity campaign to raise awareness of illegal puppy breeding and signs to look for when buying a puppy that suggest it might come from a puppy farm, and how to report suspicious activity; and
- iii. instruct the Leader of the Council to write to the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs calling for the Kept Animals Bill to be revived to make it more difficult for puppy farmers to operate.

**CL.76 STANDARDS COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP**

76.1 Attention was drawn to the report of the Monitoring Officer, circulated at Pages No. 106-107, which proposed to increase the number of independent persons and Parish Councillors on the Standards Committee. Members were asked to agree to increase the number of independent persons assisting the Monitoring Officer and Standards Committee from two to three and to increase the number of Parish Council members on the Standards Committee as non-voting members from one to three.

76.2 In proposing the recommendation in the report, the Chair of the Standards Committee advised that the Standards Committee currently had two independent persons, both of whom had indicated they would be stepping down over the next year or so. It was important to retain at least one Member who was knowledgeable in the field and therefore it was necessary to encourage new independent persons to come forward. It was also intended to increase the number of Parish Councillors from one to three and the Monitoring Officer had received a positive response from Parish Councils who had been approached to establish whether anyone would be interested in taking up a position, pending the outcome of tonight's meeting. It was intended there would be an interview process in the New Year carried out by the Monitoring Officer and the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Standards Committee. The Standards Committee currently met twice per year but a number of those meetings had been cancelled in recent years and, when the Committee had met in October, it was agreed the number of meetings should be increased to three per year going forward. It was important there was renewed focus on the Committee and there were currently insufficient members to achieve that, hence the recommendation today. The proposal was seconded by the Lead Member for Customer Focus.

76.3 A Member sought clarification as to the reason for the existing independent persons wanting to resign from their duties and the Monitoring Officer explained that the two current independent persons had been in their roles for a number of years and were ready to stand down. It was preferable to avoid a situation whereby they were replaced by two new independent persons with no experience so, by increasing the number at this stage, it would be a more gradual process of replacement. The Committee on Standards in Public Life had reported to the government in 2019 there should be two independent persons as a minimum, although more than two was preferable. There was one slot for a Parish Councillor on the Standards Committee but that was currently vacant so it was important to address that issue in order to have a Parish Council view when dealing with complaints. He stressed that the Standards Committee was not a political Committee.

76.4 A Member asked for the rationale behind the proposal to increase the number of Parish Councillors and the criteria for selection. In response, the Monitoring Officer advised that it would be preferable to have a spread through the borough but, as it stood there were four applicants so they may not have that luxury. Ideally they would have experience but ultimately they would all be interviewed and the best three candidates would be selected; should there be more interest a sifting process would be needed. A Member asked what would happen if the Parish Councillors were not considered to be appropriate when they were interviewed and assurance was provided that only those who were suitable would be appointed so it would be a case of readvertising. Another Member noted that the report stated that the independent persons were paid a small allowance and she asked how much that was and how often it was paid. The Monitoring Officer advised that it was an annual allowance of £500. In response to a query as to whether they would still be paid if they had no involvement over the course of the year, the Monitoring Officer confirmed that the legislation required him to consult with the independent persons every time there was a complaint; the independent persons did not sit on the Committee themselves but were a guide to him in his role as Monitoring Officer and could also be a guide to those making the complaint, or in receipt of a complaint. A Member indicated it would have been useful for the Minutes of the Standards Committee meeting on 16 October 2023 to have been appended to the report and the Monitoring Officer indicated that was usual practice but had not been possible on this occasion due to resource issues within the Democratic Services team which Members would be aware of. In response to a query regarding the status of the Parish Councillors on the Committee, the Monitoring Officer clarified they were non-voting members of the Committee. The independent persons did attend Committee meetings but were not technically members and could speak but not vote; the only voting members were the seven Borough Council Members. A Member suggested that the second part of the motion be amended to refer to Parish Councillors as opposed to Parish Council Members on the Standards Committee in order to make that clearer and the proposer and seconder of the motion indicated they were happy to make that change.

76.5 The Leader of the Council expressed the view that the proposal set out a move towards more openness and transparency which he supported. He recognised that the Chair of the Standards Committee had been required to propose the motion at short notice due to the absence of the Lead Member for Corporate Governance and he indicated that he would not like to see Members put in that position again.

76.6 Upon being put to the vote, it was

- RESOLVED**
1. That the number of independent persons assisting the Monitoring Officer and Standards Committee be increased from two to three.
  2. That the number of non-voting Parish Councillors on the Standards Committee be increased from one to three.

## **CL.77 APPOINTMENT TO LOWER SEVERN INTERNAL DRAINAGE BOARD**

77.1 It was proposed, seconded and

- RESOLVED** That Councillor M J Williams be appointed as the Council's representative on the Lower Severn Internal Drainage Board.

The meeting closed at 7:40 pm

## TEWKESBURY BOROUGH COUNCIL

<b>Report to:</b>	Executive Committee
<b>Date of Meeting:</b>	10 January 2024
<b>Subject:</b>	Treasury and Capital Management
<b>Report of:</b>	Associate Director: Finance
<b>Head of Service/Director:</b>	Executive Director: Resources
<b>Lead Member:</b>	Lead Member for Finance and Asset Management
<b>Number of Appendices:</b>	Four

**Executive Summary:**

The Council is required through regulations supporting the Local Government Act 2003 to 'have regard to' the Prudential Code and to set Prudential Indicators for the next three years to ensure that the Council's capital investment plans are affordable, prudent and sustainable. It is also required to produce an annual Treasury Strategy for borrowing and to prepare an Annual Investment Strategy setting out the Council's policies for managing its investments and for giving priority to security and liquidity of those investments. The required strategies are listed below in the recommendation.

**Recommendation:**

**To RECOMMEND TO COUNCIL that the following be ADOPTED:**

- **Capital Strategy 2024/25**
- **Investment Strategy 2024/25**
- **Minimum Revenue Provision Statement 2024/25**
- **Treasury Management Strategy 2024/25**

**Financial Implications:**

There are no direct financial implications arising from this report.

**Legal Implications:**

There are no specific legal implications arising from the recommendations of this report.

More generally, the authority is required to comply with the relevant guidance in respect of its financial management. Ultimately when the authority is making the calculation of its budget requirement, it must have regard to the report of the Chief Finance (s.151) Officer as to the robustness of the estimates made for the purposes of the calculations and the adequacy of the proposed financial reserves.

**Environmental and Sustainability Implications:**

There are no direct environmental and sustainability implications arising from the report.

**Resource Implications (including impact on equalities):**

There are no direct resource implications.

**Safeguarding Implications:**

There are no direct safeguarding implications

**Impact on the Customer:**

There are no direct implications arising from the report.

**1.0 INTRODUCTION**

- 1.1** The Prudential Code plays a key role in capital finance in local authorities. The Council determines its own programmes for capital investment that are central to the delivery of quality public services. The Prudential Code was developed by CIPFA (Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy) as a professional code of practice to support local authorities in taking their decisions.
- 1.2** In financing capital expenditure, the Council is governed by legislative frameworks including the requirement to have regard to CIPFA's Treasury Management Code of Practice. Local authorities are required by regulation to have regard to the Prudential Code when carrying out their duties in England under Part 1 of the Local Government Act 2003.
- 1.3** CIPFA published The Prudential Code for Capital Finance in Local Authorities (2021) in December 2021 which was updated in light of some councils borrowing excessively for investment activity. The level of risk some councils were taking with public money was seen as an inappropriate use of public money in the long term.

**2.0 TREASURY AND CAPITAL MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES****2.1 Capital Strategy**

- 2.1.1** This is a requirement of CIPFA's Prudential Code to place decisions around borrowing in the context of the overall longer term financial position of the authority and to improve links between the revenue and capital budgets. Capital expenditure plans are a key driver of treasury management activity.
- 2.1.2** This capital strategy gives a high-level overview of how capital expenditure, capital financing and treasury management activity contribute to the provision of local public services along with an overview of how associated risk is managed and the implications for future financial sustainability.
- 2.1.3** The liability benchmark has been formally introduced as it is seen as an important indicator which demonstrates the lowest risk level of borrowing. The benchmark is our net borrowing requirement plus a liquidity allowance.

**2.2 Investment Strategy**

- 2.2.1** This comes from updated Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government statutory guidance and applies to accounting periods starting 1 April 2018.

- 2.2.2** This is not the Council's strategy for actual investment or otherwise in either commercial property or service property. It does not commit the authority to any future direction or expenditure. The report provides oversight on how the Council undertakes transactions of this nature, the proportionality of these investments and a one year forecast of a range of financial indicators based on the standing investment decision of Council.
- 2.2.3** The strategy provides detailed information on the policies and procedures that the Council has in place to address the fundamental concepts that are associated with each investment type, which are risk, security and liquidity.
- 2.2.4** In line with the revised Prudential Code the Council no longer borrows to fund the purchase of investment properties.

## **2.3 Minimum Revenue Provision Statement 2024/25**

- 2.3.1** The statement at Appendix C sets out the Council policy on making a Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) for the 2024/25 financial year in accordance with the Local Authorities (Capital Finance and Accounting) (England) Regulations 2003. The policy is also in line with the revised guidance issued in 2018. As a result of the Council's recent capital programme, funded by borrowing, the Council is required to make a MRP in order to repay the principal borrowed.
- 2.3.2** The Council will look to utilise capital and revenue balances where possible in order to reduce the revenue impact of investment plans; however, where either internal or external borrowing is necessary, a MRP will be required to be made.
- 2.3.3** The MRP statement includes details on voluntary overpayments of MRP. The Council set aside £88k at the end of 2020/21 and used £21k in 2021/22. This leaves a balance of £67k for use in future years.

## **2.4 Treasury Management Strategy 2024/25**

- 2.4.1** The Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy's Treasury Management in the Public Services: Code of Practice 2017 (the CIPFA Code) requires the authority to approve a treasury management strategy before the start of each financial year. The report at Appendix D fulfils the authority's legal obligation under the Local Government Act 2003 to have regard to the CIPFA Code.
- 2.4.2** The Treasury Management Strategy 2024/25 sets the framework in which day-to-day and strategic treasury activities are operated. The documents are compiled from the recommendations within the CIPFA guidance and from the Council's Treasury Management advisors with consideration given to the current financial climate and factors affecting market conditions.
- 2.4.3** The budget for investment income in 2024/25 is £1.2 million, based on an average investment portfolio of £16.7 million at an interest rate of 4.99% and £8.3m of pooled funds at 4.5%. The budget for debt interest paid in 2024/25 is £407k, based on the £19.5m of fixed rate PWLB loans only. If actual levels of investments and borrowing, and actual interest rates differ from those forecast, performance against budget will be correspondingly different.

## **3.0 CONSULTATION**

- 3.1** None

**4.0 ASSOCIATED RISKS**

4.1 All risks are covered within the accompanying reports.

**5.0 MONITORING**

5.1 The 2021 Prudential Code and Treasury Management Code introduce a new requirement that monitoring of the treasury management and other prudential indicators should now be reported quarterly as part of the general revenue and capital monitoring process.

5.2 The in-year review and management of our treasury and capital activities are actioned by the Executive Committee in line with the Terms of Reference set out within the Council's Constitution. These Terms of Reference for the Executive Committee include:

- to 'review and monitor the operation of the policy framework' and
- to 'monitor the Council's performance.'

**6.0 RELEVANT COUNCIL PLAN PRIORITIES/COUNCIL POLICIES/STRATEGIES**

6.1 The control and good management of financial resources is essential to effectively deliver the Council's priorities.

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**Background Papers:** None

**Contact Officer:** Associate Director: Finance  
01684 272006      emma.harley@teWKesbury.gov.uk

**Appendices:** Appendix A – Capital Strategy 2024/25  
Appendix B – Investment Strategy 2024/25  
Appendix C – Minimum Revenue Provision Statement 2024/25  
Appendix D – Treasury Management Strategy 2024/25

## Capital Strategy Report 2024/25

### Introduction

This capital strategy report gives a high-level overview of how capital expenditure, capital financing and treasury management activity contribute to the provision of local public services along with an overview of how associated risk is managed and the implications for future financial sustainability. It has been written in an accessible style to enhance members' understanding of these sometimes-technical areas.

Decisions made this year on capital and treasury management will have financial consequences for the Authority for many years into the future. They are therefore subject to both a national regulatory framework and to local policy framework, summarised in this report.

### Capital Expenditure and Financing

Capital expenditure is where the Authority spends money on assets, such as property or vehicles, that will be used for more than one year. In local government this includes spending on assets owned by other bodies, and loans and grants to other bodies enabling them to buy assets.

- For details of the Authority's policy on capitalisation, see Note 1.15 in the Financial Statements for the year ended 31 March 2023

In 2024/25, the Authority is planning capital expenditure of £4.58m as summarised below:

*Table 1: Prudential Indicator: Estimates of Capital Expenditure in £ millions*

	<b>2022/23 actual</b>	<b>2023/24 forecast</b>	<b>2024/25 budget *</b>	<b>2025/26 budget</b>	<b>2026/27 budget</b>
General Fund services	2.77	3.27	4.58	2.71	1.29
<b>TOTAL</b>	2.77	3.27	4.58	2.71	1.29

The main General Fund capital projects include the replacement of the refuse and recycling fleet and payment of Disabled Facility Grants. Following a change in the Prudential Code, the Authority no longer incurs capital expenditure on investments.

**Governance:** Service managers must take a report to full Council in order to include projects in the Council's capital programme. Finance calculate the financing cost (which can be nil if the project is internally financed) and review any business case for the proposal to ensure it meets the council requirements over payback periods (if applicable). Council appraises all proposals based on a comparison of strategic priorities against financing costs and approves the use of capital resources. The final capital programme is then presented to Executive Committee and to Council in February each year.

All capital expenditure must be financed, either from external sources (government grants and other contributions), the Authority's own resources (revenue, reserves, and capital receipts) or debt (borrowing, leasing). The planned financing of the above expenditure is as follows:

Table 2: Capital financing in £ millions

	<b>2022/23 actual</b>	<b>2023/24 forecast</b>	<b>2024/25 budget *</b>	<b>2025/26 budget</b>	<b>2026/27 budget</b>
External sources	1.76	1.94	1.20	0.80	0.80
Capital receipts	0.16	0.8	0.13	0.22	0.13
Revenue resources	0.85	0.53	3.25	1.69	0.36
Debt	0	0	0	0	0
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>2.77</b>	<b>3.27</b>	<b>4.58</b>	<b>2.71</b>	<b>1.29</b>

Debt is only a temporary source of finance, since loans and leases must be repaid, and this is therefore replaced over time by other financing, usually from revenue which is known as minimum revenue provision (MRP). Alternatively, proceeds from selling capital assets (known as capital receipts) may be used to replace debt finance. Planned MRP and use of capital receipts are as follows:

Table 3: Replacement of debt finance in £ millions

	<b>2022/23 actual</b>	<b>2023/24 forecast</b>	<b>2024/25 budget</b>	<b>2025/26 budget</b>	<b>2026/27 budget</b>
Own resources	0.93	0.95	0.97	1	1.02
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>0.93</b>	<b>0.95</b>	<b>0.97</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1.02</b>

The Authority's cumulative outstanding amount of debt finance is measured by the capital financing requirement (CFR). This increases with new debt-financed capital expenditure and reduces with MRP and capital receipts used to replace debt. The CFR is expected to be £51.62m during 2024/25. Based on the above figures for expenditure and financing, the Authority's estimated CFR is as follows:

Table 4: Prudential Indicator: Estimates of Capital Financing Requirement in £ millions

	<b>31.3.2023 actual</b>	<b>31.3.2024 forecast</b>	<b>31.3.2025 budget *</b>	<b>31.3.2026 budget</b>	<b>31.3.2027 budget</b>
Capital investments	53.54	52.59	51.62	50.62	49.61
<b>TOTAL CFR</b>	<b>53.54</b>	<b>52.59</b>	<b>51.62</b>	<b>50.62</b>	<b>49.61</b>

**Asset management:** To ensure that capital assets continue to be of long-term use, the Council has an asset management strategy in place. This plan is set in the wider context of ensuring a sustainable future for Council expenditure and revenue and aims to:

- Identify and explain the context and objectives of Asset Management at Tewkesbury Borough Council.
- Identify and explain how the plan links with our Corporate Plan and processes that will be followed to deliver Asset Management to Tewkesbury Borough Council.
- Identify the specific challenges and opportunities that currently affect Tewkesbury Borough Council's land and building assets and the ability of those assets to deliver the priorities, goals and promises set out in our Corporate Plan.
- Identify and recommended strategies to address and resolve issues and opportunities within the asset portfolio.



- Establish an annual Service Action Plan summarising the required actions arising from those recommendations.

The Council's asset management strategy can be found on our website.

*Table 5: Capital receipts receivable in £'000*

	<b>2022/23 actual</b>	<b>2023/24 forecast</b>	<b>2024/25 budget</b>	<b>2025/26 budget</b>	<b>2026/27 budget</b>
Right to buy receipts	421	250	250	250	250
Other	7	0	0	0	0
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>428</b>	<b>250</b>	<b>250</b>	<b>250</b>	<b>250</b>

### **Treasury Management**

Treasury management is concerned with keeping sufficient but not excessive cash available to meet the Authority's spending needs, while managing the risks involved. Surplus cash is invested until required, while a shortage of cash will be met by borrowing, to avoid excessive credit balances or overdrafts in the bank current account. The Authority is typically cash rich in the short-term as revenue income is received before it is spent, but cash poor in the long-term as capital expenditure is incurred before being financed. The revenue cash surpluses are offset against capital cash shortfalls to reduce overall borrowing.

The Authority does not borrow to invest for the primary purpose of financial return and therefore retains full access to the Public Works Loans Board.

Due to decisions taken in the past, the Authority currently has £20.07m borrowing at an average interest rate of 1.92% and £33.7m treasury investments at an average income rate of 4.63%.

**Borrowing strategy:** The Authority's main objectives when borrowing are to achieve a low but certain cost of finance while retaining flexibility should plans change in future. These objectives are often conflicting, and the Authority therefore seeks to strike a balance between cheaper short-term loans (currently available between 5.14% to 5.35%) and long-term fixed rate loans where the future cost is known but higher (currently 5% to 5.7%).

Projected levels of the Authority's total outstanding debt (which comprises borrowing, PFI liabilities, leases are shown below, compared with the capital financing requirement (see above).

*Table 6: Prudential Indicator: Gross Debt and the Capital Financing Requirement in £ millions*

	<b>31.3.2023 actual</b>	<b>31.3.2024 forecast</b>	<b>31.3.2025 budget</b>	<b>31.3.2026 budget</b>	<b>31.3.2027 budget</b>
Debt	30.33	19.79	19.26	18.73	18.09
Capital Financing Requirement	53.54	52.59	51.62	50.62	49.61

Statutory guidance is that debt should remain below the capital financing requirement, except in the short-term. As can be seen from table 6, the Authority expects to comply with this in the medium term.

**Liability benchmark:** To compare the Authority's actual borrowing against an alternative strategy, a liability benchmark has been calculated showing the lowest risk level of borrowing. This assumes that cash and investment balances are kept to a minimum level of £10m at each year-end.

Table 7: Borrowing and the Liability Benchmark in £ millions

	31.3.2023 actual	31.3.2024 forecast	31.3.2025 budget	31.3.2026 budget	31.3.2027 budget
Outstanding borrowing	30.33	19.79	19.26	18.73	18.09
Liability benchmark	10.56	11.19	9.22	7.22	6.21

The table shows that the Authority expects to remain borrowed above its liability benchmark. This is because a deliberate decision has been made to borrow additional sums due to the volatility of the Council's cash flows.

**Affordable borrowing limit:** The Authority is legally obliged to set an affordable borrowing limit (also termed the authorised limit for external debt) each year and to keep it under review. In line with statutory guidance, a lower "operational boundary" is also set as a warning level should debt approach the limit.

Table 8: Prudential Indicators: Authorised limit and operational boundary for external debt in £m

	2023/24 limit	2024/25 limit	2025/26 limit	2026/27 limit
Authorised limit – borrowing	50	50	50	50
Operational boundary – borrowing	40	40	40	40

Further details on borrowing are in the treasury management strategy.

**Treasury investment strategy:** Treasury investments arise from receiving cash before it is paid out again. Investments made for service reasons or for pure financial gain are not generally considered to be part of treasury management.

The Authority's policy on treasury investments is to prioritise security and liquidity over yield, that is to focus on minimising risk rather than maximising returns. Cash that is likely to be spent in the near term is invested securely, for example with the government, other local authorities or selected high-quality banks, to minimise the risk of loss. Money that will be held for longer terms is invested more widely, including in bonds, shares and property, to balance the risk of loss against the risk of receiving returns below inflation. Both near-term and longer-term investments may be held in pooled funds, where an external fund manager makes decisions on which particular investments to buy and the Authority may request its money back at short notice.

Table 9: Treasury management investments in £millions

	31.3.2023 actual	31.3.2024 forecast	31.3.2025 budget	31.3.2026 budget	31.3.2027 budget
Near-term investments	19.34	8.35	11.79	13.25	13.73
Longer-term investments	10.43	10.30	8.30	8.30	8.30
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>29.77</b>	<b>18.65</b>	<b>20.09</b>	<b>22.55</b>	<b>22.03</b>

Further details on treasury investments are in the treasury management strategy.

**Risk management:** The effective management and control of risk are prime objectives of the Authority's treasury management activities. The treasury management strategy therefore sets out various indicators and limits to constrain the risk of unexpected losses and details the extent to which financial derivatives may be used to manage treasury risks.

- The treasury management prudential indicators are in the treasury management strategy.

**Governance:** Decisions on treasury management investment and borrowing are made daily and are therefore delegated to the Executive Director of Resources and staff, who must act in line with the treasury management strategy approved by Council. The in-year review and management of our treasury and capital activities are actioned by the Executive Committee in line with the Terms of Reference set out within the Council's constitution. These Terms of Reference for the Executive Committee include:

- to 'review and monitor the operation of the policy framework' and
- to 'monitor the Council's performance.'

The Audit and Governance Committee is responsible for scrutinising treasury management decisions.

### **Commercial Activities**

- With central government financial support for local public services declining and uncertainty around future funding sources (e.g. New Homes Bonus), the Council had no choice in previous years but to invest in commercial property purely or mainly for financial gain. Total commercial investments are currently valued at £59.28m as at 31.03.23 (with a cost value of £60.76m) providing a net return after all costs of 5.29%.
- With financial return being the main objective, the Council accepts higher risk on commercial investment than with treasury investments. The principal risk exposures include voids, fall in capital value and high asset management costs. These risks are managed by using professional property advisers who are used to analyse the risk of voids, advice on alternative uses or exit strategies for investment properties. In order that commercial investments remain proportionate to the size of the authority, and to ensure that plausible losses could be absorbed in budgets or reserves without unmanageable detriment to local services, we have decided not to continue acquiring further properties and contingency plans are in place (including a contingency reserve) should expected yields not materialise.
- Only direct costs such as property management are netted off gross income. Interest and minimum revenue provision costs are excluded from this indicator.

*Table 10: Prudential indicator: Net income from commercial and service investments to net revenue stream*

	<b>2022/23 actual</b>	<b>2023/24 forecast</b>	<b>2024/25 budget</b>	<b>2025/26 budget</b>	<b>2026/27 budget</b>
Total net income from service and commercial investments	3,135	3,428	2,773	2,060	1,869
Proportion of net revenue stream	22.27%	26.27%	19.86%	14%	12.24%
Proportion of usable revenue reserves	7.75%	8.82%	6.96%	5.04%	4.58%

### **Other Liabilities**

In addition to forecast debt of £19.26m detailed above, the Council is committed to making future payments to cover its pension fund deficit (valued at £2.3m as at 31 March 2023 ). It has also set aside £3.47m to cover risks of provisions (of which £2.64m relates to business rates appeals).

**Governance:** Decisions on incurring new discretionary liabilities are taken in line with the Financial Procedure Rules by service managers in consultation with Executive Director of Resources and the Monitoring Officer.

### **Revenue Budget Implications**

Although capital expenditure is not charged directly to the revenue budget, interest payable on loans and MRP are charged to revenue. The net annual charge is known as financing costs; this is compared to the net revenue stream i.e. the amount funded from Council Tax, business rates and general government grants.

*Table 11: Prudential Indicator: Proportion of financing costs to net revenue stream*

	<b>2022/23 actual</b>	<b>2023/24 forecast</b>	<b>2024/25 budget *</b>	<b>2025/26 budget</b>	<b>2026/27 budget</b>
Financing costs (£m)	1.390	1.367	1.383	1.400	1.414
Proportion of net revenue stream	9.88%	10.48%	9.90%	9.51%	9.26%

Further details on the revenue implications of capital expenditure are in the 2024/25 revenue budget.

**Sustainability:** Due to the very long-term nature of capital expenditure and financing, the revenue budget implications of expenditure incurred in the next few years will extend for up to 40 years into the future. The Executive Director of Resources is satisfied that the proposed capital programme is prudent, affordable and sustainable because it has all been full costed and the full revenue implications have been included within the Medium-Term Finance Strategy (MTFS).

### **Knowledge and Skills**

The Council employs professionally qualified and experienced staff in senior positions with responsibility for making capital expenditure, borrowing and investment decisions. For example, the Executive Director of Resources is a qualified accountant with over 25 years' experience, the Asset Manager has many years' experience and is supported by an expert team including engineers and building surveyors. The Council pays for staff to study towards relevant professional qualifications including CIPFA and AAT.

Where Council staff do not have the knowledge and skills required, use is made of external advisers and consultants that are specialists in their field. The Council currently employs Arlingclose Limited as treasury management advisers, Lambert Smith Hampton as property consultants and appoints legal specialists as necessary. This approach is more cost effective than employing such staff directly and ensures that the Council has access to knowledge and skills commensurate with its risk appetite.

## Investment Strategy Report 2024/25

### Introduction

The Authority invests its money for three broad purposes:

- because it has surplus cash as a result of its day-to-day activities, for example when income is received in advance of expenditure (known as **treasury management investments**),
- to support local public services by lending to or buying shares in other organisations (**service investments**), and
- to earn investment income (known as **commercial investments** where this is the main purpose).

This investment strategy meets the requirements of statutory guidance issued by the government in January 2018 and focuses on the second and third of these categories.

The statutory guidance defines investments as “all of the financial assets of a local authority as well as other non-financial assets that the organisation holds primarily or partially to generate a profit; for example, investment property portfolios.” The Authority interprets this to exclude (a) trade receivables which meet the accounting definition of financial assets but are not investments in the everyday sense of the word and (b) property held partially to generate a profit but primarily for the provision of local public services. This aligns the Authority’s definition of an investment with that in the 2021 edition of the CIPFA Prudential Code, a more recent piece of statutory guidance.

### Treasury Management Investments

The Authority typically receives its income in cash (e.g. from taxes and grants) before it pays for its expenditure in cash (e.g. through payroll and invoices). It also holds reserves for future expenditure and collects local taxes on behalf of other local authorities and central government. These activities, plus the timing of borrowing decisions, lead to a cash surplus which is invested in accordance with guidance from the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy. The balance of treasury management investments is expected to fluctuate between £15.2m and £25.6m during the 2024/25 financial year.

**Contribution:** The contribution that these investments make to the objectives of the Authority is to support effective treasury management activities.

**Further details:** Full details of the Authority’s policies and its plan for 2024/25 for treasury management investments are covered in a separate document, the Treasury Management Strategy.

### Service Investments: Loans

**Contribution:** The Council may lend money to local businesses/charities to support local public services and stimulate local economic growth.

**Security:** The main risk when making service loans is that the borrower will be unable to repay the principal lent and/or the interest due. In order to limit this risk and ensure that total exposure to service loans remains proportionate to the size of the Authority, we ensure that any default in the repayment is affordable for the Council.

Accounting standards require the Authority to set aside loss allowance for loans, reflecting the likelihood of non-payment. The figure for any loans in the Authority's statement of accounts at the end of 2023-24 will be shown net of this loss allowance (as it was in 2022-23). However, the Authority makes every reasonable effort to collect the full sum lent and has appropriate credit control arrangements in place to recover overdue repayments.

**Risk assessment:** The Authority assesses the risk of loss before entering into and whilst holding service loans. As we only have one in progress we have assessed their credit rating and also ensured we could afford any financial loss of a default in repayment.

### **Service Investments: Shares**

**Contribution:** The Council invests in the shares of a jointly owned teckel company (Ubico Ltd) to support local public services (environmental services). Tewkesbury Borough Council have a £1 share and there are 7 other authorities each owning £1 each.

The purpose of the investment is to work with other local authorities to create efficiencies and resilience within our environmental services and also enable a more commercial outlook within the company.

**Security:** One of the risks of investing in shares is that they fall in value meaning that the initial outlay may not be recovered. As the only shares we have are nominal and relate to a service objective then there is no risk of falls in value.

### **Other Shares**

We also hold shares in a Local Authority Property Fund however this is covered within the Treasury Management Strategy.

### **Commercial Investments: Property**

**Contribution:** The Council invests in local and UK wide commercial property with the intent of making a profit that will be spent on local public services. The properties held cover a range of sectors including industrial and retail to spread the risk and include a wide range of lease types and lengths. The income generated from these investments enables us to continue functioning as a council and provide our statutory duties.

Some investments are held for service reasons as well and are immaterial in value. The material items are shown in the table below:

*Table 3: Property held for investment purposes in £ millions*

Property	Actual	31.3.2023 actual	
	Purchase costs (£m)	Gains or (losses)	Value in accounts (£m)
Land only	1.52	0.06	1.58
Office	22.94	(0.06)	22.88
Industrial	13.46	(0.14)	13.32
Retail	22.83	(1.34)	21.49

<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>60.75</b>	<b>(1.48)</b>	<b>59.27</b>
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**Security:** In accordance with government guidance, the Authority considers a property investment to be secure if its accounting valuation is higher than its purchase cost (including taxes and transaction costs) or, overall, the value of material investment properties are no less than 20% lower than purchase cost. A fall in the value of the property does not impact on the council as it is reversed out in the Movement in Statement of Reserves. The council is concerned about the net income return as this is crucial to the budget.

The fair value of the Council's investment property portfolio is about 2% lower than the original purchase price. The fair value looks at the length of any leases currently in place (and as the lease term diminishes the fair value falls). The fair value has been calculated within the past twelve months and the assets provide security for the capital investment. If the value falls a significant amount (20% or more) then further work is done to identify whether any mitigating actions are needed to protect the capital invested. These actions include analysing any risk of lease defaults or cancellations and ensuring contingency funds are in place to mitigate any material impact on the budget.

**Risk assessment:** The Authority assesses the risk of loss before entering into and whilst holding property investments by:

- using professional property advisers to assess the full cost of any potential commercial property purchase, including void periods;
- ensuring an exit strategy by looking at the alternative use for the property;
- costing any asset management requirements required and setting aside monies in the budget;
- looking at lease lengths and break clauses to ascertain the risk of any voids and to enter early negotiations with tenants;
- ensuring a minimum rate of return that enables all known costs to be covered;
- diversifying the portfolio over a number of sector areas.
- Undertaking an independent valuation exercise to substantiate the purchase price prior to completion
- Undertaking other building and environmental surveys
- Reviewing the strength of covenant of the existing tenant
- Reviewing the strength of economy in the surrounding area
- Familiarisation of local commercial agents for an efficient and cost-effective marketing process
- Regular communication with new tenants to build initial relationships and manage any teething problems
- Annual in person inspections to respond to any landlord repairs required and to maintain landlord and tenant alliance
- Regular email and telephone contact with tenants to maintain a strong professional relationship
- Efficient reactive repair management whilst keeping the tenant informed
- Strong bond with local contractors who can be relied upon to react rapidly to repairs
- Forward knowledge of major repairs within the last year of lease, to be completed as soon as the property becomes vacant to minimise any void period.
- Good communication whilst arranging engineering inspections for insurance purposes
- Active rent account management for early interception of tenant financial difficulties
- Tight budget control of service charges in order that good value for the tenant is achieved
- Good relationship with RICS professionals for rent review, lease renewal and lease termination support.
- Efficient dilapidations management to secure funds for works required on lease termination

**Liquidity:** Compared with other investment types, property is relatively difficult to sell and convert to cash at short notice and can take a considerable period to sell in certain market conditions. To ensure that the invested funds can be accessed when they are needed, for example to repay capital borrowed, the Council would use professional agents to sell these assets to maximise best value.

### **Proportionality**

The Council is dependent on profit generating investment activity to achieve a balanced revenue budget. Table 4 below shows the extent to which the expenditure planned to meet the service delivery objectives of the Authority is dependent on achieving the expected net profit from investments over the lifecycle of the Medium Term Financial Plan. Should it fail to achieve the expected net profit, the Council's contingency plans for continuing to provide these services is to firstly use any contingency reserves available to continue to provide these services in the short term, whilst an assessment of the investments future capabilities are made, and then cost reductions would be made to ensure the council is financially viable in the longer term.

*Table 4: Proportionality of Investments (£'000)*

	<b>2022/23 Actual</b>	<b>2023/24 Forecast</b>	<b>2024/25 Budget</b>	<b>2025/26 Budget</b>	<b>2026/27 Budget</b>
Investment income	3,479	3,988	4,508	4,378	4,318
Gross service expenditure	40,528	30,528	34,338	35,197	35,169
Proportion	8.58%	13.06%	13.13%	12.44%	12.28%

### **Borrowing in Advance of Need**

Government guidance is that local authorities must not borrow more than or in advance of their needs purely in order to profit from the investment of the extra sums borrowed. The Authority has chosen not to follow this guidance previously and has previously borrowed for this purpose because, as a small council with the 8<sup>th</sup> lowest council tax in the country, the level of cuts to core government support along with losses associated with the retained business rates scheme and the growing size of the Borough 52mean that the Council would be unlikely to balance its budget without this income and therefore would be forced to reduce service offering drastically. It would also heighten the potential for issuing a s114 notice.

The Authority's policies in investing the money borrowed, including management of the risks, for example of not achieving the desired profit or borrowing costs increasing, is to always have a fixed rate for borrowing for at least 40% of borrowings to manage the risk of interest rate increases. In addition, the Council ensures any rental income is managed and leases are reviewed early to allow for any potential break clauses and void periods which can be factored into the budget.

Despite having undertaken borrowing in advance of need previously we will not borrow in this way in future as we feel the level of these investments is at an acceptable level of risk and any further investments would not be at a proportionate for an authority of our size. We will only borrow in future to replace short term debt relating to prior year investment decisions.

### **Capacity, Skills and Culture**

**Elected members and statutory officers:**



A Commercial Investment Board was set up along with an approved Commercial Investment Strategy (Council, December 2016) to provide a level of scrutiny and governance around property purchases. The board consists of six Members and council officers (to include the Head of Finance and Asset Management and the Asset Manager) who receive investment proposals and evaluate individual proposals for bidding.

### **Commercial deals and corporate governance:**

Lambert Smith Hampton Investment Management (LSHIM) were appointed as our professional property investment advisers. The Council gave them the total amount of money available for investment and the minimum net return we will accept and they recommended a balanced portfolio between industrial, retail and office accommodation in order to spread the risk between sectors.

When a property came to the market that LSHIM believe fits this criteria they sent us a summary to see whether we were interested in pursuing it further. If we chose to look into the investment, we commissioned LSHIM to perform their due diligence and prepare a full report on the property.

Detailed analysis of any potential bids were received by the board outlining the risks, returns, any existing tenancies and asset management opportunities for the property explained. LSHIM were aware of the differing requirements of a local authority and recommended properties that would fit within our approved commercial strategy and risk appetite. Detailed financials were received outlining possible net returns to us which included our statutory costs such as minimum revenue provision (MRP) and also allowed for voids and conservative estimates of any rent increases.

Authority of investments up to £12m were made by the Head of Finance and Assets in consultation with the Commercial Investment Board whereas anything over £12m has to be referred to the Executive Committee for deeper scrutiny and decision making.

We have no plans to buy any new investment property in the future.

### **Investment Indicators**

The Authority has set the following quantitative indicators to allow elected members and the public to assess the Authority's total risk exposure as a result of its investment decisions.

**Total risk exposure:** The first indicator shows the Authority's total exposure to potential investment losses. This includes amounts the Authority is contractually committed to lend but have yet to be drawn down.

*Table 5: Total investment exposure in £millions*

<b>Total investment exposure</b>	<b>31.03.2023 Actual</b>	<b>31.03.2024 Forecast</b>	<b>31.03.2025 Forecast</b>
Treasury management investments	29.15	19.00	19.00
Commercial investments: Property	59.28	59.28	59.28
<b>TOTAL INVESTMENTS</b>	<b>88.43</b>	<b>78.28</b>	<b>78.28</b>

**How investments are funded:** Government guidance is that these indicators should include how investments are funded. Since the Authority does not normally associate particular assets with particular liabilities, this guidance is difficult to comply with. However, the following investments could be described as being funded by borrowing. The remainder of the Authority's investments are funded by usable reserves and income received in advance of expenditure.

We have no treasury management investments funded by borrowing and have no plans to do this in the future either.

*Table 6: Investments funded by borrowing in £million*

<b>Investments funded by borrowing</b>	<b>31.03.2023 Actual</b>	<b>31.03.2024 Forecast</b>	<b>31.03.2025 Forecast</b>
Commercial investments: Property	54.47	53.55	52.6
<b>TOTAL FUNDED BY BORROWING</b>	<b>30.33</b>	<b>19.79</b>	<b>19.26</b>

**Rate of return received:** This indicator shows the investment income received less the associated costs, including the cost of borrowing where appropriate, as a proportion of the sum initially invested. Note that due to the complex local government accounting framework, not all recorded gains and losses affect the revenue account in the year they are incurred.

*Table 7: Investment rate of return (net of all costs)*

<b>Investments net rate of return</b>	<b>2022/23 Actual</b>	<b>2023/24 Forecast</b>	<b>2024/25 Forecast</b>
Treasury management investments	3.46%	4.63%	4.75%
Commercial investments: Property	0.44%	3.41%	3.48%

## Minimum Revenue Provision Statement 2024/25

### Annual Minimum Revenue Provision Statement 2024/25

Where the Authority finances capital expenditure by debt, it must put aside resources to repay that debt in later years. The amount charged to the revenue budget for the repayment of debt is known as Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP), although there has been no statutory minimum since 2008. The Local Government Act 2003 requires the Authority to have regard to the Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government's *Guidance on Minimum Revenue Provision* (the MHCLG Guidance) most recently issued in 2018.

The broad aim of the Guidance is to ensure that capital expenditure is financed over a period that is either reasonably commensurate with that over which the capital expenditure provides benefits, or, in the case of borrowing supported by Government Revenue Support Grant, reasonably commensurate with the period implicit in the determination of that grant.

The MHCLG Guidance requires the Authority to approve an Annual MRP Statement each year and recommends a number of options for calculating a prudent amount of MRP. The following statement incorporates options recommended in the Guidance.

- For capital expenditure incurred after 31<sup>st</sup> March 2008, MRP will be determined by charging the expenditure over the expected useful life of the relevant asset as the principal repayment on an annuity with an annual interest rate of the Public Works Loan Board (PWLB) annuity rate (less the 0.2% for certainty rate) for 20 years on the day of purchase, starting in the year after the asset becomes operational. MRP on expenditure not related to fixed assets but which has been capitalised by regulation or direction will be charged over 20 years.
- MRP on purchases of freehold land will be charged over 50 years.
- For assets acquired by finance leases, MRP will be determined as being equal to the element of the rent or charge that goes to write down the balance sheet liability.
- Where former operating leases have been brought onto the balance sheet on 1<sup>st</sup> April 2024 due to the adoption of the *IFRS 16 Leases* accounting standard, and the asset values have been adjusted for accruals, prepayments, premiums and/or incentives, then the annual MRP charges will be adjusted so that the total charge to revenue remains unaffected by the new standard.

Capital expenditure incurred during 2024/25 will not be subject to a MRP charge until 2025/26 or later.

Based on the Authority's latest estimate of its capital financing requirement (CFR) on 31<sup>st</sup> March 2024, the budget for MRP has been set as follows:

	31.03.2024 Estimated CFR £'000	2024/25 Estimated MRP £'000
Unsupported capital expenditure after 31.03.2008	52,596	972
Voluntary overpayment (or use of prior year overpayments)	0	0
<b>Total General Fund</b>	<b>52,596</b>	<b>972</b>

**Overpayments:** In earlier years, the Authority has made voluntary overpayments of MRP that are available to reduce the revenue charges in later years.

<b>MRP Overpayments</b>	<b>£'000</b>
Actual balance 31.03.2023	67
Approved [overpayment/drawdown] 2023/24	0
Expected balance 31.03.2024	67
Planned [overpayment/drawdown] 2024/25	0
Forecast balance 31.03.2025	67

## Treasury Management Strategy Statement 2024/25

### Introduction

Treasury management is the management of the Authority's cash flows, borrowing and investments, and the associated risks. The Authority has borrowed and invested substantial sums of money and is therefore exposed to financial risks including the loss of invested funds and the revenue effect of changing interest rates. The successful identification, monitoring and control of financial risk are therefore central to the Authority's prudent financial management.

Treasury risk management at the Authority is conducted within the framework of the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy's *Treasury Management in the Public Services: Code of Practice 2021 Edition* (the CIPFA Code) which requires the Authority to approve a treasury management strategy before the start of each financial year. This report fulfils the Authority's legal obligation under the *Local Government Act 2003* to have regard to the CIPFA Code.

Investments held for service purposes or for commercial profit are considered in a different report, the Investment Strategy.

### External Context

#### **Economic background:**

The impact on the UK from higher interest rates and inflation, a weakening economic outlook, an uncertain political climate due to an upcoming general election, together with war in Ukraine and the Middle East, will be major influences on the Authority's treasury management strategy for 2024/25.

The Bank of England (BoE) increased Bank Rate to 5.25% in August 2023, before maintaining this level in September and then again in November. Members of the BoE's Monetary Policy Committee voted 6-3 in favour of keeping Bank Rate at 5.25%. The three dissenters wanted to increase rates by another 0.25%.

The November quarterly Monetary Policy Report (MPR) forecast a prolonged period of weak Gross Domestic Product (GDP) growth with the potential for a mild contraction due to ongoing weak economic activity. The outlook for CPI inflation was deemed to be highly uncertain, with near-term risks to CPI falling to the 2% target coming from potential energy price increases, strong domestic wage growth and persistence in price-setting.

Office for National Statistics (ONS) figures showed CPI inflation was 6.7% in September 2023, unchanged from the previous month but above the 6.6% expected. Core CPI inflation fell to 6.1% from 6.2%, in line with predictions. Looking ahead, using the interest rate path implied by financial markets the BoE expects CPI inflation to continue falling, declining to around 4% by the end of calendar 2023 but taking until early 2025 to reach the 2% target and then falling below target during the second half 2025 and into 2026.

ONS figures showed the UK economy grew by 0.2% between April and June 2022. The BoE forecasts GDP will likely stagnate in Q3 but increase modestly by 0.1% in Q4, a deterioration in the outlook compared to the August MPR. The BoE forecasts that higher interest rates will constrain GDP growth, which will remain weak over the entire forecast horizon.

The labour market appears to be loosening, but only very slowly. The unemployment rate rose slightly to 4.2% between June and August 2023, from 4.0% in the previous 3-month period, but the lack of consistency in the data between the two periods made comparisons difficult. Earnings growth remained

strong, with regular pay (excluding bonuses) up 7.8% over the period and total pay (including bonuses) up 8.1%. Adjusted for inflation, regular pay was 1.1% and total pay 1.3%. Looking forward, the MPR showed the unemployment rate is expected to be around 4.25% in the second half of calendar 2023, but then rising steadily over the forecast horizon to around 5% in late 2025/early 2026.

Having increased its key interest rate to a target range of 5.25-5.50% in August 2023, the US Federal Reserve paused in September and November, maintaining the Fed Funds rate target at this level. It is likely this level represents the peak in US rates, but central bank policymakers emphasised that any additional tightening would be dependent on the cumulative impact of rate rises to date, together with inflation and developments in the economy and financial markets.

US GDP grew at an annualised rate of 4.9% between July and September 2023, ahead of expectations for a 4.3% expansion and the 2.1% reading for Q2. But as the impact from higher rates is felt in the coming months, a weakening of economic activity is likely. Annual CPI inflation remained at 3.7% in September after increasing from 3% and 3.2% consecutively in June and July.

Eurozone inflation has declined steadily since the start of 2023, falling to an annual rate of 2.9% in October 2023. Economic growth has been weak, and GDP was shown to have contracted by 0.1% in the three months to September 2023. In line with other central banks, the European Central Bank has been increasing rates, taking its deposit facility, fixed rate tender, and marginal lending rates to 3.75%, 4.25% and 4.50% respectively.

#### **Credit outlook:**

Credit Default Swap (CDS) prices were volatile during 2023, spiking in March on the back of banking sector contagion concerns following the major events of Silicon Valley Bank becoming insolvent and the takeover of Credit Suisse by UBS. After then falling back in Q2 of calendar 2023, in the second half of the year, higher interest rates and inflation, the ongoing war in Ukraine, and now the Middle East, have led to CDS prices increasing steadily.

On an annual basis, CDS price volatility has so far been lower in 2023 compared to 2022, but this year has seen more of a divergence in prices between ringfenced (retail) and non-ringfenced (investment) banking entities once again.

Moody's revised its outlook on the UK sovereign to stable from negative to reflect its view of restored political predictability following the volatility after the 2022 mini-budget. Moody's also affirmed the Aa3 rating in recognition of the UK's economic resilience and strong institutional framework.

Following its rating action on the UK sovereign, Moody's revised the outlook on five UK banks to stable from negative and then followed this by the same action on five rated local authorities. However, within the same update the long-term ratings of those five local authorities were downgraded.

There remain competing tensions in the banking sector, on one side from higher interest rates boosting net income and profitability against another of a weakening economic outlook and likely recessions that increase the possibility of a deterioration in the quality of banks' assets.

However, the institutions on our adviser Arlingclose's counterparty list remain well-capitalised and their counterparty advice on both recommended institutions and maximum duration remain under constant review and will continue to reflect economic conditions and the credit outlook.

#### **Interest rate forecast (November 2023):**

Although UK inflation and wage growth remain elevated, the Authority’s treasury management adviser Arlingclose forecasts that Bank Rate has peaked at 5.25%. The Bank of England’s Monetary Policy Committee will cut rates in the medium term to stimulate the UK economy but will be reluctant to do so until it is sure there will be no lingering second-round effects. Arlingclose sees rate cuts from Q3 2024 to a low of around 3% by early-mid 2026.

Arlingclose expects long-term gilt yields to eventually fall from current levels (amid continued volatility) reflecting the lower medium-term path for Bank Rate. However, yields will remain relatively higher than in the past, due to quantitative tightening and significant bond supply. As ever, there will undoubtedly be short-term volatility due to economic and political uncertainty and events.

Like the BoE, the Federal Reserve and other central banks see persistently high policy rates through 2023 and 2024 as key to dampening domestic inflationary pressure. Bond markets will need to absorb significant new supply, particularly from the US government.

A more detailed economic and interest rate forecast provided by Arlingclose is in Appendix A.

For the purpose of setting the budget, it has been assumed that new treasury investments will be made at an average rate/yield of 4.75%, with no current expectation for new long-term borrowing.

### Local Context

On 30th November 2023, the Authority held £20.07m of borrowing and £33.7m of treasury investments. This is set out in further detail at **Appendix B**. Forecast changes in these sums are shown in the balance sheet analysis in table 1 below.

*Table 1: Balance sheet summary and forecast*

	31.3.23 Actual £m	31.3.24 Estimate £m	31.3.25 Forecast £m	31.3.26 Forecast £m	31.3.27 Forecast £m
Capital financing requirement	53.54	52.59	51.62	50.62	49.61
Less: External borrowing **	30.33	19.79	19.26	18.73	18.09
<b>Internal borrowing</b>	<b>23.21</b>	<b>32.80</b>	<b>32.36</b>	<b>31.89</b>	<b>31.52</b>
Less: Balance sheet resources	52.98	51.40	52.40	53.40	53.40
<b>Treasury investments</b>	<b>29.77</b>	<b>18.60</b>	<b>20.04</b>	<b>21.51</b>	<b>21.88</b>

\* leases and PFI liabilities that form part of the Authority’s total debt

\*\* shows only loans to which the Authority is committed and excludes optional refinancing

The underlying need to borrow for capital purposes is measured by the Capital Financing Requirement (CFR), while balance sheet resources are the underlying sums available for investment. The Authority’s current strategy is to maintain borrowing and investments below their underlying levels, sometimes known as internal borrowing.

CIPFA’s *Prudential Code for Capital Finance in Local Authorities* recommends that the Authority’s total debt should be lower than its highest forecast CFR over the next three years. Table 1 shows that the Authority expects to comply with this recommendation during 2024/25.

**Liability benchmark:** To compare the Council’s actual borrowing against an alternative strategy, a liability benchmark has been calculated showing the lowest risk level of borrowing. This assumes the

same forecasts as table 1 above, but that cash and investment balances are kept to a minimum level of £10m at each year-end to maintain sufficient liquidity but minimise credit risk.

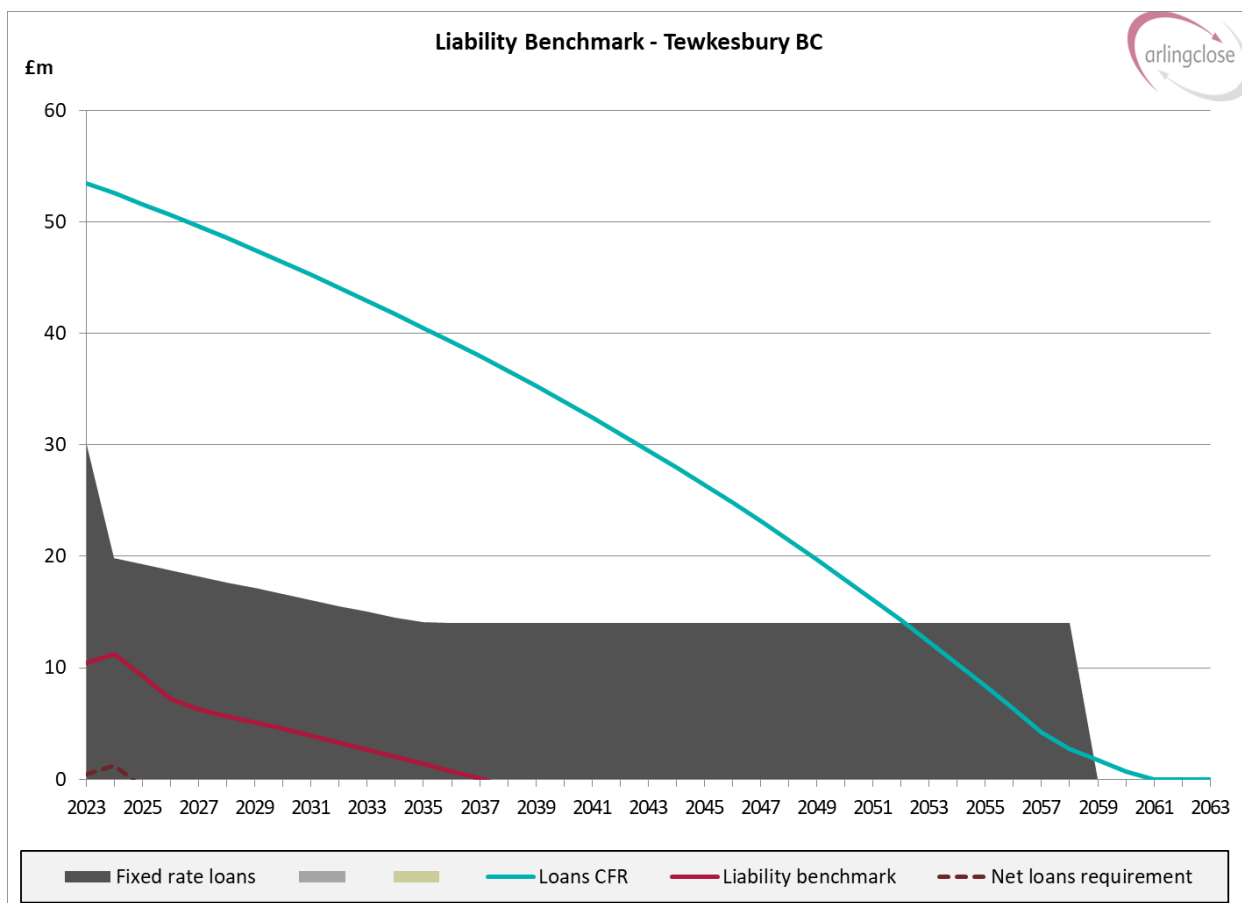
The liability benchmark is an important tool to help establish whether the Council is likely to be a long-term borrower or long-term investor in the future, and so shape its strategic focus and decision making. The liability benchmark itself represents an estimate of the cumulative amount of external borrowing the Council must hold to fund its current capital and revenue plans while keeping treasury investments at the minimum level required to manage day-to-day cash flow.

*Table 2: Prudential Indicator: Liability benchmark*

	<b>31.3.23 Actual £m</b>	<b>31.3.24 Estimate £m</b>	<b>31.3.25 Forecast £m</b>	<b>31.3.26 Forecast £m</b>	<b>31.3.27 Forecast £m</b>
Loans CFR	53.54	52.59	51.62	50.62	49.61
Less: Balance sheet resources	52.98	51.4	52.4	53.4	53.4
<b>Net loans requirement</b>	0.56	1.19	-0.78	-2.78	-3.79
Plus: Liquidity allowance	10.00	10.00	10.00	10.00	10.00
<b>Liability benchmark</b>	<b>10.56</b>	<b>11.19</b>	<b>9.22</b>	<b>7.22</b>	<b>6.21</b>

Following on from the medium-term forecasts in table 2 above, the long-term liability benchmark assumes capital expenditure funded by borrowing, minimum revenue provision on new capital expenditure based on a 25 year asset life and income, expenditure and reserves all increasing by inflation. This is shown in the chart below together with the maturity profile of the Authority's existing borrowing:





**Borrowing Strategy**

The Authority currently holds £20.07 million of loans, a decrease of £10.53 million on the previous year, as part of its strategy for funding previous years’ capital programmes. The balance sheet forecast in table 1 shows that the Authority does not expect to need to borrow in 2024/25. The Authority may however borrow to pre-fund future years’ requirements, providing this does not exceed the authorised limit for borrowing of £50 million.

**Objectives:** The Authority’s chief objective when borrowing money is to strike an appropriately low risk balance between securing low interest costs and achieving certainty of those costs over the period for which funds are required. The flexibility to renegotiate loans should the Authority’s long-term plans change is a secondary objective.

**Strategy:** Given the significant cuts to public expenditure and in particular to local government funding, the Authority’s borrowing strategy continues to address the key issue of affordability without compromising the longer-term stability of the debt portfolio. With short-term interest rates currently much lower than long-term rates, it is likely to be more cost effective in the short-term to either use internal resources, or to borrow short-term loans instead.

By doing so, the Authority is able to reduce net borrowing costs (despite foregone investment income) and reduce overall treasury risk. The benefits of short-term borrowing will be monitored regularly against the potential for incurring additional costs by deferring borrowing into future years when long-term borrowing rates are forecast to rise modestly. Arlingclose will assist the Authority with this ‘cost of carry’ and breakeven analysis. Its output may determine whether the Authority borrows additional sums at long-term fixed rates in 2024/25 with a view to keeping future interest costs low, even if this causes additional cost in the short-term.

The Authority has previously raised all of its long-term borrowing from the PWLB but will consider long-term loans from other sources including banks, pensions and local authorities, and will investigate the possibility of issuing bonds and similar instruments, in order to lower interest costs and reduce over-reliance on one source of funding in line with the CIPFA Code. PWLB loans are no longer available to local authorities planning to buy investment assets primarily for yield; the Authority intends to avoid this activity in order to retain its access to PWLB loans.

Alternatively, the Authority may arrange forward starting loans, where the interest rate is fixed in advance, but the cash is received in later years. This would enable certainty of cost to be achieved without suffering a cost of carry in the intervening period.

In addition, the Authority may borrow further short-term loans to cover unplanned cash flow shortages.

**Sources of borrowing:** The approved sources of long-term and short-term borrowing are:

- HM Treasury's PWLB lending facility (formerly the Public Works Loan Board)
- any institution approved for investments (see below)
- any other bank or building society authorised to operate in the UK
- any other UK public sector body
- UK public and private sector pension funds (except Gloucestershire County Council Pension Scheme)
- capital market bond investors
- UK Municipal Bonds Agency plc and other special purpose companies created to enable local authority bond issues

**Other sources of debt finance:** In addition, capital finance may be raised by the following methods that are not borrowing, but may be classed as other debt liabilities:

- leasing
- hire purchase
- Private Finance Initiative
- sale and leaseback

**Municipal Bonds Agency:** UK Municipal Bonds Agency plc was established in 2014 by the Local Government Association as an alternative to the PWLB. It issues bonds on the capital markets and lends the proceeds to local authorities. This is a more complicated source of finance than the PWLB for two reasons: borrowing authorities will be required to provide bond investors with a guarantee to refund their investment in the event that the agency is unable to for any reason; and there will be a lead time of several months between committing to borrow and knowing the interest rate payable. Any decision to borrow from the Agency will therefore be the subject of a separate report to full Council.

**Short-term and variable rate loans:** These loans leave the Authority exposed to the risk of short-term interest rate rises and are therefore subject to the interest rate exposure limits in the treasury management indicators below. Financial derivatives may be used to manage this interest rate risk (see section below).

**Debt rescheduling:** The PWLB allows authorities to repay loans before maturity and either pay a premium or receive a discount according to a set formula based on current interest rates. Other lenders may also be prepared to negotiate premature redemption terms. The Authority may take advantage of this and replace some loans with new loans, or repay loans without replacement, where this is expected

to lead to an overall cost saving or a reduction in risk. The recent rise in interest rates means that more favourable debt rescheduling opportunities should arise than in previous years.

### **Treasury Investment Strategy**

The Authority holds significant invested funds, representing income received in advance of expenditure plus balances and reserves held. In the past 12 months, the Authority's treasury investment balance has ranged between £27.4 and £46.3 million, and similar levels are expected to be maintained in the forthcoming year.

**Objectives:** The CIPFA Code requires the Authority to invest its treasury funds prudently, and to have regard to the security and liquidity of its investments before seeking the highest rate of return, or yield. The Authority's objective when investing money is to strike an appropriate balance between risk and return, minimising the risk of incurring losses from defaults and the risk of receiving unsuitably low investment income. Where balances are expected to be invested for more than one year, the Authority will aim to achieve a total return that is equal or higher than the prevailing rate of inflation, in order to maintain the spending power of the sum invested. The Authority aims to be a responsible investor and will consider environmental, social and governance (ESG) issues when investing.

**Strategy:** As demonstrated by the liability benchmark above, the Authority expects to be a long-term investor and treasury investments will therefore include both short-term low risk instruments to manage day-to-day cash flows and longer-term instruments where limited additional risk is accepted in return for higher investment income to support local public services.

The CIPFA Code does not permit local authorities to both borrow and invest long-term for cash flow management. But the Authority may make long-term investments for treasury risk management purposes, including to manage interest rate risk by investing sums borrowed in advance for the capital programme for up to three years; to manage inflation risk by investing usable reserves in instruments whose value rises with inflation; and to manage price risk by adding diversification to the strategic pooled fund portfolio.

**ESG policy:** Environmental, social and governance (ESG) considerations are increasingly a factor in global investors' decision making, but the framework for evaluating investment opportunities is still developing and therefore the Authority's ESG policy does not currently include ESG scoring or other real-time ESG criteria at an individual investment level. This will be reviewed on an ongoing basis as the framework is developed. When investing in banks and funds, the Authority will prioritise banks that are signatories to the UN Principles for Responsible Banking and funds operated by managers that are signatories to the UN Principles for Responsible Investment, the Net Zero Asset Managers Alliance and/or the UK Stewardship Code.

**Business models:** Under the IFRS 9 standard, the accounting for certain investments depends on the Authority's "business model" for managing them. The Authority aims to achieve value from its treasury investments by a business model of collecting the contractual cash flows and therefore, where other criteria are also met, these investments will continue to be accounted for at amortised cost.

**Approved counterparties:** The Authority may invest its surplus funds with any of the counterparty types in table 3 below, subject to the limits shown.

Table 3: Treasury investment counterparties and limits

Sector	Time limit	Counterparty limit	Sector limit
The UK Government	50 years	Unlimited	n/a
Local authorities & other government entities	25 years	£3.0m	Unlimited
Secured investments *	25 years	£3.0m	Unlimited
Banks (unsecured) *	13 months	£2.0m	Unlimited
Building societies (unsecured) *	13 months	£2.0m	£4.0m
Registered providers (unsecured) *	5 years	£2.0m	£4.0m
Money market funds *	n/a	£3.0m	Unlimited
Strategic pooled funds			
- CCLA	n/a	£4.0m	£10.0m
- Other		£2.0m	
Real estate investment trusts	n/a	£2.0m	£4.0m
Other investments *	5 years	£1.0m	£2.0m

This table must be read in conjunction with the notes below

**Minimum credit rating:** Treasury investments in the sectors marked with an asterisk will only be made with entities whose lowest published long-term credit rating is no lower than A-. Where available, the credit rating relevant to the specific investment or class of investment is used, otherwise the counterparty credit rating is used. However, investment decisions are never made solely based on credit ratings, and all other relevant factors including external advice will be taken into account.

**Government:** Loans to, and bonds and bills issued or guaranteed by, national governments, regional and local authorities and multilateral development banks. These investments are not subject to bail-in, and there is generally a lower risk of insolvency, although they are not zero risk. Investments with the UK Government are deemed to be zero credit risk due to its ability to create additional currency and therefore may be made in unlimited amounts for up to 50 years.

**Secured investments:** Investments secured on the borrower's assets, which limits the potential losses in the event of insolvency. The amount and quality of the security will be a key factor in the investment decision. Covered bonds and reverse repurchase agreements with banks and building societies are exempt from bail-in. Where there is no investment specific credit rating, but the collateral upon which the investment is secured has a credit rating, the higher of the collateral credit rating and the counterparty credit rating will be used. The combined secured and unsecured investments with any one counterparty will not exceed the cash limit for secured investments.

**Banks and building societies (unsecured):** Accounts, deposits, certificates of deposit and senior unsecured bonds with banks and building societies, other than multilateral development banks. These investments are subject to the risk of credit loss via a bail-in should the regulator determine that the bank is failing or likely to fail. See below for arrangements relating to operational bank accounts.

**Registered providers (unsecured):** Loans to, and bonds issued or guaranteed by, registered providers of social housing or registered social landlords, formerly known as housing associations. These bodies are regulated by the Regulator of Social Housing (in England), the Scottish Housing Regulator, the Welsh

Government and the Department for Communities (in Northern Ireland). As providers of public services, they retain the likelihood of receiving government support if needed.

**Money market funds:** Pooled funds that offer same-day or short notice liquidity and very low or no price volatility by investing in short-term money markets. They have the advantage over bank accounts of providing wide diversification of investment risks, coupled with the services of a professional fund manager in return for a small fee. Although no sector limit applies to money market funds, the Authority will take care to diversify its liquid investments over a variety of providers to ensure access to cash at all times.

**Strategic pooled funds:** Bond, equity and property funds that offer enhanced returns over the longer term but are more volatile in the short term. These allow the Authority to diversify into asset classes other than cash without the need to own and manage the underlying investments. Because these funds have no defined maturity date, but are available for withdrawal after a notice period, their performance and continued suitability in meeting the Authority's investment objectives will be monitored regularly.

**Real estate investment trusts:** Shares in companies that invest mainly in real estate and pay the majority of their rental income to investors in a similar manner to pooled property funds. As with property funds, REITs offer enhanced returns over the longer term, but are more volatile especially as the share price reflects changing demand for the shares as well as changes in the value of the underlying properties.

**Other investments:** This category covers treasury investments not listed above, for example unsecured corporate bonds and company loans. Non-bank companies cannot be bailed-in but can become insolvent placing the Authority's investment at risk.

**Operational bank accounts:** The Authority may incur operational exposures, for example through current accounts, collection accounts and merchant acquiring services, to any UK bank with credit ratings no lower than BBB- and with assets greater than £25 billion. These are not classed as investments but are still subject to the risk of a bank bail-in, and balances will therefore be kept below £4.0m per bank. The Bank of England has stated that in the event of failure, banks with assets greater than £25 billion are more likely to be bailed-in than made insolvent, increasing the chance of the Authority maintaining operational continuity.

**Risk assessment and credit ratings:** Credit ratings are obtained and monitored by the Authority's treasury advisers, who will notify changes in ratings as they occur. The credit rating agencies in current use are listed in the Treasury Management Practices document. Where an entity has its credit rating downgraded so that it fails to meet the approved investment criteria then:

- no new investments will be made,
- any existing investments that can be recalled or sold at no cost will be, and
- full consideration will be given to the recall or sale of all other existing investments with the affected counterparty.

Where a credit rating agency announces that a credit rating is on review for possible downgrade (also known as "negative watch") so that it may fall below the approved rating criteria, then only investments that can be withdrawn on the next working day will be made with that organisation until the outcome of the review is announced. This policy will not apply to negative outlooks, which indicate a long-term direction of travel rather than an imminent change of rating.

**Other information on the security of investments:** The Authority understands that credit ratings are good, but not perfect, predictors of investment default. Full regard will therefore be given to other available information on the credit quality of the organisations in which it invests, including credit

default swap prices, financial statements, information on potential government support, reports in the quality financial press and analysis and advice from the Authority’s treasury management adviser. No investments will be made with an organisation if there are substantive doubts about its credit quality, even though it may otherwise meet the above criteria.

When deteriorating financial market conditions affect the creditworthiness of all organisations, as happened in 2008, 2020 and 2022, this is not generally reflected in credit ratings, but can be seen in other market measures. In these circumstances, the Authority will restrict its investments to those organisations of higher credit quality and reduce the maximum duration of its investments to maintain the required level of security. The extent of these restrictions will be in line with prevailing financial market conditions. If these restrictions mean that insufficient commercial organisations of high credit quality are available to invest the Authority’s cash balances, then the surplus will be deposited with the UK Government, or with other local authorities. This will cause investment returns to fall but will protect the principal sum invested.

**Investment limits:** The Authority’s revenue reserves available to cover investment losses are forecast to be £5 million on 31<sup>st</sup> March 2024 and £5 million on 31<sup>st</sup> March 2025. In order that no more than 60% of available reserves will be put at risk in the case of a single default, the maximum that will be lent to any one organisation (other than the UK Government) will be £4 million. A group of entities under the same ownership will be treated as a single organisation for limit purposes.

Credit risk exposures arising from non-treasury investments, financial derivatives and balances greater than £2m in operational bank accounts count against the relevant investment limits.

Limits are also placed on fund managers, investments in brokers’ nominee accounts and foreign countries as below. Investments in pooled funds and multilateral development banks do not count against the limit for any single foreign country, since the risk is diversified over many countries.

*Table 4: Additional investment limits*

	Cash limit
Any group of pooled funds under the same management	£4m per manager
Negotiable instruments held in a broker’s nominee account	£6m per broker
Foreign countries	£3m per country

**Liquidity management:** The Authority uses purpose-built cash flow forecasting software to determine the maximum period for which funds may prudently be committed. The forecast is compiled on a prudent basis to minimise the risk of the Authority being forced to borrow on unfavourable terms to meet its financial commitments. Limits on long-term investments are set by reference to the Authority’s medium-term financial plan and cash flow forecast.

The Authority will spread its liquid cash over at least four providers (e.g. bank accounts and money market funds) to ensure that access to cash is maintained in the event of operational difficulties at any one provider.

## Treasury Management Prudential Indicators

The Authority measures and manages its exposures to treasury management risks using the following indicators.

**Security:** The Authority has adopted a voluntary measure of its exposure to credit risk by monitoring the value-weighted average credit rating of its investment portfolio. This is calculated by applying a score to each investment (AAA=1, AA+=2, etc.) and taking the arithmetic average, weighted by the size of each investment. Unrated investments are assigned a score based on their perceived risk.

Credit risk indicator	Target
Portfolio average credit rating	A

**Liquidity:** The Authority has adopted a voluntary measure of its exposure to liquidity risk by monitoring the amount of cash available to meet unexpected payments within a rolling one month period, without additional borrowing.

Liquidity risk indicator	Target
Total cash available within 1 months	£7m

**Interest rate exposures:** This indicator is set to control the Authority's exposure to interest rate risk. The upper limits on the one-year revenue impact of a 1% rise or fall in interest rates will be:

Interest rate risk indicator	Limit
Upper limit on one-year revenue impact of a 1% <u>rise</u> in interest rates	£500,000
Upper limit on one-year revenue impact of a 1% <u>fall</u> in interest rates	£500,000

The impact of a change in interest rates is calculated on the assumption that maturing loans and investments will be replaced at new market rates.

**Maturity structure of borrowing:** This indicator is set to control the Authority's exposure to refinancing risk. The upper and lower limits on the maturity structure of borrowing will be:

Refinancing rate risk indicator	Upper limit	Lower limit
Under 12 months	0%	100%
12 months and within 24 months	0%	100%
24 months and within 5 years	0%	100%
5 years and within 10 years	0%	100%

Time periods start on the first day of each financial year. The maturity date of borrowing is the earliest date on which the lender can demand repayment.

**Long-term treasury management investments:** The purpose of this indicator is to control the Authority's exposure to the risk of incurring losses by seeking early repayment of its investments. The prudential limits on the long-term treasury management investments will be:

Price risk indicator	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27	No fixed date
Limit on principal invested beyond year end	£14m	£12m	£12m	£10m

Long-term investments with no fixed maturity date and in the relevant financial year include strategic pooled funds and real estate investment trusts but exclude money market funds and bank accounts with no fixed maturity date as these are considered short-term.

### Related Matters

The CIPFA Code requires the Authority to include the following in its treasury management strategy.

**Financial derivatives:** Local authorities have previously made use of financial derivatives embedded into loans and investments both to reduce interest rate risk (e.g. interest rate collars and forward deals) and to reduce costs or increase income at the expense of greater risk (e.g. LOBO loans and callable deposits). The general power of competence in section 1 of the *Localism Act 2011* removes much of the uncertainty over local authorities' use of standalone financial derivatives (i.e. those that are not embedded into a loan or investment).

The Authority will only use standalone financial derivatives (such as swaps, forwards, futures and options) where they can be clearly demonstrated to reduce the overall level of the financial risks that the Authority is exposed to. Additional risks presented, such as credit exposure to derivative counterparties, will be taken into account when determining the overall level of risk. Embedded derivatives, including those present in pooled funds and forward starting transactions, will not be subject to this policy, although the risks they present will be managed in line with the overall treasury risk management strategy.

Financial derivative transactions may be arranged with any organisation that meets the approved investment criteria, assessed using the appropriate credit rating for derivative exposures. An allowance for credit risk calculated using the methodology in the Treasury Management Practices document will count against the counterparty credit limit and the relevant foreign country limit.

In line with the CIPFA Code, the Authority will seek external advice and will consider that advice before entering into financial derivatives to ensure that it fully understands the implications.

**Financial derivatives:** In the absence of any explicit legal power to do so, the Authority will not use standalone financial derivatives (such as swaps, forwards, futures and options). Derivatives embedded into loans and investments, including pooled funds and forward starting transactions, may be used, and the risks that they present will be managed in line with the overall treasury risk management strategy.

**Markets in Financial Instruments Directive:** The Authority has opted up to professional client status with its providers of financial services, including advisers, banks, brokers and fund managers, allowing it access to a greater range of services but without the greater regulatory protections afforded to individuals and small companies. Given the size and range of the Authority's treasury management activities, the Executive Director - Resources and S151 believes this to be the most appropriate status.

### Financial Implications

The budget for investment income in 2024/25 is £1.2 million, based on an average investment portfolio of £16.7 million at an interest rate of 4.75%. The budget for debt interest paid in 2024/25 is £407k, based on an average debt portfolio of £4.9 million at an average interest rate of 1.92%. If actual levels



of investments and borrowing, or actual interest rates, differ from those forecast, performance against budget will be correspondingly different.

### **Other Options Considered**

The CIPFA Code does not prescribe any particular treasury management strategy for local authorities to adopt. The Executive Director - Resources and S151, having consulted the Lead Member for Finance & Assets, believes that the above strategy represents an appropriate balance between risk management and cost effectiveness. Some alternative strategies, with their financial and risk management implications, are listed below.

<b>Alternative</b>	<b>Impact on income and expenditure</b>	<b>Impact on risk management</b>
Invest in a narrower range of counterparties and/or for shorter times	Interest income will be lower	Lower chance of losses from credit related defaults, but any such losses may be greater
Invest in a wider range of counterparties and/or for longer times	Interest income will be higher	Increased risk of losses from credit related defaults, but any such losses may be smaller
Borrow additional sums at long-term fixed interest rates	Debt interest costs will rise; this is unlikely to be offset by higher investment income	Higher investment balance leading to a higher impact in the event of a default; however long-term interest costs may be more certain
Borrow short-term or variable loans instead of long-term fixed rates	Debt interest costs will initially be lower	Increases in debt interest costs will be broadly offset by rising investment income in the medium term, but long-term costs may be less certain
Reduce level of borrowing	Saving on debt interest is likely to exceed lost investment income	Reduced investment balance leading to a lower impact in the event of a default; however long-term interest costs may be less certain

## Appendix A - Arlingclose Economic & Interest Rate Forecast - November 2023

### **Underlying assumptions:**

- UK inflation and wage growth remain elevated but, following a no-change MPC decision in November, Bank Rate appears to have peaked in this rate cycle. Near-term rate cuts are unlikely, although downside risks will increase as the UK economy likely slides into recession and inflation falls more quickly.
- The much-repeated message from the MPC is that monetary policy will remain tight as inflation is expected to moderate to target slowly. In the Bank's forecast, wage and services inflation, in particular, will keep CPI above the 2% target until 2026.
- The UK economy has so far been relatively resilient, but recent data indicates a further deceleration in business and household activity growth as higher interest rates start to bite. Global demand will remain soft, offering little assistance in offsetting weakening domestic demand. A recession remains a likely outcome.
- Employment demand is easing, although the tight labour market has resulted in higher nominal wage growth. Anecdotal evidence suggests slowing recruitment and pay growth, and we expect unemployment to rise further. As unemployment rises and interest rates remain high, consumer sentiment will deteriorate. Household spending will therefore be weak. Higher interest rates will also weigh on business investment and spending.
- Inflation will fall over the next 12 months. The path to the target will not be smooth, with higher energy prices and base effects interrupting the downtrend at times. The MPC's attention will remain on underlying inflation measures and wage data. We believe policy rates will remain at the peak for another 10 months, or until the MPC is comfortable the risk of further 'second-round' effects has diminished.
- Maintaining monetary policy in restrictive territory for so long, when the economy is already struggling, will require significant policy loosening in the future to boost activity.
- Global bond yields will remain volatile, particularly with the focus on US economic data and its monetary and fiscal policy. Like the BoE, the Federal Reserve and other central banks see persistently high policy rates through 2023 and 2024 as key to dampening domestic inflationary pressure. Bond markets will need to absorb significant new supply, particularly from the US government.
- There is a heightened risk of geo-political events causing substantial volatility in yields.

### **Forecast:**

- The MPC held Bank Rate at 5.25% in November. We believe this is the peak for Bank Rate.
- The MPC will cut rates in the medium term to stimulate the UK economy but will be reluctant to do so until it is sure there will be no lingering second-round effects. We see rate cuts from Q3 2024 to a low of around 3% by early-mid 2026.
- The immediate risks around Bank Rate remain on the upside, but these diminish over the next few quarters and shift to the downside before balancing out, due to the weakening UK economy and dampening effects on inflation.
- Arlingclose expects long-term gilt yields to eventually fall from current levels (amid continued volatility) reflecting the lower medium-term path for Bank Rate. However, yields will remain relatively higher than in the past, due to quantitative tightening and significant bond supply.

	Current	Dec-23	Mar-24	Jun-24	Sep-24	Dec-24	Mar-25	Jun-25	Sep-25	Dec-25	Mar-26	Jun-26	Sep-26
<b>Official Bank Rate</b>													
Upside risk	0.00	0.25	0.50	0.50	0.75	0.75	0.75	0.75	0.75	0.75	0.75	1.00	1.00
Central Case	5.25	5.25	5.25	5.25	5.00	4.75	4.25	4.00	3.75	3.50	3.25	3.00	3.00
Downside risk	0.00	0.00	-0.25	-0.50	-0.75	-1.00	-1.00	-1.00	-1.00	-1.00	-1.00	-1.00	-1.00
<b>3-month money market rate</b>													
Upside risk	0.00	0.25	0.50	0.50	0.75	0.75	0.75	0.75	0.75	0.75	0.75	1.00	1.00
Central Case	5.40	5.40	5.40	5.30	5.15	4.80	4.30	4.10	3.80	3.50	3.25	3.05	3.05
Downside risk	0.00	0.00	-0.25	-0.50	-0.75	-1.00	-1.00	-1.00	-1.00	-1.00	-1.00	-1.00	-1.00
<b>5yr gilt yield</b>													
Upside risk	0.00	0.50	0.70	0.70	0.85	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00
Central Case	4.28	4.35	4.30	4.25	4.10	4.00	3.75	3.50	3.40	3.30	3.30	3.30	3.35
Downside risk	0.00	-0.55	-0.75	-0.85	-1.00	-1.00	-1.00	-1.00	-1.00	-1.00	-1.00	-1.00	-1.00
<b>10yr gilt yield</b>													
Upside risk	0.00	0.50	0.70	0.70	0.80	0.90	1.00	1.10	1.20	1.20	1.20	1.20	1.20
Central Case	4.32	4.40	4.35	4.30	4.25	4.15	4.00	3.80	3.75	3.65	3.60	3.65	3.70
Downside risk	0.00	-0.55	-0.75	-0.85	-1.00	-1.00	-1.00	-1.00	-1.00	-1.00	-1.00	-1.00	-1.00
<b>20yr gilt yield</b>													
Upside risk	0.00	0.50	0.70	0.70	0.80	0.90	1.00	1.10	1.20	1.20	1.20	1.20	1.20
Central Case	4.78	4.70	4.65	4.55	4.45	4.35	4.25	4.25	4.25	4.25	4.25	4.25	4.25
Downside risk	0.00	-0.55	-0.75	-0.85	-1.00	-1.00	-1.00	-1.00	-1.00	-1.00	-1.00	-1.00	-1.00
<b>50yr gilt yield</b>													
Upside risk	0.00	0.50	0.70	0.70	0.80	0.90	1.00	1.10	1.20	1.20	1.20	1.20	1.20
Central Case	4.38	4.30	4.25	4.20	4.15	4.15	4.10	4.10	4.10	4.10	4.10	4.10	4.10
Downside risk	0.00	-0.55	-0.75	-0.85	-1.00	-1.00	-1.00	-1.00	-1.00	-1.00	-1.00	-1.00	-1.00

PWLB Standard Rate = Gilt yield + 1.00%  
 PWLB Certainty Rate = Gilt yield + 0.80%  
 PWLB HRA Rate = Gilt yield + 0.40%  
 UK Infrastructure Bank Rate = Gilt yield + 0.40%

**Appendix B - Existing Investment & Debt Portfolio Position**

	30-Nov Actual portfolio £m	30-Nov Average rate %
<b>External borrowing:</b>		
Public Works Loan Board	20.07	1.92
<b>Total external borrowing</b>	<b>20.07</b>	
<b>Treasury investments:</b>		
The UK Government	0.0	0.00
Local authorities	16.0	3.97
Other government entities	0.0	0.00
Secured investments	0.0	0.00
Banks (unsecured)	2.1	5.10
Building societies (unsecured)	0.0	0.00
Registered providers (unsecured)	0.0	0.00
Money market funds	7.3	4.99
Strategic pooled funds	4.3	5.37
Real estate investment trusts	4.0	3.70
Other investments	0.0	0.00
<b>Total treasury investments</b>	<b>33.7</b>	4.63
<b>Net Investments</b>	<b>13.63</b>	

## TEWKESBURY BOROUGH COUNCIL

<b>Report to:</b>	Executive Committee
<b>Date of Meeting:</b>	10 January 2024
<b>Subject:</b>	Cheltenham, Gloucester and Tewkesbury Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) Joint Committee
<b>Report of:</b>	CIL Manager
<b>Head of Service/Director:</b>	Associate Director: Planning
<b>Lead Member:</b>	Lead Member for Built Environment
<b>Number of Appendices:</b>	2

### **Executive Summary:**

This report seeks the support of the Executive Committee in recommending to Council approval of the governance arrangements for the allocation of CIL 'Infrastructure' funding by agreeing to the establishment of a Member Joint Committee in accordance with the appended Terms of Reference (see Section 2 which explains the move from preparing a Memorandum of Understanding as previously proposed). This includes approving to pooling arrangements by the three Joint Committee partner councils for the 'Infrastructure' portion of CIL receipts; approval for publication of an amended 'Infrastructure List' (Appendix 2) is also requested. The Infrastructure List; and further engagement with a wider range of infrastructure providers.

### **Recommendation:**

#### **To RECOMMEND TO COUNCIL:**

- 1. That establishment of a Community Infrastructure Levy Joint Committee with the Terms of Reference as set out at Appendix 1, including the pooling of strategic Community Infrastructure Levy monies by Cheltenham Borough, Gloucester City and Tewkesbury Borough Councils, be APPROVED.**
- 2. That the amended Infrastructure List, set out at Appendix 2, be APPROVED for publication.**
- 3. That engagement with a wide range of infrastructure providers e.g. NHS, emergency services, Environment Agency be ENDORSED in order to identify any wider infrastructure priorities to be considered by the Community Infrastructure Levy Joint Committee.**

### **Financial Implications:**

There are no direct financial implications of the recommendations in this report for the Council; however, indirect benefits will be realised from the strategic 'infrastructure' element of the CIL which can be used to enhance the borough, improve infrastructure and support economic growth. Work is to be undertaken within existing resources and budgets including the 5% portion of CIL receipts that may be used for administration.

**Legal Implications:**

The “strategic” element of CIL receipts (being otherwise than up to 5% for administration and the 15% to 25% neighbourhood portion) must be spent on ‘infrastructure’. Charging authorities can choose to pool a proportion of their Community Infrastructure Levy receipts to fund infrastructure including for out of their own area spending. Each of the charging authorities included in the pooling arrangements should be content that funding for infrastructure outside the authority’s area will support development of its own area.

Under National Planning Policy Guidance (NPPG), charging authorities are encouraged to consider publishing a Memorandum of Understanding detailing the administration, principles, and governance that will be implemented for any pooled fund, covering, but not limited to:

- a proposed governance structure and decision-making process for agreeing how the pooled fund is implemented and spent;
- the proportion or amount of levy each charging authority will contribute;
- the procedure for collecting the pooled levy;
- the strategic infrastructure projects the pooled fund will be spent on;
- a system for returning pooled funds to an authority in the event that it is necessary to do so;
- a proposed review mechanism for the memorandum.

It is further recommended that the Memorandum of Understanding is a publicly accessible document, which clearly explains how the pooled levy will be administered and spent. A Memorandum of Understanding is not being proposed, but the Joint Committee’s Terms of Reference will set out how the pooled levy will be administered and spent.

The authority has a variety of legislative powers relating to its governance arrangements, including the general power of competence set out in Section 1 of the Localism Act 2011. This includes the setting up of Joint Committees under Section 101(5) and Section 102 of the Local Government Act 1972 and the Local Authorities (Arrangement for the Discharge of Functions) (England) Regulations 2012 which enable two or more local authorities to discharge any of their functions (other than those which are the responsibility of an authority’s executive under section 13 of the Local Government Act 2000).

The production of an Infrastructure Funding Statement (IFS) at least annually (by 31 December each year in respect of the previous financial year), including a Regulation 121A ‘Infrastructure List’, is a statutory obligation as a result of amendments to the Community Infrastructure Levy Regulations 2010 by the Community Infrastructure Levy (Amendment) (England) (No.2) Regulations 2019. The December 2023 IFS was approved at the Council meeting on 12 December 2023.

The government’s National Planning Practice Guidance on the Community Infrastructure Levy states that local authorities can publish updated data and infrastructure funding statements more frequently if they wish.

**Environmental and Sustainability Implications:**

None directly from this report; however, CIL infrastructure projects that may be funded in the future have the potential to have a positive impact on all three dimensions of sustainable development.

**Resource Implications (including impact on equalities):**

None directly from this report; however, CIL infrastructure projects that may be funded in the future may have implications.

**Safeguarding Implications:**

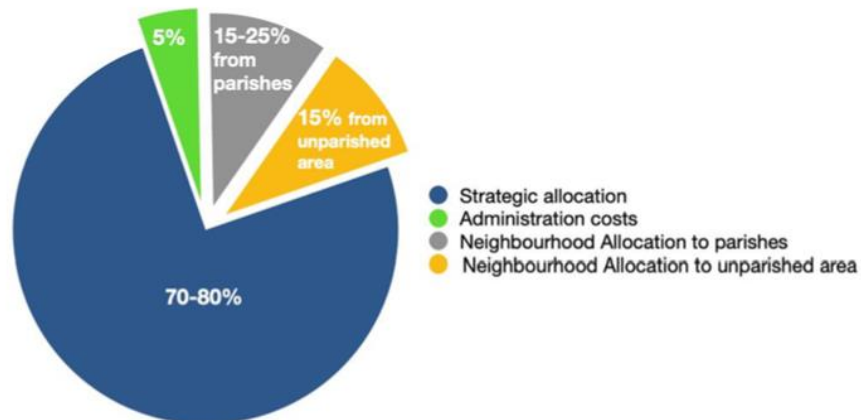
None

**Impact on the Customer:**

Meetings of the Joint CIL Committee which make decisions on the allocation of CIL funding will be held in public.

**1.0 INTRODUCTION**

- 1.1 The Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) is a charge which can be levied by local authorities on new development in their area. It is an important tool for local authorities to use to help them deliver the infrastructure needed to support development in their area. In England, authorities which can charge the levy are the local planning authorities for the area. CIL is governed by the CIL Regulations 2010 (as amended).
- 1.2 Tewkesbury Borough Council approved the introduction of CIL on 15 October 2018 with commencement of charging on planning applications granted permission on or after 1 January 2019.
- 1.3 CIL is paid to the Council by developers after their planning permissions commence, in line with the Council's adopted Instalments Policy. CIL is a significant means, outside wider government funding, by which the Councils are able to collect and pool developer contributions to deliver infrastructure improvements.
- 1.4 The breakdown of CIL is aligned with CIL regulations as shown in the diagram below. Please note that, as a fully parished borough, 15% from unparished areas is not held by Tewkesbury Borough Council.



**2.0 WHY A JOINT COMMITTEE?**

- 2.1 Members will note that this report differs from previous governance proposals, to form a CIL Board, to that of a Joint Committee. The Joint Committee has the benefit of introducing a more coherent and less complex approach to making decisions on bids for CIL money and provides a robust framework for collaboration and collective decision making.

- 2.2** This change has arisen responding to a number of key factors, including:
1. The concern of the time and administration that would be needed to service a CIL Board and then recall decisions back to each individual Council for final approval, building in delay and uncertainty for infrastructure providers.
  2. More efficient to engage on a collective basis with infrastructure providers and adds transparency into future CIL allocation and the setting of priorities through the operation of a Joint Committee.
  3. Commitment given by Cheltenham Borough and Gloucester City Councils to define a Terms of Reference and build in the safeguards that included:
    - a. full consensus vote;
    - b. review triggers;
    - c. link back to infrastructure commitments contained with the Infrastructure Funding Statements published by the Councils which includes the Infrastructure List (including any interim assessments) and the Infrastructure Delivery Plan (being updated to support the emerging Cheltenham, Gloucester and Tewkesbury Strategic and Local Plan);
    - d. decisions made by the Committee will be subject to the decisions being reported back through relevant Cabinet/Executive Committee of each of the member Councils;
    - e. Gloucestershire County Council will be entitled to attend meetings of the Committee to input on matters relevant to the functions and activities of the Committee but shall have no voting rights nor be involved in scrutiny; and
    - f. pooling and its review.
  4. Positive and constructive engagement with Gloucestershire County Council on the preparation of the draft Terms of Reference.
- 2.3** Gloucestershire County Council is not a CIL charging authority; however, county councils are responsible for the delivery of key strategic infrastructure. As set out in national Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG), charging authorities must consult and should collaborate with them in setting the levy and should work closely with them in setting priorities for how the levy will be spent in two-tier areas.
- 2.4** The NPPG goes on to advise that *“Charging authorities should think strategically in their use of the levy to ensure that key infrastructure priorities are delivered to facilitate growth and the economic benefit of the wider area. This may, for example, include working with neighbouring authorities...”*
- 2.5** This report and the Joint Committee proposal relates only to the strategic element of CIL, responsibility for the neighbourhood element of CIL sits wholly with Tewkesbury Borough Council and sits outside the proposals of the recommendations of this report.
- 2.6** An Officer Working Group is being established to support the work of the Joint Committee; a Terms of Reference for this working group is being prepared and will be agreed by the Joint Committee once established.
- 3.0 THE PROPOSAL**
- 3.1** It is proposed that a Joint Committee be set up between Gloucester City Council, Cheltenham Borough Council and Tewkesbury Borough Council supported by an Officer Working Group to work jointly and collaboratively to advise the councils on the expenditure of the strategic ‘Infrastructure’ pot of CIL monies that have been pooled.



- 3.2** The Joint Committee will:
- Oversee the strategic CIL application process and scrutinise each project bid for strategic fit and compliance with CIL requirements.
  - Be accountable for the oversight, monitoring and governance of awards.
  - Take an objective and detached view of applications.
- 3.3** Each charging authority shall appoint a Committee Member and a substitute who shall be either the Leader or other appointed Executive Members. The quorate membership of the Joint Committee will be three, made up of one Member from each charging authority. Each charging authority will have one vote.
- 3.4** The Officer Working Group will be made up of appropriate officers of each charging authority, who may call on infrastructure providers, including Gloucestershire County Council, where appropriate to provide professional advice. The Officer Working Group will work together to assess bids for Community Infrastructure funding and submit recommendations to the Joint Committee for approval.
- 3.5** The Officer Working Group activities shall include:
- Making recommendations to the Committee.
  - Contract management where triggered.
  - Application revisions and extensions.
  - Financial updates.
  - Project delivery scrutiny.
  - Compliance with funding agreements.
- 3.6** The Committee will be hosted under local government arrangements by Tewkesbury Borough Council with hosting arrangements reviewed every two years. The host authority will provide Secretary/Clerk, S151 and Monitoring Officer roles to the Committee.
- 3.7** Meetings will occur at least annually to agree strategic CIL allocations on 'infrastructure'. Other meetings may be required to respond to the programme of the additional functions. Meetings which make decisions on the allocation of CIL funding will be held in public.
- 3.8** The proposed Terms of Reference for the Joint Committee are provided at Appendix 1, those for the Officer Working Group will be approved by the Joint Committee once established.
- 3.9** In preparation for the work of the Joint Committee, the Councils have reviewed and updated the list of infrastructure projects that "may be wholly or partly funded" by strategic CIL 'Infrastructure' funds. The 'Infrastructure List' (amended from version approved for publication as Chapter 3 of the December 2023 IFS) is provided at Appendix 2 to this report and Members are asked to approve this for publication. Any future updates will be brought to Members for agreement. The combined list will provide a starting point for the work of the CIL Joint Committee.

## 4.0 POOLING OF FUNDS

- 4.1 In order to make the most effective use of CIL funds, and ensure sufficient monies to deliver strategic scale infrastructure, it is proposed that the strategic ‘infrastructure’ portion of receipts from each CIL charging authority are pooled. The pooling of CIL contributions is supported by national guidance, the NPPG sets out that *“Charging authorities can choose to pool a proportion of their Community Infrastructure Levy... Where local authorities are working jointly to prepare development plans for their areas, pooling of levy receipts may be a useful mechanism for funding strategic infrastructure projects that have cross-boundary benefits. Each of the charging authorities included in the pooling arrangements should be content that funding for infrastructure outside the authority’s area will support development of its own area”*.
- 4.2 The NPPG encourages charging authorities, where pooling is agreed, to publish a Memorandum of Understanding detailing the administration, principles, and governance that will be implemented for the pooled fund. However, the proposal which has been progressed across the partner councils is to put in place a Joint Committee and the pooling element has been incorporated into the Terms of Reference now presented.
- 4.3 Whilst a Memorandum of Understanding was an appropriate mechanism in the context of previous governance proposals for a CIL Board, considering the changes now proposed to move to a Joint Committee, such an approach would not provide a robust position.
- 4.4 A Memorandum of Understanding is helpful in setting out an agreed position, however it is not legally binding on any party and has no enforceability outside goodwill of the parties concerned. Utilising a Terms of Reference adds more weight as the responsibilities of the Joint Committee are enforceable by the partner councils.
- 4.5 The Terms of Reference appended to this report (Appendix 1), proposes 100% pooling of just the strategic ‘Infrastructure’ portion of CIL receipts. The key justifications for this are:
- Taking into account S106 obligations, CIL to date and other funding either secured or identified, there is, and will remain, a significant funding gap to meet the infrastructure demands of the adopted Gloucester, Cheltenham and Tewkesbury Joint Core Strategy, the three district level plans and the emerging replacement Strategic and Local Plan (SLP).
  - Without commitment to pooling, all Councils will face ongoing challenges to fund large infrastructure projects, and it will take a longer period of time to deliver priorities for investment.
  - By committing to pooling, within the parameters of the Joint Committee Terms of Reference, it sends a positive message to the broad range of infrastructure providers that the SLP Councils are committed to enabling infrastructure priorities across the SLP area.
  - By building in trigger point reviews regarding pooling, this provides all partner Councils with the ability to renegotiate the level of pooling in the future.
  - If Tewkesbury was to retain a percentage of the strategic CIL Infrastructure receipts, in parallel to the Joint Committee it would have to put in separate governance procedures which, given the level of CIL currently being collected may be a challenge to allocate due to the high values of strategic infrastructure and this would not be efficient in respect of time and resources.
- 4.6 From time to time there may arise from one or more Councils an exceptional case to reprioritise infrastructure, bringing forward a new infrastructure request. The draft Terms of Reference recognises this and makes provision for this flexibility.

## **5.0 INFRASTRUCTURE LIST**

- 5.1** The Infrastructure Funding Statement (IFS) must include, as well as reports on CIL and S106 Planning Contributions for the preceding financial year, an Infrastructure List.
- 5.2** In preparation for the work of the Joint Committee, the Councils have reviewed and updated the list of infrastructure projects or types of infrastructure which “the charging authority intends will be, or may be, wholly or partly funded by CIL”.
- 5.3** The Infrastructure List is shared by the three Joint Core Strategy (JCS) Councils of Gloucester, Cheltenham and Tewkesbury reflecting their co-operation on the JCS and its successor, the Strategic and Local Plan.
- 5.4** Previous reporting had highlighted that the agreed Infrastructure List was not representative of current priorities so the JCS/SLP Councils, alongside Gloucestershire County Council, prepared an updated Infrastructure List which was approved for publication as part of the IFS in December 2023.
- 5.5** As a result of comments received from Gloucestershire County Council the list, included at Appendix 2 for approval to publish, no longer includes a section explicitly excluding any categories of infrastructure or specific projects. This is a decision for Members after consideration by the Joint Committee of the wider implications of doing so. Approval will apply to Tewkesbury Borough Council’s list and for this to be combined with the lists of Cheltenham, Gloucester and Gloucestershire County Council, as presented, to provide a starting point for the work of the CIL Joint Committee.
- 5.6** It is recognised that a full reassessment of the Infrastructure Delivery Plan (upon which the Infrastructure List approved for publication in the December 2020 IFS was based) is required. The full reassessment will take place alongside the preparation of the SLP. However, the provision of infrastructure cannot wait until that is completed to better reflect current priorities and this report therefore also seeks to do the following:
1. Gain approval for the establishment of a Joint Committee to facilitate governance of the allocation of Community Infrastructure Levy ‘Infrastructure’ receipts received by Cheltenham, Gloucester and Tewkesbury.
  2. Gain agreement of pooling arrangements by the three Joint Committee partner councils, managed through the Community Infrastructure Levy Joint Committee Terms of Reference.
- 5.7** The Councils are very aware that infrastructure identified by the local authorities may not identify all priorities. With this in mind a wider targeted exercise is being undertaken with key stakeholders such as NHS, emergency services, utilities, Environment Agency, Sport England etc. Should additional items be identified for our area which are considered priorities ahead of the full review of the IDP to support the SLP an update to the Infrastructure List will be presented to Executive and Council.

## **6.0 NEXT STEPS**

- 6.1** Recommendation to Council on 23 January 2024.
- 6.2** Alongside the preparation of the SLP, ensure the infrastructure needed to accommodate planned future development is fully considered through ongoing engagement with a full range of infrastructure providers, including running an open and transparent bidding process with the aim of producing a comprehensive Infrastructure Delivery Plan, from which schemes which meet not only the needs of new development but also the priorities of the Council may be selected for inclusion on a deliverable future Infrastructure List to support the new plan.

## **7.0 CONSULTATION**

7.1 None

## **8.0 ASSOCIATED RISKS**

8.1 Failure to co-ordinate spending of the strategic 'infrastructure' portion of CIL receipts would undermine the ability to deliver such projects, be inefficient and present a far higher risk of failure to deliver.

## **9.0 MONITORING**

9.1 There is a statutory obligation to produce an annual IFS with detailed accounts of income and expenditure of CIL. The updated Infrastructure List, if approved for publication, will replace the list approved for publication in the December 2023 IFS. However, this is potentially only the first of such inter-annual updates. Whilst the Councils undertake to publish the IFS, with list, at least annually, the list will continue to be reviewed and updated as the work on engagement with other infrastructure providers, the decisions of the Joint Committee and the delivery of schemes approved to receive funding are completed.

## **10.0 RELEVANT COUNCIL PLAN PRIORITIES/COUNCIL POLICIES/STRATEGIES**

10.1 Joint Core Strategy 2011 to 2031(December 2017).

Joint Core Strategy 2011 to 2031 Infrastructure Delivery Plan (2014) and Addendum (2017).

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**Background Papers:** Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) Formal Adoption of Charging Schedule and Supporting Policies alongside Approval of the Regulation 123 List for Publication and Setting a Commencement Date for Charging (October 2018).

Tewkesbury Infrastructure Funding Statement Reports to Council (annual)

**Contact Officer:** CIL Manager  
01684 272261 [paul.hardiman@teWKesbury.gov.uk](mailto:paul.hardiman@teWKesbury.gov.uk)

**Appendices:** Appendix 1 – Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) Joint Committee Terms of Reference  
Appendix 2 – Amended Infrastructure List

# Cheltenham, Gloucester and Tewkesbury

## Community Infrastructure Levy Joint Committee

### Terms of Reference

#### Introduction

Cheltenham Borough Council, Gloucester City Council and Tewkesbury Borough Council worked together to produce the Cheltenham, Gloucester and Tewkesbury Joint Core Strategy (2017) (the JCS) as the overarching strategy to guide the development of their area. The three councils (the member councils) have agreed to pool the receipts received from the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) with the aim of working together to achieve the objectives of the JCS.

To facilitate an open and transparent joint approach to the governance of the application of CIL receipts the member councils have resolved to establish a joint committee.

#### Purpose

The Community Infrastructure Levy Joint Committee (the “Committee”) shall work jointly and collaboratively to advise the member Councils on CIL generally and make decisions on bids for CIL monies that have been pooled by the constituent Councils. The member Councils of the Committee are charging authorities for the purposes of the Community Infrastructure Levy Regulations 2010 (as amended) (the “CIL Regulations”). The Committee shall consider how community infrastructure levy (CIL) receipts should be spent to support the development of the Council’s area, in accordance with Regulations 59(1) and 59(3) of the CIL Regulations.

Regulation 59(1) of the CIL Regulations provides (1) that charging authority must apply CIL to funding the provision, improvement, replacement, operation or maintenance of infrastructure to support the development of its area.

Regulation 59(3) of the CIL Regulations provides that a charging authority may apply CIL to funding the provision, improvement, replacement, operation or maintenance of infrastructure outside its area where to do so would support the development of its area.

The member councils believe that working together to pool CIL receipts for the development of infrastructure within their collective administrative areas will support the delivery of their shared objectives as set out in the JCS and consequently will support development within their respective areas in accordance with Regulation 59(3) of the CIL regulations.

#### The Pooled Fund

In recognition of the joint approach the member councils have agreed Infrastructure Funding Statements (IFS) and Infrastructure Lists (IL) which identify infrastructure priorities that are consistent with the objectives of the JCS and their localities to support development across the JCS area.

It is the intention of the member councils to pool 100% of the CIL receipts they receive net of any CIL receipts which are either passported to local councils or are allocated by the member councils to

their individual neighbourhood CIL funds in accordance with Regulation 59A and 59F of the CIL regulations respectively.

Notwithstanding the agreement by the member councils to pool 100% of their net CIL receipts, it is recognised by the member councils that the IL's agreed by the member councils may contain infrastructure projects which are of greater importance to one member council, notwithstanding that but the project is of benefit to the JCS area as a whole. There may from time to time be exceptional circumstances where specific infrastructure is identified as a new priority for one or more councils. Where this occurs, this will be presented to the Joint Committee for consideration.

Any member council that considers it is no longer appropriate for the member councils to pool 100% of their net CIL receipts shall be able to trigger a review of these terms of reference in accordance with the Governance section appearing herein below.

## The Role of the Joint Committee

The Committee shall:

- Oversee the Strategic CIL application process and scrutinise each project bid for strategic fit and compliance with CIL requirements.
- Be accountable for the oversight, monitoring and governance of awards.
- Take an objective and detached view of applications.

The first meeting of the Committee will be to agree the process for assessment of pipeline of projects for investment.

The CIL Officer Working Group shall be made up of appropriate officers of each CIL charging authority and Gloucestershire County Council and will report to the Committee.

The Working Group activities shall include:

- Making recommendations to the Committee
- Contract management where triggered
- Application revisions and extensions
- Financial updates
- Project delivery scrutiny
- Compliance with funding agreements

## Governance

The Committee is a Joint Committee under s101(5) and s102 Local Government Act 1972 and under Part 1A Chapter 2 Section 9EB of the Local Government Act 2000 and pursuant to the Local Authorities (Arrangement for the Discharge of Functions) (England) Regulations 2012.

The Committee will include Cheltenham Borough Council, Gloucester City Council and Tewkesbury Borough Council.

These Terms of Reference will be reviewed as a minimum every two years. An earlier review will be triggered by any key changes in policy and or legislation relating to CIL or by a member council wishing to review the proportion of net CIL receipts that the member councils pool pursuant to these Terms of Reference.

## Host Authority

The Committee will be hosted under local government arrangements by Tewkesbury Borough Council with hosting arrangements reviewed every two years.

The host authority will provide Secretary/ Clerk, S151 and Monitoring Officer roles of the Committee. This time allocation will be funded from the 5% administration of CIL.

## Membership

Each Council shall appoint a Committee Member and a substitute who shall be either the Leader or other appointed Executive Members. The quorate membership of the Committee will be three, made up of one Member from each council.

If a quorate meeting cannot be achieved, the meeting will be rearranged. Each Committee Member shall remain in office until removed or replaced by his or her appointing Council or, in the case of an Executive Committee Member, until he or she ceases to be a member of the Executive Committee.

## Functions of the Committee

Each of the Councils, by establishing the Joint Committee, empowers the Committee to make decisions on bids for CIL monies in respect of sums received by its member Councils. The bids will be considered, and the monies allocated in a manner which is consistent with the infrastructure commitments contained with the annual IFS published by the councils, this includes the IL (including any interim assessments) and the Infrastructure Delivery Plan (being updated to support the emerging Cheltenham, Gloucester and Tewkesbury Strategic and Local Plan). Allocation of funding will be made on a project-by-project basis, not per financial year.

The Committee will support and engage in such other additional functions as the respective Councils may determine from time to time including but not limited to:

1. Identifying the future strategic infrastructure and investment needs.
2. Providing an evidence base for spending decisions on strategic locally identified priorities.
3. Consulting with Gloucestershire County Council on proposals for CIL expenditure and to consider Gloucestershire County Council spending priorities (if any) for CIL expenditure.
4. Exploring other sources of funding and opportunities for match funding streams.
5. Determining the method for evaluating and scoring to rate each application submitted and review weighting for criteria.
6. Scrutinising full applications and project presentations including any special terms under which an award is made.
7. Monitoring the delivery of projects that have had funding allocations, including regular reporting from officers in relation to contract management and financial updates.
8. As and where necessary calling individual projects into account where Grant contract conditions trigger review.
9. Determining how any unallocated funds within the pooled fund should be treated.

## Voting

One vote for each Council.

Normal rules as to declarations of interest shall be applied in accordance with the host authority's Code of Conduct

Decisions shall be made by full consensus vote.

## Quorum

A representative from each Council must be present. No business shall be transacted at any meeting unless the quorum is reached. If quorum is not reached within 30 minutes of the start of the meeting (or if quorum ceases to be present during a meeting) the meeting shall be adjourned to the same time and venue to a date determined by the Chair.

## Meetings

The Chair and Vice Chair of the meeting will be elected at the first meeting and then each Annual Meeting of the Committee and, if the Chair or Vice Chair is not present at any meeting within 10 minutes of the start of the meeting, those present will elect a Chair to act for that meeting.

The Chair and Vice Chair will be from different Councils.

Only a voting member is entitled to be elected as Chair or Vice Chair of the Committee.

Meetings will occur at least annually to agree Strategic CIL allocations. Other meetings may be required to respond to the programme of the additional functions. Meetings which make decisions on the allocation of CIL funding will be in public.

## Constitution

The Constitution of the host authority shall apply to the Committee.

## Attendance

Gloucestershire County Council shall be entitled to attend meetings of the Committee to input on matters relevant to the functions and activities of the Committee but shall have no voting rights nor be involved in scrutiny.

Each member Council may send appropriate officers to meetings of the Committee, or any Sub-Committee thereof, to support its Members.

## Responsibilities of the Chair and Vice Chair

The role of the Chair is to ensure that the meetings of the Committee are conducted efficiently and effectively.

The role of the Vice Chair is to deputise for the Chair during any period of the Chair absence, or at other times as appropriate, and their responsibilities shall be the same as those of the Chair.

## Member Conduct

Members shall be subject to the Code of Conduct for Elected Members adopted by the Council that nominated them to be a Committee Member.

## Scrutiny

The decisions made by the Committee shall be subject to the decisions being reported back through relevant Cabinet/Executive Committee of each of the member Councils.

Any decision by the Committee, except those agreed as urgent in accordance with these provisions, shall not be implemented until the member Councils have formally reported back through their own Cabinet/Executive Committee.

All decisions of the Committee (unless considered urgent) shall be subject to the "call in" process of each member Council. If not called in during that period any decision shall then be available for implementation.



Where the Committee decides that a decision is urgent it shall record the reasons for such urgency in the Minutes of the meeting and any subsequent “call in” of that decision should normally relate only to the process leading to the decision and not to the decision itself and the Chair of the member Council’s Scrutiny Committee shall be advised immediately.

#### Liability of Members

Committee Members shall have the same responsibilities as those that apply when sitting on other committees and bodies as an appointed representative of their nominating Council.



Joint Core Strategy (JCS) Authorities of Gloucester City Council,  
Tewkesbury Borough Council and Cheltenham Borough Council

## *Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL)*

### **3. INFRASTRUCTURE LIST**



121A.— Annual infrastructure funding statements (1) Subject to paragraph (2), no later than 31st December in each calendar year a contribution receiving authority must publish a document ("the annual infrastructure funding statement") which comprises the following— (a) a statement of the infrastructure projects or types of infrastructure which the charging authority intends will be, or may be, wholly or partly funded by CIL (other than CIL to which regulation 59E or 59F applies) ("the infrastructure list");

## Background

The Joint Core Strategy (JCS) partners of Gloucester City Council, Cheltenham Borough Council and Tewkesbury Borough Council are each both Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) Charging and Collecting Authorities in their own right.

Regulation 121A of the Community Infrastructure Levy Regulations 2010 (as amended) requires CIL Charging Authorities to produce an annual "Infrastructure Funding Statement". This must include a list of schemes or types of infrastructure (the "Infrastructure List") that the Council intends may be wholly or partly funded from CIL.

### The Allocation of CIL

All CIL income must be allocated as follows:

Administration Fund: Up to 5% of CIL can be applied towards its implementation and ongoing administration of the Charging/Collection Authority(ies).

Neighbourhood Fund: 15% (subject to a cap based on number of existing dwellings in the Parish) rising to 25% in areas that have a 'made' Neighbourhood Development Plan (NDP also called neighbourhood Plans) in place, of each CIL charge payment received, is either:

- Passed to the Parish Council in whose boundary the development that made the payment is located;
- Held by the Charging Authority on behalf of a Designated Neighbourhood Forum, as once they have a made NDP they are entitled to direct the spending of their 25%, or
- 15% is held by the Charging Authority to be spent in the same way as all other Neighbourhood CIL.

Infrastructure Fund: The remaining 70 to 80% must be spent on infrastructure that supports the growth of the CIL Charging Authority's area.

The 'Infrastructure List' relates solely to schemes or infrastructure types that the Charging Authority intends may be wholly or partly funded from the 'Infrastructure' Fund.

## The Partnership Approach

The Joint Core Strategy (JCS) partners of Gloucester City Council, Cheltenham Borough Council and Tewkesbury Borough Council has led to the development of a shared Infrastructure list.

## Previous Infrastructure Lists

The Infrastructure List is not a comprehensive audit of all infrastructure requirements associated with the facilitation and mitigation of the impacts of development during the plan period. The Infrastructure Delivery Plans (IDP) of Development Plans are prepared for this purpose and seek to identify not only infrastructure needs but also potential sources of funding and delivery including funding from: Central Government; Local Government; and Developer Contributions and Provision by way of agreements permitted under Section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 and Section 278 of the Highways Act 1980, for example.

The removal of the Regulation 123 'pooling restriction', by the 2019 CIL Amendment Regulation, was intended to make it easier to deliver major infrastructure projects. It allows local authorities to combine CIL and Section 106 revenues towards the same infrastructure project or item.

As set out in CIL Regulation 122, planning obligations such as a section 106 agreements will continue to be sought alongside the CIL to secure all infrastructure which is "necessary to make the development acceptable in planning terms, "is directly related to the development and is "fairly and reasonably related in scale and kind to the development".

The IDP, prepared to support the JCS, provided an evidenced source of projects for the first JCS Partner's Infrastructure List, published in December 2020.

The IDP identified a significant potential shortfall in funding, and CIL income forecasts predicted only a small amount of the shortfall could be raised within the plan period. As we have prepared our IFS statements our Infrastructure List has been updated:

Year 1: The Infrastructure identified as 'critical' was selected to form the first list;

Year 2: Reviewed progress of each of the projects and identified a number that were either completed or had secured sufficient funding from other sources to no longer envisage needing CIL funding;

Year 3: Removed schemes identified as no longer requiring CIL funding and provided updates to scheme names and cost estimates for the remaining schemes.

Year 4: 2023 Infrastructure List as summarised below; and

Future Years: Will be informed by a full review of the IDP.

## The 2023 Infrastructure List

Further to the publication of the 2022 IFS report which highlighted that the agreed Infrastructure list was not representative of current priorities, work has taken place with our JCS/SLP partners and Gloucestershire County Council to prepare an interim Infrastructure List. This recognises that the IDP, prepared to support the JCS, was a point in time and since then the councils have declared a climate emergency, there have been key changes in national policy, and it is important that CIL investment is targeted to infrastructure priorities that are relevant, deliverable and meet the demands of the current position of the three partners, individually and jointly.

## The 'Infrastructure List'

The inclusion of a project on the Infrastructure List does not represent a commitment that the Partners will necessarily spend CIL monies on that item and for clarity, there is no priority implied by the order in which the projects appear in the list itself.

The JCS Partners will continue to review this list and provide updates on at least an annual basis, alongside the preparation of their Infrastructure Funding Statement(s).

### Projects Requesting CIL Funding

#### Local

1. Cheltenham Petersfield Community & Sports Hub (£300k to £617k)
2. Cheltenham Spa Railway Station Enhancements (Honeybourne Line cycle path extension) (£1.3m) – S106/County Council Funding Potential
3. Cheltenham Parks and Green Space Landscape and Recreation: maintenance & investment (£600k) – Section 106 Commuted Sums for long term maintenance and Borough Council funding Potential.
4. Cheltenham central safe cycle hub pilot project (£25k) – Neighbourhood Funding Potential
5. Cheltenham Town Centre Interchange study (£70k) – S106/County Council Funding Potential
6. Cheltenham cycle spine phase 1 Construction Work (£1.3m) - – S106/County Council Funding Potential

7. Cheltenham Cycle Spine Phase 2 (Station to Pittville Park) Design Work (£600k) – S106/County Council Funding Potential
8. Tewkesbury Town Centre and Riverside Public Realm Enhancements (£1.5m) – S106 Funding Potential
9. Tewkesbury Town Centre children's play facilities (£75k) (part of Tewkesbury Borough enhanced play facilities project) - S106/Neighbourhood Funding Potential
10. Hampton Place, Churchdown footpath (£20k) (part of Tewkesbury Borough Active Travel network improvements) - S106/Neighbourhood/County Council Funding Potential
11. Melrose Walk, Mitton footpath (£10k) (part of Tewkesbury Borough Active Travel network improvements) - S106/Neighbourhood/County Council Funding Potential
12. Wheatpieces Woodland Walk footpath (£10k) (part of Tewkesbury Borough Active Travel network improvements) - S106/Neighbourhood/County Council Funding Potential
13. Gloucester to Haresfield Cycle Spine Design Work (£850k) – S106 / County Council / Challenge Funding Potential
14. Gloucester Strategic Transport Interchange connectivity (£2m - £5m) – S106/County Council/Challenge Funding Potential

#### Shared

15. Recycling services depot (£28.5m split 60/40 between CBC and TBC respectively) – Section 106 Potential
16. Mass Rapid Transit, next business case stage (£2m divided by 3) – S106/County Council/Challenge Funding Potential

#### The Pipeline

##### Projects Requiring More Work to Identify Costs:

#### Local

17. Cheltenham High Street public realm improvements – Section 106 / Neighbourhood / County Council / Challenge Funding Potential
18. Tewkesbury Borough Crematoria / Cemeteries – Section 106 Potential
19. Tewkesbury Borough Bishops Cleeve Leisure Centre - Section 106 /Neighbourhood Funding Potential
20. Tewkesbury Ashchurch Rail Station/Infrastructure Enhancements - Section 106 / Challenge Funding Potential
21. Tewkesbury Garden Town enabling infrastructure - Section 106 / County Council / Challenge Funding Potential

22. Tewkesbury Town Centre enhanced cultural offer – Section 106 Potential
23. Tewkesbury Traffic management in historic core – Section 106 and County Council Potential
24. Tewkesbury Town Centre Business incubator units – Section 106 Potential
25. Tewkesbury Borough EV induction charging infrastructure – Section 106 / Challenge Funding Potential
26. Tewkesbury Borough Active Travel network improvements – Section 106 / Neighbourhood / County Council / Challenge Funding Potential
27. Tewkesbury Borough Community Places creation and improvement - Section 106 /Neighbourhood Funding Potential
28. Tewkesbury Borough Youth Facilities project creation and improvement - Section 106 /Neighbourhood Funding Potential
29. Tewkesbury Borough enhanced play facilities project - Section 106 /Neighbourhood Funding Potential
30. Tewkesbury Borough enhanced sports facilities project - Section 106 /Neighbourhood Funding Potential
31. Gloucester City GL1 Leisure Centre - Section 106 Potential/Neighbourhood Funding Potential
32. Gloucester City Oxstalls Sports Park - Section 106 Potential/Neighbourhood Funding Potential
33. Gloucester City Blackbridge Community and Sports Hub - Section 106 Potential
34. Gloucester Nature Park - Section 106 Potential/Neighbourhood Funding Potential
35. Gloucester Crematoria / Cemeteries - Section 106 Potential
36. Gloucester Strategic Green Infrastructure - Section 106 Potential/Neighbourhood Funding Potential

#### Shared

37. NHS GP Surgeries - Section 106 Potential
38. Expressbus Corridors – Section 106/County Council/Challenge Funding Potential
39. Brockworth to Cheltenham cycle link (via Shurdington) – Section 106/County Council/Challenge Funding Potential
40. Brockworth to Gloucester cycle link – Section 106/County Council/Challenge Funding Potential
41. Gloucester to Hartpury College cycle link – Section 106/County Council/Challenge Funding Potential
42. M5 J10 Scheme
43. M5 J9 & A46 Improvement Scheme



#### 44. All Education requirements

Format:

The partner councils at the time of drafting this IFS are progressing proposals to set up a CIL Joint Committee. It should be noted that the Joint Committee proposal relates **only** to the strategic element of CIL, the Infrastructure Fund, responsibility for the neighbourhood element of CIL sits wholly with the individual councils. The Joint Committee would be responsible for the allocation of CIL monies using the Infrastructure List as a starting point for consideration.

For information, the Infrastructure List has been compared to the funding available in the three council's Infrastructure Funds, both as is reported in this Infrastructure Funding Statement (December 2023) and in the first 6 months of this financial year 2023/24.

#### Funding Available

CIL Authority	Regulation 59i Strategic 'Infrastructure Fund'	
	Date	Amount
Cheltenham Borough Council	31/03/2023	£1,199,537.68
	<b>25/10/2023</b>	<b>£2,564,105.08</b>
Tewkesbury Borough Council	31/03/2023	£7,053,286.54
	<b>25/10/2023</b>	<b>£8,058,663.30</b>
Gloucester City Council	31/03/2023	£825,367.24
	<b>25/10/2023</b>	<b>£1,274,784.90</b>
	31/03/2023	£9,078,191.46
	<b>25/10/2023</b>	<b>£11,897,553.28</b>

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#### Costed Requests for Funding

CIL Authority	Projects seeking funding		
	List	Project	Amount
Cheltenham Borough Council	Local	1.	£617,000.00
	Local	2.	£1,310,000.00
	Local	3.	£600,000.00
	Local	4.	£25,000.00
	Local	5.	£70,000.00

	Local	6.	£1,300,000.00
	Local	7.	£600,000.00
CBC Local Sub-total			£4,522,000.00
	Shared	15.	£17,100,000.00
	Shared	16.	£666,666.67
CBC Shared Sub-total			£17,766,666.67
CBC Joint Sub-total			£22,288,666.67
Tewkesbury Borough Council	Local	8.	£1,500,000.00
	Local	9.	£75,000.00
	Local	10.	£20,000.00
	Local	11.	£10,000.00
	Local	12.	£10,000.00
TBC Local Sub-total			£1,615,000.00
	Shared	15.	£11,400,000.00
	Shared	16.	£666,666.67
TBC Shared Sub-total			£12,066,666.67
TBC Joint Sub-total			£13,681,666.67
Gloucester City Council	Local	13.	£850,000.00
	Local	14.	£5,000,000.00
GCC Local Sub-total			£5,850,000.00
	Shared	16.	£666,666.67
GCC Shared Sub-total			£666,666.67
GCC Joint Sub-total			£6,516,666.67
All Councils Local Total			£11,987,000.00
All Councils Shared Total			£32,115,000.00
All Councils Joint Total			<b>£44,102,000.00</b>

## TEWKESBURY BOROUGH COUNCIL

<b>Report to:</b>	Executive Committee
<b>Date of Meeting:</b>	10 January 2024
<b>Subject:</b>	Gloucestershire Statement of Common Ground
<b>Report of:</b>	Director: Communities
<b>Head of Service/Director:</b>	Executive Director: Place
<b>Lead Member:</b>	Lead Member for Built Environment
<b>Number of Appendices:</b>	One

**Executive Summary:**

The Gloucestershire Statement of Common Ground (GSoCG) has been prepared by the six local planning authorities in Gloucestershire, Gloucestershire County Council, and the GFirst Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP). It is a non-statutory document and was approved by Council in January 2023.

The GSoCG includes a series of 37 high level agreements dealing with a broad range of environmental issues and land use matters including addressing the climate and ecological emergencies, housing and economic needs, the Green Belt, transport provision, the natural environment and green infrastructure.

At that time, Tewkesbury Borough Council approved a version of the GSoCG with a number of caveats to the agreements. The Council now wishes to fully sign up to all of the agreements within the GSoCG and remove any caveats. This will bring Tewkesbury Borough Council into alignment with partners across the county.

**Recommendation:**

**To RECOMMEND TO COUNCIL that:**

- i) **the revised version of the Gloucestershire Statement of Common Ground be APPROVED with the dashes in the “agreements” section removed and the removal of Appendix 3 to the previously approved version; and**
- ii) **authority be delegated to the Executive Director: Place, in consultation with the Lead Member for Built Environment, to make the amendments set out at i) above, along with any necessary minor amendments, corrections and additions to in respect of any spelling, grammatical, cross-referencing, typographical errors and/or factual updates prior to signing by the Leader or Chief Executive.**

**Financial Implications:**

None arising directly as a result of this report.

**Legal Implications:**

Section 33A(1) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 which is in respect of the duty to co-operate in relation to the planning of sustainable development provides that each person who is a local planning authority, County Council and certain other bodies (such as the Environment Agency and Homes England) must co-operate with each other and local enterprise partnerships in maximising the effectiveness with which certain activities are undertaken. These activities are the preparation of local development plans (including development plan documents) and any activities that can reasonably be considered to prepare the way for/support for such activities so far as relating to a strategic matter.

A strategic matter for the duty is sustainable development or use of land that has or would have a significant impact on at least two planning areas and sustainable development or use of land in a two-tier area if the development or use is a county matter or has or would have a significant impact on a county matter.

Under sections 19(1B) to (1C) of the 2004 Act, each local planning authority must identify strategic priorities for development and use of land in the authority's area and policies to address those priorities must be set out in the local authority's development plan documents (taken as a whole).

Paragraph 20 of the National Planning Policy Framework (December 2023) sets out the matters that strategic policies should provide for and under paragraph 27 it is stated that in order to demonstrate effective and on-going joint working, strategic policymaking authorities should prepare and maintain one or more statements of common ground, documenting the cross-boundary matters being addressed and progress in cooperating to address these. These should be produced using the approach set out in national planning guidance and be made publicly available throughout the plan-making process to provide transparency.

National planning policy guidance sets out what a statement of common ground is expected to contain and this includes a record of where agreements have (or have not) been reached on key strategic matters.

Once published, authorities responsible for the statement will need to ensure that it reflects the most up to date position in terms of joint working across the area. Updates can occur when either agreements are reached, or a decision is taken to update strategic policies in the area covered by the statement.

When soundness of plans is tested under the NPPF (December 2023) one element of this under paragraph 35 is that the plan should be deliverable over the plan period and based on effective joint working on cross-boundary strategic matters that have been dealt with rather than deferred, as evidenced by the statement of common ground. Therefore, although not a statutory document, statements of common ground dealing with these matters will be expected when plans are at examination. The formal approval of the Statement of Common Ground will remain the responsibility of each of the parties to it.

**Environmental and Sustainability Implications:**

The SoCG sets out various agreements between the signatories that have implications for the environment and will ensure continued and effective engagement on such matters as the various local plans are reviewed and progressed across the county.

**Resource Implications (including impact on equalities):**

None arising directly as a result of this report.

**Safeguarding Implications:**

None arising directly as a result of this report.

**Impact on the Customer:**

None arising directly as a result of this report.

**1.0 INTRODUCTION**

- 1.1** In preparing their local plans, local authorities are legally required to cooperate on strategic, cross-boundary planning matters. In two tier authorities such as Gloucestershire, this includes the County Council, as well as neighbouring authorities and prescribed bodies such as the Environment Agency, the Local Nature Partnership and highways authorities.
- 1.2** To demonstrate effective and ongoing joint working on such matters, local planning authorities are required to prepare and maintain one or more statements of common ground, which should document the cross-boundary matters being progressed and progress in cooperating on them.
- 1.3** This Council approved a version of the Gloucestershire Statement of Common Ground (GSoCG) with considerable caveats in January 2023. The full version that Council approved at that time is attached as Appendix 1.

**2.0 GLOUCESTERSHIRE STATEMENT OF COMMON GROUND**

- 2.1** The GSoCG is a non-statutory document, subject to regular updates, which captures progress in working together and outcomes. The purpose of the statement is to:
- a) Identify and agree an action plan on the strategic planning matters in Gloucestershire that require collaborative working between the parties.
  - b) Identify and demonstrate where common ground exists between the parties.
  - c) Identify in principle the potential response to addressing the strategic spatial planning matters.
  - d) Provide the basis for a 'live' document to allow for regular updates which capture progress in responding to the strategic planning matters, acknowledging that responding to the climate emergency will be a 'golden thread' running through strategic planning activities and the outputs of the GSoCG.
  - e) Meet in part the requirement for local planning authorities to discharge the statutory 'Duty to Cooperate' requirement as part of local plan preparation.
- 2.2** The Leader of the Council has indicated that he would like to adopt the entire GSoCG without any caveats. To indicate this, it is proposed to amend the document to remove the dashes to the "agreements" section of the document (pages 6 – 12) and to remove Appendix 3 - List of 'Agreements' not agreed by any and/or all parties (pages 29 – 30).
- 2.3** In terms of the associated action plan set out at Appendix 4, this is in development in order to identify more detailed county-wide actions to support the GSoCG and a consultancy has been appointed by Gloucestershire County Council to support this work.

### **3.0 CONSULTATION**

**3.1** The development of the GSoCG has been subject to numerous rounds of feedback from each of the member authorities. Portfolio holders and/or Leaders have had input and an informal agreement on this final version. Other partners have been informed that it is TBCs intention to bring themselves into line with the other partners and are supportive of this.

### **4.0 ASSOCIATED RISKS**

**4.1** None

### **5.0 MONITORING**

**5.1** None

### **6.0 RELEVANT COUNCIL PLAN PRIORITIES/COUNCIL POLICIES/STRATEGIES**

**6.1** The Gloucester, Cheltenham and Tewkesbury Joint Core Strategy 2011 to 2031 adopted (December 2017).

Tewkesbury Borough Local Plan 2011-2031 adopted June 2022.

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**Background Papers:** None

**Contact Officer:** Director: Communities.  
01684 272259 [Peter.tonge@teewkesbury.gov.uk](mailto:Peter.tonge@teewkesbury.gov.uk)

**Appendices:** Appendix 1 - Gloucestershire Statement of Common Ground

Gloucestershire  
Economic Growth  
Joint Committee

Gloucestershire  
Statement of Common Ground – February 2022

Cheltenham Borough Council  
Forest of Dean District Council  
Gloucester City Council  
Stroud District Council

Cotswold District Council  
GFirst LEP  
Gloucestershire County Council  
Tewkesbury Borough Council

**Version Control**

<b>Version</b>	<b>Date</b>
Version 1	John Baker 31/05/2020
Version 2	DO Comments on J Baker 08/06/2020
Version 3	DO Version September 2020
Version 4	DO Version December 2020
Version 5	JR Version February 2021
Version 6	JR Version May 2021
Version 7	JR Version July 2021
Version 8	SF Version January 2022
Version 9	JR Version February 2022

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## 1. Introduction

- 1.1. This Gloucestershire Statement of Common Ground (GSoCG) has been prepared by the 7 local authorities in Gloucestershire (x1 County Council and x6 'District' Councils) and GFirst LEP – Gloucestershire's Local Enterprise Partnership – hereafter referred to as the parties.
- 1.2. "Gloucestershire has been a significant location for commerce since around AD48 when the Romans established an important crossing at the River Severn at Glevum. Located at a crossroads between Wales and London, and the West Midlands and the South West, the county's strategic position, even in an increasingly digital age, remains important to this day for businesses, visitors, and residents alike<sup>1</sup>". The county has a diverse and highly valued natural and built environment that makes it a particularly attractive place to live and work.
- 1.3. The County has a strong track record of working together at the strategic level, and has reached agreement on numerous subjects of common interest in recent times including Gloucestershire 2050, the Gloucestershire Local Housing Needs Assessment and the Gloucestershire Inward Investment programme. This GSoCG provides the opportunity to build upon the work that has gone before.
- 1.4. This is the first GSoCG and as such does not contain all the answers. The purpose of this statement is:
  - a. To identify and demonstrate where common ground exists between the parties
  - b. To identify and agree an action plan on the strategic spatial planning matters in Gloucestershire that require collaborative working between the parties.
  - c. To identify in principle the potential response to addressing the strategic spatial planning matters.
  - d. To provide the basis for a 'live' document to allow for regular updates which capture progress against responding to the strategic spatial planning matters, acknowledging that responding to the Climate emergency will be the "Golden thread" that runs through the strategic planning activities and the outputs of this GSoCG.
  - e. To meet (in part) the requirements placed on Local Planning Authorities from the National Planning Policy Framework Revised 2019 (the Framework) to discharge the statutory 'Duty-to-Cooperate' as part of their local plan preparation. The various statutory requirements for a statement of common ground are set out in Appendix 1 for ease of reference.

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<sup>1</sup> Source – Draft Gloucestershire Industrial Strategy 2019

- f. To respond to the Gloucestershire Economic Growth Joint Committee (GEGJC) to develop a statement of common ground as the basis to consider the development of a Gloucestershire Spatial Development Strategy.

1.5. Appendix 2 provides context and explanation to support the agreements outlined in this document.

## **2. Parties involved**

2.1. This GSoCG agrees strategic spatial planning matters between the following parties:

- Cheltenham Borough Council
- Cotswold District Council
- Forest of Dean District Council
- GFirst LEP
- Gloucester City Council
- Gloucestershire County Council
- Stroud District Council
- Tewkesbury Borough Council.

2.2. Any part of the GSoCG that is not agreed by the parties will be identified in Appendix 3, along with the organisation(s) not in agreement. Where text is not agreed by all parties it will be denoted with a dashed border.

2.3. In discharging their continuing joint and individual local plan responsibilities, some of the participating local authorities will need to agree additional or supplementary SoCGs or Duty-to-Cooperate statements with neighbouring local authorities both within and outside Gloucestershire, and with other bodies. Where appropriate, additional or supplementary agreements may be incorporated into the Gloucestershire GSoCG in future iterations, with appropriate explanation, or be presented as separate documents.

2.4. The GSoCG is a strategic document. It deals with matters that require cross-boundary consideration and agreement, and does not address non-strategic issues, which are the concern of and can be addressed by individual organisations, including through their local plans and the local transport plan.

## **3. Signatories**

3.1. The signatories to the GSoCG are the Leaders or Portfolio Holders of the seven local authorities, or the Chief Officers under delegated powers, and the Chair or Chief Executive of GFirst LEP as follows:

Signature and date

Leader or Chief Executive

Cheltenham Borough Council

Signature and date

Leader or Chief Executive

Cotswold District Council

Signature and date

Leader or Chief Executive

Forest of Dean District Council

Signature and date

Chair or Chief Executive

GFirst LEP

Signature and date

Chair or Chief Executive

Gloucester City Council

Signature and date

Leader or Chief Executive

Gloucestershire County Council

Signature and date

Leader or Chief Executive

Stroud District Council

Signature and date

Leader or Chief Executive

Tewkesbury Borough Council.

Other signatories

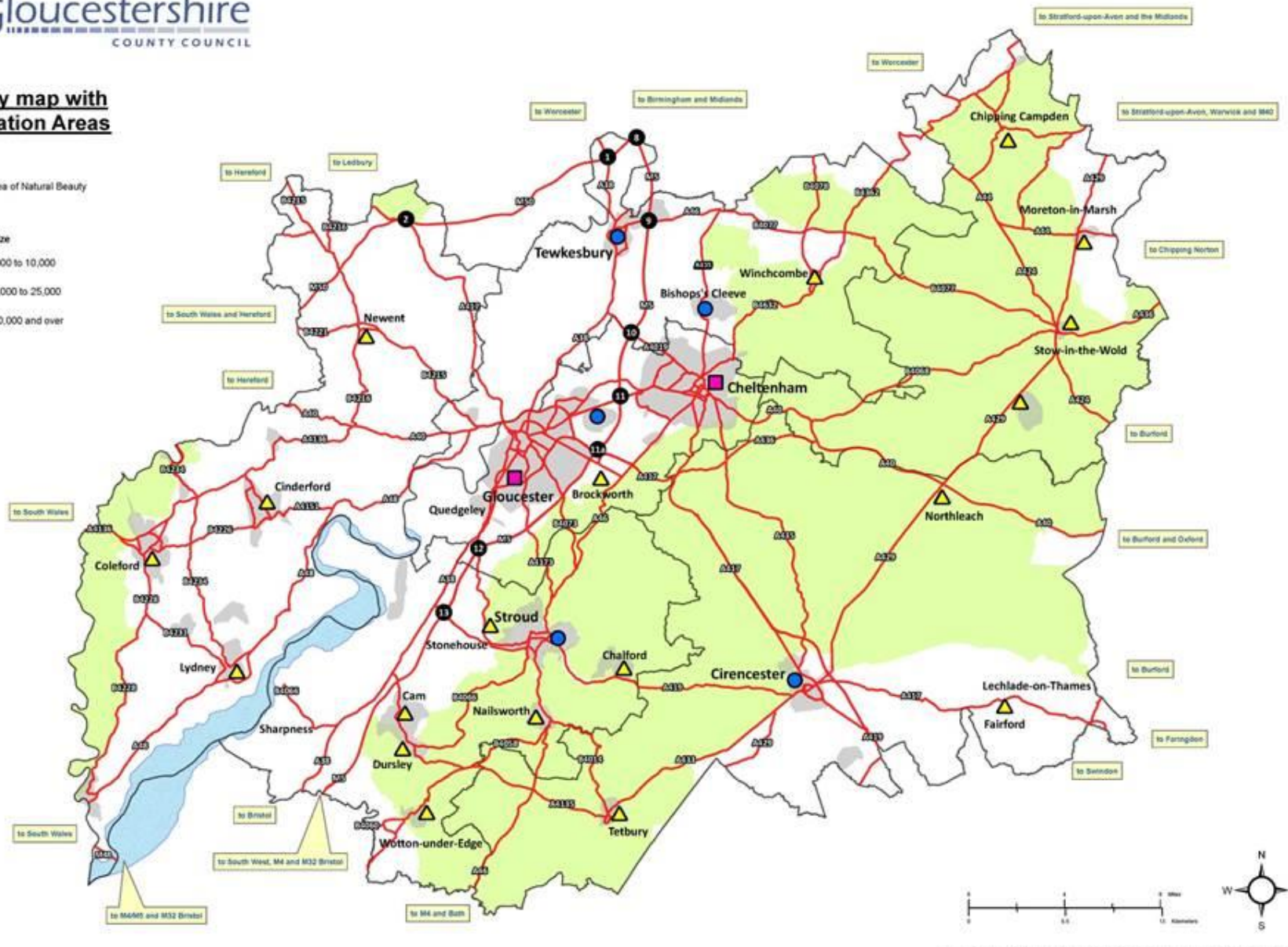
- 3.2. An appropriate representative of other strategic organisations will be required as a signatory if their organisation becomes a party to the GSoCG.

#### **4. Gloucestershire's Strategic Geography**

- 4.1. The GSoCG applies to the County of Gloucestershire. The rationale for developing a GSoCG for this area is the distinctiveness of the area and the relationship between the urban core of Gloucester and Cheltenham and the largely rural areas of Cotswold, Forest of Dean, Stroud and Tewkesbury and the functional and connectivity relationships that are presented. Gloucestershire as a whole is a Functional Housing and Economic Area with a sound economy, though with greater economic potential. This is recognised by the presence of GFirst LEP covering the same area. It also has a Police and Crime Commissioner and a Clinical Commissioning Group, alongside other strategic groups such as the Gloucestershire Nature Partnership and the Gloucestershire Health and Wellbeing Board.

**County map with Population Areas**

-  Area of Natural Beauty
- Population Size**
-  1,000 to 10,000
  -  10,000 to 25,000
  -  100,000 and over



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## 5. A Gloucestershire Spatial Development Strategy

### 5.1. The GEGJC have committed to:

“deliver a high-level spatial planning document for Gloucestershire which will set out agreed broad allocations for housing and economic growth across all districts”

and

“the development of, a high level future growth document for Gloucestershire, and work with the Local Plan teams to translate this into an agreed and adopted Gloucestershire Spatial Development Strategy”

5.2. In November 2018, the GEGJC endorsed a proposal to develop a “statement of common ground” as the most effective way of advancing these commitments in the first instance.

5.3. In addressing the matters agreed in this draft GSoCG, action will be taken and a body of evidence will be collected. Drawing that information together and understanding the relationship between the evidence gathered could readily then lead to the production of a Gloucestershire Spatial Development Strategy. The time, resource and financial requirements to support a Spatial Strategy need to be understood before commitment is given. When the aforementioned ‘Action Plan’ is presented to GEGJC, it will be accompanied by a business case for a Spatial Strategy for the County for consideration.

### Agreements

1. The parties agree to the development of a Gloucestershire Spatial Development Strategy and it is recognised that agreeing this statement of common ground provides the most effective way of advancing this commitment in the first instance.
2. The parties agree that an action plan to address the matters and agreements within the GSoCG should be produced. That action plan should build upon the emerging early work undertaken by Gloucestershire County Council and set out the matters to be addressed, the course of action proposed, responsibilities, timetables and budget requirements. That action plan will be presented for consideration by the parties in due course. Once the action plan is agreed work on the Spatial Development Strategy for Gloucestershire will commence.

## 6. Strategic Planning Matter Agreements

6.1. The following presents the agreements reached between the parties on strategic planning matters in Gloucestershire which require a joint response.

### Climate Change

## Agreements

3. The parties agree that the climate and ecological emergencies presents risks to the county that are systemic, and unprecedented in scale and potential impact.
4. The parties agree that responses to the climate and ecological emergencies must be commensurate with the scale and severity of the risk, and that coordinated action is the most effective means of responding.
5. The parties agree that strategic planning decisions have a role to play in the reduction of carbon in contributing to local and global sustainability, and that our decisions must be informed by the climate and ecological emergencies and wherever possible deliver a positive contribution to climate change mitigation and adaptation and ecological recovery. Responding to the Climate Emergency will be the 'golden thread' that runs through the strategic planning activities and the outputs of this SoCG, responding to our commitments to Carbon net zero.
6. The parties agree to investigate the use of alternative forms of energy generation, in line with environmental and landscape considerations.

## Housing

### Agreements

7. The Parties agree that making provision to meet the full range of housing needs in the right places at the right time is a vital role for the Gloucestershire authorities. The parties acknowledge this may result in one local authority accommodating the identified needs of another local authority, particularly where a local authority is unable to accommodate all of the identified need and where accommodating need in a neighbouring authority represents the most sustainable form of development.
8. The parties agree to jointly seek to meet in full (at least) the aggregated housing needs for Gloucestershire as identified by the statutory standard method at the time. The parties will continue the joint approach to the collection of housing needs data through a jointly procured and managed Local Housing Needs Assessment, using the relevant housing need methodology of the day. The parties agree to deliver housing where it promotes sustainable patterns of growth in Gloucestershire and is designed to respect local character and address potential impacts on existing communities.
9. The parties agree to explore the full range of development opportunities available, taking into account the potential impact on existing communities, resources and infrastructure.

## The Economy and Employment

### Agreements

10. The Parties agree it is important to take advantage of the location and characteristics of Gloucestershire and its economic strengths. The parties will take a pro-active role in creating the conditions within which existing and potential new employers can flourish, with a particular emphasis on spatial planning. Action will be taken to identify the appropriate scale and distribution of employment allocations, with the potential value of strategic sites to serve a larger area fully considered.
11. Parties agree that collaboration is essential to deliver a purposeful Gloucestershire approach to inward investment and business retention.

## The Green Belt

### Agreements

12. The Parties agree that the Green Belt in Gloucestershire is a strategic issue to be considered in the context of strategic spatial planning for the County.
13. The Parties agree that changes to the Green Belt boundary will be considered through the local plan making process, particularly through the JCS Review, in order to provide more sustainable locations for development that support the overall spatial strategy.

## Transport Provision

### Agreements

14. The Parties agree that strategic land allocations will set out the appropriate transport infrastructure required to deliver sustainable, resilient communities. This will be achieved through implementing the policies of the Gloucestershire Local Transport Plan, which provides for better public transport, cycle and pedestrian infrastructure, and active travel to enable a more efficient, low-carbon and people-centred transport network that delivers genuine travel choice and contributes to the growth of Gloucestershire's economy. Each strategic allocation that comes forward through the development plan will be supported by a sustainable transport mitigation package, based on the policies set out in the Gloucestershire Local Transport Plan.
15. The Parties agree to continue the exploration and pursuit of the opportunities to enhance the passenger transport network and services, as an integral part of developing a potential integrated spatial strategy and with the objective of increasing the proportion of trips within and beyond Gloucestershire made by rail.
16. The Parties agree that local plans should contain policies to ensure new developments support, where possible, the viability of passenger transport network and services. This is in recognition of the role of passenger transport in improving all people's accessibility and to reducing the carbon emissions associated with transport.
17. All parties agree that opportunities to maximise sustainable transport solutions will vary between urban and rural areas.



18. The Parties agree that local plans should contain policies requiring developments to contribute the provision of the walking and cycling network. This is in recognition of the role active travel will play in achieving carbon reducing ambitions and promoting a healthy and active society. The aspiration is for cycling to become mass transit and routes must be designed for larger numbers of cyclists, of all abilities and disabilities. Cycling and walking should be at the heart of transport, place-making, and health policy.

## Digital Network

### Agreements

19. The Parties will seek every opportunity to promote the advancement and rollout of digital infrastructure. The goal will be to achieve high quality digital services and modern economic and social infrastructure for Gloucestershire so that the County can continue to compete regionally, nationally and globally in the attraction of people and businesses. There will be a particular focus on delivering cyber technologies and digital infrastructure across the entire County, noting that substantial parts of Gloucestershire are rural areas.
20. The Parties will work with industry to identify the best means of contributing through planning policy and highways work to the timely delivery of comprehensive, open access, digital infrastructure.

## Natural Environment and Green Infrastructure

### Agreements

21. The Parties will ensure that strategically and locally important green infrastructure and ecosystem services are valued and improved through the development of a Natural Capital approach and the Nature Recovery Network, both being led by the Gloucestershire Local Nature Partnership (GLNP).
22. The Parties agree that local plans should contain policies requiring developments to deliver high quality and appropriately managed green infrastructure, to comply with and, where feasible, be assessed against the Building with Nature Standards, and to deliver a net gain for biodiversity.
23. In developing the Natural Capital approach, consideration will continue to be given to the desirability and feasibility of creating a regional park, possibly around the River Severn and its washlands, with objectives including raising awareness of the natural environment, habitat enhancement, recreation, strategic water management, carbon capture, and the creation of a Gloucestershire brand.
24. The Parties agree to work collaboratively to help conserve, manage and enhance the area's unique natural environment including areas of international and national landscape and biodiversity importance.

25. The Parties agree to work collaboratively and holistically to develop a Gloucestershire wide approach to mitigate against flood risk and to build in resilience through nature-based solutions. The role played by green infrastructure in reducing the risk of flooding should be considered at every scale stage in determining sustainable strategic land allocations for housing and employment. Parties agree to ensure adequate consideration is given to the cumulative and off-site impacts of development on future flood risk. The promotion of new water retention technologies will be encouraged, including sponge technology techniques.

## Health and Social Infrastructure

### Agreements

26. Parties will ensure that provision for strategic health, wellbeing, cultural and education facilities, consistent with the changing size and structure of the population, is made in the appropriate locations through spatial strategy. This will include the raising of standards and inclusive access across these facilities.
27. The Parties are committed to the elimination of discrimination and promotion of equality of opportunity for all citizens and will work towards this goal, both in the provision of services and employment.

## Infrastructure Delivery

### Agreements

28. The Parties agree that the strategic infrastructure needs\* for the County, particularly those that align to future strategic growth, will be identified, prioritised and agreed on, and captured in one single source document. A methodology for prioritisation will be agreed in advance of the prioritisation taking place.
29. The infrastructure agreed upon will be costed and scheduled. The likely funding streams and mechanisms to enable the delivery of infrastructure will be identified. Joint working and engagement across parties will be used to develop business cases for funding and competitive bidding.
30. The Parties agree, through appropriate governance arrangements, that the task identified at agreements 22 and 23 should be undertaken strategically with involvement of the parties and others where relevant.

*\* Strategic Infrastructure Needs - refers to a broad range of infrastructure required to support future growth, included but not limited to social, cultural, educational, green infrastructure as well as more 'traditional' infrastructure associated with new development (e.g. roading infrastructure).*

## Minerals and Waste

## Agreements

31. The Parties agree to identify valuable minerals resources to be safeguarded for possible exploitation, and agree to seek the best way forward and its implementation through local plans, including by the exploitation of minerals in association with development in accordance with the spatial strategy.

32. The Parties will support the form and location of appropriate waste management facilities to positively support a progressive approach to waste management and press on with the move towards a circular economy. The Parties will actively discourage waste management facilities that do not contribute to the development of the circular economy.

33. The Parties will continue and extend the work started in parts of the Gloucestershire the identification of opportunities for the generation of energy from renewable and benign resources and will seek positive and progressive policies in local plans for the exploitation of these opportunities.

34. The Parties will seek to produce a reduction in the level of energy use, and this will be sought in part by the requirement for the incorporation of the most appropriate advanced technologies for energy generation from renewable sources and for energy conservation as part of significant new development schemes.

## 7. Governance

7.1. In order for this GSoCG to be advanced and the agreements identified above delivered, clear governance is required. The GEGJC is an established committee, and is the committee that jointly commissioned this GSoCG. The following governance arrangements are proposed:

- The GEGJC will continue to be the committee responsible for the overall production, development and monitoring of the GSoCG.
- The Senior Responsible Officer for the GSoCG will be XXX. They are charged with XXX
- The Strategic Planning Leaders Board will continue to provide strategic oversight and management of the GSoCG, the GSoCG Action Plan and any other future initiatives arising from the GSoCG.
- The Heads of Planning/Planning Policy Managers in district authorities, the Outcome Manager from GCC and the Deputy CEO from GFirst LEP will take responsibility for the production and updating of any further initiatives arising from the GSoCG

## Agreements

35. The parties agree that the Gloucestershire Economic Growth Joint Committee will be the committee responsible for the production and monitoring of the GSoCG.

36. The parties agree that whilst the essential purpose of the GSoCG is to promote joint action in addressing strategic issues, nothing in the GSoCG removes the roles and responsibilities of the individual participating organisations in making decisions according to their statutory roles.

## **8. Next Steps**

- 8.1. Reaching agreement on strategic planning matters is the start of the GSoCG. Action needs to be taken to address the matters arising from those agreements. It is proposed that an action plan be developed to identify the actions to be taken, those responsible for taking that action, and a timeframe and budget to address the actions. This will be presented to GEGJC within 6 months of this GSoCG being approved by GEGJC. (See Appendix 4 for template)
- 8.2. The actions will address some of the evidence needs arising from Local Plan preparation across the 7 authorities. Once the action plan is agreed work on the Spatial Development Strategy for Gloucestershire will commence..
- 8.3. The GSoCG is a live document and needs to be kept up-to-date. This should be done annually and/or when progress is made to address the matters or agreement and/or when the landscape changes (for example planning reform or local government reorganisation). Progress also needs to be monitored, which again should be done annually and reported through a monitoring report.

## **Agreements**

37. The parties agree that the GSoCG is a live document, to be updated and monitored regularly, and as a minimum on an annual basis.

## **Appendices**

1. The Requirements of a Statement of Common Ground
2. Background Information to Support the Gloucestershire Statement of Common Ground
3. List of 'Agreements' not agreed by any and/or all parties
4. Action Plan to deliver on commitments in the Gloucestershire Statement of Common Ground

## **Appendix 1 - The Requirements of a Statement of Common Ground**

MHCLG – Guidance on Plan Making (<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/plan-making>)

### **What is a statement of common ground expected to contain?**

A Statement of Common Ground is expected to contain the following:

- a. a short written description and map showing the location and administrative areas covered by the statement, and a brief justification for these area(s);
- b. the key strategic matters being addressed by the statement, for example meeting the housing need for the area, air quality etc.;
- c. the plan-making authorities responsible for joint working detailed in the statement, and list of any additional signatories (including cross-referencing the matters to which each is a signatory);
- d. governance arrangements for the cooperation process, including how the statement will be maintained and kept up to date;
- e. if applicable, the housing requirements in any adopted and (if known) emerging strategic policies relevant to housing within the area covered by the statement;
- f. distribution of needs in the area as agreed through the plan-making process, or the process for agreeing the distribution of need (including unmet need) across the area;
- g. a record of where agreements have (or have not) been reached on key strategic matters, including the process for reaching agreements on these; and
- h. any additional strategic matters to be addressed by the statement which have not already been addressed, including a brief description how the statement relates to any other statement of common ground covering all or part of the same area.

The level of cooperation detailed in the statement is expected to be proportionate to the matters being addressed. The statement is expected to be concise and is not intended to document every occasion that strategic policy-making authorities meet, consult with each other, or for example, contact prescribed bodies under the duty to cooperate. The statement is a means of detailing key information, providing clear signposting or links to available evidence on authorities' websites.

## Appendix 2 - Background Information to Support the Gloucestershire Statement of Common Ground

### 1. Gloucestershire's Strategic Geography

- 1.1. Gloucestershire lies between other complementary and competing areas, with Bristol and the West of England Combined Area to the south, Oxfordshire to the east; Swindon to the South East; Birmingham, Coventry and Warwickshire to the north; and Worcestershire and Wales to the west and north-west. Gloucestershire is part of the Western Gateway launched in November 2019, as a strategic partnership intended to promote and maximise economic growth across the west of England and south Wales. The Western Gateway will seek to ensure that the region is globally competitive and as such is intended to mirror and compete with the already established Northern Powerhouse and Midlands Engine. Gloucestershire is actively involved in the progression of the Western Gateway and Gloucestershire has a significant role to play, in particular through the progression of cyber as a key sector and lever for growth in this part of the region. As well as cyber-tech the draft Local Industrial Strategy highlights agri-tech, aerospace and manufacturing services sectors as key strengths for the county.
- 1.2. There are a number of strategies dealing with social, economic and environmental issues for Gloucestershire and others in preparation. These are examples of collective working on strategic issues, and participants in the GSoCG are either party to these strategies or will continue to seek to work with the owners of these strategies and to cooperate in their implementation. Current and emerging strategies include Gloucestershire 2050, the Local Industrial Strategy, the Local Transport Plan, the Sustainable Energy Strategy, the Green Infrastructure Strategy and the emerging climate change strategy for Gloucestershire. What is clearly evident from this strategic context is the alignment of priorities that that will need to be considered in developing the GSoCG.
- 1.3. Currently, Local Plans and the Local Transport Plan are the primary, statutory mechanism used to plan and deliver development in Gloucestershire. These plans, when considered holistically, provide a 'spatial plan' for Gloucestershire up to the mid 2030's, broadly as follows:
  - The Urban Areas of Cheltenham and Gloucester, adjacent areas within Tewkesbury Borough, as well as Ashchurch are the focus of strategic growth
  - Stroud caters for significant growth, commensurate with its size and geographical location
  - Tewkesbury and Winchcombe together with the larger villages of Tewkesbury Borough, the Forest of Dean towns of Coleford, Lydney, Newent and Cinderford, and the larger Cotswold towns of Cirencester, Moreton-in-Marsh and Tetbury cater for reasonable levels of development, commensurate with their size.
  - Smaller urban areas (including villages) across Gloucestershire provide for local need
  - Rural areas are largely protected from development
  - Investment in transport infrastructure largely aims to cater for growth at the levels identified above and remedy other existing, identified problems.

Spatial planning in Gloucestershire has been approached in this hierarchical way for some considerable time. With the important additional consideration of potential new settlements, such a development approach means that homes are built close to the largest areas of employment opportunities, infrastructure investment can be target toward major populations (enhancing its use, effectiveness and success) whilst other areas can accommodate local demand whilst protecting character, both built and natural. The current status of Local Plans across Gloucestershire is set out at Appendix 2.

## **2. Current Context (September 2020)**

2.1. There are a number of recent events that will inevitably impact on spatial planning in Gloucestershire (and indeed the broader country). They are outlined below because they will have a significant bearing on the way in which this GSoCG and any Gloucestershire wide spatial planning is taken forward. These include:

- All local authority parties have declared a Climate Change emergency (with some also declaring a specific ecological emergency) with varying aims and targets within the last 12-18 months, all with a theme of reducing carbon emissions. If this is to be achieved the location and connectedness of, and the design standards adopted in new development need careful consideration and a joined up approach.
- Covid 19 and it's impacts – It is inevitable that there will be negative short-medium term economic consequences. There may well be lasting societal changes that emerge too – including a reduced demand for travel, a greater appreciation and utilisation of people's homes and local areas (in particular open, green spaces), an accelerated need to change the function of urban centres, a need for enhanced digital connectivity and so on, a decentralisation from larger urban centres such as London and Birmingham as remote technology and ability to work from homes shifts perceptions in where people wish their homes to be located.
- The Government's Planning White Paper of Summer 2020 proposes wholesale reform of the planning system in England. There are a wide range of changes proposed which if implemented will have a significant impact on Plan making and infrastructure delivery across England.
- The Government may consult on further devolution proposals during 2021. The opportunity to plan jointly (for example the JCS) already exists, but changes to local government structures in the future may provide new opportunities.

2.2. Taken as a whole, these recent events, the outcomes of which are unknown, will have a profound effect on plan making and delivery of growth in the future. This must be borne in mind in progressing with this GSoCG and any recommendations arising. A live 'GSoCG' should enable timely responses to the challenges we face. At the same time, investment in strategic planning, including future work on this GSoCG and any subsequent planning strategy work, needs to be carefully considered in the context of planning reform and local government review.



### **3. Strategic Planning Matters in Gloucestershire**

#### **Introduction**

- 3.1. The GSoCG is about strategic planning matters that can be addressed by spatial planning and need to be addressed by more than one district planning authority, whilst working with the County Council and GFirst LEP. What follows is an identification of the strategic matters in Gloucestershire, with a set of agreements which capture the matters arising and the proposed responses (as actions). They are presented as distinct matters of spatial planning but need to be considered as component parts of successful spatial planning.

#### **Climate Change (and Ecological Emergency)**

- 3.2. There is an overwhelming need in Gloucestershire, as everywhere, to address the climate and ecological emergency, as declared by each of the local authorities in Gloucestershire. The strategic planning activities in the Gloucestershire must work towards this commitment and to achieving a net carbon zero society. There are opportunities through growth to advance carbon reduction technologies in Gloucestershire, including through commitments to sustainable construction and better building energy performance. The level of use of energy by residents, workers and visitors is higher in Gloucestershire, as everywhere, than is consistent with a low carbon future. More needs to be done to generate energy locally from renewable sources using a variety of technologies and to reduce the consumption of energy generally.
- 3.3. Gloucestershire's existing transport network depends largely on its highway network. Future transportation solutions in Gloucestershire need to balance demand for clean sustainable growth and improved connectivity with maximising the efficiency of existing infrastructure. Significant investment in Gloucestershire's passenger and active travel networks will be required to complement planned highway capacity works as future growth will require greater integration of modes to ensure a high quality transport network is deliverable.
- 3.4. The legacy of COVID-19 and the possible changes towards travel demand is likely to challenge the traditional view of managing the transport network, with the priority of minimising journey times switching to managing journey options for people as transport networks decarbonise. Serving a growing leisure market may also become as important as commuting options when people decide where to live and this may need to be considered as the county grows.

#### **Housing**

- 3.5. The housing needs of Gloucestershire have to be met to enable the members of the changing population to house themselves, including those who need assistance through the provision of affordable housing, to address the need to attract a younger working age population and to ensure a workforce exists locally to enable the achievable growth in the economy to take place. The housing that is built needs to be fit for purpose and enable people to live

independently in their own home for as long as they can. This will require a flexible response to the type and tenure of housing together with the sustainability principles of the product.

- 3.6. Each local authority is required to make provision to meet the housing needs of its area through Local Plans. How and where that provision is made clearly affects those in need of housing, and has implications for the economy, transport and the environment. It is important that the right type of housing is development in the right places to meet needs, enhance wellbeing, support the economy and protect the environment. The future form of housing development in Gloucestershire, whether this be through extensions to existing settlements or through new settlements, should promote sustainable patterns of living and be designed to respect local character.
- 3.7. The housing requirements are increasingly unlikely to be met wholly within the same local administrative area as the need arises, particularly where those areas are geographically/administratively constrained (e.g. Cheltenham and Gloucester). Where this arises, planning policy requires those authorities to seek provision in neighbouring authority areas, and if this cannot be achieved reach a conclusion that the need cannot be met. Failing to meet housing need impacts on Gloucestershire’s growth ambitions, housing affordability and choice, reduces the available workforce in an area and encourages travel between people’s homes and jobs particularly (in Gloucestershire case) by private car and can make the provision of services less efficient to deliver.
- 3.8. Current local plans/local plans in development in Gloucestershire make provision for new homes to varying timescales. This provisions is captured below:

<b>Area</b>	<b>Plan Status and key dates</b>	<b>Plan Period</b>	<b>Requirement</b>	<b>How is this Met?</b>
<b>Cheltenham</b>	Joint Core Strategy adopted 2017  Cheltenham Plan adopted 2020	2011-2031	at least 10,917 new homes	Completions, commitments, Plan allocations and windfall allowance
<b>Cotswold</b>	Adopted 2018	2011-2031	420 pa	Allocation and windfall supply
<b>Forest of Dean</b>	Allocations Plan adopted June 2018 Replacement Local Plan at early strategic options stage (2021-41)	2006-2026	330 pa	Allocation and windfall
<b>Gloucester</b>	Adopted Joint Core Strategy	2011-2031	at least 14,359 new homes	Completions, commitments,

	Emerging Gloucester City Plan (at Examination)			Plan allocations and windfall allowance
<b>Stroud</b>	Local Plan adopted November 2015	2006-2031	At least 11,400 new homes	Completions, commitments, Plan allocations and windfall allowance
<b>Tewkesbury</b>	Adopted Joint Core Strategy  Emerging Tewkesbury Borough Plan (at Examination)	2011-2031	9,900	Completions, commitments and proposed allocations in emerging Borough Plan total 9,397 dwellings  Shortfall (503 dwellings) to be addressed through JCS review

3.9. Local Plans in the area also contain specific policies for Gypsy and Traveller provision, as below:

<b>Area</b>	<b>Plan Status and key dates</b>	<b>Plan Period</b>	<b>Requirement</b>	<b>How is this Met?</b>
<b>Cheltenham</b>	Joint Core Strategy adopted 2017  Cheltenham Plan adopted 2020	2011-2031	3 pitches	Criteria based policy
<b>Cotswold</b>	Adopted Local Plan (2018)	2011-2031	3 pitches	2 allocated sites + criteria based policy for additional allocations
<b>Forest of Dean</b>	Allocations Plan 2018/ Core Strategy 2012	2006-2026	No requirement identified at time of examination	Criteria based policy

<b>Gloucester</b>	Adopted Joint Core Strategy  Emerging Gloucester City Plan (at Examination)	2011-2031	2 pitches	
<b>Stroud</b>	Local Plan adopted November 2015	2006-2031	31 pitches	Completions and commitments
<b>Tewkesbury</b>	Adopted Joint Core Strategy  Emerging Tewkesbury Borough Plan (at Examination)	2011-2031	17 pitches <sup>2</sup>	Completions and proposed Borough Plan allocations total: 50 pitches

3.10. Local Plans in the area also contain specific policies for Travelling Showpeople provision, as below:

<b>Area</b>	<b>Plan Status and key dates</b>	<b>Plan Period</b>	<b>Need</b>	<b>How is this Met?</b>
<b>Cheltenham</b>	Joint Core Strategy adopted 2017  Cheltenham Plan adopted 2020	2011-2031	None	N/A
<b>Cotswold</b>	Adopted Local Plan (2018)	2011-2031	None	Criteria based policy
<b>Forest of Dean</b>	Allocations Plan 2018/ Core Strategy 2012	2006-2026		Criteria based policy
<b>Gloucester</b>	Adopted Joint Core Strategy  Emerging Gloucester City Plan (at Examination)	2011-2031	16 plots	

<sup>2</sup> 17 pitches includes 5 pitches from those who meet the definition of traveler from the Planning Policy for Traveller Sites plus 25% (12 pitches) of those where it was at the time unknown whether they would meet the definition or not.

<b>Stroud</b>	Local Plan adopted November 2015	2006-2031	8 plots	Completions and commitments
<b>Tewkesbury</b>	Adopted Joint Core Strategy  Emerging Tewkesbury Borough Plan (at Examination)	2011-2031	22 plots	Proposed Borough Plan allocations total: 9 plots

3.11. There are good reasons for the parties to agree that housing provision is a strategic spatial planning issue, and that joint working to make sufficient provision is essential. Work is already underway to address this issue jointly. District authorities in Gloucestershire are currently working on a Local Housing Needs Assessment which identifies the minimum housing need for Gloucestershire broken down to a District level and sub categories of need, including affordable housing and housing for special needs.

3.12. Proposed reforms to the current planning system will change the methodology used to calculate housing need. The initial indication is that the 20yr need will rise from 65,000 under the current method to 95,000 under the new method. To meet these identified needs a range of development options will need to be considered and joint working will be essential.

#### **The Economy and Employment**

3.13. Whilst the economy of Gloucestershire is strong, there is greater economic potential to be achieved, with some sectors showing particular strength and with Gloucestershire home to some distinctive businesses activities that can be nurtured to the benefit of the local and wider economy. All prospective employers will in part be assisted through the provision of employment land and space where it is needed and of a scale and type suitable for the requirements of the relevant sectors, with particular regard to where Gloucestershire may have a particular advantage over other possibly competing areas. Flexibility will be key and this will need to be built through engagement across the key sectors. GFirst LEP will be a key contributor to providing the evidence base to help steer the changing economic context for Gloucestershire.

3.14. Gloucestershire has an ageing population with a falling level of economically active people, a change taking place because the retention of young people in the area is relatively low. This will give rise to increasing inter-generational tensions and has direct and indirect negative effects on the economy.

3.15. In Gloucestershire critical roles in creating the conditions for businesses to thrive include:

- The district councils, charged with providing for employment space through the allocation of land in local plans, and with ensuring enough housing is provided

- The County Council responsible for transport infrastructure, economic development and education
- GFirst LEP with very strong links with businesses and providing direct support to new, incoming and existing businesses, as well as producing the Local Industrial Strategy
- All local authorities with various responsibilities for green and inclusive growth

3.16. Whilst these organisations work together, there isn't yet one coherent strategy for coordinated action to support the development of employment and the economy in the future. GFirst LEP have prepared the Local Industrial Strategy for Gloucestershire which was put to Government prior to the onset of Covid-19. The views of the Government are awaited. Local Plans provide for employment land across Gloucestershire, currently as follows:

<b>Area</b>	<b>Plan Status and key dates</b>	<b>Plan Period</b>	<b>Requirement</b>	<b>How is this Met?</b>
<b>Cheltenham</b>	Joint Core Strategy adopted 2017  Cheltenham Plan adopted 2020	2011-2031	192ha B Class – across the JCS area	Completions, commitments, Plan allocations and windfall allowance
<b>Cotswold</b>	Adopted Local Plan (2018)	2011-2031	24ha B Class land between 2016-2031	Completions, commitments and plan allocations
<b>Forest of Dean</b>	Allocations Plan 2018	2006-2026	Not stated	New allocations and intensification of existing sites, criteria based policies (60+ha)
<b>Gloucester</b>	Adopted Joint Core Strategy  Emerging Gloucester City Plan (at Examination)	2011-2031	192ha B Class – across the JCS area	Completions, commitments, Plan allocations and windfall allowance
<b>Stroud</b>	Local Plan adopted November 2015	2006-2031	58 hectares	Completions, commitments, Plan allocations and windfall allowance

<b>Tewkesbury</b>	Adopted Joint Core Strategy  Emerging Tewkesbury Borough Plan (at Examination)	2011-2031	192ha B Class – across the JCS area	84ha on strategic allocations (some or all within Tewkesbury Borough)  40ha on proposed allocations in the emerging Tewkesbury Borough Plan  Other commitments and vacant employment land across the Borough.
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3.17. The parties have recently completed a new Gloucestershire Economic Needs Assessment (2020) which:

- Identifies the Functional Economic Market Area (FEMA) for planning purposes.
- Provides a review of the context in neighbouring areas and the wider region.
- Provides an assessment of the economic performance and characteristics and commercial property market.
- Considers a range of scenarios for future economic growth in Gloucestershire.
- Identifies the quantum of employment land required to meet these scenarios and the locational requirements of different sectors.

This work has been commissioned to directly inform the preparation of Local Plans across Gloucestershire.

### **The Green Belt**

3.18. Parts of Gloucestershire are designated as Green Belt, a designation dating from the Gloucestershire Development Plan of 1968 and extended by the Gloucestershire County Structure Plan in 1981. The fundamental intention the Green Belt is to prevent urban sprawl by keeping land permanently ‘open’. Parts of Gloucestershire that offer good potential for promoting more sustainable development are in the green belt and so local plans – prepared with the overriding statutory objective on plan-makers of promoting sustainable development

- will have to consider whether changes to the area of green belt will have to be made, as national planning policy provides for.

- 3.19. Green Belt policy was originally conceived as a strategic policy for shaping the pattern of development – and it was identified through strategic planning documents when designated. It should be looked at strategically therefore, and this is a role for the GSoCG. If avoiding development in the Green Belt means that the development will have to go elsewhere, then the alternative locations must still need to contribute toward the overall spatial strategy and sustainable development objectives. For plans to withstand scrutiny the reasons for rejecting alternatives must be clearly given.

### **The Movement of People, Goods, Services and Information**

- 3.20. There is a clear need to provide for greater modal choice to provide for alternatives to the car and enable individuals to choose how they travel. Post COVID-19 there will be a need to work collectively to develop a financially sustainable transport offer that reflects the possible legacy of the pandemic on changes in demand to traditional journey patterns. Improvements in digital connectivity open opportunities for this and help support the management of the transport network.
- 3.21. As the county grows there is a clear need to increase the market share of rail through better regional connectivity and work with bus operators to identify sustainable solutions to develop a financially sustainable, socially inclusive and efficient countywide bus network. This will provide for areas not served by rail. It will also aid understanding of the decarbonisation transfer process the roles different parties will need to play supporting this. Cycling and Waling also provide a real opportunity to improve the physical and mental health of residents, improve air quality and ease congestion within urban areas.
- 3.22. In addition to supporting personal travel it is important to recognise the requirements of commercial operators to provide the most efficient way of transporting goods alongside reducing carbon emissions and improving air quality.
- 3.23. The movement of people, goods and services between and within places and spaces has a profound effect on the economy, the lives of residents and the environment. There is a clear relationship between the location, scale and form of growth and movement. This GSoCG provides the opportunity to maximise the opportunity to promote and enable shifts in movement behaviour through considering the location of existing and new populations and aligning movement solutions to enable the greatest impact and success.

### **Transport Provision**

- 3.24. Essential travel in Gloucestershire is heavily based on the private car. For the most part this is currently fossil fuel propulsion, but this will change dramatically in the plan making periods relevant to the GSoCG, as car technology is changing quickly, with electric and other forms of non-carbon emitting propulsion taking over, with manufacturers committing to phasing out fossil fuelled propulsion. The provision of publicly accessible electric charging is an important



commitment by the County Council and district authorities which will facilitate and speed this change to the car as a sustainable mode of transport. However, even with the uptake of electric vehicles proceeding as planned, Government and local carbon reduction targets can only be achieved if we also create communities that reduce the need to travel and through a significant shift to sustainable transport modes, such as walking, cycling and public transport. The GSoCG will need to take account of this fundamental change in outlook in considering sustainable locations for strategic land allocations for the future.

- 3.25. The housing and employment land strategic site selection purpose of the GSoCG provides a golden opportunity to enable much improved public transport connections for residents, both road and rail, to create the genuine choice for residents outlined in paragraph 3.21, and deliver the public transport aspirations of the Local Transport Plan.
- 3.26. Covid-19 has led to a significant increase in online retail and remote working. Clearly this has negative consequences on existing town centres, but the need to travel for retail purposes are diminishing. New technologies and initiatives are ever developing which may lead to a shift the way in which people, goods and services move, ranging from Electronic Vehicles and Autonomous Vehicles to Mobility as a Service (MaaS). The location, design and layout of new development need to take into account of these developments. Digital technology provides an alternative to movement, and this is covered in more detail below.
- 3.27. The Gloucestershire Local Transport Plan (LTP) sets out the current transport strategy for Gloucestershire to 2041. The plan provides for a range transport schemes which largely aim to cater for planned growth and seeks to promote modal shift in new developments.
- 3.28. Development beyond that identified in existing advanced or adopted local plans provides the greatest opportunity to influence future movement choices. The road and rail network, together with technological advances provides the opportunity for modal shift but investment will be required. The LTP sets out a range of aspirations and scenarios for catering for growth that could take place beyond 2031. These aspirations and scenarios need to be developed alongside decisions on the future locations of growth to make them effective and successful.

### **Digital Network**

- 3.29. Gloucestershire already has a strategic role in cyber security and this will grow significantly with the development of 'Cyber Central'. The County must position itself to take full advantage of this opportunity, from education to supporting industries to broader connectivity benefits for the community at large.
- 3.30. The movement of information digitally is becoming ever more relevant, and Covid-19 has proved the value of and need for quality connectivity, particularly for the service sector on which a large proportion of the Gloucestershire economy relies. Quality broadband services are increasingly a factor people consider when looking at the attractiveness of an area as somewhere to live. Gloucestershire has the opportunity to benefit from the comprehensive and inclusive roll out of high quality digital infrastructure to assist business and domestic users.

## Natural Environment and Green and Blue Infrastructure

- 3.31. Gloucestershire contains areas of great landscape value, some recognised by national designations and of huge value to residents and visitors alike, and these need to be conserved and enhanced for their own sake and for the distinctive character they give to Gloucestershire. At the same time, more people need ready access to environmental assets as has been highlighted during the Covid-19 pandemic, and there is 'quality in the ordinary'. An enhanced green infrastructure network of spaces and corridors would provide structure and identity to an area, benefit wildlife, create recreational opportunities and amenity, help in the management of water, and assist in carbon capture.
- 3.32. Green infrastructure as a connected network of multi-functional green and blue spaces and corridors is essential to the wellbeing of Gloucestershire and its people, and is something should be part of the spatial strategy and as such promoted through the GSoCG. Part of the appeal of Gloucestershire for residents and business alike is its natural environment.
- 3.33. There is a great deal of work underway in Gloucestershire by government agencies, local authorities and voluntary groups promoting various aspects of green infrastructure. This includes:
- The work promoted by the Gloucestershire Local Nature Partnership (GLNP) on natural capital baseline mapping and on the Nature Recovery Network that helps to underpin it.
  - The national Building with Nature Standards, developed in Gloucestershire (initiated by the GLNP and the Gloucestershire Wildlife Trust), provide planners and developers with evidence-based, how-to guidance on delivering high-quality green infrastructure
  - The emerging Environment Bill will mandate Biodiversity net gain for certain types of development, noting the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) already highlights the need to provide biodiversity net gain.
- 3.34. In 2015, the Green Infrastructure Working Group of the GLNP developed 'A Strategic Framework for Green Infrastructure in Gloucestershire' with consultation and agreement gained from Gloucestershire's local authorities (undergoing review in 2020-21).
- 3.35. Gloucestershire Vision 2050 identified the potential of a Regional Park. Stakeholders have been investigating the possibility, including identifying a possible location.
- 3.36. Furthermore, all authorities signed up to the GLNP Green Infrastructure Pledge in 2018 - a promise to commit to making Gloucestershire a pioneer of green infrastructure, creating a better, more attractive place to live, work and visit, as well as becoming an exemplar for the rest of the country.
- 3.37. Many of the local authorities in Gloucestershire have recognised the huge declines in biodiversity by declaring climate and ecological emergencies. Many policies and initiatives are

in place or are being developed around biodiversity and nature recovery showing a commitment to continuing to work in partnership to address biodiversity declines.

- 3.38. There is therefore a great deal to use and to build upon for improved and better valued green infrastructure, expressed through strategy/policy, as part of the spatial strategy embraced by the GSoCG.
- 3.39. Flood resilience will require a strategic response, including others beyond the boundary of Gloucestershire. Having a clear and agreed proposed flood resilience response will enable the Parties to engage with neighbouring authorities and regions in a coordinated way.

### **Energy Production**

- 3.40. There is a need to increase energy efficiency and reduce energy usage for residents, workers and visitors in Gloucestershire in order to achieve a net-zero carbon future. There are key opportunities to achieve this through commitments to more sustainable construction methods with improved building energy performance, as well as through shifts in transport modes. There is also opportunity to explore renewable and low-carbon energy generation projects, including community energy schemes.
- 3.41. The Gloucestershire Sustainable Energy Strategy (2019) includes 6 key ambitions for energy reduction in Gloucestershire and a road map of actions to establish the building blocks necessary, focusing on the next 6 years.

### **Health and Social Infrastructure**

- 3.42. Many of the matters above have a clear impact on health and wellbeing – to provision of quality green space and housing, providing opportunities for active travel, reducing emissions and improving air quality and so on. The relationship between spatial planning is not traditionally fully understood, but that relationship is becoming clearer.
- 3.43. Specifically here, early year, educational, health and cultural facilities including open space, need to be provided at least in balance with the needs of a growing and changing population, consistent with nurturing greater skills and wellbeing, and more inclusively. Provision should be made as close to where demand arises in an efficient and effective way and should not be an afterthought – provision is essential and should be planned as part of spatial planning. The needs of service providers need to be understood at an early stage to inform future planning. Careful consideration needs to be given to the viability of development.

### **Infrastructure Delivery**

- 3.44. The provision of infrastructure to support existing and new communities is obviously essential. This ranges from transport to education to green space, as discussed in various sections above. In order for infrastructure to be delivered effectively there is a need to:

- understand where demand will arise
  - identify, prioritise and agree on that infrastructure
  - consult with relevant infrastructure providers
  - identify funding mechanisms to enable infrastructure delivery
  - the viability of development.
- 3.45. Funding is secured in a variety of ways including through the collection of Community Infrastructure Levy funds, through s106 agreements, bids and grants administered by GFirst LEP, bids to various Government Agencies and so on. Most of these funding mechanisms are competitive – competition with other areas of the country for private and government investment, competition between competing infrastructure projects within the GSoCG area, or onsite competition between the various demands placed on the development sector. Gloucestershire has a good track record of winning competitive funding and the GSoCG will be a key tool in future bids in articulating the collective ambition and delivery of growth.
- 3.46. At a both a strategic and local, non-strategic level, infrastructure needs are identified in a range of statutory and non-statutory documents including Local Plans, Infrastructure Development Plans and annual Infrastructure Funding Statements, the Local Transport Plan, Education Place Planning Strategies, the Natural Capital initiative and so on.
- 3.47. There is no single source document that identifies the agreed strategic infrastructure requirements for Gloucestershire. Such a document, together with a clear strategic direction of growth in Gloucestershire, would present a solid basis to encourage investment in its various forms from the public and private sector. Furthermore, such an approach would fit well with current proposed reforms to the development contribution regime. The various strategic infrastructure concepts listed in the preceding sections will need to be planned for and funded.
- 3.48. Various pieces of work are either underway or under consideration. The parties are exploring the potential for a single Local Developer Guide for Gloucestershire. This document will provide a clear practice guide for developers on how the parties expect infrastructure to be funded by development, building upon adopted policies and standards set out in local plans.

### **Minerals and Waste**

- 3.49. There are strategic minerals deposits in Gloucestershire that should be secured until they need to be used, perhaps in association with appropriate development. These are dealt with through Minerals and Waste Local Plans developed by the County Council.
- 3.50. Sufficient provision needs to be made for the waste management facilities required to implement a positive and progressive reuse, recycle, recover approach to resources, striving towards the achievement of a circular economy.

**Appendix 3 - List of 'Agreements' not agreed by any and/or all parties**

Agreement Name and Number	Party/Parties not in agreement	Non agreement paragraph	Comment
Climate Change agreements 3-6	Tewkesbury Borough Council	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The parties agree that the climate and ecological emergencies presents risks to the county that are systemic, and unprecedented in scale and potential impact.</li> <li>2. The parties agree that responses to the climate and ecological emergencies must be commensurate with the scale and severity of the risk, and that coordinated action is the most effective means of responding.</li> <li>3. The parties agree that strategic planning decisions have a role to play in the reduction of carbon in contributing to local and global sustainability, and that our decisions must be informed by the climate and ecological emergencies and wherever possible deliver a positive contribution to climate change mitigation and adaptation and ecological recovery. Responding to the Climate Emergency will be the 'golden thread' that runs through the strategic planning activities and the outputs of this SoCG, responding to our commitments to Carbon net zero.</li> <li>4. The parties agree to investigate the use of alternative forms of energy generation, in line with environmental and landscape considerations.</li> </ol>	<p>TBC requested the deletion of references to "ecological emergencies in paragraphs 3 and 4 and paragraph 3.2 within the Appendix. TBC has not declared an ecological emergency and does not have a position on it. On that basis this is a something TBC is unable to commit to.</p> <p>TBC assert that any considerations of alternative forms of energy generation would be wider than environmental and landscape considerations. This requirement would be up top individual LA's to take forward if they wished to so do but should not be within SOCG.</p>
Transport Provision agreement 18.	Tewkesbury Borough Council	<p>The Parties agree that local plans should contain policies requiring developments to contribute to quality of the walking and cycling network. This is in recognition of the role active travel will play a significant role in achieving carbon reducing ambitions and promoting a healthy and active</p>	<p>Due to the nature of the TBC area, the inclusion and assertion that cycling will become mass transit cannot be supported by TBC as it is not achievable and is</p>

		<p>society. <b>Cycling will become mass transit and routes must be designed for larger numbers of cyclists, for users of all abilities and disabilities.</b> Cycling and walking should be at the heart of transport, place-making, and health policy.</p>	<p>unrealistic given the rural nature of the borough.</p>
<p>Natural Environment and Green Infrastructure agreement 24</p>	<p>Tewkesbury Borough Council</p>	<p>The Parties agree to work collaboratively to help conserve, manage and enhance the area's unique natural environment including areas of international and national landscape and biodiversity importance.</p>	<p>TBC considers this paragraph too restrictive. Appropriate development can take place within areas of special landscape and AONB.</p>
<p>Minerals and Waste 32</p>	<p>Tewkesbury Borough Council</p>	<p>The Parties will support the form and location of appropriate waste management facilities to positively support a progressive approach to waste management and press on with the move towards a circular economy. The Parties will actively discourage waste management facilities that do not contribute to the development of the circular economy.</p>	<p>TBC consider that the wording within this agreement is too restrictive as to where the council may wish to locate waste management facilities.</p>
<p>Minerals and Waste 34</p>	<p>Tewkesbury Borough Council</p>	<p>The Parties will seek to produce a reduction in the level of energy use, and this will be sought in part by the requirement for the incorporation of the most appropriate advanced technologies for energy generation from renewable sources and for energy conservation as part of significant new development schemes.</p>	<p>This is too restrictive. TBC is already looking at alternative sources of energy. It is helpful for the council to facilitate alternative forms of energy and to ensure that people have choice.</p>

Appendix 4 - Pro-forma Action Plan to deliver on commitments in the Gloucestershire Statement of Common Ground

Strategic Matter	Proposed Action	Anticipated Action Outcome	Action Timeline	Action Budget	Action Lead Officer	Action Team
Climate Change						
Housing						
Employment						
The Green Belt						
Transport Provisions						
Digital Network						
Natural Environment and Green Infrastructure						
Energy Production						
Health and Social Infrastructure						
Infrastructure Delivery						
Minerals and Waste						





## TEWKESBURY BOROUGH COUNCIL

<b>Report to:</b>	Council
<b>Date of Meeting:</b>	23 January 2024
<b>Subject:</b>	Review of Polling Districts and Polling Places/Stations
<b>Report of:</b>	Democratic and Elections Adviser
<b>Head of Service/Director:</b>	Director: Corporate Resources
<b>Lead Members:</b>	Leader of the Council Lead Member for Corporate Governance
<b>Number of Appendices:</b>	Two

**Executive Summary:**

To consider the outcome of the review undertaken in respect of polling districts and polling places/stations within the Borough.

**Recommendation:**

1. **To APPROVE the recommendations set out in Appendix 1 to this report in relation to polling districts and polling places/stations within the borough.**
2. **Pending any further formal review, to delegate authority to the Returning Officer to make any further polling place and/or polling station changes as is necessary to enable the efficient and effective conduct of elections.**
3. **To delegate authority to the Electoral Registration Officer to make any changes as are necessary to the Register of Electors.**

**Financial Implications:**

There are no significant financial implications arising from the changes proposed in this report.

The number of polling stations will impact on the overall cost of an election or referendum, in terms of hire charges, additional staffing, additional equipment, etc. However, in all but Borough Council elections/by-elections and the scheduled, four-yearly parish/town council elections, these costs can be claimed against the election and will not fall upon the Borough Council.

**Legal Implications:**

Any review must be conducted in accordance with the statutory provisions and associated guidance.

The next full review must be started and completed within the period 1 October 2028 and 31 January 2030.

These proposals respect the Electoral Commission guidance.

There is a statutory appeal process through the Electoral Commission where a review either does not meet the reasonable requirements of electors or does not take sufficient account of the accessibility needs of disabled persons.

**Environmental and Sustainability Implications:**

In reviewing existing, or seeking new, polling places/stations, consideration is given to the ability to access polling stations by alternatives to car, e.g. cycle, walk, public transport, etc.

**Resource Implications (including impact on equalities):**

Polling stations are reviewed as and when required to maintain accessibility, and various methods of voting ensure equality in voting.

The review seeks to ensure that electors are given such reasonable facilities for voting as are practicable in the circumstances - this includes such issues as accessibility for disabled persons.

**Safeguarding Implications:**

None directly from this report. However, where school premises are used as polling stations, officers will work with school representatives to ensure that appropriate measures are put in place.

**Impact on the Customer:**

Any review outcome will seek to ensure equality in access to voting for all electors (wherever this is possible).

**1.0 INTRODUCTION**

1.1 The Council is requested to consider the outcome of a statutory review of polling districts, polling places and polling stations within the Borough.

**2.0 BACKGROUND**

2.1 Under the Representation of the People Act 1983 and the Electoral Administration Act 2006, local authorities are required to undertake a regular (five-yearly) review of all polling districts, polling places and polling stations within their area. The review is conducted having regard to Electoral Commission guidance.

2.2 The aims of the review are as follows:

- to ensure that all electors have such reasonable facilities for voting as are practicable in the circumstances;
- to ensure that so far as is reasonable and practicable every polling place for which it is responsible is accessible to electors who are disabled.

2.3 The relevant Parliamentary Acting Returning Officer(s) must comment during any review of UK Parliamentary polling districts and polling places on both existing polling stations and the polling stations that would likely be used if any new proposal for polling places was to be accepted. The Returning Officer of the Borough should also be consulted. It should be noted that, for Tewkesbury, these designations are held by the same person.

- 2.4 It should also be noted that the review cannot consider Parliamentary Constituency, County Division, Borough Ward, or Town/Parish Council boundaries.
- 2.5 In accordance with statute, every Parliamentary Constituency must be divided into polling districts; and for each polling district there must be a designated “polling place” and a designated “polling station”.
- A **polling district** is a geographical area created by the sub-division of a UK Parliamentary constituency for the purposes of a UK Parliamentary election. In England, each parish is to be a separate polling district. This means that a parish must not be in a polling district which has a part of either a different parish within it unless special circumstances apply. Those special circumstances could arise if, for example, the parish has only a small number of electors and it is not practicable for the parish to be its own polling district. Within Tewkesbury Borough, we have traditionally used a Parish or Parish Ward area as the polling district.
  - A **polling place** is the building or area in which polling stations will be selected by the (Acting) Returning Officer. A polling place within a polling district must be designated so that polling stations are within easy reach of all electors from across the polling district. While some authorities have, in the past, designated the entire polling district as the polling place, relevant legislation states that ‘the polling place must be small enough to indicate to electors in different parts of the district how they will be able to reach the polling station’. As a result, it is considered that polling places should always be defined more specifically than simply the polling district - for example, by designating the name of the polling place (normally a particular building or area and its environs). The term “polling place” is not defined in law but it is suggested that it refers to the location in which the polling station is to be situated, e.g. the polling place could be a school with the polling station being a particular room in that school.
  - A **polling station** is the room or area within the polling place where voting takes place. Unlike polling districts and polling places, which are fixed by the local authority, polling stations are chosen by the relevant Returning Officer for the election.
- 2.6 In summary, the following legislative requirements apply regarding the designation of polling districts and polling places:
- each parish in England is to be a separate polling district, unless special circumstances apply;
  - the council must designate a polling place for each polling district, unless the size or other circumstances of a polling district are such that the situation of the polling stations does not materially affect the convenience of the electors;
  - the polling place must be an area in the borough, unless special circumstances make it desirable to designate an area wholly or partly outside the borough (for example, if no accessible polling place can be identified in the borough);
  - the polling place must be small enough to indicate to electors in different parts of the borough how they will be able to reach the polling station.

### **3.0 CONSULTATION**

- 3.1** Consultation documents were sent in October 2023 to the Members of Parliament with Constituencies in the Borough, County and Borough Councillors, Town/Parish Councils/Meetings within the Borough, and other interested parties. The documentation provided details of the current arrangements, and comments were invited on whether any changes were considered necessary/beneficial. Public notices and press releases were issued to encourage responses. In addition to direct communications, the review was publicised on the Council's website where an online feedback form was provided for ease of response. Further background information and documentation is also available on the website.
- 3.2** Attempts were made to engage with organisations that represent persons with disabilities. The feedback received was less about individual polling places/stations but more about what could be done to assist a disabled voter in the run-up to, and at, an election time - ranging from ease of registration, communication, assistance in casting a vote, and general aspects in terms of physical access and polling station layout. A very positive relationship is being built with the Gloucestershire Sight Loss Council, whose contributions have been invaluable thus far.
- 3.3** It should also be noted that, as part of every major election that is carried out, those who act as polling station visitors undertake a personal inspection of all polling stations in use and take a view as to the facilities provided and accessibility issues. The Elections Team also seek to address any issues that occur between elections. Any comments gathered in this way were also fed into the review.
- 3.4** The all-embracing document at Appendix 1 sets out:
- details of the Polling District and Polling Place/Station arrangements at the start of review;
  - the consultation responses received;
  - the officers' comments, conclusions and recommendations in light of the representations received; and, also, in response to other electoral changes since the last review.
- 3.5** Appendix 1 has been broken down into existing Borough Ward areas. Within each Ward section, the situation that applied before the review (the 'Pre-Review Position') is included for context purposes - for ease of read, this text is in italics.
- 3.6** The representations received arising out of the review consultation, officers' comments thereon and the recommendations for Member consideration and decision follow on, set out in the 'Arising from the Review' section.
- 3.7** Given its comprehensive nature, and the fact that it covers general review issues as well as individual proposals, the submission of the North Cotswolds Constituency Labour Party is reproduced in full at Appendix 2.
- 3.8** No representations were received in relation to many of the existing polling districts/places/stations. Several comments received supported the retention of the status quo.
- 3.9** There was, however, a desire for change in a number of areas, particularly where significant development had occurred in recent years, e.g. Brockworth.
- 3.10** As a matter of course, the review also looked for viable alternatives to the use of school premises and portacabins/mobile polling stations - although this proved challenging to secure.

- 3.11** In those cases where changes have been put forward, there is local support in favour of the change. Several Borough Ward Members also put forward suggestions and, where possible, these have been accommodated.
- 3.12** Where changes are proposed, the relevant Ward Members have been invited to comment on the proposed arrangements. Any responses received in this regard will be reported orally at the Meeting.
- 3.13** The Acting Returning Officers of the three Parliamentary Constituencies with 'land' in the Borough (based on the new Constituency arrangements) have been made aware of the proposed arrangements post-review and have been invited to comment thereon. Any responses received in this regard will be reported orally at the Meeting.

#### **4.0 CONCLUSIONS**

- 4.1** It is considered that many of the existing polling district arrangements remain fit-for-purpose and are in line with statutory requirements and guidance. However, various changes are recommended, primarily to respond to recent residential development and to achieve improvements for electors. As a minimum, every parish/parish ward will continue to be designated as a polling district.
- 4.2** It is acknowledged that not every polling station has total access for all, but they do meet the 'reasonable and practicable test'. Work will continue to improve arrangements wherever possible, in conjunction with organisations that represent the needs of disabled persons.
- 4.3** The recommended changes to polling districts/places/stations are set out in detail in Appendix 1 (with supporting maps).
- 4.4** If the proposals are accepted, two temporary polling stations/portacabins would remain, at Leigh (where no reasonable alternative exists) and Staverton (where alternatives were pursued but not considered feasible). However, in each instance, only one representation was received to the continuation of the arrangements at the Leigh (arising out of the 2023 elections rather than this review) and Staverton. It should also be remembered that there must be a balance between locality and accessibility.
- 4.5** The maximum recommended number of electors to be allocated to a polling station is 2250 (Electoral Commission guidance). The number of electors within a polling district will determine the number of polling stations required within a polling place (although consideration will also be given to the number of postal voters, as this will reduce the number of polling station voters). Once final arrangements have been approved by Council, Officers will determine the number of polling stations required within each polling place, having regard to the Electoral Commission guidance.
- 4.6** The outcome of this review will be reported via the website, and to relevant parties where changes have been made. Any individual or organisation that has commented as part of the review will also be contacted. While changes to polling station locations will be notified via poll cards as part of the formal election process, e.g. the forthcoming Police and Crime Commissioner election, advance notification of the changes will be sent to all affected households at the conclusion of the review.

#### **5.0 ASSOCIATED RISKS**

- 5.1** Completion of this review is a statutory requirement. Failure to complete the work would result in the Council being in breach of the legislation.

5.2 All polling station locations, whether current or proposed, are subject to an overview risk evaluation.

## 6.0 MONITORING

6.1 The effectiveness of any approved arrangements will be evaluated on an election-by-election basis.

6.2 The Council can undertake further reviews ahead of the next statutory review if circumstances dictate (either for the whole Borough or part of it) - for example, to take account of the outcome of the review of Gloucestershire County Council electoral divisions currently being undertaken by The Local Government Boundary Commission for England (where final recommendations are due in March 2024 for implementation at the County Council elections in May 2025).

## 7.0 RELEVANT COUNCIL PLAN PRIORITIES/COUNCIL POLICIES/STRATEGIES

7.1 None.

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**Background Papers:** None

**Contact Officer:** Democratic and Elections Adviser  
01684 272050      nigel.adams@teWKesbury.gov.uk

**Appendices:** Appendix 1 - Details of Polling District and Polling Place/Station arrangements at the start of review; the consultation responses received; and the officers' comments, conclusions and recommendations in light of the representations received and other electoral changes since the last review; and associated plans.

Appendix 2 - Submission by North Cotswolds Constituency Labour Party.

**REVIEW OF POLLING DISTRICTS, POLLING PLACES  
AND POLLING STATIONS 2023**

**TEWKESBURY BOROUGH COUNCIL AREA**

**CONSULTATION RESPONSES, AND COMMENTS, CONCLUSIONS  
AND RECOMMENDATIONS ARISING THEREFROM**

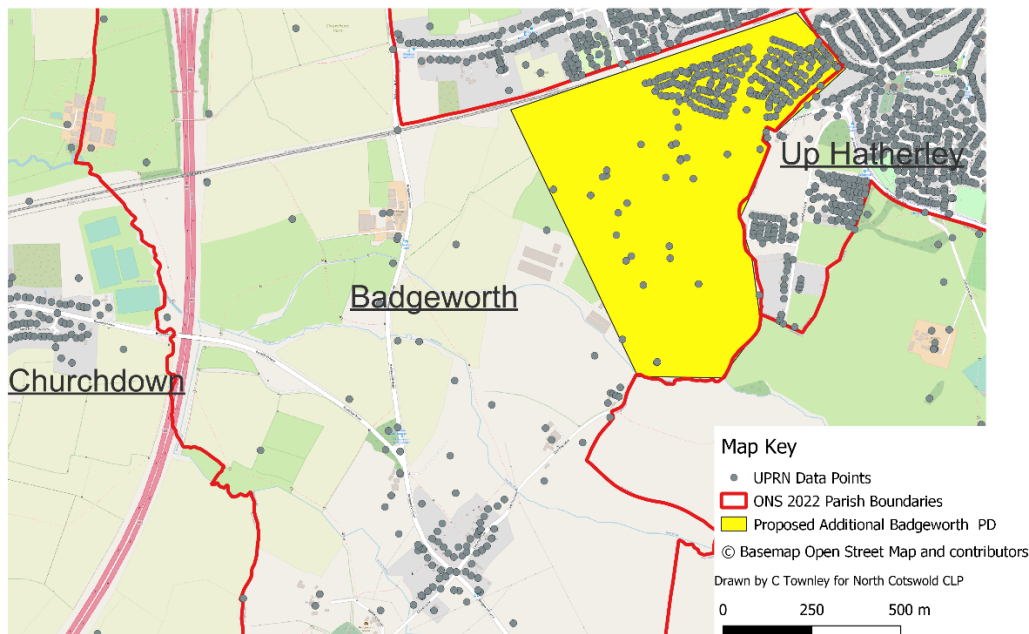
**BADGEWORTH BOROUGH WARD**

<b>PRE-REVIEW POSITION</b>			
<b>Current Polling District</b>	<b>Polling District Reference</b>	<b>Current/proposed Parliamentary Constituency</b>	<b>Current Polling Place and/or Polling Station</b>
<i>Badgeworth (Badgeworth Ward)</i>	<i>BBG</i>	<i>Tewkesbury - current North Cotswold - proposed</i>	<i>Badgeworth Village Hall Badgeworth Lane Badgeworth GL51 4UJ</i>
<i>Badgeworth (Bentham Ward)</i>	<i>BBN</i>	<i>Tewkesbury - current North Cotswold - proposed</i>	<i>Witcombe &amp; Bentham Village Hall Pillcroft Road Witcombe GL3 4TB</i>
<i>Great Witcombe</i>	<i>GRW</i>	<i>Tewkesbury - current North Cotswold - proposed</i>	<i>Witcombe &amp; Bentham Village Hall Pillcroft Road Witcombe GL3 4TB</i>
<i>Staverton</i>	<i>STV</i>	<i>Tewkesbury - current North Cotswold - proposed</i>	<i>Portacabin Staverton Court Farm Boddington Road Staverton GL51 0TW</i>

<b>ARISING FROM THE REVIEW</b>	
<b>A.</b>	<b>Re Polling District BBG</b>
<b><u>Representations</u></b>	
(i)	<u>Councillor Yates</u>
Polling Place is inaccessible to people living in Symphony Road except by car. There is no public transport, and Cold Pool Lane is dangerous for both pedestrians and cyclists.	

(ii) North Cotswolds Constituency Labour Party

Badgeworth BBG - Proposed Additional Polling District



At a first glance this appears to be a centrally located polling station meeting most voters needs, however, on the North Eastern fringe of the area is a relatively recent development (based on UPRN data which suggests this is about 300 dwellings). This suggests that perhaps 500 electors are concentrated more than 1.3 miles away from the designated Polling Station. There are also geographical issues for voters allocated to this polling station on the northern fringe with Staverton Parish, although it may be impractical to come up with more effective alternatives for them. Consideration should be given to splitting the polling district and establishing a separate polling station adjacent to the development, the boundary shown in yellow on the map above is illustrative rather and the western boundary will need to be carefully considered. It is possible that the sports pavilion at FC Lakeside would be a suitable location. In default a mobile voting station would need to be considered for this location.

The geography of this polling district also appears poor for the voters east of Shurdington Road. In the longer term an opportunity to address this arises from the County Divisions review (currently the subject of consultation) but would require consideration to where the boundary line is drawn between the proposed Boundary Commission's Bentham and Badgeworth Wards.

**Comments/Conclusions**

The representations in respect of the more recent residential development are supported in principle. The residents of that development would most likely look to the adjacent Cheltenham Borough area in terms of services and, perhaps, community identity, despite being located within Badgeworth Parish and Tewkesbury Borough.

These types of situation are becoming more common-place given development pressures but, insofar as any polling district/place/station review is concerned, it is not always possible to address matters to the satisfaction of all (without creating additional polling districts/places with often smaller electorate figures and, in the absence of permanent buildings/facilities, leading to an increased use of portacabins/mobile polling stations which do not represent an ideal solution).

That said, in this instance, officers had been investigating the potential for a more localised polling place, and the pavilion used by FC Lakeside on Cold Pool Lane, Cheltenham is a suitable location,



and its operators would be happy to hire the facility to the Council at election times. Whilst the room that would be used is relatively small, it should be able to cope with an electorate of just over 400, especially as this will inevitably be reduced due to postal voter numbers. The pavilion venue has a level access and ramp, parking facilities, external lighting, toilets and a kitchen, together with accessible facilities for disabled persons.

In terms of a new polling district area, it is suggested that this be drawn largely on the new development and other properties which potentially would find the FC Lakeside pavilion more convenient in terms of access.

No action is proposed at this stage in respect of the electors east of Shurdington Road.

Maps of the existing and proposed arrangements are set out in **Annex A**.

### **Recommendation(s)**

**That the current Polling District of Badgeworth (Badgeworth Ward) - BBG - be divided into two polling districts, as follows (in line with the maps at Annex A):**

- (i) the current polling district less the area identified above as Polling District BBG2 - with the new Polling District Reference of BBG1, the polling place as existing at Badgeworth Village Hall;**
- (ii) a new polling district identified above as Polling District BBG2 - with the new Polling District Reference of BBG2, the polling place at The Pavilion, FC Lakeside, Cold Pool Lane, Cheltenham, GL51 6LA.**

### **B. Re Polling District BBN**

#### **Representations**

No specific representations re polling district - but several residents have confirmed the suitability of the Village Hall as a polling station (see comments in Section C below).

#### **Comments/Conclusions**

No changes are required.

### **Recommendation(s)**

**That no changes be made to the current arrangements.**

### **C. Re Polling District GRW**

#### **Representations**

- (i) North Cotswolds Constituency Labour Party**

This appears a satisfactory location ... at this time; however, the Council should set out the justification for why GRW polling place is not in the polling district.

- (ii) Residents**

My wife and I confirm that the Village Hall is convenient; easy to locate; adequate as a polling station; with good parking and with good access for all.

(iii) Residents

We are very happy with the current polling station - thank you!

**Comments/Conclusions**

Wherever possible, a polling place will be located within the polling district area. However, in cases where no accessible and suitable polling place is available, a polling place can be designated outside the polling district (or even Borough).

In this instance, no suitable polling place has been identified within the Great Witcombe Polling District (including potential locations to cater for a portacabin/mobile polling station).

It should be noted that this Village Hall is also used as polling place for Badgeworth (Bentham Ward).

**Recommendation(s)**

**That the Witcombe & Bentham Village Hall continue to be used as the polling place for the Great Witcombe (GRW) Polling District within Badgeworth Ward.**

**D. RE Polling District STV**

**Representations**

Councillor Yates

Polling place in Staverton Village is at an unacceptably great distance from any people who live in Barmfurlong Road. There is no access by public transport.

**Comments/Conclusions**

Given that the use of portacabins is not an ideal solution and in the light of the specific representation relating to Staverton, officers revisited the situation and identified the following two possible alternatives:

- The Butterfly Gardens at Dundry Nurseries (which is used for parish council meetings);
- The Ramada by Wyndham Cheltenham.

The Parish Council's views were sought on the existing arrangement and the two alternatives identified (or any other suggested polling place/station location that might be considered more suitable), and the response was as follows:

*Ramada Hotel is currently housing refugees; we've heard that they may be vacating in December however we don't know for sure. It is however on a bus route and there would be adequate parking if available.*

*The Butterfly Gardens is a great location; however, access and parking may be challenging as it is located down a long bumpy single track to the rear of Dundry Nurseries and has little parking outside.*

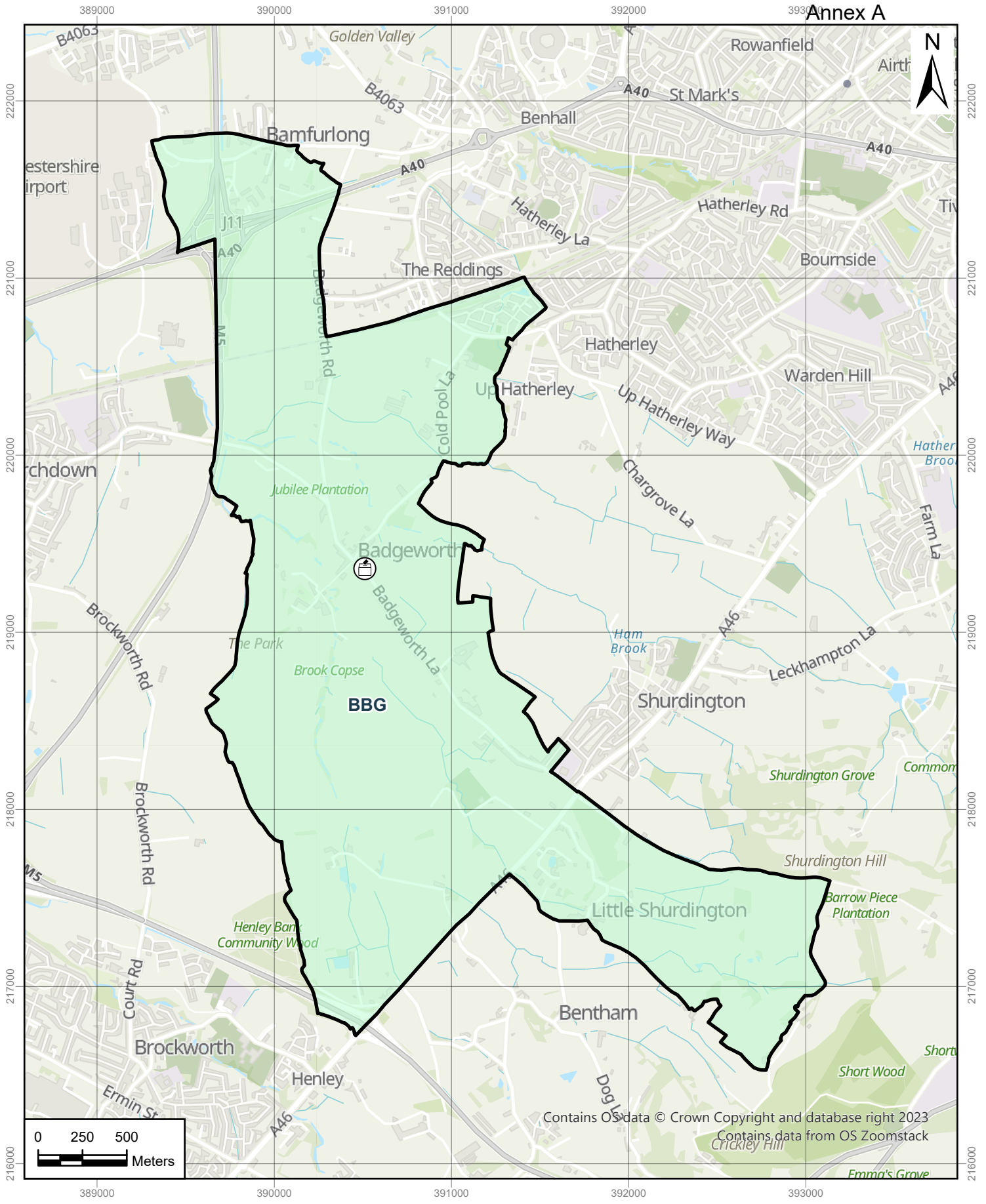
*The council have suggested if there is anywhere near the airport which could be utilised. The Staverton bridge opened this week making access easier.*

While a more central location would be preferable, no appropriate facility appears to be available at the present time. Given the numbers involved, the option of two polling stations (both of which would need to be portacabins) is not considered to be feasible.

The situation will continue to be monitored, especially if the Ramada Hotel reverts to its previous hotel and meeting facility use.

**Recommendation(s)**

**That no changes be made to the current arrangements.**



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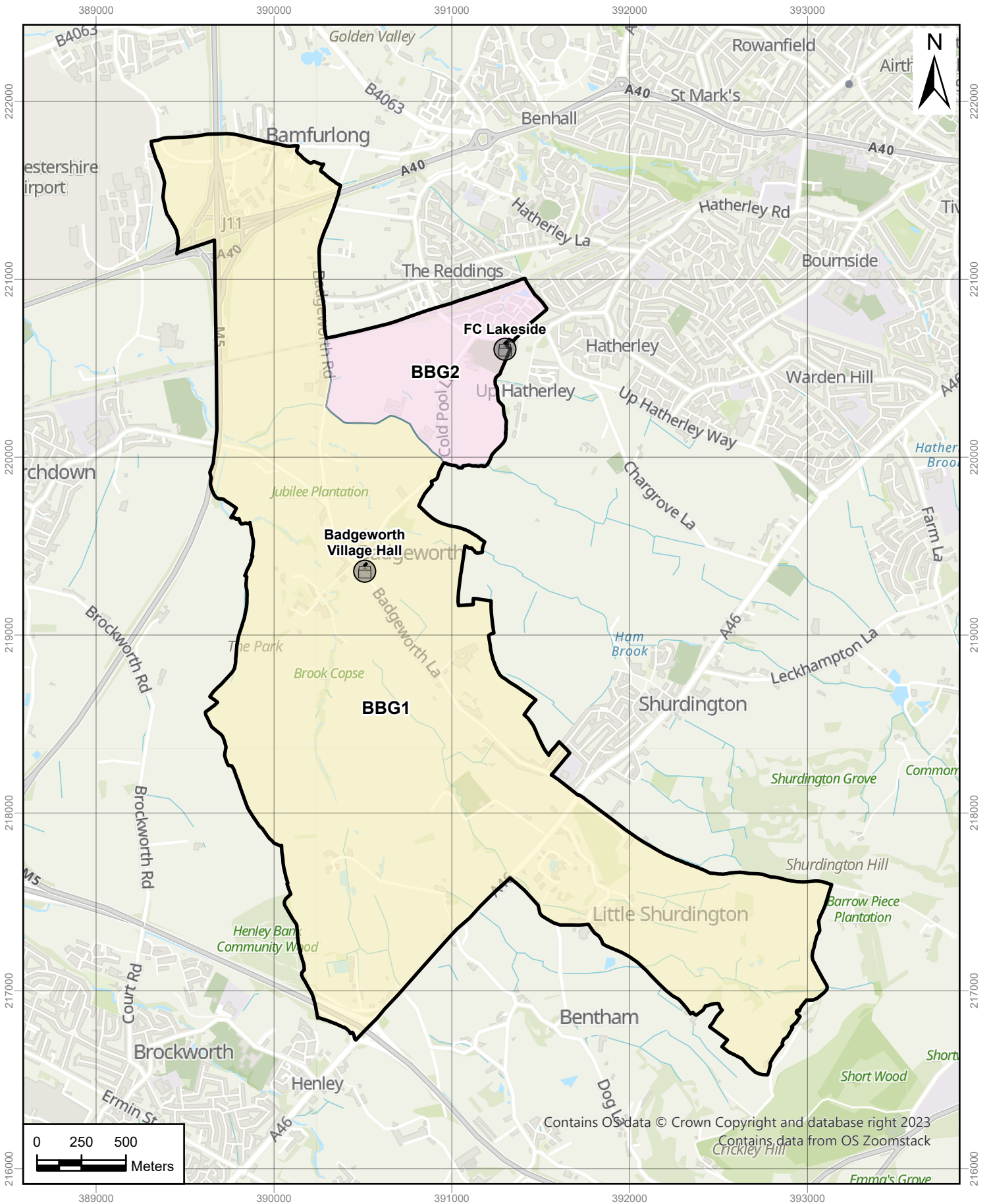
Legend	
	Ward Boundary
Current Polling District(s)	
	BBG
	Current Polling Place(s)

**Tewkesbury Borough Council**  
**Existing arrangements**  
**Badgeworth Borough Ward (Badgeworth)**





Scale: 1:28,000  
 CRS: British National Grid  
 Coordinates: Meters

Date: 21 December 2023





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Legend	
	Ward Boundary
Proposed Polling District(s) boundaries	
	BBG1
	BBG2
	Proposed Polling Place(s)

**Tewkesbury Borough Council**  
**Proposed arrangements**  
**Badgeworth Borough Ward (Badgeworth)**

Scale: 1:28,000  
 CRS: British National Grid  
 Coordinates: Meters

Date: 21 December 2023



## **BROCKWORTH EAST BOROUGH WARD**

<b>PRE-REVIEW POSITION</b>			
<b><i>Current Polling District</i></b>	<b><i>Polling District Reference</i></b>	<b><i>Current/proposed Parliamentary Constituency</i></b>	<b><i>Current Polling Place and/or Polling Station</i></b>
<i>Brockworth East 1</i>	<i>BRE1</i>	<i>Tewkesbury - current North Cotswold - proposed</i>	<i>Brockworth Community Centre Court Road Brockworth GL3 4ET</i>
<i>Brockworth East 2</i>	<i>BRE2</i>	<i>Tewkesbury - current North Cotswold - proposed</i>	<i>Brockworth Community Centre Court Road Brockworth GL3 4ET</i>
<i>Brockworth East 3</i>	<i>BRE3</i>	<i>Tewkesbury - current North Cotswold - proposed</i>	<i>Brockworth Community Centre Court Road Brockworth GL3 4ET</i>

<b>ARISING FROM THE REVIEW</b>
<p><b><u>Representations</u></b></p> <p><u>North Cotswolds Constituency Labour Party</u></p> <p><b>BRE 1 Polling Station:</b> Brockworth Community Centre Court Road Brockworth Gloucester GL3 4ET</p> <p>Given the growth in electors within this area it is questioned whether it would be sensible to create a new polling district for both BRE1 and BRE2 for the voters north of the Horsebere Brook with the voters south of the Brook continuing to vote at the Community Centre. At this stage no proposals for a different Polling Place for this area are made, but in the long-term use of a building within Perrybrook should be an expressed aspiration for the Council. An acceptable alternative resolution at this stage might be to agree to an early review, if and when a suitable building becomes available and the main distributor roads through the development have been completed. Possible opportunities for polling places to consider, in addition to the primary and secondary schools within the vicinity of the development, could include Brockworth Sports Centre, the proposed extra care village to be developed by St Monica's Trust (referred to in the Section 106 agreement) as well as Brockworth Rugby Club and also as a last resort the Tithe Barn which is a wedding venue adjacent to Brockworth Court.</p> <p><b>BRE 2 Polling Station:</b> Brockworth Community Centre Court Road Brockworth Gloucester GL3 4ET</p> <p>No change is suggested for this polling station, apart from the area north of Horsebere Brook discussed above.</p> <p><b>BRE3 Polling Station:</b> Brockworth Community Centre Court Road Brockworth Gloucester GL3 4ET</p> <p>No change recommended to this Polling District at this time.</p>

## **Comments/Conclusions**

The situation with the Brockworth East and Brockworth West wards is complex, and the current polling district arrangements do not best reflect the existing and planned development on the Perrybrook estate (encompassing BRE1, BRE2 and BRW2) or the Coopers Edge development (encompassing BRW3, HCC1 (Hucclecote) and an adjoining area in Stroud District).

At some stage in the future, a review of Borough Ward boundaries may be beneficial - however, this cannot be undertaken as part of this review.

In order to reflect the development that has already taken place, and to provide an element of future-proofing in relation to the next phase of the Perrybrook development, a revised polling district is put forward for parts of the existing BRE1 and BRE2 Polling Districts, using the Horsbere Brook as the boundary. This would form a new Polling District BRE1, to be served by a polling place at Brockworth Rugby Football Club, Mill Lane, Brockworth.

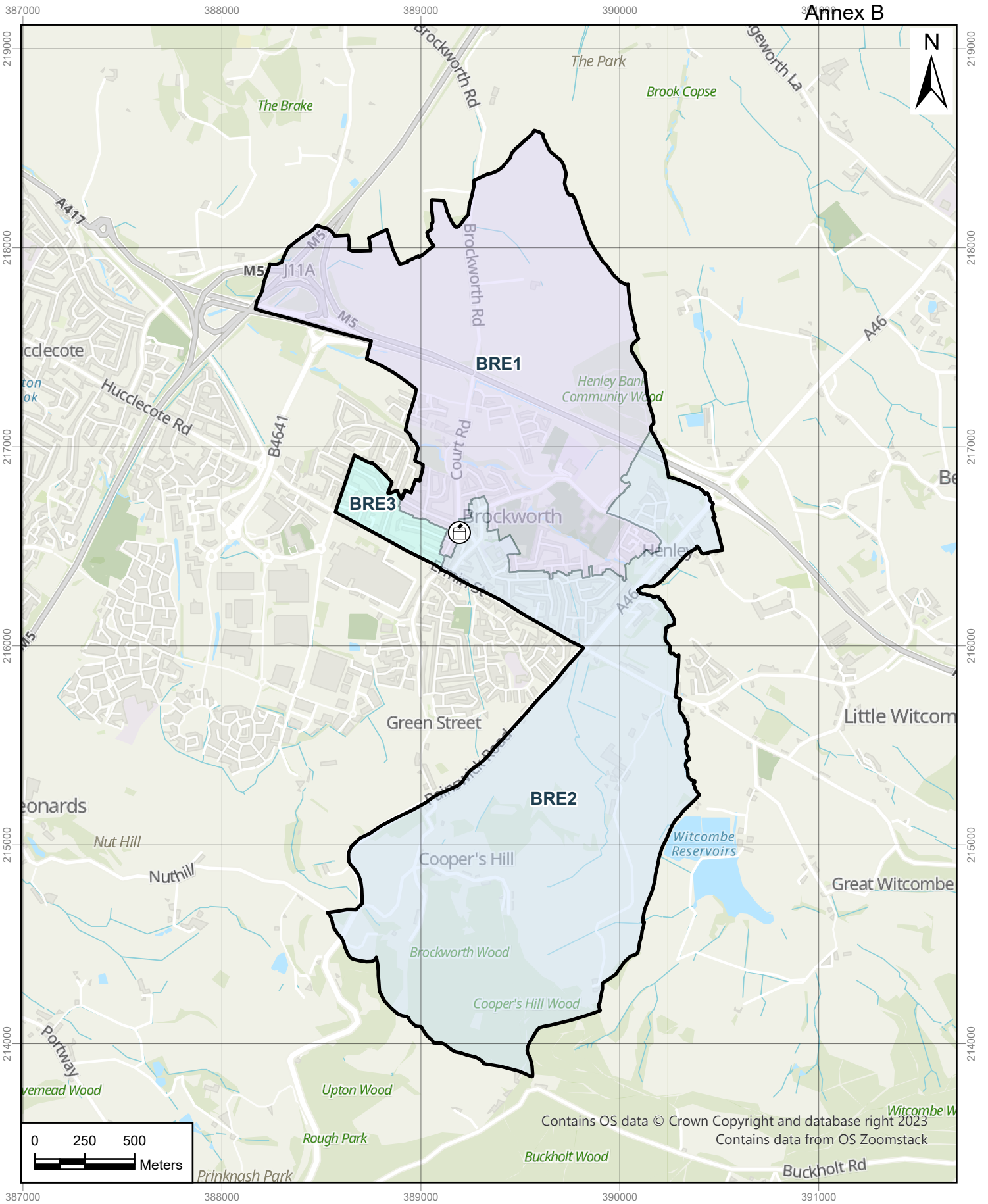
The remaining area from the existing BRE2 Polling District would then be combined with existing BRE3 Polling District - to form a new BRE2 Polling District with a polling place at Brockworth Community Centre. This combination would avoid the need to continue with what is an artificial split across existing Polling Districts BRE2 and BRE3, likely introduced to balance numbers across polling districts at the time.

Maps of the existing and proposed arrangements are set out in **Annex B**.

## **Recommendation(s)**

**That the current Polling District arrangements be amended in line with the maps shown at Annex B to create two new Polling Districts, as follows:**

- (i) a new Polling District BRE1, with a polling place at Brockworth Rugby Football Club, Mill Lane, Brockworth;**
- (ii) a new Polling District BRE2, with a polling place at the Brockworth Community Centre, Court Road, Brockworth.**



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Legend	
	Ward Boundary
Current Polling District(s)	
	BRE1
	BRE2
	BRE3
	Current Polling Place(s)

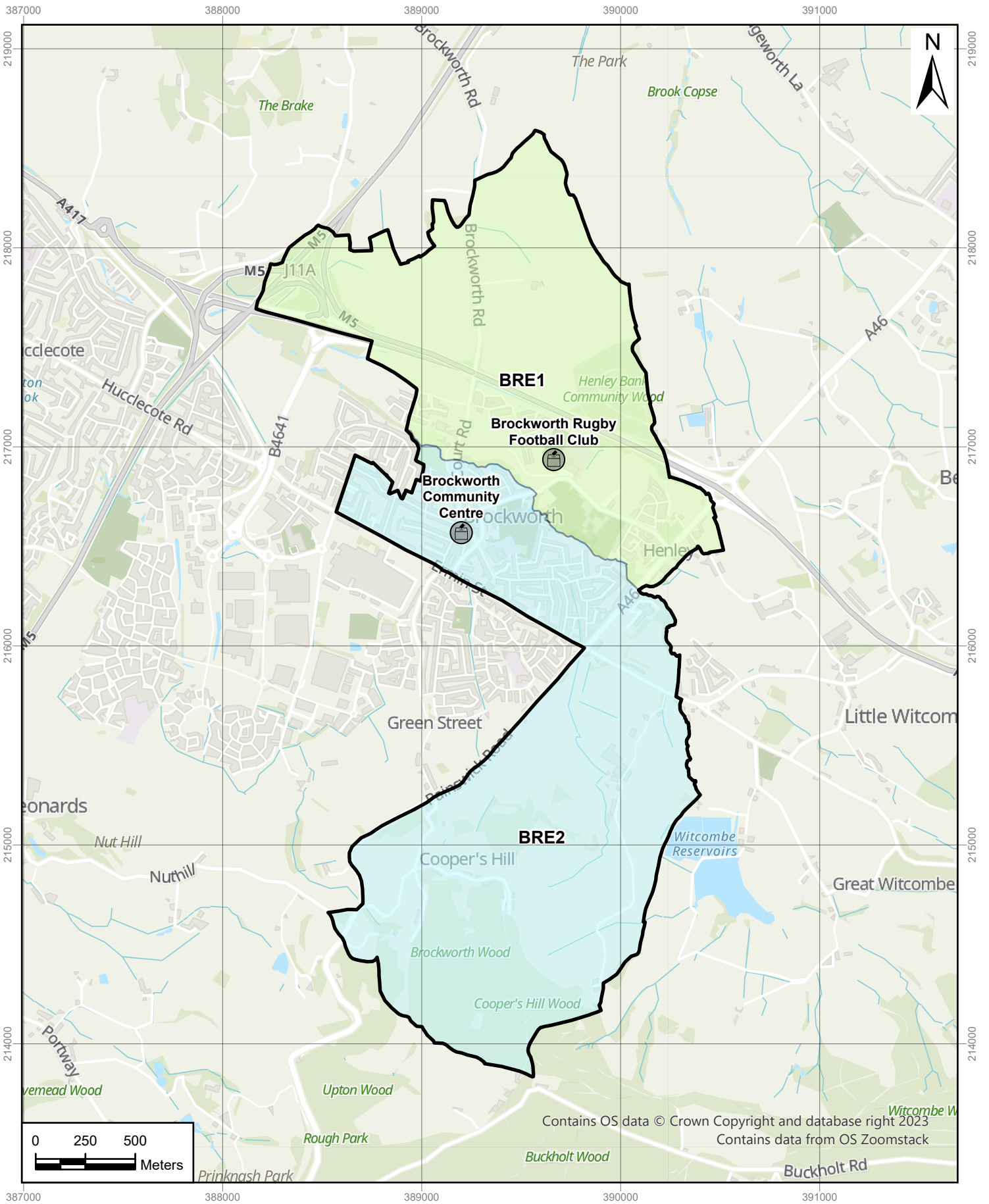
**Tewkesbury Borough Council**  
**Existing arrangements**  
**Brockworth East Borough Ward**

Scale: 1:25,000  
 CRS: British National Grid  
 Coordinates: Meters

Date: 21 December 2023







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Legend	
	Ward Boundary
Proposed Polling District(s) boundaries	
	BRE1
	BRE2
	Proposed Polling Place(s)

**Tewkesbury Borough Council**  
**Proposed arrangements**  
**Brockworth East Borough Ward**

Scale: 1:25,000  
 CRS: British National Grid  
 Coordinates: Meters

Date: 21 December 2023



## **BROCKWORTH WEST BOROUGH WARD**

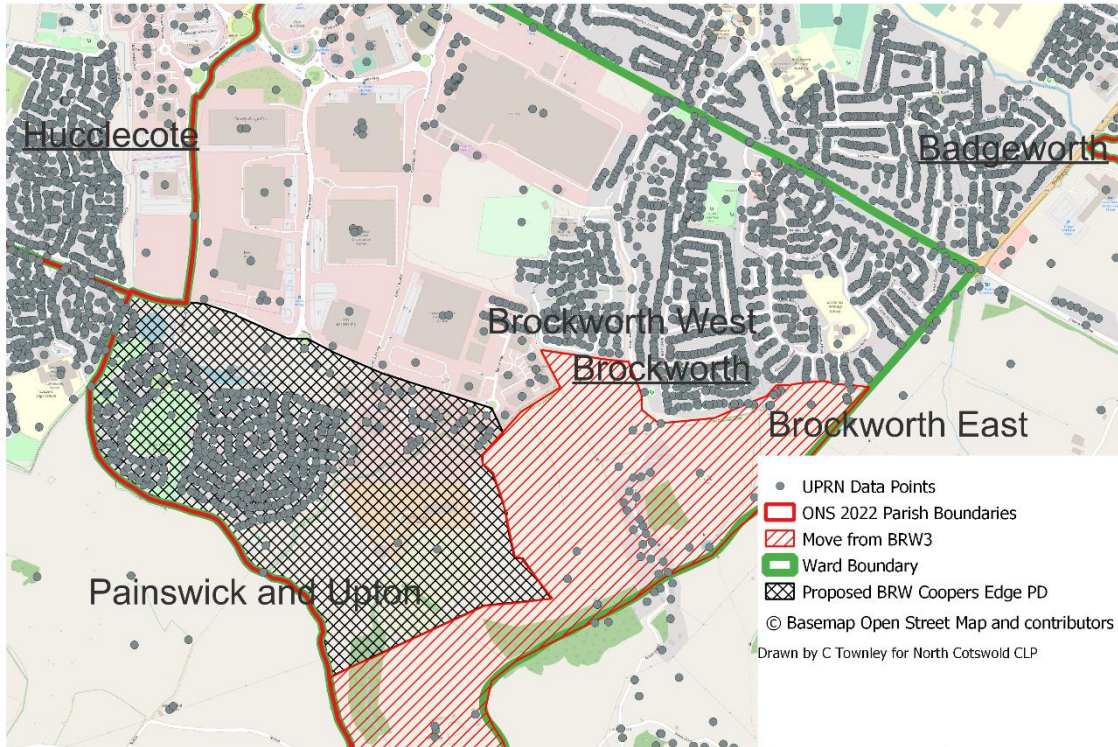
<b>PRE-REVIEW POSITION</b>			
<b>Current Polling District</b>	<b>Polling District Reference</b>	<b>Current/proposed Parliamentary Constituency</b>	<b>Current Polling Place and/or Polling Station</b>
<i>Brockworth West 1</i>	<i>BRW1</i>	<i>Tewkesbury - current North Cotswold - proposed</i>	<i>St Patrick's Church Hall St Patrick's Court Brockworth GL3 4HL</i>
<i>Brockworth West 2</i>	<i>BRW2</i>	<i>Tewkesbury - current North Cotswold - proposed</i>	<i>St Patrick's Church Hall St Patrick's Court Brockworth GL3 4HL</i>
<i>Brockworth West 3</i>	<i>BRW3</i>	<i>Tewkesbury - current North Cotswold - proposed</i>	<i>Midglos Indoor Bowls Club Spinners Road Off Green Street Brockworth GL3 4LS</i>

<b>ARISING FROM THE REVIEW</b>
<p><b><u>Representations</u></b></p> <p><u>North Cotswolds Constituency Labour Party</u></p> <p><b>BRW 1 Polling Station:</b> St Patrick's Church Hall St Patrick's Court Brockworth GL3 4HL</p> <p>This appears to be well designed polling district and apart from the recommendation in respect of the southern end of Green Street and Castle Hill discussed in BRW3, no changes are suggested. An option to consider might be to move the remainder of BRW2 to BRW1 but this may result in a large polling station with a risk of long queues to vote as a result of the voter ID requirement.</p> <p><b>BRW 2 Polling Station:</b> St Patrick's Church Hall St Patrick's Court Brockworth GL3 4HL</p> <p>This is a particularly poorly developed Polling District which has no appropriate Polling Station within the Polling District and does not relate well to the settlement pattern. However, this is not really the fault of the LGBCE as this somewhat inappropriate ward split was recommended to the Commission by the Borough Council during the consultation process leading to the boundary changes implemented in 2019.</p> <p>Given the "hard boundaries" that exist to the North, East and West of the Polling District and the area to the south is in unpopulated there is probably no practical alternative but to accept this Polling District "as is", until such time as a review of Borough wards takes place.</p> <p>Therefore, it is suggested that the Council consider making arrangements for a polling station in the vicinity of the District Centre within the Gloucester Business Park. This could for example be located in Tescos if appropriate space could be found or as an alternative mobile polling station in this general area. Another remote alternative might be to look at the availability of space within the Victoria Inn.</p>

If there are realistically no suitable alternatives, the Community Centre used for BRE1-3 might be considered to be more suitable than St Patricks Hall but it is proposed to continue using St Patrick's Hall the reasons for doing so should be recorded in the report.

**BRW3 Polling Station:** Midglos Indoor Bowls Club Spinners Road Off Green Street Brockworth Gloucester GL3 4LS

Brockworth West BRW3 - Proposed Additional Polling District



NB: the boundaries shown to the east of Coopers Edge are illustrative but are drawn to include one residential property to the South of the Business Park, details of which can be provided if required.

The current Polling Place is of good quality and is well located for the Spinners Drive development to the south-east of Invista and the existing housing in the Polling District along the northern half of Green Street. Using uncoded UPRN data there are 269 UPRNS in this area, this is likely to represent around 460 electors.

The southern half of Green Street (from Watermead to A46) and Watermeads itself is now isolated for vehicular traffic from the remainder of Green Street due to a Traffic Regulation Order which has now closed this road to motorised traffic. The Catholic Church used for BRW1 is actually nearer than BRW3 polling station and a pragmatic solution might be to move these voters and those along the southern edge of BRW3 into BRW1. There are approximately 50 dwellings in this likely to include approximately 80 electors. This is accepted as being borderline but should be taken into account in any future ward boundary review.

Much of the central area of BRW3 is unpopulated, being part of the Gloucester Business Park and therefore this has limited impact on where people from this area vote, apart from one residential property which has a vehicular access through the Business Park.

The most difficult issue is the western extremity of BRW3 consisting of the housing within the Brockworth Parish part of Coopers Edge. This is geographically distant from the current Polling Station. Measured from Napier Drive the road distance is 1.8 miles. Similarly, the shortest walking is 1.8 miles across the Business Park. There is no shorter route because Golf Course Lane has no access points between the Business Park and Spinners Drive development, meaning there is no sensible alternative walking route to the Polling Station except by Ermin Street. Brockworth Bridleway

60 does provide a potentially shorter route via Spinners Drive, however, this route is in very poor condition and is often very boggy during wet weather, which the County Councillor for the division is seeking to resolve.

Additionally, it should be noted that St Patrick's Hall is closer than the Indoor Bowls Centre, but a change of venue for the whole PD does not address the issues of poor access for people, who for the large part are in an urban area and living 1.8 miles travelling distance from the polling station. It should also be noted that the No 8 bus service from Coopers Edge terminates within Whittle Way adjacent to the Whittle Inn.

It is therefore recommended that the roads within the Coopers Edge development within Brockworth West should become a new Polling District and that a polling place within the vicinity of Coopers Edge should be used. There appear to be two options of creating a Polling Station: -

- a) To establish a Polling Station to serve the new Polling District located at either Coopers Edge School or the adjacent Community Centre. This may be difficult for Tewkesbury Borough to stomach as this is outside the Borough but is within the new constituency and both buildings are more or less adjacent to the District Boundary and are much more conveniently located to the voters in this proposed Polling District than the current polling station. It is also a relevant factor to take into account that the community centre and school was built to serve the whole development, which were both built as a result of Section 106 obligations entered into by the consortium of local authorities including Stroud, Tewkesbury and Gloucestershire to achieve a satisfactory development.
- b) If the community centre or school are rejected by TBC, for whatever reason, the council should then consider the provision of a mobile voting centre, possible locations might be on one of the access roads to this area of Gauntlet Way and Buccaneer Avenue.

### **Comments/Conclusions**

#### **BRW1 & BRW3**

The situation with the Brockworth East and Brockworth West wards is complex, and the current polling district arrangements do not best reflect the existing and planned development on the Perrybrook estate (encompassing BRE1, BRE2 and BRW2) or the Coopers Edge development (encompassing BRW3, HCC1 (Hucclecote) and an adjoining area in Stroud District).

An alternative solution is also required as the Midglos Indoor Bowls Club is no longer available as a polling place/station venue.

Given the representations made, including related comments from a resident of Hucclecote Parish who lives on part of the Coopers Edge development, officers have investigated the possibility of creating a polling place at The Edge Community Centre (or Coopers Edge School) for use by residents of that part of the development within Tewkesbury Borough (in both Brockworth and Hucclecote Wards). Stroud District Council currently use a room in the community centre as a polling station for those residents of Coopers Edge whose properties are located within Stroud District. The Electoral Commission has confirmed that we could use a facility outside not only a polling district but also a Borough/District area if this was the most convenient and effective for voters.

Such an arrangement as suggested would appear the most beneficial and logical for electors.

From an initial discussion with officers from Stroud District Council, they have no objection in principle to our use of the community centre venue, subject to it being possible to introduce adequate measures to avoid any voter confusion between the polling stations across the two council areas. They did however question whether the introduction of a further polling station serving almost 1700 potential electors would give rise to possible parking/traffic issues - especially as there are already issues in the locality generally.

Following a site visit, the community centre could easily accommodate two polling stations and 'segregation' issues could be managed. However, parking could clearly be a problem. There is no dedicated parking for the community centre (other than three spaces for use by staff located on a blocked paved area). The adjacent school does have parking, but not enough to cater for staff parking on most days. There are 19/20 parking bays in front of the school and community centre, but these are on highway land and available for use by all, with no time restrictions. There is a circulatory route for school dropping off.

There is limited on-street parking on one side of the road adjacent to the parking bays; and other on-street parking available on many of the roads in the immediate area. However, more generally, parking in the area is difficult (often indiscriminate) to say the least - ambulance parking also appears prevalent (possibly because paramedics live in the area) and there is parking on various block paved areas.

It is understood that representatives from Upton St Leonards Parish Council have recently met with the local County Councillor and the Local Highways Manager, regarding this issue and that they are also working with the School and the Coopers Edge Trust. It is further understood that the Trustees will be considering potential options before seeking to meet with County Highways to find a suitable resolution - as the affected land has been adopted by the County Council as public highway land.

Whilst one of the reasons for seeking an additional polling station at the community centre is that it will enable many voters to walk to that station, there is a need to ensure that parking is available for users, including disabled people.

Against this background, the County Council has been approached to see whether there is any possibility of some form of temporary parking restriction being imposed on election day, so that the parking bays and adjacent on-street parking could effectively be reserved for voters (the whole of the community centre will be in use for election purposes from 6.30 am until 10.30 pm). If this was possible, then we would look to use the community centre for two polling stations but, if not, it may not be feasible. A response is still awaited from the County Council.

If the use of The Edge Community Centre is not feasible, then the fall-back option (given that the Midglos Indoor Bowls Club is no longer available) would be for electors to use the St Patrick's Church Hall, especially as it is proposed that it will no longer be used as a polling station for electors within Polling District BRW2.

## BRW2

Officers have also investigated alternative locations for a polling place to serve the voters of the existing BRW2 Polling District. Whilst suitable facilities are not available at the District Centre within the Gloucester Business Park (including in Tesco's), a function room is available within the Victoria Inn, Hucclecote Road, Brockworth, which offers the required level of facilities. It also represents a much closer polling place location for voters in that Polling District.

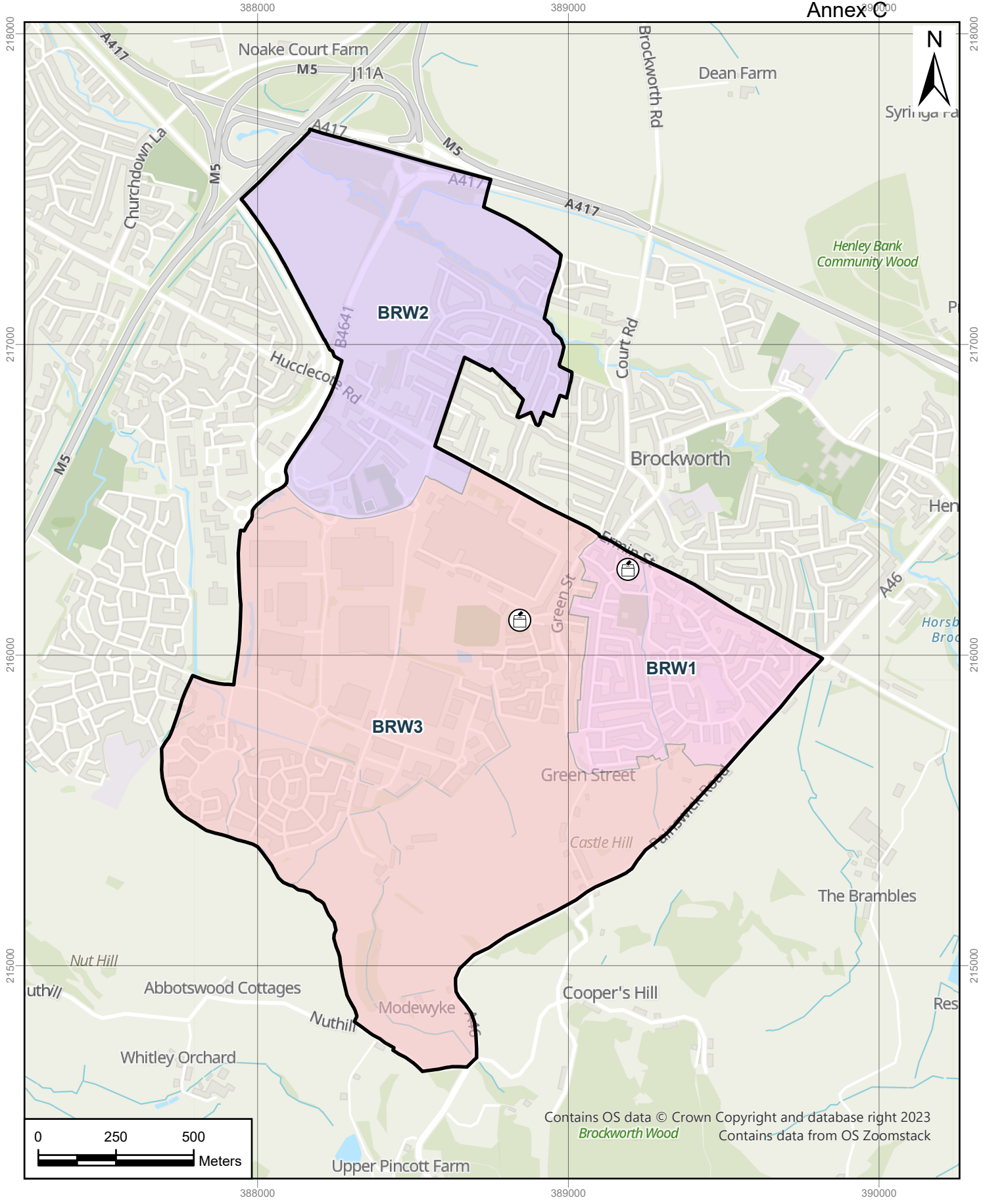
These proposals have been discussed with the Borough Ward Members, who are supportive.

Maps of the existing and proposed arrangements are set out in **Annex C**.

**Recommendation(s)**

**That the current Polling District arrangements be amended in line with the maps shown at Annex C to, as follows:**

- (i) a new Polling District BRW1, with a polling place at St Patrick's Church Hall, St Patrick's Court, Brockworth;**
- (ii) the retention of the existing Polling District BRW2 but with a polling place at the Victoria Inn, Hucclecote Road, Brockworth;**
- (iii) a new Polling District BRW3, with a polling place at The Edge Community Centre, Coopers Edge (but with a fall-back polling place option of St Patrick's Church Hall, St Patrick's Court, Brockworth).**



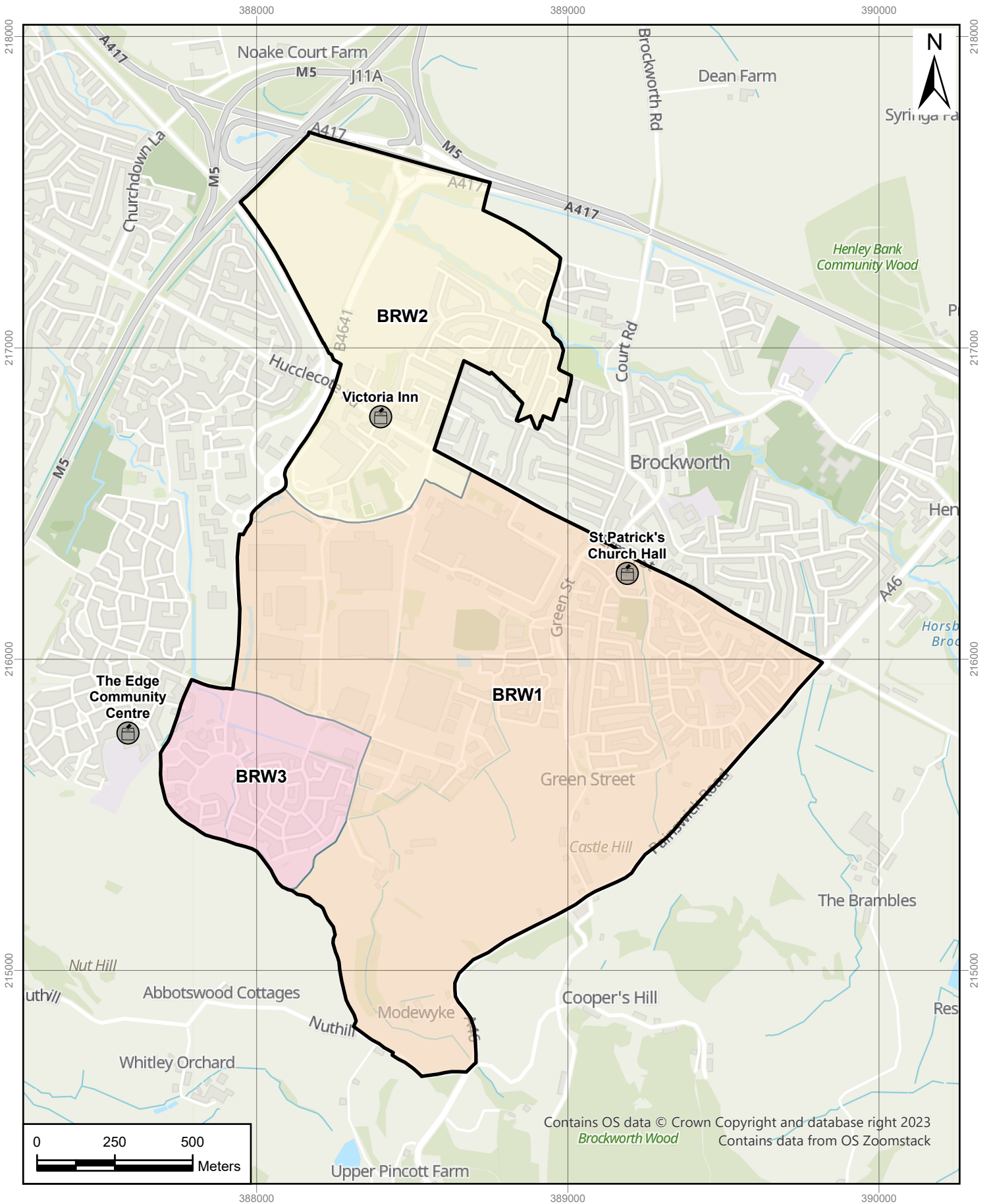
Legend	
	Ward Boundary
Current Polling District(s)	
	BRW1
	BRW2
	BRW3
	Current Polling Place(s)

**Tewkesbury Borough Council**  
**Existing arrangements**  
**Brockworth West Borough Ward**

Scale: 1:16,000  
 CRS: British National Grid  
 Coordinates: Meters

Date: 21 December 2023





Legend	
	Ward Boundary
Proposed Polling District(s) boundaries	
	BRW1
	BRW2
	BRW3
	Proposed Polling Place(s)

**Tewkesbury Borough Council**  
**Proposed arrangements**  
**Brockworth West Borough Ward**

Scale: 1:16,000  
 CRS: British National Grid  
 Coordinates: Meters

Date: 21 December 2023





## **CHURCHDOWN BROOKFIELD WITH HUCCLECOTE BOROUGH WARD**

<b>PRE-REVIEW POSITION</b>			
<b>Current Polling District</b>	<b>Polling District Reference</b>	<b>Current/proposed Parliamentary Constituency</b>	<b>Current Polling Place and/or Polling Station</b>
<i>Churchdown (Brookfield)</i>	<i>CHB</i>	<i>Tewkesbury - current North Cotswold - proposed (part)</i>	<i>Methodist Church Hall Chapel Hay Lane Churchdown GL3 2ET</i>
<i>Hucclecote 1</i>	<i>HCC1</i>	<i>Tewkesbury - current North Cotswold - proposed</i>	<i>Pineholt Village Hall Bird Road Hucclecote GL3 3SN</i>
<i>Hucclecote 2</i>	<i>HCC2</i>	<i>Tewkesbury - current North Cotswold - proposed</i>	<i>Pineholt Village Hall Bird Road Hucclecote GL3 3SN</i>

<b>ARISING FROM THE REVIEW</b>
<b>A. Re Polling District CHB</b>
<p><b><u>Representations</u></b></p> <p><u>North Cotswolds Constituency Labour Party</u></p> <p>No changes are proposed at this time.</p>
<p><b><u>Comments/Conclusions</u></b></p> <p>When reviewing the new Parliamentary Constituency boundaries (effective from the next UK Parliamentary Election), it has come to light that there are two anomalies between the Ward boundaries approved by the Council under its Community Governance Review in 2022 (and endorsed by the Local Government Boundary Commission for England) and the revised/new Constituency boundaries of (i) Tewkesbury and (ii) North Cotswolds. These anomalies were also highlighted, after the consultation had closed, by the North Cotswolds Constituency Labour Party.</p> <p>Both anomalies relate to land transferred from Innsworth Parish to Churchdown Parish, part of which was transferred to the Churchdown Brookfield with Hucclecote Borough Ward and part to the Churchdown St Johns Borough Ward. These areas will remain within the new Tewkesbury Parliamentary Constituency area rather than be transferred to the new North Cotswolds Parliamentary Constituency.</p> <p>Whilst there are currently no electors in either area of land, it is suggested that for clarity across the two Parliamentary Constituencies, a separate polling district be created in both Borough Ward areas comprising the affected areas.</p> <p>Maps of the existing and proposed arrangements are set out in <b>Annex D</b>.</p>

## **Recommendation(s)**

- (a) That the current Polling District CHB be sub-divided into two Polling Districts - CHB1 and CHB2 - to address the anomaly between the new Parliamentary Constituency Boundaries and the Borough Ward boundary (in line with the maps shown at Annex D);
- (b) that, in the event of there being any electors in the future within Polling District CHB2, the electors shall vote at Innsworth Community Hall for standalone Parliamentary elections but at the Methodist Church Hall, Churchdown, for all other elections.

## **B. Re Polling Districts HCC1 & HCC2**

### **Representations**

- (i) North Cotswolds Constituency Labour Party

No changes are proposed at this time.

- (ii) Resident

We currently have to travel to Pineholt Village Hall/Bowls Club to vote. This is a significant distance from Coopers Edge. It would be far more convenient for the residents of Coopers Edge to be able to vote at the Coopers Edge Community Centre.

### **Comments/Conclusions**

The situation with the Brockworth West and Hucclecote Wards is complex given the impact of the Coopers Edge development (encompassing BRW3, HCC1 (Hucclecote) and an adjoining area in Stroud District) on the current polling district arrangements.

Given the representations made, including related comments from a resident of Hucclecote Parish who lives on part of the Coopers Edge development, officers have investigated the possibility of creating a polling place at The Edge Community Centre (or Coopers Edge School) for use by residents of that part of the development within Tewkesbury Borough (in both Brockworth and Hucclecote Wards). Stroud District Council currently use a room in the community centre as a polling station for those residents of Coopers Edge whose properties are located within Stroud District. The Electoral Commission has confirmed that we could use a facility outside not only a polling district but also a Borough/District area if this was the most convenient and effective for voters.

Such an arrangement as suggested would appear the most beneficial and logical for electors. It should also be borne in mind that there is no direct road link between this part of the Coopers Edge development and the current polling station at Pineholt Village Hall.

From an initial discussion with officers from Stroud District Council, they have no objection in principle to our use of the community centre venue, subject to it being possible to introduce adequate measures to avoid any voter confusion between the polling stations across the two council areas. They did however question whether the introduction of a further polling station serving almost 1700 potential electors would give rise to possible parking/traffic issues – especially as there are already issues in the locality generally.

Following a site visit, the community centre could easily accommodate two polling stations and 'segregation' issues could be managed. However, parking could clearly be a problem. There is no dedicated parking for the community centre (other than three spaces for use by staff located on a blocked paved area). The adjacent school does have parking, but not enough to cater for staff parking on most days. There are 19/20 parking bays in front of the school and community centre, but

these are on highway land and available for use by all, with no time restrictions. There is a circulatory route for school dropping off.

There is limited on-street parking on one side of the road adjacent to the parking bays; and other on-street parking available on many of the roads in the immediate area. However, more generally, parking in the area is difficult (often indiscriminate) to say the least - ambulance parking also appears prevalent (possibly because paramedics live in the area) and there is parking on various block paved areas.

It is understood that representatives from Upton St Leonards Parish Council have recently met with the local County Councillor and the Local Highways Manager, regarding this issue and that they are also working with the School and the Coopers Edge Trust. It is further understood that the Trustees will be considering potential options before seeking to meet with County Highways to find a suitable resolution - as the affected land has been adopted by the County Council as public highway land.

Whilst one of the reasons for seeking an additional polling station at the community centre is that it will enable many voters to walk to that station, there is a need to ensure that parking is available for users, including disabled people.

Against this background, the County Council has been approached to see whether there is any possibility of some form of temporary parking restriction being imposed on election day, so that the parking bays and adjacent on-street parking could effectively be reserved for voters (the whole of the community centre will be in use for election purposes from 6.30 am until 10.30 pm). If this was possible, then we would look to use the community centre for two polling stations but, if not, it may not be feasible. A response is still awaited from the County Council.

If the use of The Edge Community Centre is not feasible, then the fall-back option would be for electors to continue to use the Pineholt Village Hall.

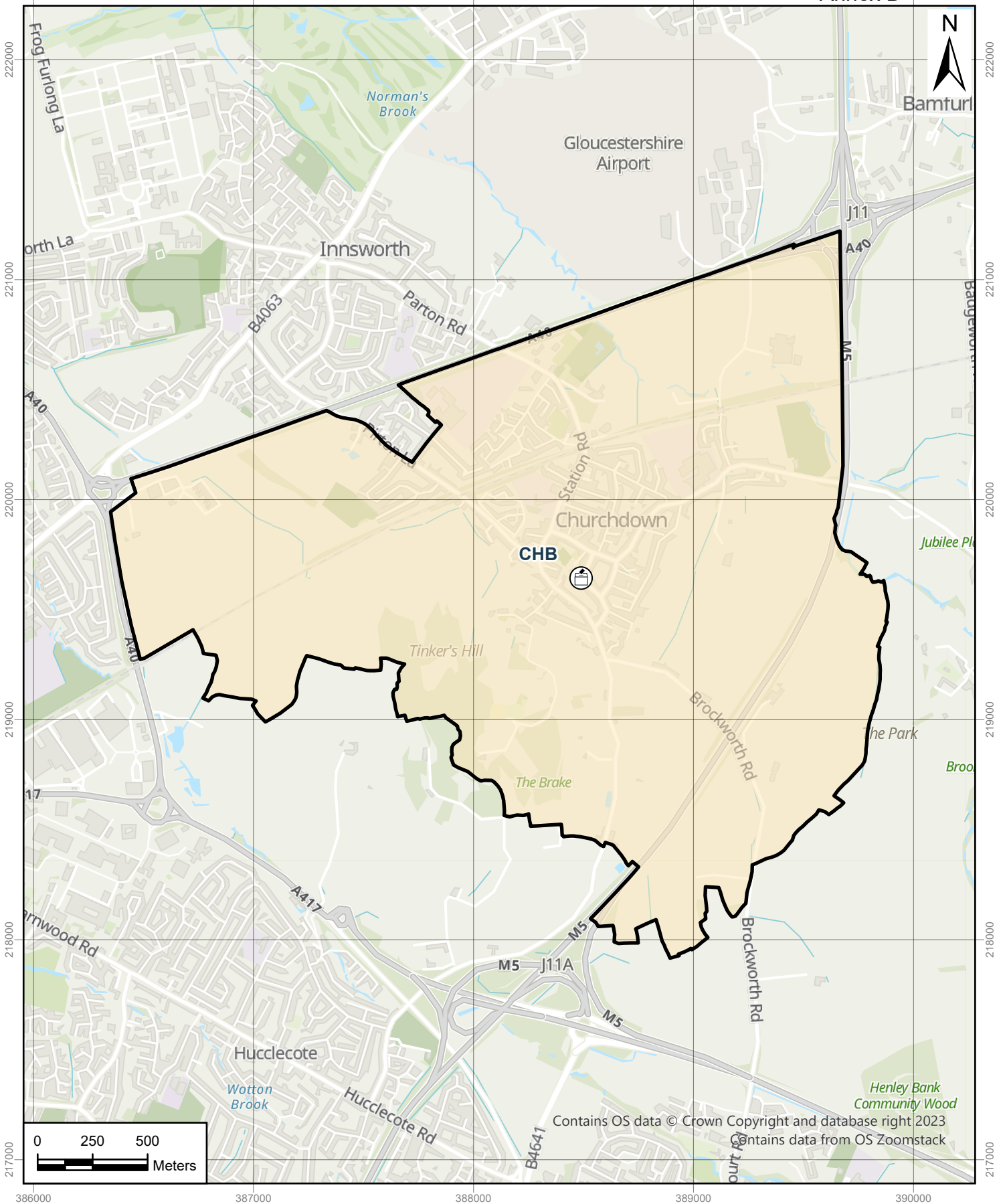
Maps of the existing and proposed arrangements are set out in **Annex E**.

### **Recommendation(s)**

**That the current Polling District arrangements be amended in line with the maps shown at Annex E to create two new Polling Districts, as follows:**

**(i) a new Polling District HCC1, with a polling place at The Edge Community Centre, Coopers Edge (but with a fall-back polling place option of Pineholt Village Hall, Bird Road, Hucclecote);**

**(ii) a new Polling District HCC2, with a polling place at Pineholt Village Hall, Bird Road, Hucclecote.**



**Legend**

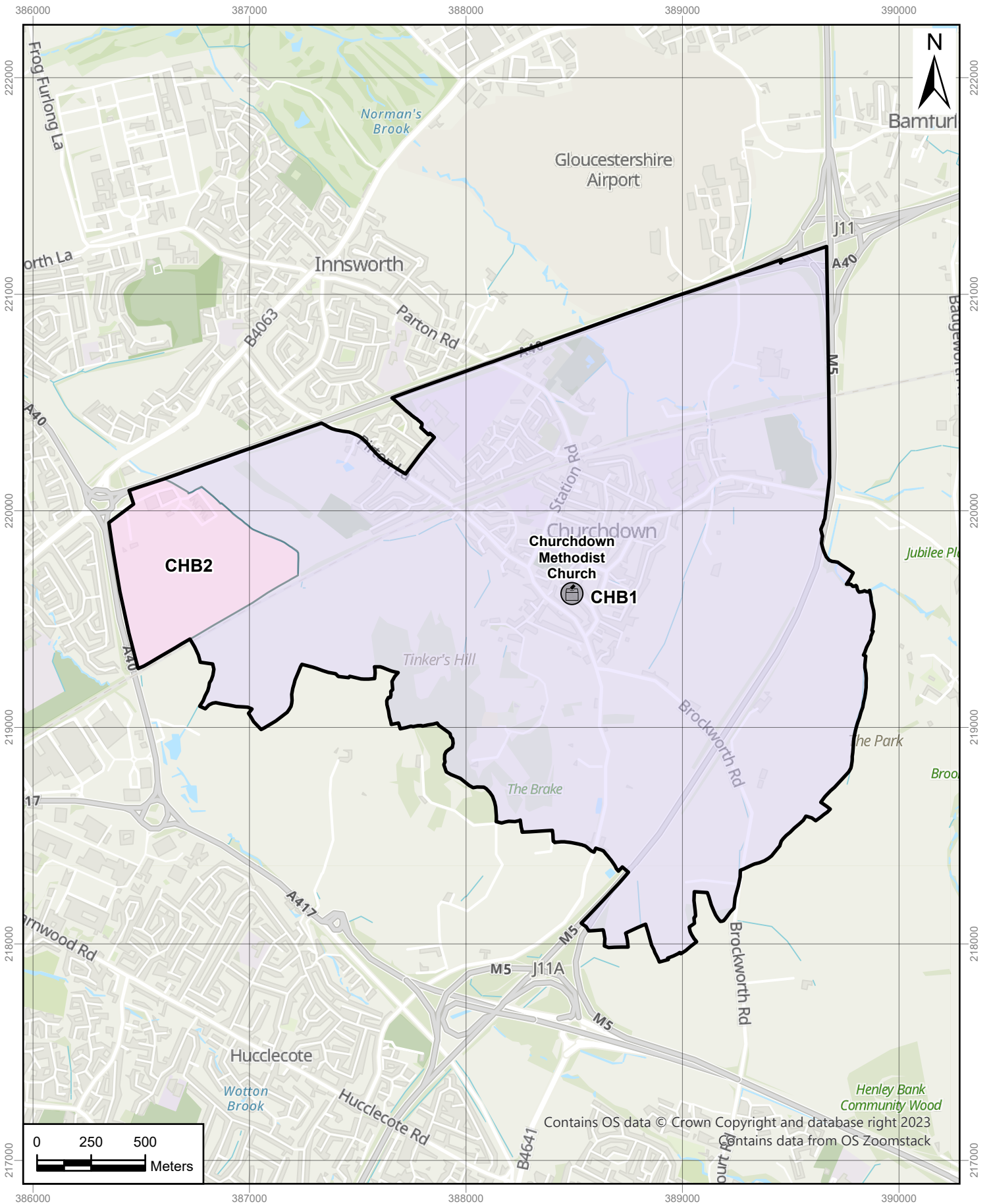
- Ward Boundary
- Current Polling District(s)  
CHB
- Current Polling Place(s)

**Tewkesbury Borough Council**  
**Existing arrangements**  
**Churchdown Brookfield with Hucclecote Borough**  
**Ward (Churchdown Brookfield)**

Scale: 1:23,000  
 CRS: British National Grid  
 Coordinates: Meters

Date: 21 December 2023





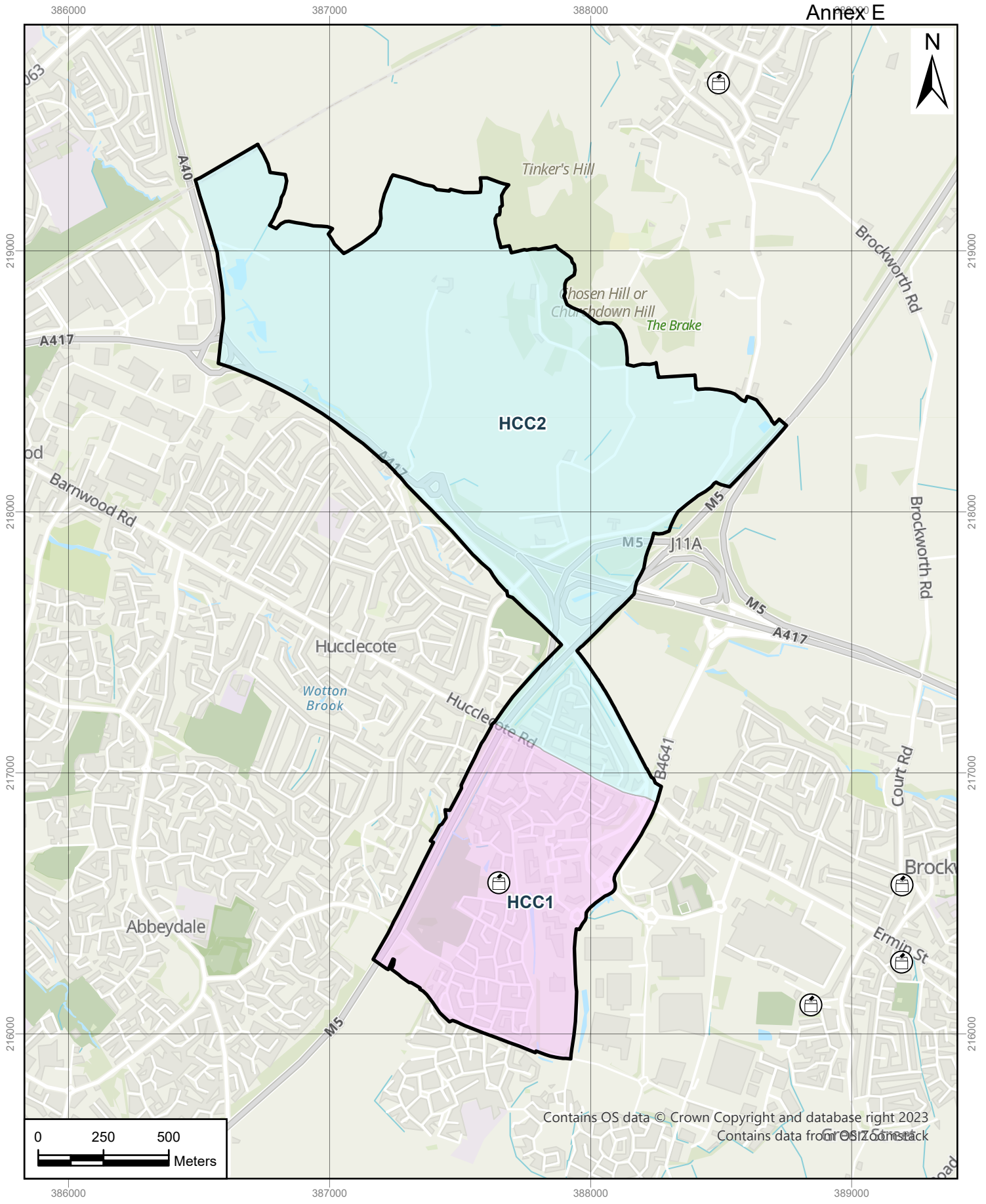
Legend	
	Ward Boundary
Proposed Polling District(s) boundaries	
	CHB1
	CHB2
	Proposed Polling Place(s)

**Tewkesbury Borough Council**  
**Proposed arrangements**  
**Churchdown Brookfield with Hucclecote Borough**  
**Ward (Churchdown Brookfield)**

Scale: 1:23,000  
 CRS: British National Grid  
 Coordinates: Meters

Date: 21 December 2023





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Legend	
	Ward Boundary
Current Polling District(s)	
	HCC1
	HCC2
	Current Polling Place(s)

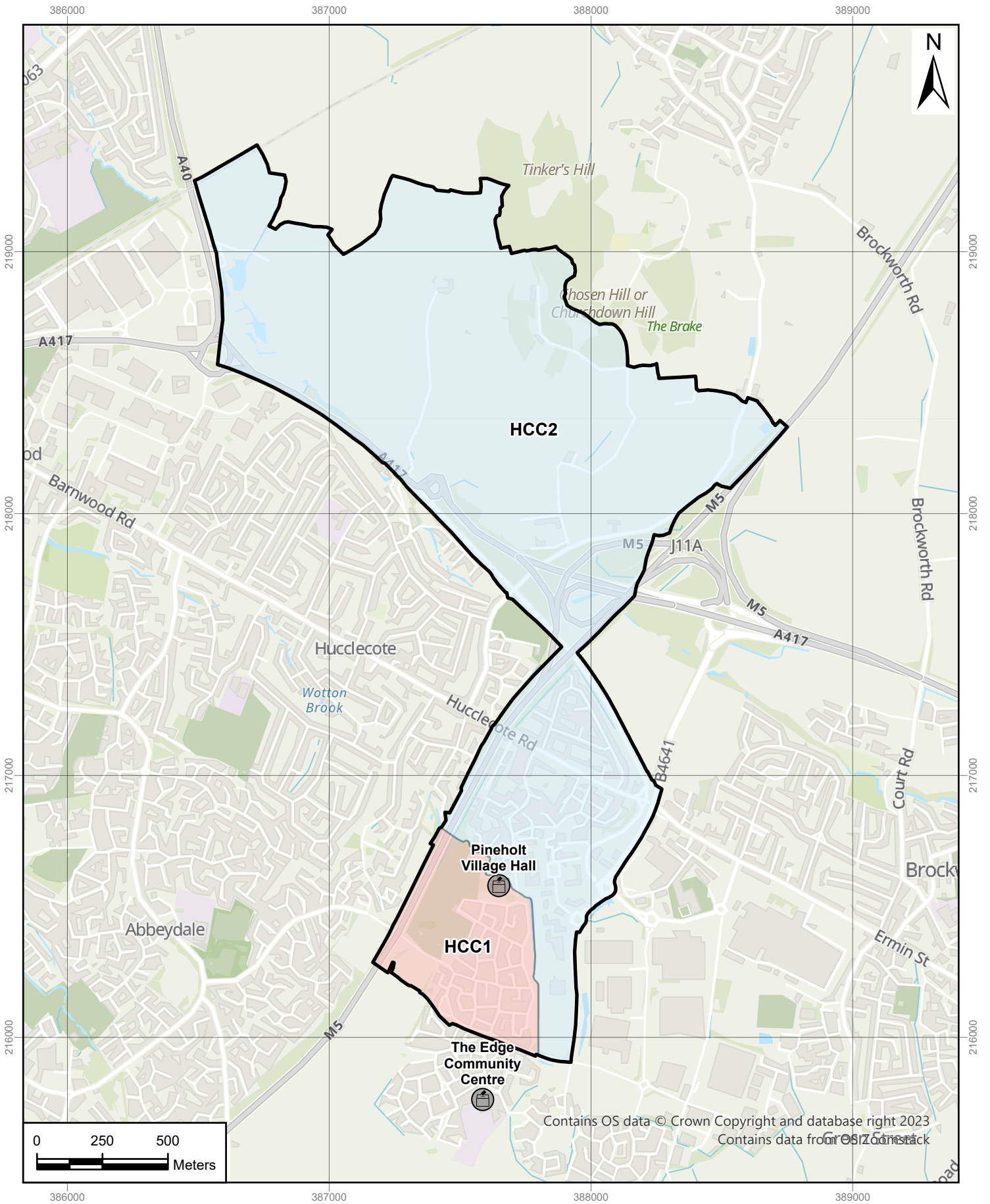
**Tewkesbury Borough Council**  
**Existing arrangements**  
**Churchdown Brookfield with Hucclecote**  
**Borough Ward (Hucclecote)**

Scale: 1:19,000  
 CRS: British National Grid  
 Coordinates: Meters

Date: 21 December 2023

**142**





Legend	
	Ward Boundary
Proposed Polling District(s) boundaries	
	HCC1
	HCC2
	Proposed Polling Place(s)

**Tewkesbury Borough Council**  
**Proposed arrangements**  
**Churchdown Brookfield with Hucclecote**  
**Borough Ward (Hucclecote)**

Scale: 1:19,000  
 CRS: British National Grid  
 Coordinates: Meters

143
Date: 21 December 2023



## **CHURCHDOWN ST JOHNS BOROUGH WARD**

<b>PRE-REVIEW POSITION</b>			
<b>Current Polling District</b>	<b>Polling District Reference</b>	<b>Current/proposed Parliamentary Constituency</b>	<b>Current Polling Place and/or Polling Station</b>
Churchdown (St Johns 1)	CHJ1	Tewkesbury - current North Cotswold - proposed	St John's Church Hall St John's Avenue Churchdown GL3 2DB
Churchdown (St Johns 2)	CHJ2	Tewkesbury - current North Cotswold - proposed	St John's Church Hall St John's Avenue Churchdown GL3 2DB
Churchdown (St Johns 3)	CHJ3	Tewkesbury - current North Cotswold – proposed (part)	St John's Church Hall St John's Avenue Churchdown GL3 2DB
Churchdown (St Johns 4)	CHJ4	Tewkesbury - current North Cotswold - proposed	St John's Church Hall St John's Avenue Churchdown GL3 2DB

<b>ARISING FROM THE REVIEW</b>
<p><b><u>Representations</u></b></p> <p><u>North Cotswolds Constituency Labour Party</u></p> <p>No changes are proposed, although given the population growth at the western end of the polling district CHJ3, an option might be to consider exploring the use of GL3 Community Centre or the Catholic Church situated on Cheltenham Road East as this lies within the area of that Polling District.</p>
<p><b><u>Comments/Conclusions</u></b></p> <p>(i) <u>Existing Polling District CHJ3</u></p> <p>The population growth at the western end of the current polling district CHJ3 is acknowledged but, upon review, it is not considered that the alternative polling place suggested will offer significant benefits to the current polling place. As such, no changes are recommended at the current time. It is, however, considered that, in advance of any future review, detailed work is undertaken to establish whether a more appropriate street split can be achieved across the Borough Ward, with the potential for additional polling places.</p> <p>(ii) <u>Existing Polling Districts CHJ3 and CHJ4</u></p> <p>Arising out of previous Community Governance/boundary reviews, a separate, small, polling district CHJ4 was required to be created as a temporary measure. However, this split is no longer necessary, and Polling Districts CHJ3 and CHJ4 can be combined.</p>



(iii) Parliamentary Constituency/Borough Ward Boundary Anomaly

When reviewing the new Parliamentary Constituency boundaries (effective from the next UK Parliamentary Election), it has come to light that there are two anomalies between the Ward boundaries approved by the Council under its Community Governance Review in 2022 (and endorsed by the Local Government Boundary Commission for England) and the revised/new Constituency boundaries of (i) Tewkesbury and (ii) North Cotswolds. These anomalies were also highlighted, after the consultation had closed, by the North Cotswolds Constituency Labour Party.

Both anomalies relate to land transferred from Innsworth Parish to Churchdown Parish, part of which was transferred to the Churchdown Brookfield with Hucclecote Borough Ward and part to the Churchdown St Johns Borough Ward. These areas will remain within the new Tewkesbury Parliamentary Constituency area rather than be transferred to the new North Cotswolds Parliamentary Constituency.

Whilst there are currently no electors in either area of land, it is suggested that for clarity across the two Parliamentary Constituencies, a separate polling district be created in both Borough Ward areas comprising the affected areas.

General

Maps of the existing and proposed arrangements are set out in **Annex F**.

**Recommendation(s)**

**That, in line with the maps at Annex F:**

- (a) no changes be made to existing Polling Districts CHJ1 or CHJ2;**
- (b) subject to (c) below, existing Polling Districts CHJ3 and CHJ4 be combined to form a new Polling District CHJ3;**
- (c) the proposed Polling District CHJ3 be sub-divided into two Polling Districts - CHJ3 and CHJ4 - to address the anomaly between the new Parliamentary Constituency Boundaries and the Borough Ward boundary;**
- (d) in the event of there being any electors in the future within the proposed Polling District CHJ4, the electors shall vote at Innsworth Community Hall for a stand-alone Parliamentary elections but at St John's Church Hall, St John's Avenue, Churchdown, for all other elections;**
- (e) subject to the exception identified in (d) above, St John's Church Hall, St John's Avenue, Churchdown continue to be used as the polling place for all polling places within Churchdown St Johns Borough Ward.**

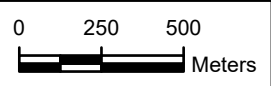
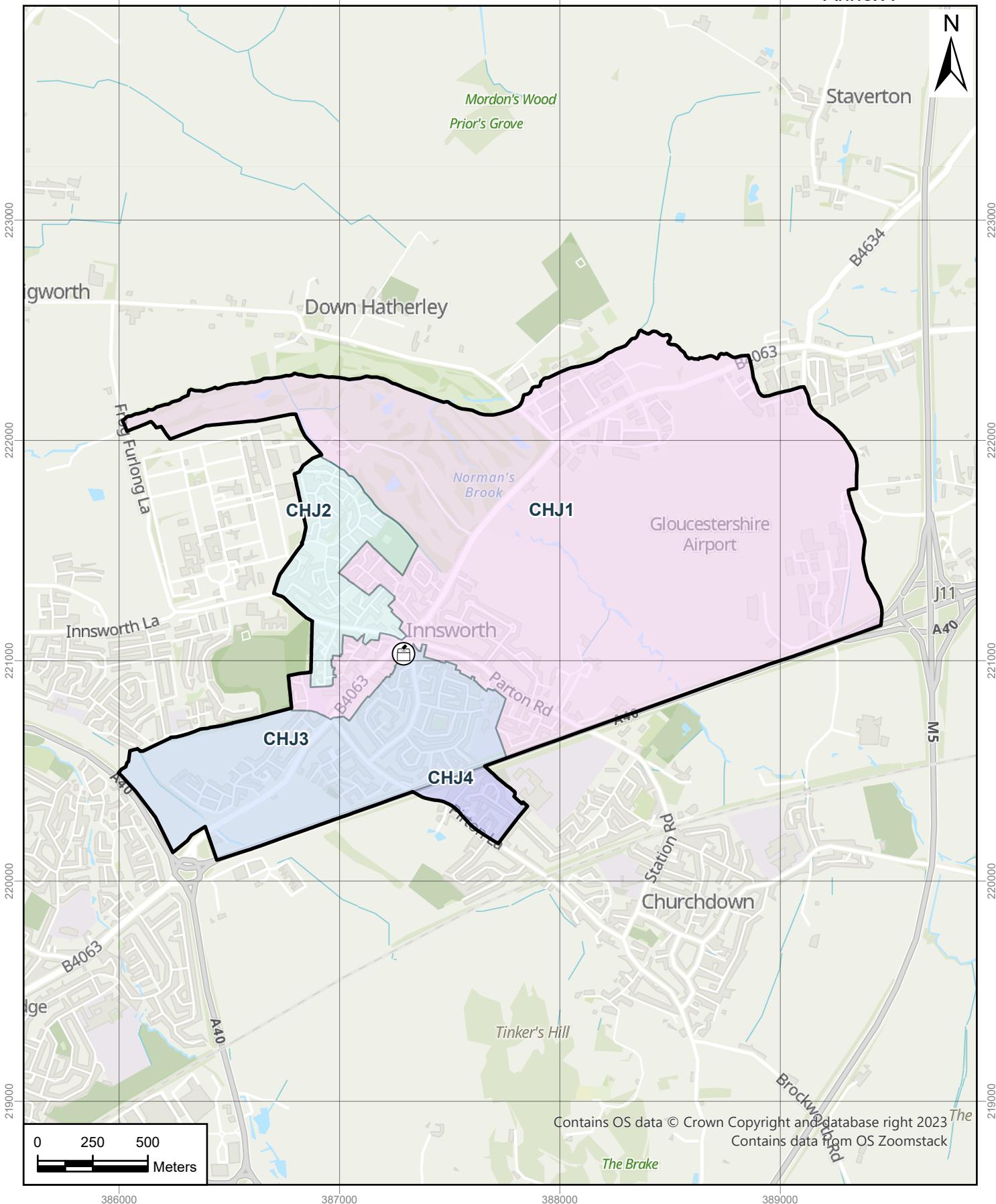
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Annex F



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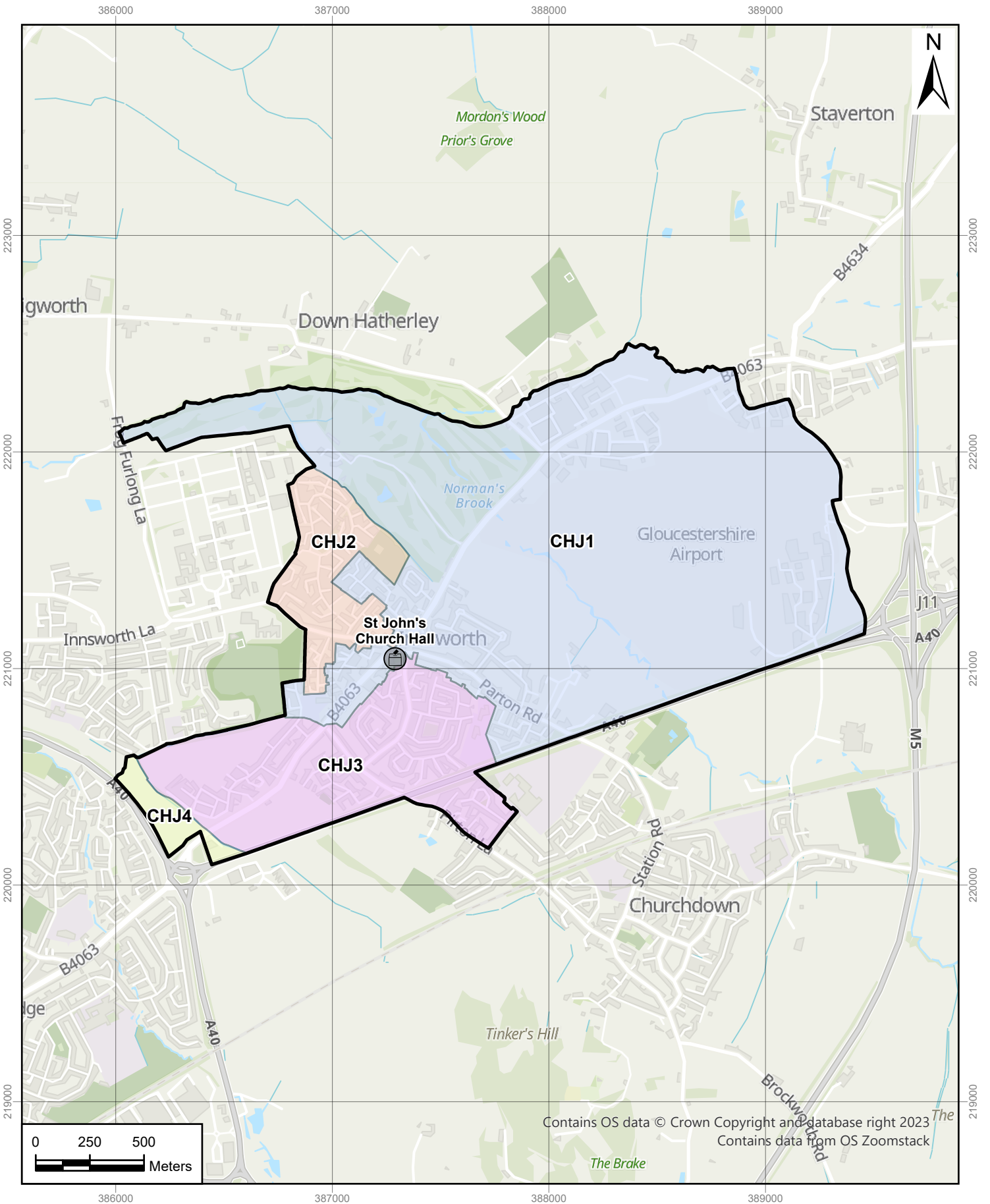
Legend	
	Ward Boundary
Current Polling District(s)	
	CHJ1
	CHJ2
	CHJ3
	CHJ4
	Current Polling Place(s)

**Tewkesbury Borough Council**  
**Existing arrangements**  
**Churchdown St Johns Borough Ward**

Scale: 1:23,000  
 CRS: British National Grid  
 Coordinates: Meters

Date: 21 December 2023





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Legend	
	Ward Boundary
Proposed Polling District(s) boundaries	
	CHJ1
	CHJ2
	CHJ3
	CHJ4
	Proposed Polling Place(s)

**Tewkesbury Borough Council**  
**Proposed arrangements**  
**Churchdown St Johns Borough Ward**

Scale: 1:23,000  
 CRS: British National Grid  
 Coordinates: Meters

Date: 21 December 2023



## **CLEEVE GRANGE BOROUGH WARD**

<b>PRE-REVIEW POSITION</b>			
<b><i>Current Polling District</i></b>	<b><i>Polling District Reference</i></b>	<b><i>Current/proposed Parliamentary Constituency</i></b>	<b><i>Current Polling Place and/or Polling Station</i></b>
<i>Bishops Cleeve (Cleeve Grange)</i>	<i>BCG</i>	<i>Tewkesbury</i>	<i>Sixth Form Block Cleeve School Two Hedges Road Bishops Cleeve GL52 8AE</i>

<b>ARISING FROM THE REVIEW</b>
<b><u>Representations</u></b> None received.
<b><u>Comments/Conclusions</u></b> No changes are required.
<b><u>Recommendation(s)</u></b> That no changes be made to the current arrangements.

**CLEEVE HILL BOROUGH WARD**

<b>PRE-REVIEW POSITION</b>			
<b>Current Polling District</b>	<b>Polling District Reference</b>	<b>Current/proposed Parliamentary Constituency</b>	<b>Current Polling Place and/or Polling Station</b>
<i>Gotherington</i>	<i>GTH</i>	<i>Tewkesbury</i>	<i>Gotherington Village Hall 54 Malleson Road Gotherington GL52 9EX</i>
<i>Southam</i>	<i>STH</i>	<i>Tewkesbury</i>	<i>Southam Village Hall The Close School Road Southam GL52 3NS</i>
<i>Woodmancote</i>	<i>WDM</i>	<i>Tewkesbury</i>	<i>Woodmancote New Village Hall Bushcombe Close Woodmancote GL52 9HX</i>

<b>ARISING FROM THE REVIEW</b>
<b>A. Re Polling District WDM</b>
<p><b><u>Representations</u></b></p> <p><u>Resident</u></p> <p>I do not think the village hall is a suitable venue as a polling station. In 2022, the Village Hall introduced a policy which led to some residents being banned from entering Woodmancote village hall and the grounds.</p> <p>I would suggest if TBC wish to continue to use the facility as a polling station by members of our community, they should first address this issue. Whilst the policy remains in place this venue is not open to all.</p>
<p><b><u>Comments/Conclusions</u></b></p> <p>The Chairman of the Village Hall has confirmed that if any such ban was in place at the time of an election, the restriction would not apply insofar as an elector's democratic right to vote was concerned.</p>
<p><b><u>Recommendation(s)</u></b></p> <p><b>That no changes be made to the current arrangements.</b></p>

**B. Re Polling Districts GTH & STH**

**Representations**

None received.

**Comments/Conclusions**

No changes are required.

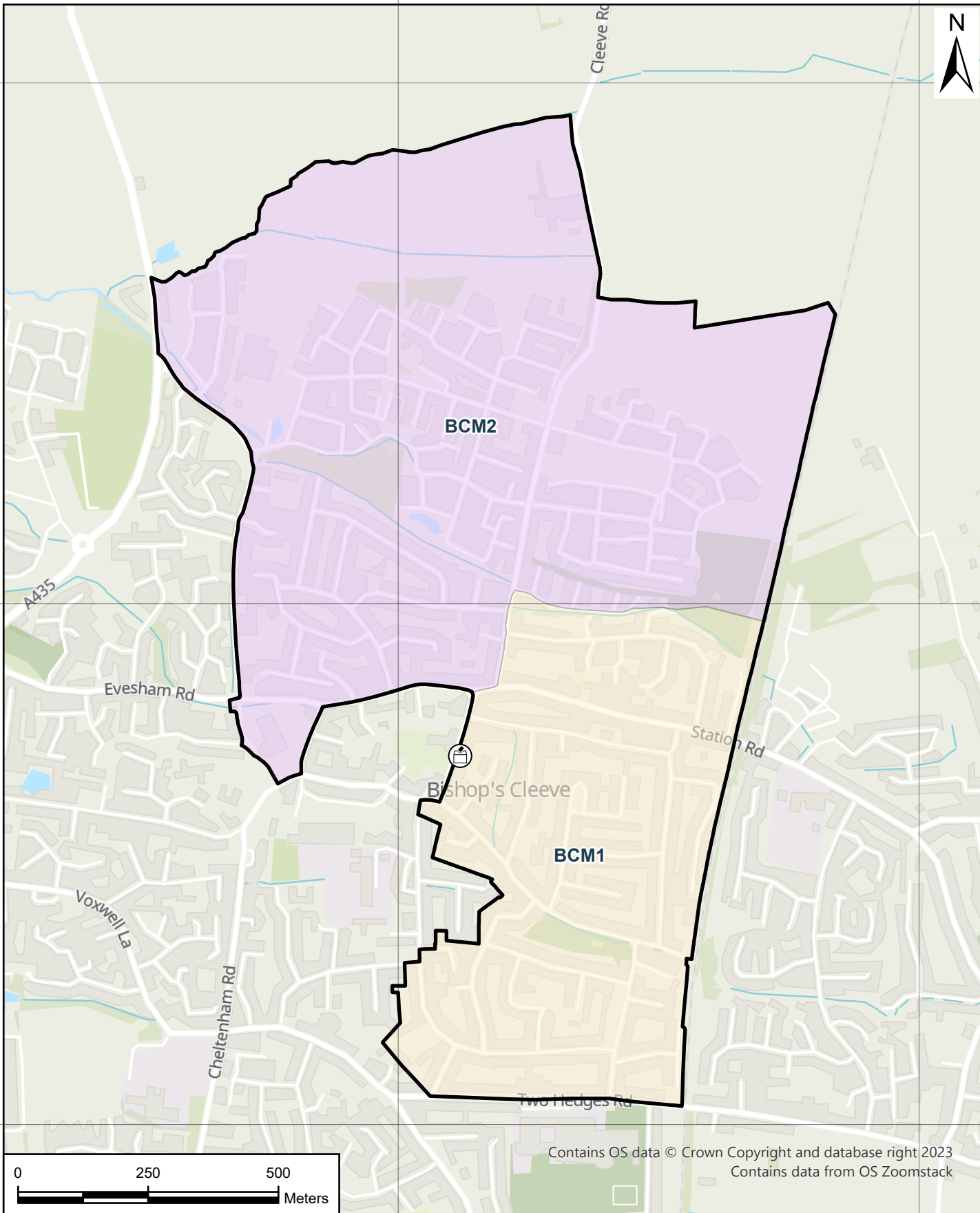
**Recommendation(s)**

**That no changes be made to the current arrangements.**

## CLEEVE ST MICHAEL'S BOROUGH WARD

<b>PRE-REVIEW POSITION</b>			
<b>Current Polling District</b>	<b>Polling District Reference</b>	<b>Current/proposed Parliamentary Constituency</b>	<b>Current Polling Place and/or Polling Station</b>
<i>Bishops Cleeve (Cleeve St Michaels 1)</i>	<i>BCM1</i>	<i>Tewkesbury</i>	<i>St Michael's Community Centre School Road Bishops Cleeve GL52 8BA</i>
<i>Bishops Cleeve (Cleeve St Michaels 2)</i>	<i>BCM2</i>	<i>Tewkesbury</i>	<i>St Michael's Community Centre School Road Bishops Cleeve GL52 8BA</i>

<b>ARISING FROM THE REVIEW</b>
<p><b><u>Representations</u></b></p> <p><u>Bishops Cleeve Parish Council</u></p> <p>The Parish Council is taking ownership of the new Homelands Community Building, situated in Gotherington Lane, early in 2024 as it is almost complete and ready for handover. This site may suit the many newer residents of the Cleeve St Michaels ward.</p>
<p><b><u>Comments/Conclusions</u></b></p> <p>The new Homelands Community Centre Building would be more convenient for the voters in Polling District BCM2. If the new Centre is not completed by the scheduled date, and in time for any scheduled election, the St Michael's Community Centre will be retained as the polling place for Polling District BCM2 in the intervening period.</p> <p>Maps of the existing and proposed arrangements are set out in <b>Annex G</b>.</p>
<p><b><u>Recommendation(s)</u></b></p> <p>(a) That the St Michael's Community Centre, School Road, Bishops Cleeve continue to be used as the polling place for Polling District BCM1;</p> <p>(b) that the new Homelands Community Building, situated in Gotherington Lane, Bishops Cleeve (as shown in Annex G), be designated as the polling place for Polling District BCM2 (but with a fall-back polling place option of St Michael's Community Centre, School Road, Bishops Cleeve).</p>



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Legend	
	Ward Boundary
Current Polling District(s)	
	BCM1
	BCM2
	Current Polling Place(s)

**Tewkesbury Borough Council**  
**Existing arrangements**  
**Bishops Cleeve St Michaels Borough Ward**

Scale: 1:10,000  
 CRS: British National Grid  
 Coordinates: Meters

Date: 11 January 2024





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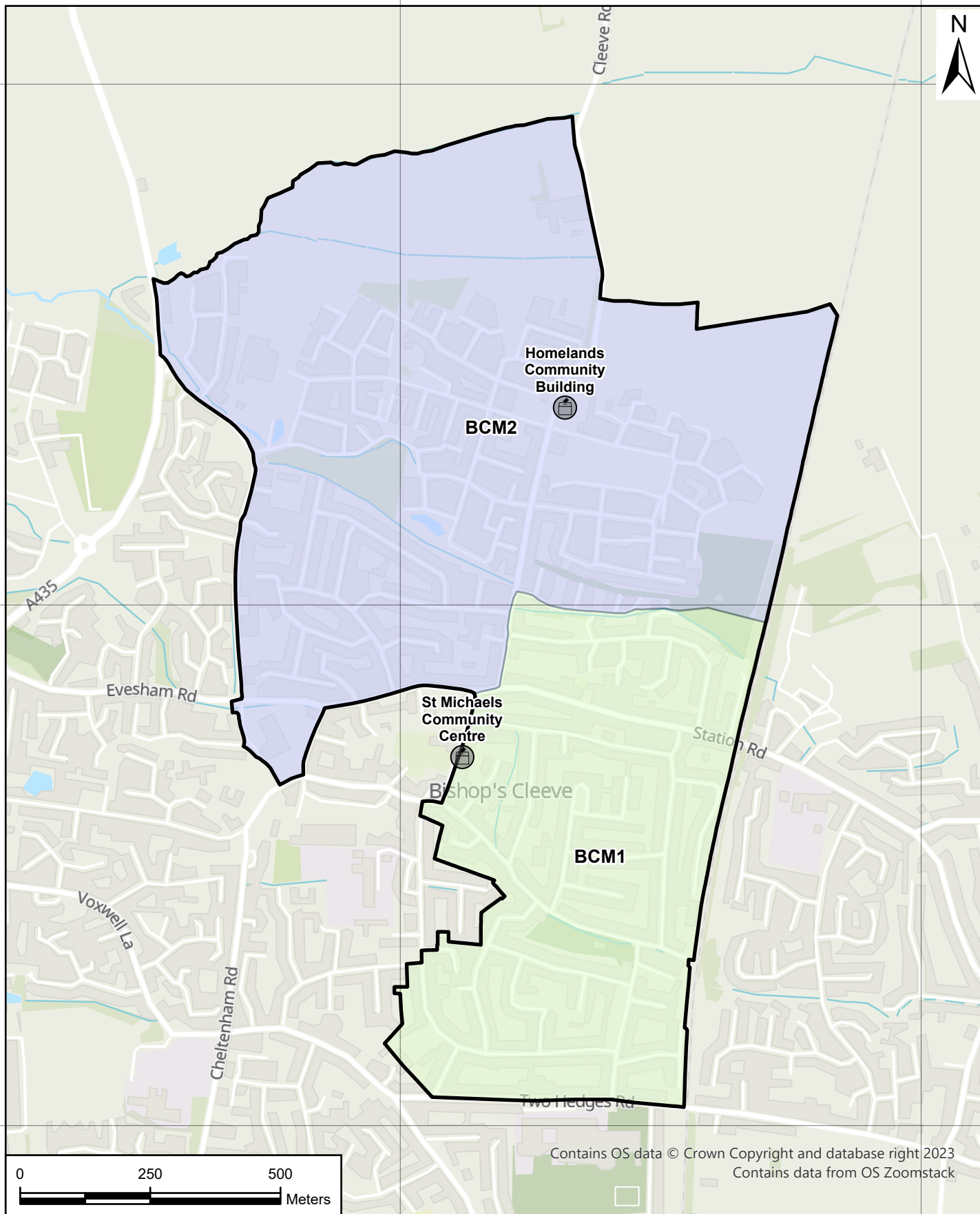
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




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Legend

-  Ward Boundary
- Proposed Polling District(s) boundaries
-  BCM1
-  BCM2
-  Proposed Polling Place(s)

**Tewkesbury Borough Council**  
**Proposed arrangements**  
**Bishops Cleeve St Michaels Borough Ward**

Scale: 1:10,000  
 CRS: British National Grid  
 Coordinates: Meters



## **CLEEVE WEST BOROUGH WARD**

<b>PRE-REVIEW POSITION</b>			
<b>Current Polling District</b>	<b>Polling District Reference</b>	<b>Current/proposed Parliamentary Constituency</b>	<b>Current Polling Place and/or Polling Station</b>
<i>Bishops Cleeve (Cleeve West 1)</i>	<i>BCW1</i>	<i>Tewkesbury</i>	<i>Bishops Cleeve Tithe Barn Cheltenham Road Bishops Cleeve GL52 8LU</i>
<i>Bishops Cleeve (Cleeve West 2)</i>	<i>BCW2</i>	<i>Tewkesbury</i>	<i>Bishops Cleeve Tithe Barn Cheltenham Road Bishops Cleeve GL52 8LU</i>

<b>ARISING FROM THE REVIEW</b>
<p><b><u>Representations</u></b></p> <p><u>Resident</u></p> <p>I think having a polling station on the new Cleevelands site would be a good idea especially for those who can't travel etc.</p>
<p><b><u>Comments/Conclusions</u></b></p> <p>The representation is supported in principle, given the location of this and other development on the west side of the A435. However, there is no community hall/building facility within the Cleevelands development site itself at the present time, although one is planned through the related planning agreement for the site.</p> <p>Enquiries have been made regarding a room/space that is for hire within the Medical Centre, but the practice has confirmed that this would not be a suitable or practicable venue for polling place/station use but did suggest St Michaels Village Hall/Community Centre. However, this facility is located further away than the Tithe Barn and is used as a polling place for Cleeve St Michaels Ward which could give rise to voter confusion. Another possibility was the Cheltenham North Rugby Club but, while this is located within the polling district, it is no more convenient than the Tithe Barn (which has the added benefit of being known by electors).</p> <p>Most recently, attention has also been drawn to a potential community facility within the Bishops Cleeve Nursing Home which might have the potential to host a polling station for Cleeve West electors. Contact has been made with the Nursing Home, and any response received will be reported orally at the meeting.</p> <p>In any event, any new community facility on the Cleevelands site is likely to prove a viable alternative location, as and when constructed.</p>
<p><b><u>Recommendation(s)</u></b></p> <p><b>That no changes be made to the current arrangements.</b></p>

## **HIGHNAM WITH HAW BRIDGE BOROUGH WARD**

<b>PRE-REVIEW POSITION</b>			
<b>Current Polling District</b>	<b>Polling District Reference</b>	<b>Current/proposed Parliamentary Constituency</b>	<b>Current Polling Place and/or Polling Station</b>
<i>Ashleworth</i>	<i>ALW</i>	<i>Forest of Dean</i>	<i>Ashleworth Memorial Hall Nup End Ashleworth GL19 4JJ</i>
<i>Chaceley</i>	<i>CHY</i>	<i>Forest of Dean</i>	<i>Chaceley Village Hall Chaceley GL19 4EH</i>
<i>Forthampton</i>	<i>FTH</i>	<i>Forest of Dean</i>	<i>Forthampton Village Hall School Lane Forthampton GL19 4QB</i>
<i>Hasfield</i>	<i>HSF</i>	<i>Forest of Dean</i>	<i>Tirley Village Hall Ledbury Road Tirley GL19 4EW</i>
<i>Highnam</i>	<i>HGM</i>	<i>Forest of Dean</i>	<i>The Gambier Parry Hall Highnam Community Centre Newent Road Highnam GL2 8DG</i>
<i>Maisemore</i>	<i>MSM</i>	<i>Forest of Dean</i>	<i>Maisemore Village Hall Church Road Maisemore GL2 8JE</i>
<i>Minsterworth</i>	<i>MST</i>	<i>Forest of Dean</i>	<i>Minsterworth Village Hall Main Road Minsterworth GL2 8JH</i>
<i>Tirley</i>	<i>TRL</i>	<i>Forest of Dean</i>	<i>Tirley Village Hall Ledbury Road Tirley GL19 4EW</i>

## ARISING FROM THE REVIEW

### Representations

#### Minsterworth Parish Council (re Polling District MST)

Minsterworth Parish Council strongly supports the use of Minsterworth Village Hall as a polling station for the following reasons:

1. The Minsterworth Village Hall is on the main A48, very clearly visible and a well-known black and white building. There is a bus stop nearby with a frequent bus service.
2. There is a large car park (60 + spaces) with overhead floodlighting and dedicated disabled parking spaces.
3. Disabled access is good.
4. In addition to the car park lights, the hall has PIR floodlighting at the front and the side (disabled access), all of which is monitored by CCTV.
5. Internally the building is well lit, there is a good heating system, there is ample space, toilet and kitchen facilities, and ample chairs and tables are available.
6. Wifi is available, and there is a good mobile phone signal.

### Comments/Conclusions

No changes are required.

### Recommendation(s)

**That no changes be made to the current arrangements.**

## **INNSWORTH BOROUGH WARD**

<b>PRE-REVIEW POSITION</b>			
<b>Current Polling District</b>	<b>Polling District Reference</b>	<b>Current/proposed Parliamentary Constituency</b>	<b>Current Polling Place and/or Polling Station</b>
<i>Innsworth</i>	<i>INS</i>	<i>Tewkesbury</i>	<i>Innsworth Community Hall Rookery Road Innsworth GL3 1AU</i>
<i>Longford</i>	<i>LNG</i>	<i>Tewkesbury</i>	<i>Longford Village Hall Longford Lane Longford GL2 9EL</i>
<i>Longford 1</i>	<i>LNG1</i>	<i>Tewkesbury</i>	<i>Longford Village Hall Longford Lane Longford GL2 9EL</i>
<i>Twigworth</i>	<i>TWG</i>	<i>Tewkesbury</i>	<i>Twigworth Green Sales Centre (Bovis/Linden) Tewkesbury Road Twigworth GL2 9PQ</i>

<b>ARISING FROM THE REVIEW</b>
<p><b><u>Representations</u></b></p> <p>None received.</p>
<p><b><u>Comments/Conclusions</u></b></p> <p>As a result of previous electoral boundary changes, the parish of Longford comprised two polling districts. This sub-division is no longer necessary.</p> <p>No other changes are required.</p>
<p><b><u>Recommendation(s)</u></b></p> <p>(a) That existing Polling Districts LNG and LNG1 be combined into one Polling District, with the Polling District Reference LNG;</p> <p>(b) that no other changes be made to the current arrangements.</p>

## **ISBOURNE BOROUGH WARD**

<b>PRE-REVIEW POSITION</b>			
<b>Current Polling District</b>	<b>Polling District Reference</b>	<b>Current/proposed Parliamentary Constituency</b>	<b>Current Polling Place and/or Polling Station</b>
<i>Ashchurch Rural 1</i>	<i>ARL1</i>	<i>Tewkesbury</i>	<i>Ashchurch Village Hall Ashchurch Road Ashchurch GL20 8LA</i>
<i>Walton Cardiff</i>	<i>ARL2</i>	<i>Tewkesbury</i>	<i>Ashchurch Village Hall Ashchurch Road Ashchurch GL20 8LA</i>
<i>Buckland</i>	<i>BCD</i>	<i>Tewkesbury</i>	<i>Laverton Village Hall Laverton WR12 7NA</i>
<i>Dumbleton</i>	<i>DMB</i>	<i>Tewkesbury</i>	<i>Dumbleton Village Hall Dairy Lane Dumbleton WR11 7TP</i>
<i>Oxenton</i>	<i>OXT</i>	<i>Tewkesbury</i>	<i>Teddington Village Hall Alstone Road Teddington GL20 8JA</i>
<i>Snowhill</i>	<i>SNH</i>	<i>Tewkesbury</i>	<i>Snowhill Village Hall Snowhill WR12 7JU</i>
<i>Stanton</i>	<i>STN</i>	<i>Tewkesbury</i>	<i>The Burland Parish Hall Church Lane Stanton WR12 7NE</i>
<i>Stanway</i>	<i>STW</i>	<i>Tewkesbury</i>	<i>Isbourne Valley School Didbrook GL54 5PF</i>
<i>Teddington</i>	<i>TED</i>	<i>Tewkesbury</i>	<i>Teddington Village Hall Alstone Road Teddington GL20 8JA</i>

<i>Toddington</i>	<i>TOD</i>	<i>Tewkesbury</i>	<i>Toddington Village Hall Stow Road Toddington GL54 5DU</i>
<i>Toddington 1</i>	<i>TOD1</i>	<i>Tewkesbury</i>	<i>Toddington Village Hall Stow Road Toddington GL54 5DU</i>
<i>Wormington</i>	<i>WRM</i>	<i>Tewkesbury</i>	<i>Dumbleton Village Hall Dairy Lane Dumbleton WR11 7TP</i>

## ARISING FROM THE REVIEW

### **Representations**

(i) Resident (re Polling District TED)

Village Hall perfectly adequate in all aspects.

(ii) Resident (re Polling District TED)

The village hall is a very convenient polling location for the residents of the two villages of Toddington & Alstone. It allows many to walk to vote rather than drive which is an important requirement - ease of voting is an essential encouragement in the democratic process and I hope this can be retained as the polling station in future elections.

### **Comments/Conclusions**

As a result of previous electoral boundary changes, the parish of Toddington comprised two polling districts. This sub-division is no longer necessary.

No other changes are required.

### **Recommendation(s)**

**(a) That existing Polling Districts TOD and TOD1 be combined into one Polling District, with the Polling District Reference TOD;**

**(b) that no other changes be made to the current arrangements.**

## **NORTHWAY BOROUGH WARD**

<b>PRE-REVIEW POSITION</b>			
<b><i>Current Polling District</i></b>	<b><i>Polling District Reference</i></b>	<b><i>Current/proposed Parliamentary Constituency</i></b>	<b><i>Current Polling Place and/or Polling Station</i></b>
<i>Northway 1</i>	<i>NOR1</i>	<i>Tewkesbury</i>	<i>Northway Community Hub and Parish Offices Lee Walk Northway GL20 8QG</i>
<i>Northway 2</i>	<i>NOR2</i>	<i>Tewkesbury</i>	<i>Carrant Brook School Hardwick Bank Road Northway GL20 8RP</i>

<b>ARISING FROM THE REVIEW</b>
<b><u>Representations</u></b>  None received.
<b><u>Comments/Conclusions</u></b>  No changes are required.
<b><u>Recommendation(s)</u></b>  That no changes be made to the current arrangements.



## **SEVERN VALE NORTH BOROUGH WARD**

<b>PRE-REVIEW POSITION</b>			
<b>Current Polling District</b>	<b>Polling District Reference</b>	<b>Current/proposed Parliamentary Constituency</b>	<b>Current Polling Place and/or Polling Station</b>
<i>Deerhurst</i>	<i>DRH</i>	<i>Tewkesbury</i>	<i>Apperley Village Hall Sawpit Lane Apperley GL19 4DP</i>
<i>Elmstone Hardwicke</i>	<i>ELH</i>	<i>Tewkesbury</i>	<i>Uckington &amp; Elmstone Hardwicke Village Hall Elmstone Hardwicke Lane Uckington GL51 9SR</i>
<i>Leigh</i>	<i>LGH</i>	<i>Tewkesbury</i>	<i>Portacabin Holborn Farm Blacksmiths Lane The Leigh GL19 4AG</i>
<i>Stoke Orchard &amp; Tredington</i>	<i>STO</i>	<i>Tewkesbury</i>	<i>Stoke Orchard Community Centre Armstrong Road Stoke Orchard GL52 7SB</i>

<b>ARISING FROM THE REVIEW</b>
<p><b><u>Representations</u></b></p> <p>None received as part of the formal consultation.</p> <p>However, following on from the May 2023 elections, the Clerk to Leigh Parish Council suggested that the Farm Shop on the A38 near Coombe Hill might offer a better polling place for residents of the Leigh.</p>
<p><b><u>Comments/Conclusions</u></b></p> <p>The portacabin arrangement at the Leigh is not an ideal solution, but no suitable alternative has been identified to date. It has been used for several elections, is known by electors, and has not given rise to any specific objections.</p> <p>Having evaluated the A38 Coombe Hill Farm Shop option, it is considered that the potential site is quite cramped, has limited parking, would be in commercial use on an election day, and gives rise to highway safety concerns given that the access is directly onto a main highway where traffic often travels at relatively high speeds.</p> <p>No changes are required.</p>

**Recommendation(s)**

**That no changes be made to the current arrangements.**

## **SEVERN VALE SOUTH BOROUGH WARD**

<b>PRE-REVIEW POSITION</b>			
<b>Current Polling District</b>	<b>Polling District Reference</b>	<b>Current/proposed Parliamentary Constituency</b>	<b>Current Polling Place and/or Polling Station</b>
<i>Boddington</i>	<i>BDD</i>	<i>Tewkesbury</i>	<i>Uckington &amp; Elmstone Hardwicke Village Hall Elmstone Hardwicke Lane Uckington GL51 9SR</i>
<i>Down Hatherley</i>	<i>DHY</i>	<i>Tewkesbury</i>	<i>Down Hatherley Village Hall Down Hatherley Lane Down Hatherley GL2 9QB</i>
<i>Norton</i>	<i>NRT</i>	<i>Tewkesbury</i>	<i>Norton Village Hall Old Tewkesbury Road Norton GL2 9LJ</i>
<i>Sandhurst</i>	<i>SND</i>	<i>Tewkesbury</i>	<i>Sandhurst Village Hall Sandhurst GL2 9NP</i>
<i>Uckington</i>	<i>UCK</i>	<i>Tewkesbury</i>	<i>Uckington &amp; Elmstone Hardwicke Village Hall Elmstone Hardwicke Lane Uckington GL51 9SR</i>

<b>ARISING FROM THE REVIEW</b>
<p><b><u>Representations</u></b></p> <p>None received.</p>
<p><b><u>Comments/Conclusions</u></b></p> <p>No changes are required.</p>
<p><b><u>Recommendation(s)</u></b></p> <p><b>That no changes be made to the current arrangements.</b></p>

## **SHURDINGTON BOROUGH WARD**

<b>PRE-REVIEW POSITION</b>			
<b>Current Polling District</b>	<b>Polling District Reference</b>	<b>Current/proposed Parliamentary Constituency</b>	<b>Current Polling Place and/or Polling Station</b>
Shurdington	SHD	Tewkesbury - current North Cotswold - proposed	Shurdington Community Centre Bishop Road Shurdington GL51 4TB

<b>ARISING FROM THE REVIEW</b>
<p><b><u>Representations</u></b></p> <p>(i) <u>Resident</u></p> <p>Satisfactory.</p> <p>(ii) <u>North Cotswolds Constituency Labour Party</u></p> <p>There is now a large housing development on the boundary with Cheltenham which has 396 UPRN which perhaps suggests an electorate of about 700. This is located approximately 1.5 miles away from the Polling Station and therefore consideration should be given to a separate polling district for voters on the east of Shurdington Road with a new polling station – most likely a mobile station. Careful consideration to the boundary to be used east of the road so that people who are close to Shurdington continue to be allocated to the Village will also need to be made. It should also be noted that allocating voters along Leckhampton Road to this polling district, who do not have any direct vehicular access to the village is also likely to give them a shorter distance to travel.</p>
<p><b><u>Comments/Conclusions</u></b></p> <p>The Parish Council's views were sought on the existing arrangement and the comments made by the North Cotswolds Constituency Labour Party (or any other suggested polling place/station location that might be considered more suitable), and the Clerk's response was as follows:</p> <p><i>I have had no views from Councillors and to the best of my knowledge, the Parish Council have never received any complaints.</i></p> <p>It is appropriate to consider the impact of development on polling district/polling place arrangements. However, the Council has received no other representations relating to Shurdington and we have not had any previous issues with, or comments about, the current polling station arrangements, including from the most recent elections in May.</p> <p>The person making the representation has acknowledged that any additional polling station would likely need to be a portacabin/mobile facility given the lack of a suitable permanent building/hall nearby. Given the numbers involved, the option of two polling stations (one of which would need to be portacabins) is not considered to be feasible.</p> <p>The situation will continue to be monitored, especially at the time of any future boundary review.</p>

**Recommendation(s)**

**That no changes be made to the current arrangements.**

## **TEWKESBURY EAST BOROUGH WARD**

<b>PRE-REVIEW POSITION</b>			
<b>Current Polling District</b>	<b>Polling District Reference</b>	<b>Current/proposed Parliamentary Constituency</b>	<b>Current Polling Place and/or Polling Station</b>
<i>Tewkesbury Newtown</i>	<i>TTN</i>	<i>Tewkesbury</i>	<i>Boys Brigade Community Centre Canterbury Leys Newtown GL20 8BP</i>
<i>Wheatpieces</i>	<i>WTC</i>	<i>Tewkesbury</i>	<i>Wheatpieces Community Centre Columbine Road Walton Cardiff GL20 7SP</i>
<i>Wheatpieces 1</i>	<i>WTC1</i>	<i>Tewkesbury</i>	<i>Wheatpieces Community Centre Columbine Road Walton Cardiff GL20 7SP</i>

<b>ARISING FROM THE REVIEW</b>
<b>A. Re Polling District TTN</b>
<p><b><u>Representations</u></b></p> <p><u>Councillor Bowman</u></p> <p>There is limited parking on site. It is within walking distance for most residents. A pedestrian crossing over the Ashchurch Road would be helpful as the road can be very busy. There is disabled access to the building via a ramp a little way along from the main entrance. At the last election my fellow councillor reported that the access was fine for all the voters that came along when she was there.</p>
<p><b><u>Comments/Conclusions</u></b></p> <p>On balance, and in the absence of other negative comments, it is suggested that this polling place be retained.</p>
<p><b><u>Recommendation(s)</u></b></p> <p><b>That no changes be made to the current arrangements.</b></p>

**B. Re Polling Districts WTC & WTC1**

**Representations**

Councillor Bowman

This is a modern community building with adequate parking and disabled access. I do not know of any issues with this building being used as a polling station.

**Comments/Conclusions**

As a result of previous electoral boundary changes, the parish of Wheatpieces comprised two polling districts. This sub-division is no longer necessary.

No other changes are required.

**Recommendation(s)**

**(a) That existing Polling Districts WTC and WTC1 be combined into one Polling District, with the Polling District Reference WTC (to be served by two polling stations within the one identified polling place);**

**(b) that no other changes be made to the current arrangements.**

## **TEWKESBURY NORTH & TWYNING BOROUGH WARD**

<b>PRE-REVIEW POSITION</b>			
<b>Current Polling District</b>	<b>Polling District Reference</b>	<b>Current/proposed Parliamentary Constituency</b>	<b>Current Polling Place and/or Polling Station</b>
<i>Tewkesbury North &amp; Twyning 1</i>	<i>TNT1</i>	<i>Tewkesbury</i>	<i>Mitton Manor Primary School Carrant Road Mitton GL20 8AR</i>
<i>Tewkesbury North &amp; Twyning 2</i>	<i>TNT2</i>	<i>Tewkesbury</i>	<i>Holy Trinity Church 10 Oldbury Road Tewkesbury GL20 5NA</i>
<i>Tewkesbury North &amp; Twyning 3</i>	<i>TNT3</i>	<i>Tewkesbury</i>	<i>Holy Trinity Church 10 Oldbury Road Tewkesbury GL20 5NA</i>
<i>Twyning</i>	<i>TWY</i>	<i>Tewkesbury</i>	<i>Twyning Village Hall Fleet Road Twyning GL20 6DG</i>

<b>ARISING FROM THE REVIEW</b>
<b>A. Re Polling District TNT1</b>
<p><b><u>Representations</u></b></p> <p><u>Resident (re Polling District TNT1)</u></p> <p>The polling station at Mitton Primary School is ideally placed, has good access and parking. There is no reason why this polling station should be changed.</p>
<p><b><u>Comments/Conclusions</u></b></p> <p>No changes are required.</p>
<p><b><u>Recommendation(s)</u></b></p> <p><b>That no changes be made to the current arrangements.</b></p>
<b>B. Re Polling Districts TNT2 &amp; TNT3</b>
<p><b><u>Representations</u></b></p> <p>None received.</p>



**Comments/Conclusions**

As a result of previous electoral boundary changes, two polling districts were created for this area. This sub-division is no longer necessary.

No other changes are required.

**Recommendation(s)**

**(a) That existing Polling Districts TNT2 and TNT3 be combined into one Polling District, with the Polling District Reference TNT2;**

**(b) that no other changes be made to the current arrangements.**

**C. Re Polling District TWY**

**Representations**

Resident

Happy that the village hall is a suitable venue as a polling station - facilities include toilets, a kitchen, tables and chairs and 2 accessible entrances.

Resident

Twyning Village Hall is an ideal location for the polling station. It has all the facilities required by electors, including disabled access. It is large and has been used satisfactorily for many years. There is limited on-site parking, but a large majority of electors walk to the hall. Facilities for polling staff are excellent.

Resident

Polling in Twyning uses the village hall. This always appears to work well. The hall is fairly central to the village, has good access, plenty of space in the hall, well-lit, a small car parking area available, toilets available.

Resident

The village hall provides all the facilities needed to act as our polling station.

**Comments/Conclusions**

No changes are required.

**Recommendation(s)**

**That no changes be made to the current arrangements.**

## **TEWKESBURY SOUTH BOROUGH WARD**

<b>PRE-REVIEW POSITION</b>			
<b>Current Polling District</b>	<b>Polling District Reference</b>	<b>Current/proposed Parliamentary Constituency</b>	<b>Current Polling Place and/or Polling Station</b>
<i>Tewkesbury South 1</i>	<i>TSH1</i>	<i>Tewkesbury</i>	<i>St Joseph's Church Chance Street Tewkesbury GL20 5RF</i>
<i>Tewkesbury South 2</i>	<i>TSH2</i>	<i>Tewkesbury</i>	<i>Tewkesbury Youth Centre Link Road Tewkesbury GL20 5JQ</i>
<i>Tewkesbury South 3</i>	<i>TSH3</i>	<i>Tewkesbury</i>	<i>Tewkesbury Youth Centre Link Road Tewkesbury GL20 5JQ</i>

<b>ARISING FROM THE REVIEW</b>
<p><b><u>Representations</u></b></p> <p><u>Resident of Polling District TSH3</u></p> <p>The Link Road building (Tewkesbury Youth Centre) is too far for many of the Priors Park residents and could be seen as not inclusive, perhaps it would be better to include the Priors Park Chapel in Queens Road.</p>
<p><b><u>Comments/Conclusions</u></b></p> <p>At present, electors within Polling District TSH1 vote at St Joseph's Church; and those within Polling Districts TSH2 and TSH3 vote at Tewkesbury Youth Centre. As part of the consultation process on the review of polling districts and polling places/stations, the formal representation set out above was received in respect of the continued use of the Youth Centre.</p> <p>Other concerns had been raised about the location of the polling station for TSH2 and TSH3 voters, given that it is located at one extremity of the area concerned, leaving many electors with significant distances to travel. Officers contacted representatives of both the Neighbourhood Project Building and Priors Park Community Church building. Following a site visit, the Community Church facility premises appear suitable as a polling station. That said, it is acknowledged that it is in a 'tight' residential area with a complex road network. In addition, consideration would need to be given as to whether, if the Community Church building was to be used, would the use of the Youth Centre be discontinued altogether (and, if so, what would be the impact for electors in that part of TSH3) or whether it would be beneficial/practicable for there to be one polling station in each location (albeit with potentially differing elector numbers).</p> <p>Officers are mindful of the mixed urban/rural nature of TSH2 and TSH3 and, if possible, would like to improve the polling station arrangements. Road safety (in terms of suitable crossing places on busy roads), and the availability of public transport (particularly for those on the edges of the area, e.g.</p>

people from the Odessa Park site) are other valid considerations. Other options discussed include the potential for hosting a polling station at the Borough Council Offices; whether The Gupshill site was a viable alternative; or whether further alternatives existed.

Having taken all considerations into account, it is considered that:

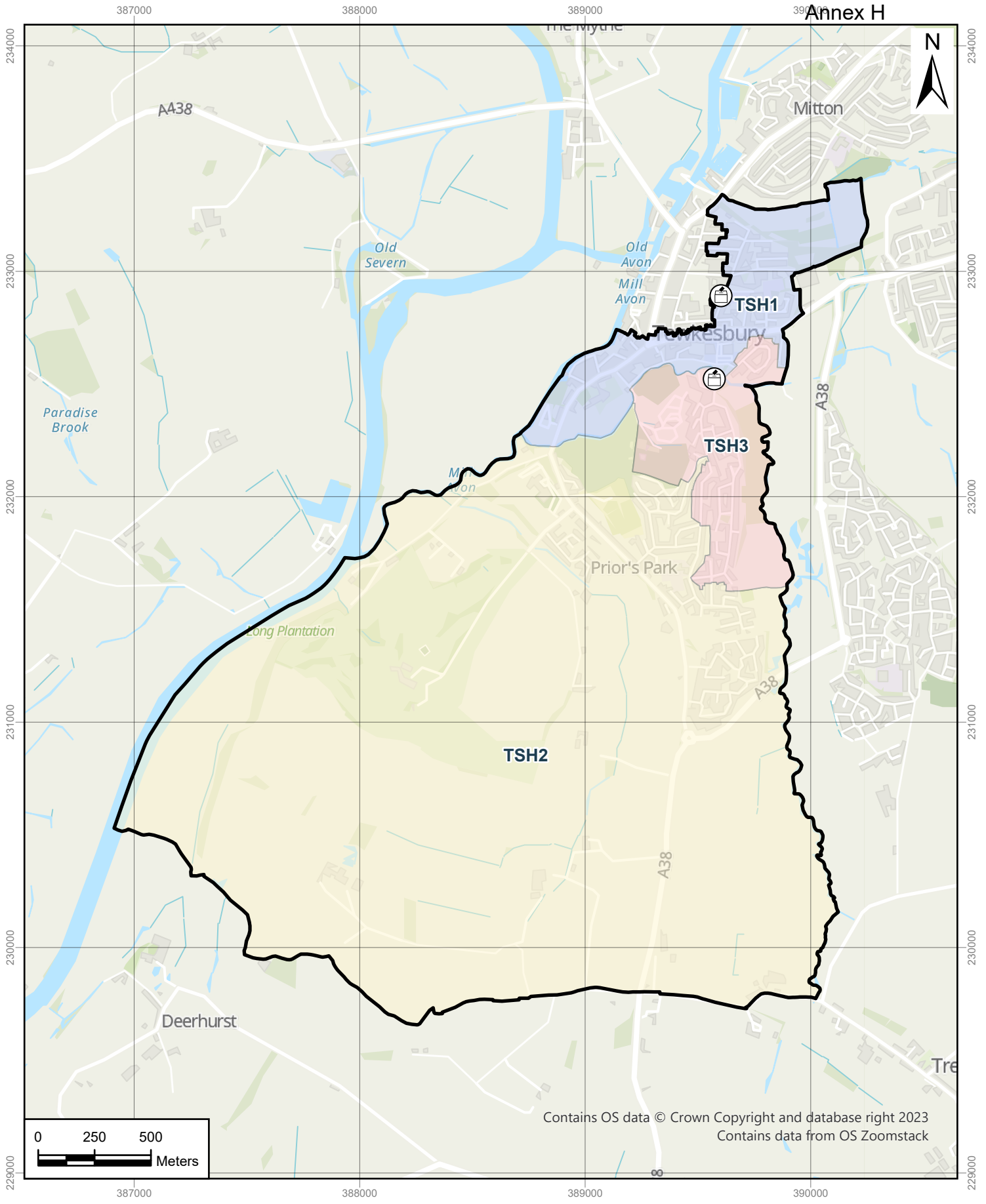
- (i) the current arrangements in respect of Polling District TSH1 remain appropriate;
- (ii) a re-drawing of the boundary between Polling Districts TSH2 and TSH3 would be beneficial, to better reflect communities, particularly within Priors Park and along the Gloucester Road;
- (iii) while the Link Road building (Tewkesbury Youth Centre) could be seen as less suitable for many of the Priors Park residents and those in neighbouring areas, and while the Community Church building would provide a suitable polling place venue, it has not been possible to achieve an appropriate division of 'whole' streets to make a sub-division of the polling district feasible - and there are concerns that change in this tight residential area may prove confusing and have a negative impact on voter turnout;
- (iv) the creation of a polling place at the Borough Council Offices (ideally with the polling station being within the Members' Room/Lounge area, given its separate external access (including ramp) and ability to offer a stand-alone dedicated polling station area) would be beneficial for residents of the Gloucester Road and the Lincoln Green/Tewkesbury Park development, together with those living in the more rural parts of the Ward, especially given the public transport routes.

Maps of the existing and proposed arrangements are set out in **Annex H**.

#### **Recommendation(s)**

**That, in line with the maps at Annex H:**

- (a) no changes be made to existing Polling District TSH1, and the polling place continue to be St Joseph's Church, Chance Street, Tewkesbury;**
- (b) a new Polling District TSH2, with a polling place at the Borough Council Offices, Gloucester Road, Tewkesbury;**
- (c) a new Polling District TSH3, with a polling place at Tewkesbury Youth Centre, Link Road, Tewkesbury.**



Legend	
	Ward Boundary
Current Polling District(s)	
	TSH1
	TSH2
	TSH3
	Current Polling Place(s)

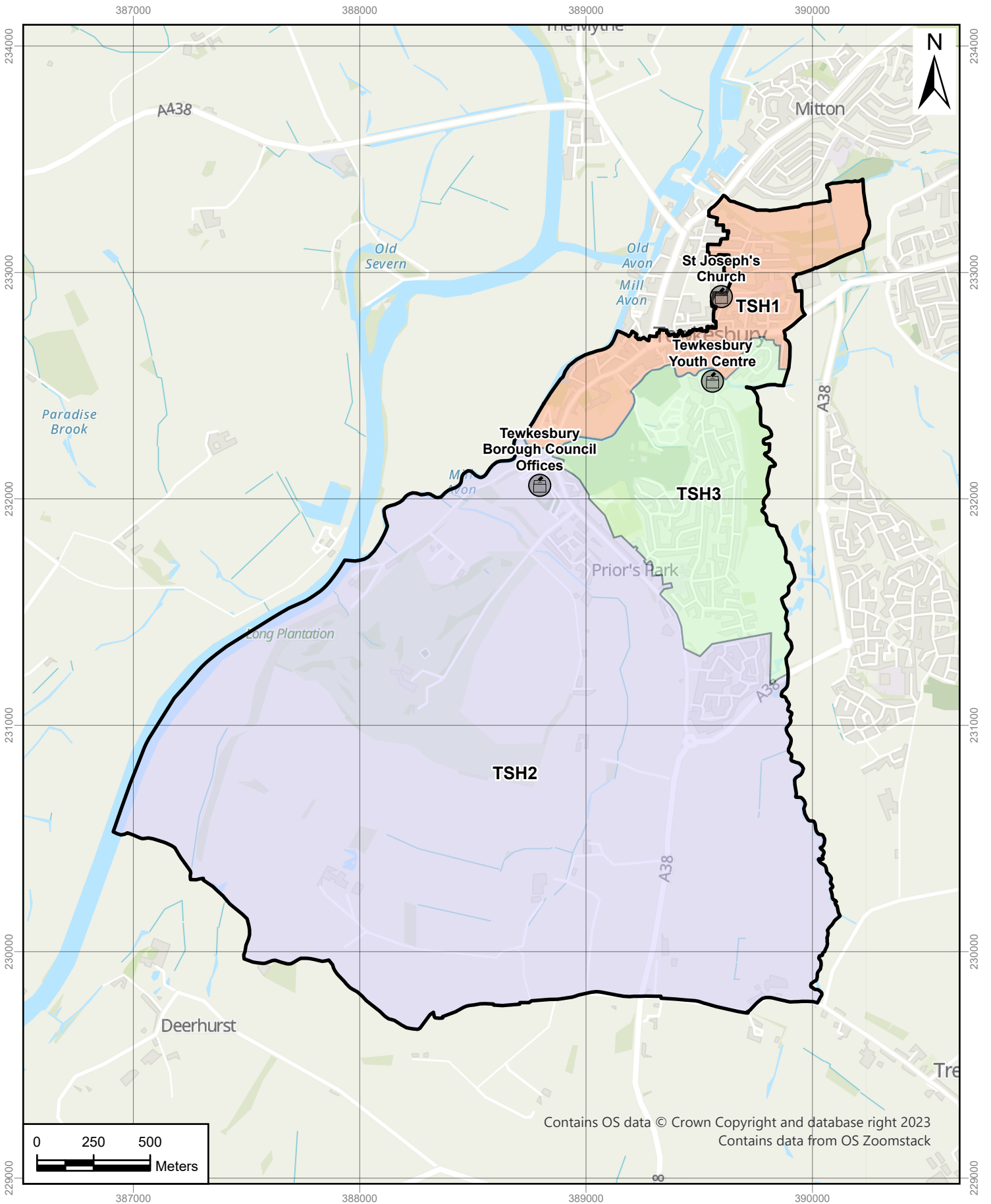
**Tewkesbury Borough Council**  
**Existing arrangements**  
**Tewkesbury South Borough Ward**

Scale: 1:22,000  
 CRS: British National Grid  
 Coordinates: Meters

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Date: 21 December 2023





Legend	
	Ward Boundary
Proposed Polling District(s) boundaries	
	TSH1
	TSH2
	TSH3
	Proposed Polling Place(s)

**Tewkesbury Borough Council**  
**Proposed arrangements**  
**Tewkesbury South Borough Ward**

Scale: 1:22,000  
 CRS: British National Grid  
 Coordinates: Meters

Date: 21 December 2023

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## **WINCHCOMBE BOROUGH WARD**

<b>PRE-REVIEW POSITION</b>			
<b>Current Polling District</b>	<b>Polling District Reference</b>	<b>Current/proposed Parliamentary Constituency</b>	<b>Current Polling Place and/or Polling Station</b>
<i>Alderton</i>	<i>ALD</i>	<i>Tewkesbury</i>	<i>Alderton Village Hall Dibden Lane Alderton GL20 8NT</i>
<i>Gretton</i>	<i>GRT</i>	<i>Tewkesbury</i>	<i>Gretton Village Hall Gretton GL54 5EP</i>
<i>Hawling</i>	<i>HWG</i>	<i>Tewkesbury</i>	<i>Hawling Methodist Church Hawling GL54 5SZ</i>
<i>Prescott</i>	<i>PRS</i>	<i>Tewkesbury</i>	<i>Gretton Village Hall Gretton GL54 5EP</i>
<i>Sudeley</i>	<i>SDY</i>	<i>Tewkesbury</i>	<i>Abbey Fields Community Centre Back Lane Winchcombe GL54 5QH</i>
<i>Winchcombe 1</i>	<i>WNC1</i>	<i>Tewkesbury</i>	<i>Abbey Fields Community Centre Back Lane Winchcombe GL54 5QH</i>
<i>Winchcombe 2</i>	<i>WNC2</i>	<i>Tewkesbury</i>	<i>Abbey Fields Community Centre Back Lane Winchcombe GL54 5QH</i>

<b>ARISING FROM THE REVIEW</b>
<p><b><u>Representations</u></b></p> <p><u>Gretton Parish Council, following consultation with the Village Hall management team (re Polling District GRT)</u></p> <p>Village Hall is centrally located and has all the necessary facilities. Easy to locate and known locally. Building has all necessary facilities for use as a polling place/station. Parking for only a few cars on-site, but more on the road - it is never a problem. Disabled access/facilities available. There are no more suitable premises within the same polling district.</p>

**Comments/Conclusions**

No changes are required.

**Recommendation(s)**

**That no changes be made to the current arrangements.**

(END)





## North Cotswolds Constituency Labour Party Submission to Tewkesbury Borough Council on the Polling District and Polling Places Review

6 current District Wards within Tewkesbury Borough are now within the North Cotswold Constituency and the Borough Council is currently undertaking a statutory review of Polling Places and Polling Stations which closes on 3 November. This review covers the whole Borough. Details of the Polling Districts and Stations and electors to Polling Station for the 6 District Wards within the new Constituency are given in the table, from information published by the Council.

Borough Ward	Polling District	Polling District Reference	Current Polling Place and/or Polling Station	Electors to Polling Station as at Sept 2023
Badgeworth	Badgeworth (Badgeworth Ward)	BBG	Badgeworth Village Hall GL51 4UJ	836
	Badgeworth (Bentham Ward)	BBN	Witcombe & Bentham Village Hall GL3 4TB	543
	Great Witcombe	GRW	Witcombe & Bentham Village Hall GL3 4TB	64
	Staverton	STV	Portacabin at Staverton Court Farm, Staverton GL51 0TW	530
Brockworth East	Brockworth East 1	BRE1	Brockworth Community Centre GL3 4ET	1356
	Brockworth East 2	BRE2	Brockworth Community Centre GL3 4ET	1258
	Brockworth East 3	BRE3	Brockworth Community Centre GL3 4ET	456
Brockworth West	Brockworth West 1	BRW1	St Patrick's Church Hall, GL3 4HL	1529
	Brockworth West 2	BRW2	St Patrick's Church Hall GL3 4HL	1027
	Brockworth West 3	BRW3	Midglos Indoor Bowls Club GL3 4LS	1417
Churchdown Brookfield with Hucclecote	Churchdown (Brookfield)	CHB	Methodist Church Hall GL3 2ET	2904
	Hucclecote 1	HCC1	Pineholt Village Hall GL3 3SN	1708
	Hucclecote 2	HCC2	Pineholt Village Hall GL3 3SN	395
Churchdown St Johns	Churchdown (St Johns 1)	CHJ1	St John's Church Hall GL3 2DB	1817
	Churchdown (St Johns 2)	CHJ2	St John's Church Hall GL3 2DB	1455
	Churchdown (St Johns 3)	CHJ3	St John's Church Hall GL3 2DB	2041
	Churchdown (St Johns 4)	CHJ4	St John's Church Hall GL3 2DB	300
Shurdington	Shurdington	SHD	Shurdington Community Centre GL51 4TB	1969

### Definitions

**Polling District:** A polling district is a geographical area of a ward (eg a parish or a sub-division of a parish).

**Polling Place:** The building (usually located in the Polling District) where voters cast their votes.

**Polling Station:** A specific location within the polling place – eg a polling place might be the community centre or school but the polling station would be a room within the community centre or school.

### The legislative requirements of a polling place review<sup>1</sup>

Local authorities must comply with the following legislative requirements regarding the designation of polling districts and polling places:

- each parish in England and community in Wales is to be a separate polling district, unless special circumstances apply

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.electoralcommission.org.uk/full-guidance/reviews-polling-districts-polling-places-and-polling-stations>

- the council must designate a polling place for each polling district, unless the size or other circumstances of a polling district are such that the situation of the polling stations does not materially affect the convenience of the electors
- the polling place must be an area in the district, unless special circumstances make it desirable to designate an area wholly or partly outside the district (for example, if no accessible polling place can be identified in the district).<sup>2</sup>
- the polling place must be small enough to indicate to electors in different parts of the district how they will be able to reach the polling station.
- Additionally, all polling stations need to meet accessibility requirements.  
<https://www.electoralcommission.org.uk/reviews-polling-districts-polling-places-and-polling-stations/legislative-requirements-a-polling-place-review/accessibility-requirements-a-polling-place-review>

Whilst the local authority is responsible for the polling district and places review, there is a statutory appeal process by the Electoral Commission, who have the power to direct the local authority to make different arrangements. There have only been 4 such appeals since 2016.<sup>3</sup> Whilst the facts considered by the Commission in each case are probably very different to any Polling District in Tewkesbury, attention is drawn to the Commission's decision South Norfolk District, Saxlingham Nethergate, Norfolk on 7 August 2020. In paragraphs 37 and 38 the Commission set out the factors they considered in a review decision about the location of a proposed polling station for relatively small rural parish, these included the distance from the parish of the new polling station, the lack of public transport, the lack of street lighting on the route to the new polling station and that the local authority could not demonstrate that they had considered suitable alternatives, including mobile polling stations.

### Objectives of North Cotswold CLP(NCCLP) response

In considering the response on behalf of the new Constituency Labour Party the objectives have been to improve ease of access to Polling Stations in line with the legislation for Polling Districts and Polling Stations. AS a result NCCLP proposes changes to Polling Districts and new polling stations for the following Polling District, primarily as a result of housing developments which have taken place mainly in the last decade and in anticipation housing growth, based on the

- **Badgeworth BBG** – Additional Polling District and Additional Polling Station to serve development east of Grovefield Road (page 3)
- **Brockworth West BRW3** – Additional Polling District and Additional Polling Station to serve the Coopers Edge Development, (pages 5)
- **Brockworth BRW2** – proposes that an alternative venue of Polling Station be identified (page 6)
- **Brockworth BRW1** – recommends the boundary is addressed to make the polling station more convenient for some voters in the BRW3 area (page but also discussed on pages 4 and 5)

<sup>2</sup> Section 18(2)(c) states that "the polling place for any polling district shall be an area in that district" and on a page on the Electoral Commission website which defines terms used in polling district reviews "A polling place within a polling district must be designated so that polling stations are within easy reach of all electors from across the polling district." (1), The exception in Section 18(2)(c) should I be read as referring to the polling district not to the local authority area.

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.electoralcommission.org.uk/reviews-polling-districts-polling-places-and-polling-stations/polling-place-review-appeals-process/past-appeal-decisions>

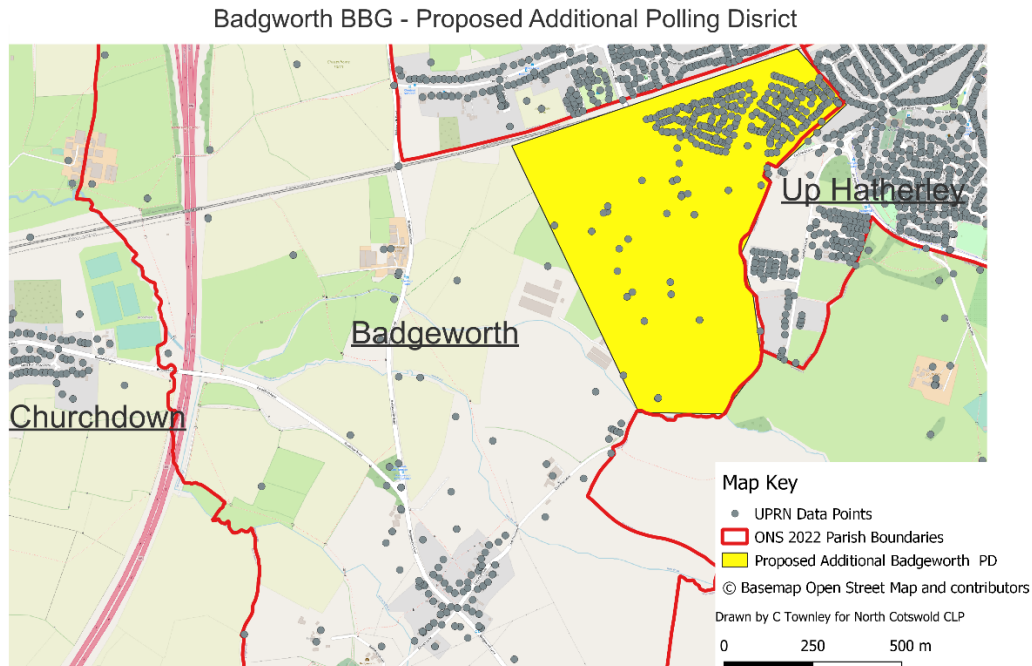
- **Brockworth BRE 1 and 2** proposes the creation of an additional Polling District for primarily the Perrybrook Development and recommends that a new Polling Station be identified as development progresses. (page 6)
- **Churchdown St Johns CHJ3**
- **Shurdington** – Proposes an additional polling district and polling station to serve the Brizen View development on the boundary with Cheltenham (page 7)

In conclusion I would also comment that the suggestions of the Acting Returning Officer should be cautiously considered, as the combining of too many stations, would result in disproportionately long delays due to the new voter ID arrangements. Whilst the Commission has recommended a maximum of 2250 it is for the Council to come to a conclusion on what is the best maximum size. At present the average size of a polling district in the Borough is 922, even after excluding the 45 districts with smaller numbers of electors the average size of mainly urban/larger parish polling districts is 1656.

Additionally, as a recommendation for the future it is suggested that the consultation papers include the Council's proposed changes to districts, rather than just issuing the list of current polling stations. Additionally it is also considered helpful if the Council could publish information on the anticipated population changes over the 5 year statutory period of the review to enable this to be taken into account in considering whether individual districts and polling places need to be change in advance of development.

**Chas Townley**  
**Constituency Secretary North Cotswold Labour Party**  
**3 November 2023**

### Badgeworth BBG - Polling Station: Badgeworth Village Hall, GL51 4UJ



At a first glance this appears to be a centrally located polling station meeting most voters needs, however, on the North Eastern fringe of the area is a relatively recent development (based on UPRN data which suggests this is about 300 dwellings.<sup>4</sup> This suggests that perhaps 500 electors are concentrated more than 1.3 miles away from the designated Polling Station. There are also geographical issues for voters allocated to this polling station on the northern fringe with Staverton Parish, although it may be impractical to come up with more effective alternatives for them. Consideration should be given to splitting the polling district and establishing a separate polling station adjacent to the development, the boundary shown in yellow on the map above is illustrative rather than definitive and the western boundary will need to be carefully considered. It is possible that the sports pavilion at FC Lakeside would be a suitable location. In default a mobile voting station would need to be considered for this location.

The Geography of this polling district also appears poor for the voters east of Shurdington Road. In the longer term an opportunity to address this arises from the County Divisions review (currently the subject of consultation) but would require consideration to where the boundary line is drawn between the proposed Boundary Commission's Bentham and Badgeworth Wards.

### BBN and GRW Witcombe and Bentham Village Hall GL3 4TB

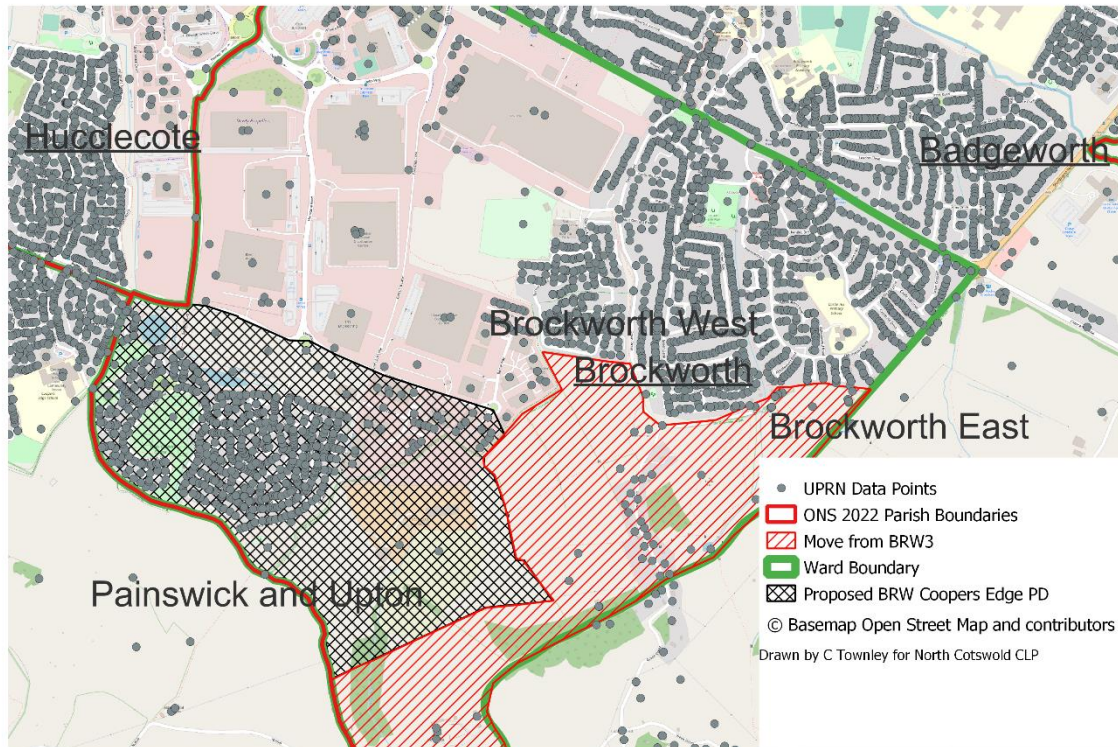
This appears a satisfactory location for these two polling districts at this time, however, the Council should set out the justification for why GRW polling place is not in the polling district.

<sup>4</sup> The UPRN data is from OS open access data and includes all UPRNs which will include not only residential addresses but also coding for streets, commercial buildings as well as other community assets (eg play areas etc t) these figures are proxies for estimated elector numbers based on 1.72 per UPRN

## Brockworth West

**BRW3** Polling Station - Midglos Indoor Bowls Club Spinners Road Off Green Street Brockworth Gloucester GL3 4LS

Brockworth West BRW3 - Proposed Additional Polling District



NB: the boundaries shown to the east of Coopers Edge are illustrative but are drawn to include one residential property to the South of the Business Park, details of which can be provided if required.

The current Polling Place is of good quality and is well located for the Spinners Drive development to the south-east of Invista and the existing housing in the Polling District along the northern half of Green Street. Using uncoded UPRN data there are 269 UPRNS in this area, this is likely to represent around 460 electors.<sup>5</sup>

The southern half of Green Street (from Watermead to A46) and Watermeads itself is now isolated for vehicular traffic from the remainder of Green Street due to a Traffic Regulation Order which has now closed this road to motorised traffic. The Catholic Church used for BRW1 is actually nearer than BRW3 polling station and a pragmatic solution might be to move these voters and those along the southern edge of BRW3 into BRW1. There are approximately 50 dwellings in this likely to include approximately 80 electors. This is accepted as being borderline but should be taken into account in any future ward boundary review.

Much of the central area of BRW3 is unpopulated, being part of the Gloucester Business Park and therefore this has limited impact on where people from this area vote, apart from one residential property which has an vehicular access through the Business Park.

<sup>5</sup> The UPRN data is from OS open access data and includes all UPRNS which will include not only residential addresses but also coding for streets, commercial buildings as well as other community assets (eg Milestone on A46, play areas etc these figures are proxies for estimated elector numbers based on 1.72 per UPRN

The most difficult issue is the western extremity of BRW3 consisting of the housing within the Brockworth Parish part of Coopers Edge. This is geographically distant from the current Polling Station. Measured from Napier Drive the road distance is 1.8 miles. Similarly, the shortest walking is 1.8 miles across the Business Park. There is no shorter route because Golf Course Lane has no access points between the Business Park and Spinners Drive development, meaning there is no sensible alternative walking route to the Polling Station except by Ermin Street. Brockworth Bridleway 60 does provide a potentially shorter route via Spinners Drive, however, this route is in very poor condition and is often very boggy during wet weather, which the County Councillor for the division is seeking to resolve.

Additionally, it should be noted that St Parick's Hall is closer than the Indoor Bowls Centre, but a change of venue for the whole PD does not address the issues of poor access for people, who for the large part are in an urban area and living 1.8 miles travelling distance from the polling station. It should also be noted that the No 8 bus service from Coopers Edge terminates within Whittle Way adjacent to the Whittle Inn.

It is therefore recommended that the roads within the Coopers Edge development within Brockworth West should become a new Polling District and that a polling place within the vicinity of Coopers Edge should be used. There appear to be two options of creating a Polling Station: -

- a) To establish a Polling Station to serve the new Polling District located at either Coopers Edge School or the adjacent Community Centre. This may be difficult for Tewkesbury Borough to stomach as this is outside the Borough but is within the new constituency and both buildings are more or less adjacent to the District Boundary and are much more conveniently located to the voters in this proposed Polling District than the current polling station. It is also a relevant factor to take into account that the community centre and school was built to serve the whole development, which were both built as a result of Section 106 obligations entered into by the consortium of local authorities including Stroud, Tewkesbury and Gloucestershire to achieve a satisfactory development.
- b) If the community centre or school are rejected by TBC, for whatever reason, the council should then consider the provision of a mobile voting centre, possible locations might be on one of the access roads to this area of Gauntlet Way and Buccaneer Avenue.

**BRW 2 Polling Station:** St Patrick's Church Hall St Patrick's Court Brockworth GL3 4HL

This is a particularly poorly developed Polling District which has no appropriate Polling Station within the Polling District and does not relate well to the settlement pattern. However, this is not really the fault of the LGBC as this somewhat inappropriate ward split was recommended to the Commission by the Borough Council during the consultation process leading to the boundary changes implemented in 2019.

Given the "hard boundaries" that exist to the North, East and West of the Polling District and the area to the south is in unpopulated there is probably no practical alternative but to accept this Polling District "as is", until such time as a review of Borough wards takes place.

Therefore, it is suggested that the Council consider making arrangements for a polling station in the vicinity of the District Centre within the Gloucester Business Park, This could for example be located in Tescos if appropriate space could be found or as an alternative mobile polling station in this general area. Another remote alternative might be to look at the availability of space within the Victoria Inn.

If there are realistically no suitable alternatives, the Community Centre used for BRE1-3 might be considered to be more suitable than St Patricks Hall but it is proposed to continue using St Partrick's Hall the reasons for doing so should be recorded in the report.

**BRW 1 Polling Station:** St Patrick's Church Hall St Patrick's Court Brockworth GL3 4HL

This appears to be well designed polling district and apart from the recommendation in respect of the southern end of Green Street and Castle Hill discussed in BRW3, no changes are suggested. An option to consider might be to move the remainder of BRW2 to BRW1 but this may result in a large polling station with a risk of long queues to vote as a result of the voter ID requirement.

**BRE 1 Polling Station:** Brockworth Community Centre Court Road Brockworth Gloucester GL3 4ET

Given the growth in electors within this area it is questioned whether it would be sensible to create a new polling district for both BRE1 and BRE2 for the voters north of the Horsebere Brook with the voters south of the Brook continuing to vote at the Community Centre. At this stage no proposals for a different Polling Place for this area are made, but in the long-term use of a building within Perrybrook should be an expressed aspiration for the Council. An acceptable alternative resolution at this stage might be to agree to an early review, if and when a suitable building becomes available and the main distributor roads through the development have been completed. Possible opportunities for polling places to consider, in addition to the primary and secondary schools within the vicinity of the development, could include Brockworth Sports Centre, the proposed extra care village to be developed by St Monica's Trust (referred to in the Section 106 agreement) as well as Brockworth Rugby Club and also as a last resort the Tithe Barn which is a wedding venue adjacent to Brockworth Court.

**BRE 2 Polling Station** Brockworth Community Centre Court Road Brockworth Gloucester GL3 4ET

No change is suggested for this polling station, apart from the area north of Horsebere Brook discussed above.

**BRE3 Polling Station:** Brockworth Community Centre Court Road Brockworth Gloucester GL3 4ET

No change recommended to this Polling District at this time.

**Churchdown Brookfield with Hucclecote** – no changes are proposed at this time.

**Churchdown St Johns** – no changes are proposed, although given the population growth at the western end of the polling district CHJ3, an option might be to consider exploring the use of GL3 Community Centre or the Catholic Church situated on Cheltenham Road East as this lies within the area of that Polling District.

**SHD - Polling Station:** Shurdington Community Centre Bishop Road GL51 4TB

There is now a large housing development on the boundary with Cheltenham which has 396 UPRN which perhaps suggests an electorate of about 700. This is located approximately 1.5 miles away from the Polling Station and therefore consideration should be given to a separate polling district for voters on the east of Shurdington Road with a new polling station – most likely a mobile station. Careful consideration to the boundary to be used east of the road so that people who are close to Shurdington continue to be allocated to the Village will also need to be made. It should also be noted

that allocating voters along Leckhampton Road to this polling district, who do not have any direct vehicular access to the village is also likely to give them a shorter distance to travel.



## TEWKESBURY BOROUGH COUNCIL

<b>Report to:</b>	Council
<b>Date of Meeting:</b>	23 January 2024
<b>Subject:</b>	Scheme of Members Allowances 2024/25
<b>Report of:</b>	Democratic and Elections Adviser
<b>Head of Service/Director:</b>	Head of Service: Democratic and Electoral Services
<b>Number of Appendices:</b>	One

**Executive Summary:**

The Council's current Scheme of Allowances expires on 31 March 2024. In determining a new Scheme of Allowances, the Council must have regard to the recommendations of its Independent Remuneration Panel. The Council can determine a Scheme effective for up to four years but, having determined its Scheme, it cannot make any changes to it without considering the recommendations of its Independent Remuneration Panel.

**Recommendation:**

**The Council is asked to determine the Scheme of Allowances to take effect on 1 April 2024 until 31 March 2025 having regard to the recommendations of the Independent Remuneration Panel as set out at Appendix 1.**

**Financial Implications:**

None if the Council accepts the recommendation of the Independent Remuneration Panel.

**Legal Implications:**

The Local Authorities (Members' Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003, require authorities to establish and maintain an Independent Remuneration Panel. The purpose of the Panel is to make recommendations to the authority about the allowances to be paid to Councillors.

Independent Remuneration Panels will make recommendations which must include the level of basic allowance for all Councillors, the level of SRAs, and to whom they should be paid, and on whether dependants' carers' allowance, travelling and subsistence allowances and co-optees' allowance should be paid and the levels of these allowances. Schemes must be made by 31 March for implementation in the forthcoming financial year. A scheme may be amended at any time, following consideration of the Independent Remuneration Panel's recommendations, but may only be revoked with effect from the beginning of a year, except in the case where a Council has begun to operate:

- (a) executive arrangements, where they are being operated in place of existing alternative arrangements;
- (b) alternative arrangements, where they are being operated in place of existing executive arrangements; or
- (c) different executive arrangements which involve an executive which takes a different form.

The 2003 Regulations place certain duties on Local Authorities in connection with publicising the recommendations made by their Independent Remuneration Panel, their Scheme of Allowances and the actual allowances paid to Councillors in any given year.

The Regulations require that, as soon as reasonably practicable after receiving a report from its Panel which sets out the Panel's recommendations, a Local Authority must ensure that copies of the report are available for inspection at its principal office at all reasonable hours. A Local Authority must also, as soon as reasonably practicable after it receives the report, publish a Notice in its area which:

- states that the authority has received recommendations from an Independent Remuneration Panel about its Scheme of Allowances;
- states that copies of the report detailing the Panel's recommendations are available for inspection at the principal office of the authority at all reasonable hours;
- states the address of the principal office;
- describes the main features of the Panel's recommendations, including the amounts of allowances the Panel has recommended should be payable to Councillors.

The 2003 Regulations also require that members of the public may take copies of the Panel's report on payment of such reasonable fee as the Local Authority may determine.

In respect of the Local Authority's Scheme of Allowances, the Regulations require that, as soon as reasonably practicable after determining a Scheme of Allowances, a Local Authority must ensure that copies of the Scheme are available for inspection at its principal office at all reasonable hours. A Local Authority must also, as soon as reasonably practicable after determining the scheme, publish a Notice in its area which:

- states that the authority has adopted a Scheme of Allowances and the period for which the scheme has effect;
- states that copies of the scheme are available for inspection at its principal office at all reasonable hours;
- states the address of the principal office;
- describes the main features of the scheme, including the amounts of allowances payable to Councillors under the scheme;
- states that, in determining the scheme, the authority had regard to the recommendations of an Independent Remuneration Panel;
- describes the main features of the Panel's recommendations, including the amounts of allowances the Panel had recommended should be payable to its Councillors;
- describes any responsibilities or duties in the scheme which would merit the payment of a SRA and travelling and subsistence allowance.

The final publicity requirement in the Regulations is that, as soon as reasonably practicable after the end of a year to which a Scheme relates, a Local Authority must make arrangements for the publication in its area of the total sum paid by it to each Member in respect of Basic, Special Responsibility, Travelling and Subsistence, Co-optees' and Dependant Carers' Allowances.

All these publicity requirements are statutory minimum requirements. However, the guidance on the Regulations from the then Office of the Deputy Prime Minister also states that a Local Authority should publicise more widely the report from its Panel, its Scheme of Allowances and the sums paid to each Member. This should include, where possible, publishing this information on the Authority's website and in the Council's own newspaper (where they have one).

**Environmental and Sustainability Implications:**

None.

**Resource Implications (including impact on equalities):**

None.

**Safeguarding Implications:**

None.

**Impact on the Customer:**

None.

**1.0 INTRODUCTION**

1.1 The Council's Independent Remuneration Panel currently consists of five members. All members of the Panel live within the Borough and undertake various voluntary roles in support of the Borough.

**2.0 SCHEME OF MEMBERS ALLOWANCES 2024/25**

2.1 The report of the Council's Independent Remuneration Panel, setting out its recommendation for the 2024/25 Scheme of Allowances, is attached at Appendix 1.

2.2 The Council's existing Scheme expires on 31 March 2024 and, before making a new scheme, the Council must have regard to the recommendations of its Independent Remuneration Panel.

2.3 The Council is asked to determine a Scheme of Allowances having regard to the recommendation of the Panel.

**3.0 CONSULTATION**

3.1 As set out in the Independent Remuneration Panel's report.

**4.0 ASSOCIATED RISKS**

4.1 None.

**5.0 MONITORING**

5.1 If there is a major change to either the operational arrangements of the Council or the Member decision-making structure/arrangements during the year, the Panel can be reconvened to consider whether any adopted scheme remains fit-for-purpose.

**6.0 RELEVANT COUNCIL PLAN PRIORITIES/COUNCIL POLICIES/STRATEGIES**

**6.1** None.

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**Background Papers:** None.

**Contact Officer:** Democratic and Elections Adviser  
01684 272050 [nigel.adams@teWKesbury.gov.uk](mailto:nigel.adams@teWKesbury.gov.uk)

**Appendices:** 1. Report of the Independent Remuneration Panel.

**REPORT OF THE INDEPENDENT REMUNERATION PANEL  
ON THE SCHEME OF MEMBERS' ALLOWANCES  
FOR TEWKESBURY BOROUGH COUNCIL 2024/25**

**INTRODUCTION**

The report has been prepared by the Independent Remuneration Panel (IRP) for Tewkesbury Borough Council comprising five individuals drawn from the community; three of which have been established members for a number of years and two having served for two reviews.

**LEGAL REQUIREMENTS**

The Local Authorities (Members' Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003 (the Regulations) apply to all Local Authorities.

The Regulations require Local Authorities to make a scheme providing for the payment of a Basic Allowance to each Member of that Authority. The Basic Allowance must be the same for each Member of the Authority.

An Authority's Scheme of Allowances may also provide for the payment of Special Responsibility Allowances (SRAs) to such Members as have additional responsibilities. The specified categories of special or additional responsibilities which may be considered in a Scheme of Allowances include:

- i) Acting as Leader or Deputy Leader.
- ii) Acting as a Member of an Executive where the Authority is operating Executive arrangements within the meaning of Part 2 of the Local Government Act.
- iii) Presiding at meetings of a Committee or Sub-Committee of the Authority.
- iv) Representing the Authority at meetings of or arranged by any other body.
- v) Acting as a Member of a Committee or Sub-Committee of the Authority which meets with exceptional frequency or for exceptionally long periods.
- vi) Acting as a spokesperson of a Political Group on a Committee or Sub-Committee of the Authority; and
- vii) Carrying out such other activities in relation to the discharge of the Authority's functions as require of the Member an amount of time and effort equal to or greater than would be required of him or her by any of the above-mentioned activities.

SRAs need not be the same and may reflect the different expectations, time and effort involved in particular roles.

Members' Allowances Schemes may also provide for the payment of a Carers' Allowance and also for Members' travelling and subsistence whilst acting in connection with their duties as a Member of the authority (Approved Duties).

Before a Local Authority may make or amend a Scheme of Allowances, it must have regard to any recommendation(s) made in relation to the Scheme by its Independent Remuneration Panel.

## CONTEXT OF THE REVIEW

The current Scheme of Allowances expires on 31 March 2024 and a new Scheme needs to be in place with effect from 1 April 2024.

By way of context, and particularly for the benefit of more newly-elected councillors, set out below are the outcomes of allowance reviews in previous years.

In 2002, the Council's Scheme of Allowances allowed for a Basic Allowance of £6,500pa increasing by £1,300 on an annual basis, as part of a four-year scheme, rising up to £10,400.

In 2004 a Basic Allowance of £9,100 was proposed, increasing to £10,400 in 2005.

In 2008 a Basic Allowance of £9,000 was approved for a three-year period.

In 2011 the then Independent Remuneration Panel recommended the following Scheme of Allowances which was adopted by the Council:

- Basic Allowance of £7,200 (four years).
- That the following Special Responsibility Allowances be payable:

Leader of the Council	£7,937
Deputy Leader	£5,953
Lead Members (7)	£3,969
Committee Chairmen (4)	£1,984
Mayor	£2,000
Deputy Mayor	£1,250
- Councillors who carried out more than one role which would attract a Special Responsibility Allowance were only entitled to claim the highest applicable Special Responsibility Allowance.
- That the Independent and Parish Members of the Standards Committee receive a Co-Optees Allowance of £1,000, to be kept under review should the Council opt to introduce voluntary arrangements.
- That Co-Optees/invitees should not receive an Allowance but the Council should ensure that they are fully reimbursed for any travel expenses incurred in attending meetings.
- That no reference to IT be included in the Council's Scheme of Allowances.
- That no change be made to the existing arrangements in respect of the payment of Travel Allowances.
- That no change be made to the existing arrangements in respect of the payment of Subsistence Allowances.
- That the existing arrangements for the Dependant Carers' Allowance remain unchanged.
- That Tewkesbury Borough Councillors should not currently be entitled to be part of the Local Government Pension Scheme.
- That no change be made to the current provisions on Suspension and Renunciation.

- That the following provision be included in the Council's Scheme:

"If a Councillor does not attend at least two-thirds of the total number of scheduled meetings of the Council, or of the Executive, or of Committees of which he/she is a Member, the Councillor concerned should be invited to pay back an appropriate percentage of his/her Basic Allowance up to a maximum of 25% of the Basic Allowance."

"If a Member is absent from Council business for more than one continuous month (other than on illness grounds) the Member concerned should be invited to pay back a sum equivalent to the amount of Basic and Special Responsibility Allowances paid for any single period of absence which exceeds one month."

"For periods of long-term absences due to illness the Council should review its position on a case by case basis."

- That the Scheme be introduced for four years but, should the political structure of the Council change following the Elections in May, the Panel be reconvened to review its recommendations.
- That no other changes be made to the Scheme of Allowances, including the Schedule of Approved Duties.
- That the Scheme run from 1 April 2011.

In 2016 the current Chair of the Panel was elected, and the following Scheme was recommended to, and adopted by, the Council:

- Basic Allowance unchanged.
- SRAs amended:
  - Leader of the Council - £8,400
  - Deputy Leader - £6,300
  - Lead Members (7) - £4,200
  - Committee Chairmen (5) - £2,100
  - Mayor - £2,100
  - Deputy Mayor - £1,300
- That the provision which states that Councillors who carry out more than one role which would attract a Special Responsibility Allowance are only entitled to claim the highest applicable Special Responsibility be deleted from the Scheme and that any Member carrying out a role subject to a Special Responsibility Allowance should receive payment for each role undertaken. *(In respect of the current Mayor particularly, who was also a Lead Member; this provision should be back-dated so that he receives both Special Responsibility Allowances during his Mayoral Year. Accordingly, it is recommended that the provision in the 2015/16 Scheme restricting claims to one Special Responsibility Allowance be removed).*
- That no reference to IT be included in the Council's Scheme of Allowances.
- That the arrangements for travel allowances remain unchanged except that the reference to 'journeys exceeding 50 miles in total will be payable at a mileage rate of 1p per mile after the first 50 miles' be deleted as the Panel cannot see any rationale for this to remain in the Scheme.

- That the arrangements for subsistence allowances remain unchanged except that the Democratic Services Group Manager be given delegated authority to approve increased amounts in special circumstances, such as visits to London, subject to them being reasonable and upon the production of receipts.
- That the Dependent Carers' Allowance remains in place but that the maximum amount payable be increased from £6 per hour to £7.20 in line with the living wage.
- That it be noted that, from 1 April 2014, the entitlement of local Councillors to join the Local Government Pension Scheme was abolished.
- That the repayment provision within the Scheme remain unchanged.
- That the Scheme be introduced for one year from 1 April 2016 to 31 March 2017, during which period the Panel will meet to review the Scheme and recommend any amendments if necessary.

That no other changes be made to the Scheme of Allowances, including the Schedule of Approved Duties.

From 2017-2020 the Basic Allowance remained unchanged, but the Panel did propose increases and changes to the SRAs and the Dependent Carers' Allowance which were adopted by the Council.

In 2020 the Panel proposed that the Scheme to run from April 2020 to March 2021 remain unchanged other than an increase in the Basic Allowance of £150 to £7,350pa which represented a 2% increase. This was adopted by the Council.

In 2021 and 2022 the Panel proposed no changes to the Scheme other than in 2022 an increase in the Dependent Carers' Allowance from £7.50 to £9.50 per hour in line with the National Living Wage.

The pay award for staff in 2022 had been accepted and was a lump sum which equated to 5% additional cost to the manpower budget whereas individual staff awards ranged from 10.5% down to 1.5%.

Inflation was then running in excess of 10%.

The Council's financial position was as previously advised to the Panel with significant deficits forecast over the medium term.

In 2023, the Independent Remuneration Panel recommended the following changes to the Scheme of Allowances:

- (i) the Basic Allowance be increased from £7,350 to £7,650
- (ii) Special Responsibility Allowances be payable as follows:
  - Leader of the Council £9,150
  - Deputy Leader of the Council £6,860
  - Other Lead Members £4,575
  - Support Members £180
  - Committee Chairs £2,290
  - Mayor £2,290
  - Deputy Mayor £1,400
- (iii) the Dependent Carers' Allowance be increased from £9.50 per hour to £10.42 per hour.



The Panel recommended that all other provisions within the then existing 2022/23 Member Allowances Scheme should be unchanged and remain in place for 2023/24.

Whilst the Council's Basic Allowance had remained amongst the highest in the country, the Panel had recognised the impact of inflation and felt it appropriate to recommend an increase of 4%, or £300; along with a similar percentage increase in Special Responsibility Allowances; and an increase in the Dependant Carers' Allowance in line with the National Living Wage.

## **EVIDENCE AND METHODOLOGY FOR THE REVIEW**

The Panel met on three occasions (a further meeting was cancelled due to illness). Discussions were held with the Executive Director: Resources & S151 Officer and six Members of the Council (across different political/other groups, different levels of experience as councillors, and different roles including Leader and Deputy Leader of the Council, Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee and others without any 'special responsibility'). Unfortunately, one of the Panel members was unable to attend the two most recent meetings as his home had been subject to flooding in recent weeks; and, understandably, his attention and commitment had been needed elsewhere.

In addition to the Member discussions, the Panel reviewed the following information:

- Allowance payments made by Gloucestershire Councils
- Allowance payments made by Councils falling within the CIPFA Nearest Neighbour Group definition (i.e. councils with similar demographics and characteristics)
- Allowance payments made by Councils from across the country that operated Committee structures as opposed to executive (Cabinet) arrangements
- Allowance payments made by other authorities within the South West Region
- The deliberations of the South West IRP Chairs at their meeting held 20th September 2023.

## **FINDINGS**

Significant amounts of time were spent on Councillor duties, particularly dealing with Ward matters, and this could easily be equated to a full-time job.

Some Members dedicated more time than others to the role depending upon the needs of their Ward and the time available to commit to the duties - this was not unusual. A number of Members were also Parish/Town Councillors, and several were Parish/Town and County Councillors. However, irrespective of the amount of time spent supporting their communities, the dedication and commitment shown was clear; and there were many examples cited of councillors working together for the good of their residents and communities, irrespective of party affiliation.

Allowances were not a factor considered when decisions were made to stand for election, which was borne out of an overriding desire to help and support the community. However, allowances did help in meeting the costs involved in terms of loss of earnings, using homes as offices, and travelling in the Ward (particularly in the very rural areas where Members could attend many Parish Council meetings).

Allowances are not salaries and could not be set at a level to compensate fully the time spent on Council business - and nor should they be.

Some Members expressed the view that the allowances were less of an issue for those with other sources of income, such as a pension, or if a person did not need to rely on a working income at all. However, it was acknowledged that without other sources of income it would not be feasible for all people to put themselves forward for the role.

The significant workload of the Leader was acknowledged as was the differing level of responsibility and workloads of the various Lead Members and, also, the Committee Chairs. It was, however, accepted that it was difficult to justify fully any further increases at this time given that the new member structures had been in place for less than one full year and further adjustments might be forthcoming in the light of experience. A member questioned whether it might be appropriate for some additional recompense to be made to those members who served on committees that met more frequently, such as Planning, but it was acknowledged that any allowance scheme could not be attendance-based.

The comparisons with other relevant/similar/neighbouring Authorities showed that whilst Tewkesbury still had a relatively high Basic Allowance, the gap had narrowed; and that, in terms of the SRAs paid, many of the Tewkesbury sums were by no means in the upper ranges.

There was a general view that the allowances were appropriate, particularly bearing in mind the Council's overall financial position and the fact that increases had been adopted for the current year.

## **CONCLUSIONS**

Having regard to the comparator information provided, and the feedback from the discussions with Members, the Panel felt, unanimously, that there was no justification to increase any of the allowances for 2024/25. The Panel was also mindful that, overall, discussions with Members had not identified support for increases at this time.

The Panel expressed the view that it was also difficult to justify any increases at this time given that the new Member structures had been in place for less than one full year and many Members were either new to the role of councillor and/or to a role that attracted a Special Responsibility Allowance.

However, given the significant changes to membership and Member structures following the 2023 elections, the key focus of the work of the Panel in the coming year would be a detailed examination of Special Responsibility Allowances to understand fully the roles that should be eligible for this type of Allowance and what payments they should attract. This would involve face-to-face discussions with the relevant office holders.

## **RECOMMENDATION**

**That no changes be made to the current Scheme of Allowances, with all current allowances to remain in place for the period 1 April 2024 to 31 March 2025.**

(END)

## TEWKESBURY BOROUGH COUNCIL

<b>Report to:</b>	Council
<b>Date of Meeting:</b>	23 January 2024
<b>Subject:</b>	Schedule of Meetings for 2024/25
<b>Report of:</b>	Head of Service: Democratic and Electoral Services
<b>Head of Service/Director:</b>	Director: Corporate Resources
<b>Lead Member:</b>	Lead Member for Corporate Governance
<b>Number of Appendices:</b>	One

**Executive Summary:**

In accordance with Rule of Procedure 3.1, the Council is asked to set the dates and times for its meetings, and for meetings of its Committees, for 2024/25.

**Recommendation:**

1. **TO ADOPT** the Schedule of Meetings for 2024/25 shown at Appendix 1.
2. **To AGREE** that Council meetings shall commence at 6:30pm rather than 6:00pm.

**Financial Implications:**

None.

**Legal Implications:**

None.

**Environmental and Sustainability Implications:**

None.

**Resource Implications (including impact on equalities):**

None.

**Safeguarding Implications:**

None.

**Impact on the Customer:**

Transparent, open and accountable decision-making underpins all of the Council's priorities, policies and strategies and the publication of meeting dates well in advance allows the public to attend, observe and participate, where appropriate, in the Council's business.

## **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

**1.1** The Constitution requires the Council, at the first meeting of the calendar year, to agree a programme of dates and times for its meetings, and for meetings of its Committees, for the forthcoming Municipal Year.

## **2.0 SCHEDULE OF MEETINGS 2024/25**

**2.1** The Schedule of Meetings for the year 2024/25, shown at Appendix 1, has been prepared on a similar basis to previous schedules with the modifications set out below:

- Standards Committee will, at the request of the service, meet three times per year as opposed to biannually.
- Additional Council meetings have been included in the Schedule compared with recent years in order to ensure Council business can be dealt with in a timely manner.

**2.2** It is open to the Council and Committees to revise or set additional dates/times to suit their work programmes for the year. Similarly, meetings can be cancelled if there is no business for consideration.

## **3.0 TIMING OF COUNCIL MEETINGS**

**3.1** In accordance with the consensus reached by Group Leaders at the Constitution Review Working Group following discussions with their respective political groups, it is proposed that Council meetings will commence at 6:30pm rather than 6:00pm.

**3.2** A variety of options were discussed by the Working Group and it was felt that a 6:30pm start would allow Members, and members of the public wishing to attend the meeting, additional time to travel to the Council Offices following their daytime commitments, whilst ensuring the meetings did not extend too late into the evening. Should Members be minded to approve the change, this will take immediate effect.

## **4.0 CONSULTATION**

**4.1** Relevant service areas and the Chief Officers Group have been consulted on the Schedule to ensure it meets the Council's business needs.

**4.2** Timing of Council and Committee meetings was discussed by Group Leaders at the Constitution Review Working Group.

## **5.0 ASSOCIATED RISKS**

**5.1** None.

## **6.0 MONITORING**

**6.1** The Constitution allows Council and Committees to revise or set additional dates/times to suit their work programme. The Schedule will be monitored and amended if necessary to ensure the business needs of the Council are met.

## **7.0 RELEVANT COUNCIL PLAN PRIORITIES/COUNCIL POLICIES/STRATEGIES**

- 7.1** Transparent, open and accountable decision-making underpins all of the Council's priorities, policies and strategies and the publication of meeting dates well in advance allows the public to attend, observe and participate where appropriate in the Council's business.

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**Background Papers:** Report on Schedule of Council and Committee meetings – Council meeting on 6 December 2022.

**Contact Officer:** Head of Service: Democratic and Electoral Services  
01684 272044 [jennifer.murray@teWKesbury.gov.uk](mailto:jennifer.murray@teWKesbury.gov.uk)

**Appendices:** Appendix 1 – Proposed Schedule of Meetings 2024/25.



## APPENDIX 1 - TEWKESBURY BOROUGH COUNCIL – SCHEDULE OF MEETINGS 2024-25

	May	June	July	August	September	October	November	December	January	February	March	April	May	
Mon			1											Mon
Tues			2			1						1 O&S		Tues
Weds	1		3			2			1 BANK HOLIDAY			2		Weds
Thurs	2 PCC Elections		4	1		3			2			3	1 County Council Elections	Thurs
Fri	3		5	2		4	1		3			4	2	Fri
Sat	4	1	6	3		5	2		4	1	1	5	3	Sat
Sun	5	2	7	4	1	6	3	1	5	2	2	6	4	Sun
Mon	6 BANK HOLIDAY	3	8 Standards	5	2	7	4 Standards	2	6	3	3 Standards	7	5 BANK HOLIDAY	Mon
Tues	7	4	9	6	3	8	5	3 O&S	7	4	4	8 Council	6	Tues
Weds	8	5 Executive	10	7	4 Executive	9	6	4	8 Executive	5 Executive	5 Licensing	9	7	Weds
Thurs	9	6	11	8	5	10	7	5	9	6	6	10	8	Thurs
Fri	10	7	12	9	6	11	8	6	10	7	7	11	9	Fri
Sat	11	8	13	10	7	12	9	7	11	8	8	12	10	Sat
Sun	12	9	14	11	8	13	10	8	12	9	9	13	11	Sun
Mon	13	10	15	12	9	14	11	9	13	10	10	14	12	Mon
Tues	14 Council – Mayor Making	11 O&S	16 Planning	13	10 O&S	15 Planning	12	10 Council	14 O&S	11 O&S	11	15 Planning	13 Council – Mayor Making	Tues
Weds	15 Council – Annual	12	17 Executive	14	11	16 Executive	13	11	15	12	12	16	14 Council – Annual	Weds
Thurs	16	13	18	15	12 Licensing	17	14	12 Licensing	16	13	13	17	15	Thurs
Fri	17	14	19	16	13	18	15	13	17	14	14	18 BANK HOLIDAY	16	Fri
Sat	18	15	20	17	14	19	16	14	18	15	15	19	17	Sat
Sun	19	16	21	18	15	20	17	15	19	16	16	20	18	Sun
Mon	20	17	22	19	16	21	18	16	20	17	17	21 BANK HOLIDAY	19	Mon
Tues	21	18 Planning	23 O&S	20 Planning	17 Planning	22 O&S	19 Planning	17 Planning	21 Planning	18 Planning	18 Planning	22	20	Tues
Weds	22	19	24	21	18	23	20	18 Audit & Governance	22	19	19 Audit & Governance	23	21	Weds
Thurs	23 Planning	20 Licensing	25	22	19	24	21	19	23	20	20	24	22 Planning	Thurs
Fri	24	21	26	23	20	25	22	20	24	21	21	25	23	Fri
Sat	25	22	27	24	21	26	23	21	25	22	22	26	24	Sat
Sun	26	23	28	25	22	27	24	22	26	23	23	27	25	Sun
Mon	27 BANK HOLIDAY	24	29	26 BANK HOLIDAY	23	28	25	23	27	24	24	28	26 BANK HOLIDAY	Mon
Tues	28	25 Council	30 Council	27	24 Council	29 Council	26	24	28 Council	25 Council	25	29	27	Tues
Weds	29	26 Audit & Governance	31	28	25 Audit & Governance	30	27 Executive	25 BANK HOLIDAY	29	26	26 Executive	30	28	Weds
Thurs	30	27 Horsford Trust Management Committee		29	26	31	28	26 BANK HOLIDAY	30	27	27		29	Thurs
Fri	31	28		30	27		29	27 OFFICES CLOSED	31	28	28		30	Fri
Sat		29		31	28		30	28			29		31	Sat
Sun		30			29			29			30			Sun
Mon					30			30			31			Mon
Tues								31						Tues

