

19 February 2024

Committee	Council
Date	Tuesday, 27 February 2024
Time of Meeting	6:30 pm
Venue	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 - 20

To approve the Minutes of the meeting held on 23 January 2024.

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 21 February 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 on Monday 26 February 2024.

(Any questions must be submitted in writing to Democratic Services by, not later than, 10.00am on Monday 19 February 2024).

7. 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) Budget 2024/25

21 - 48

(If a Councillor intends to move a Motion or Amendment in relation to the Council's annual budget, the text of the proposed Motion or Amendment must be submitted in writing to the Executive Director: Resources by 9.00am on the working day preceding the day of the Council meeting).

At its meeting on 7 February 2024, the Executive Committee considered the 2024/25 budget and **RECOMMENDED TO COUNCIL:**

1. That a net budget of £12,463,511 be **APPROVED**.
2. That a Band D Council Tax for Tewkesbury Borough Council services of £144.36 per annum, an increase of £5.00 per annum, be **APPROVED**.
3. That the growth items for 2024/25, as proposed in Appendix A, be included within the budget.
4. That the capital programme, as proposed in Appendix B, be **APPROVED**.

An amended report is attached for consideration.

(b) Council Tax Reduction Scheme

49 - 52

At its meeting on 7 February 2024, the Executive Committee recommended to Council that

- i. the default Council Tax Reduction Scheme be **ADOPTED** with effect from 1 April 2024 with a minor revision to the national working age regulations to allow for a de minimus tolerance for income changes; and
- ii. that authority be delegated to the Director: Corporate Services, in consultation with the Lead Member for Finance and Asset Management, to agree the uprating of the working age regulations incorporated into the local Council Tax Reduction Scheme in line with those announced by the Department for Work and Pensions.

(c) Council Tax Discount Scheme for Care Leavers

53 - 60

At its meeting on 7 February 2024, the Executive Committee recommended to Council that:

- i. the definition of a care leaver be amended to a young person between the ages of 18 and 24 years for the purposes of Section 13A(1)(c) of the Local Government Finance Act 1992; and,
- ii. the Council Tax Discount Scheme for Care Leavers, attached at Appendix 1 to the report, be adopted with effect from 1 April 2024.

(d) Council Tax Premiums

61 - 68

At its meeting on 7 February 2024, the Executive Committee recommended to Council that:

- i. Council Tax be increased for all properties deemed second homes, which are occupied periodically by 100% from 1 April 2025, subject to any exemptions set out in subsequent Regulations and for implementation to be in accordance with those Regulations and guidance;
- ii. the Council Tax Empty Homes Premium be increased to 100% for properties empty for between one and five years (currently between two and five years), from 1 April 2025, subject to any exemptions set out in subsequent Regulations and guidance; and,
- iii. authority be delegated to the Executive Director: Resources, in consultation with the Lead Member for Finance and Asset Management, to amend the Council's policy relating to premiums in line with legislative or government requirements and changes.

	Item	Page(s)
8.	COUNCIL TAX SETTING 2024/25	To Follow
	To agree the Council Tax for 2024/25.	
9.	GLOUCESTERSHIRE CITY REGIONS BOARD	69 - 88
	<p>To agree the establishment of the Gloucestershire City Regions Board and that authority be delegated to the Chief Executive, in consultation with the Leader of the Council, to finalise and complete the Inter-Authority Agreement and other key documentation and to take all necessary steps to create the Gloucestershire City Regions Board, including finalising the Terms of Reference for the Gloucestershire City Regions Board with those recommendations not being effective until all Gloucestershire Councils pass equivalent resolutions; and upon the establishment of the Gloucestershire City Regions Board, to agree to delegate this Council's functions to the Gloucestershire City Regions Board as necessary for the delivery of the functions identified in the Terms of Reference at Appendix 1 to this report; confirm the appointment of Gloucestershire County Council as the Administering Authority; and appoint the Leader of the Tewkesbury Borough Council to the Gloucestershire City Regions Board as the nominated Member of the Board and to appoint a substitute Member to the Board.</p>	
10.	TEWKESBURY GARDEN COMMUNITIES CHARTER	89 - 180
	<p>To consider the draft consultation responses and to adopt the Tewkesbury Garden Communities Charter and commence the process of stakeholder 'sign-up'.</p>	

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, 23 January 2024 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 L J Carter, C M Cody, C F Coleman, M Dimond-Brown, S R Dove, P A Godwin, M A Gore, D W Gray, S Hands, D J Harwood, A Hegenbarth, M L Jordan, E J MacTiernan, G C Madle, J R Mason, H C McLain, P D 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.78 ANNOUNCEMENTS

- 78.1 The evacuation procedure, as noted on the Agenda, was advised to those present.
- 78.2 The Mayor welcomed a member of the public to the meeting and indicated that they would be asking a question at Agenda Item 5 in accordance with the scheme of public participation.

CL.79 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

- 79.1 Apologies for absence were received from Councillors P W Ockelton and G F Porter.

CL.80 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

- 80.1 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.
- 80.2 There were no declarations made on this occasion.

CL.81 MINUTES

- 81.1 The Minutes of the meeting held on 12 December 2023, copies of which had been circulated, were approved as a correct record, subject to an amendment to Page No. 14, Minute No. CL.75.7 to read: '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, **having changed in 2020....**' and Page No. 16, Minute No. CL.75.16 to include a reference to Trading Standards, and signed by the Mayor.

CL.82 ITEMS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

82.1 A member of the public had used the Council's Scheme of Public Participation to ask a question of the relevant Lead Member. The Mayor invited the member of the public to address the Council and ask his question and the Leader of the Council responded as follows:

Question:

The current governance arrangements for Coopers Edge, a development of 1,900 homes with a population of 4,500, in the three Parishes of Brockworth, Hucclecote (Tewkesbury Borough) and Upton St Leonard's (Stroud District), have been completely untenable for many years.

Currently both District and County services operate within silos divided by the District boundary. Even policing is a bureaucratic wrangle with different neighbourhood policing teams responsible for different parts of the development. It is probable that the significant delays in the delivery of community infrastructure (including allotments and sporting facilities) and the adoption of public open space and highways is related to lack of a single organisation to champion the community's needs in an effective way.

The community cannot legally be placed into a single Parish without being within a single District or Borough. Similarly, the area cannot be covered by a single County Councillor without the area being in a single District or Borough. The same applies in terms of a single District Ward.

There is an urgent need for a "Principal Areas Boundary Review" to be undertaken to enable the community to be within one District; concurrently a Community Governance Review needs to take place to either establish a new Parish Council for the area or place it within a single existing Parish.

The guidance in relation to the Principal Area Boundary Review process requires a firm proposal supported by the relevant District/City/Borough Councils to be made to the Local Government Boundary Commission for England, who would in turn make a recommendation to the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities. This inevitably requires significant community consultation to be undertaken at various stages.

Can the Leader of the Council clarify whether urgently resolving these issues is on his administration's radar and, if it is, will it be included in the forthcoming refresh of the Tewkesbury Borough Council Plan; additionally, is it realistic for this to be delivered in time for the 2027 Borough and Parish elections?

Answer:

As a former resident of Coopers Edge, I am aware of some of the challenges faced by the local community there. I also acknowledge that the current arrangements in terms of governance and service delivery are not ideal and could be confusing.

Against this background, I welcome your positive suggestion and feel that it is something worth exploring with Stroud District Council if a robust argument can be put forward and evidence provided of a strong wish for change within the community. If this can be demonstrated, and a formal request for change is made to both authorities, the full implications and impacts of any proposal would need to be evaluated before being presented to Members for debate and decision.

It is difficult to be precise regarding timeframes at this early stage. As stated, the first requirement is the identification of the level of local support for change. This could be community-led and should involve the three existing Parish Councils.

From the Borough Council's perspective, the officers who are likely to be involved in any formal review process are currently focussed on upcoming elections and,

dependent upon timing of the Parliamentary Election, it may be some months (and even into 2025/26) before significant time and resource might be available. I suspect that a similar situation may well apply for Stroud. We are happy to consider approaching the Parish Councils to ask them whether they think this is something the community would want and advise them of what they would need to do to start the process. We would ask the same of Stroud.

The emerging Council's Plan which is currently out for consultation has set out caring for place and caring for people as two of the key priorities which this proposal meets. It would not really be appropriate to specify this proposal specifically in what is a strategic document - this would be more relevant if a Borough-wide, or indeed County-wide, review of boundaries was to be pursued (although any expanded review would inevitably lead to longer overall timescales). That said, it can still be pursued, and the review would also fit with our vision of supporting people and strengthening communities.

- 82.2 The Mayor thanked the member of the public for their participation and indicated that they would receive a copy of the question and answer following the meeting.

CL.83 MEMBER QUESTIONS PROPERLY SUBMITTED IN ACCORDANCE WITH COUNCIL PROCEDURE RULES

- 83.1 There were no Member questions.

CL.84 APPOINTMENT OF CIVIC HEADS FOR THE MUNICIPAL YEAR

Mayor

- 84.1 Upon being proposed and seconded, it was

RESOLVED That Councillor Philip Workman be appointed Mayor for the ensuing Municipal Year.

Deputy Mayor

- 84.2 Upon being proposed and seconded, it was

RESOLVED That Councillor Kashan Pervaiz be appointed as Deputy Mayor for the ensuing Municipal Year.

CL.85 RECOMMENDATIONS FROM EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Treasury and Capital Management

- 85.1 At its meeting on 10 January 2024, the Executive Committee considered the Capital Strategy 2024/25, Investment Strategy 2024/25, Minimum Revenue Provision Statement 2024/25 and Treasury Management Statement 2024/25 and recommended to Council that they be adopted.

- 85.2 The report which was considered by the Executive Committee had been circulated with the Agenda for the current meeting at Pages No. 19-52.

- 85.3 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 Asset Management. The Lead Member for Finance and Asset Management advised that the documents outlined the Council's approach to its management of finances, with a focus on how money was invested, capital spent and how its treasury function was managed. The four key documents before

Members today had been developed to offer assurance to Members, the local community and wider stakeholders that the Council's finances were being managed in an appropriate and sustainable way across the next year and beyond. Having these strategies in place ensured that the Council was in line with the expectations of the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) Prudential Code. The documents were expected to be updated on an annual basis so, for a number of Members, they would not be new; the strategies were based on those agreed last year and no major amendments had been made. Members would be aware that the quarterly financial report included an update on the Council's prudential indicators therefore the actual figures and financial position could be scrutinised on a regular basis through the financial year.

- 85.4 A Member noted from the table at Page No. 27 of the report that the total net income reduced over the years but, in light of the Council's commercial investment, she wondered if it should at least stay the same. The Executive Director: Resources advised that in terms of the minimum revenue provision this was set aside each year to repay the Council's borrowing and deducted from that sum, therefore, it reduced on an annual basis. Direct income from the Council's properties was retained at the same level so hopefully would increase. In response to a further Member query, clarification was provided that the figures in the table were in thousands i.e. £3,135 was actually £3,135,000 and the Executive Director: Resources undertook to ensure that was updated in next year's report.
- 84.5 Upon being put to the vote, it was

RESOLVED That the Capital Strategy 2024/25, Investment Strategy 2024/25, Minimum Revenue Provision Statement 2024/25 and Treasury Management Statement 2024/25 be **ADOPTED**.

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

- 85.6 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.
- 85.7 The report which was considered by the Executive Committee had been circulated with the Agenda for the current meeting at Pages No. 53-74.
- 85.8 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 Built Environment. The Leader of the Council advised that this was a joint approach, working with Cheltenham Borough and Gloucester City Councils to deliver the strategic infrastructure required for the whole area to serve all three communities, for example, a new waste depot. He stressed that decisions would be by consensus so all three authorities would need to agree and no one could be outvoted. In terms of the Infrastructure List, this was an ongoing list which could be amended and added to – it was to be borne in mind that it was not for smaller infrastructure for communities which could otherwise be met through Section 106 contributions and, in any case, Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) funding was sadly not enough to meet all infrastructure needs. The Lead Member for Built Environment advised that the report sought Council's support for the establishment

of a Community Infrastructure Levy Joint Committee to provide governance for the allocation of the strategic infrastructure part of CIL receipts collected by the three partner councils and recommended approval of the Terms of Reference for the Joint Committee, as set out at Appendix 1 to the report; pooling of strategic CIL infrastructure funding by the three partner councils; publication of the amended Infrastructure List, as set out at Appendix 2 to the report, and engagement with a wider range of infrastructure providers to identify other priorities for consideration by the Joint Committee for inclusion on the Infrastructure List. The Terms of Reference included the following requirements: an agreement to pool funding, subject to a periodic review; consensus of all three partner councils for proposed allocations; decisions and reviews to be reported to the Executive Committee or Cabinet; agreement of the joint Infrastructure List as part of the Infrastructure Funding Statement in December each year; agreement of the Infrastructure Delivery Plan, updated to support the joint Strategic and Local Plan (SLP) and; for Gloucestershire County Council to attend meetings but have no voting rights or scrutiny of bids for funding. Members would recall that when CIL funding was received it went into three pots: up to 5% may be used for administrative costs, either 15% or 25%, depending on whether a Neighbourhood Development Plan was in place, must be passed to the parish in which the development took place; and the remaining 70-80% must be spent in accordance with Regulation 59 of the CIL Regulations 2010 for the provision, replacement, operation or maintenance of infrastructure to support the development of its area – it was the third pot that was proposed to be pooled. In terms of the Infrastructure List set out at Appendix 2 to the report, an amendment had been made to the version approved for publication in December 2023 at the request of Gloucestershire County Council to the pipeline of projects requiring more work to identify costs, as such, the title of the final section 'Projects not to be funded from CIL' had been removed, with the three projects that had been identified under that category being included in the group of 'shared' projects. Lastly, with regard to wider engagement, the Infrastructure List included only local authority priorities, therefore, a wider targeted exercise was proposed with key stakeholders such as the NHS, emergency services, utilities, Environment Agency, Sports England and others to identify other priorities for consideration by the Joint Committee.

- 85.9 With Tewkesbury Borough being largely rural in nature, a Member questioned how it was proposed to manage the risk that priorities for CIL spend would be biased towards the urban infrastructure requirements. In response, the Leader of the Council advised that it was incumbent upon them to ensure the funding was used to serve Tewkesbury Borough Council residents primarily whilst being mindful of the holistic strategic infrastructure for the area; he had already made reference to a waste depot as an example of strategic infrastructure which would benefit all communities. A Member asked how each part of the borough would get its fair share given that some had experienced significantly more residential development than others and therefore had greater need for infrastructure to support that growth, for instance, Brockworth desperately needed a GP surgery. The Leader of the Council was sympathetic to the needs of Brockworth but all communities would have their own strains and pressures and the CIL pot would not be able to solve all infrastructure needs. As a local authority, it was important to utilise Section 106 monies and to ensure that developers were being held accountable for their commitments. He would be happy to work with Members on an individual basis to see what more could be done to address any specific issues.
- 85.10 Another Member sought clarification as to the statement that decisions would be made by consensus and was advised that decisions had to be unanimous so there would not be a situation where two authorities could outvote the third partner. A Member asked how that would work in practice and what would happen if a consensus could not be reached. The Chief Executive explained that, ultimately, the partnership would dissolve and another mechanism would need to be

introduced for how to use CIL money; however, given the maturity of the partnership and the engagement work that was taking place with Gloucestershire County Council which would also be part of the Committee, albeit without a vote, he was confident they would be able to come to sensible decisions. In response to a query regarding transparency, confirmation was provided that meetings would be minuted. A Member raised concern that there would only be one Member from each partner authority on the Committee and the Leader of the Council clarified there would be two Members from each partner authority, as set out in the Terms of Reference at Page No. 57, Paragraph 3.3 of the report which stated that each authority would appoint a Committee Member and a substitute – this would be the Leader and the Lead Member for Built Environment from each of the three partner authorities. Whilst there would be up to six Members in the meeting, three of those would be substitutes and there would be one vote per authority – meetings would always require three Members with the ability to vote. A Member raised concern that both the Leader and the Lead Member for Built Environment represented the same part of the borough and she would have liked to have seen more of a split in terms of representation on the Committee. Another Member asked if it was appropriate for the two representatives to be from the same political party. In response, the Leader of the Council indicated that the appointments were not party political or Ward specific and they would be representing the whole borough in their Lead Member roles. For context, the Lead Member for Built Environment clarified that the amount of money within the CIL pot was in the region of £11m which would not be enough to fund even half of the projects and could easily be spent on a single piece of infrastructure such as a school or road.

- 85.11 A Member drew attention to the table within the Infrastructure List at Page No. 73 of the report and noted that £8m of the £11m within the CIL pot came from development within Tewkesbury Borough; however, Cheltenham Borough Council was asking for £4.5m to complete its work despite only providing £2.5m and she asked if that meant that money from Tewkesbury Borough's development would essentially be going to Cheltenham Borough if that was agreed. The Leader of the Council felt the Member was right to point out the difference in terms of who brought what to the pot and these were robust conversations for the Committee to have; however, in terms of this example, it was necessary to look at cross benefits for both parties and what Cheltenham Borough Council could bring to the table that Tewkesbury Borough Council did not have, for instance, land for infrastructure. The Member pointed out that Tewkesbury Borough covered a huge area and she would not like to see urban need prioritised over local rural need. The Leader of the Council pointed out that a lot of local infrastructure need should be being met by Section 106 and there was not enough money in the pot to meet all local infrastructure needs. He was aware that developers needed to be held accountable for Section 106 with infrastructure brought forward in a more timely manner and there was more to be done in terms of ensuring the right contributions were secured from the outset, but the CIL pot was very much strategic and would be used to the benefit of the whole borough and projects which met that test. He acknowledged there were things on the Infrastructure List currently which did not meet that test and those conversations were to be had by the Committee.

85.12 Upon being put to the vote, it was

RESOLVED

1. 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**.
2. That the amended Infrastructure List, as set out at Appendix 2 to the report, 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.

Gloucestershire Statement of Common Ground

- 85.13 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.
- 85.14 The report which was considered by the Executive Committee had been circulated with the Agenda for the current meeting at Pages No. 75-112.
- 85.15 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 Built Environment. The Leader of the Council explained that the Gloucestershire Statement of Common Ground had been prepared by the six local planning authorities in Gloucestershire, Gloucestershire County Council and the GFirst Local Enterprise Partnership. The statement had been approved by Tewkesbury Borough Council in January 2023 with a number of caveats to the agreements contained within it and the Council now wished to fully sign up to all of the agreements and remove any caveats.
- 85.16 A Member drew attention to Page No. 87 of the report and, with regard to Agreement 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 – sought assurance that the Council was mindful of economic and financial implications and how the authority and its partners could incentivise greater uptake of alternative forms e.g. for Council Tax, Business Rates and non-strategic planning. With regard to Page No. 91 of the report, Agreement 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 – the Member sought assurance this would not be to the detriment of Tewkesbury Borough residents. In response, the Leader of the Council indicated he was very happy to give assurances on both points; it was recognised that the authority had financial parameters and he did not feel that signing up to this left the authority vulnerable in terms of the issues raised. A Member noted that Page No. 91, Paragraph 7.1 of the

report contained a bullet point which was incomplete: “The Senior Responsible Officer for the Gloucestershire Statement of Common Ground will be XXX. They are charged with XXX.” She understood this was a published document rather than a draft and she asked whether that information should be included. The Chief Executive explained that, whilst the document predated his involvement with the authority, there was a strategic director group tasked with taking this forward and each authority would have a different person in that particular box; this was a process issue which would be taken up with that group accordingly.

- 85.17 With regard to Page No. 92, Paragraph 8.3 of the report, a Member noted that the Gloucestershire Statement of Common Ground was a live document which needed to be kept up-to-date on an annual basis. She asked if all authorities had to agree the document at the same time and what annual basis meant in this context. The Chief Executive advised that the initial intention was to move towards a joint strategic plan for Gloucestershire with all authorities signing up to a 50 year long plan but that had not worked well for the authorities within Leadership Gloucestershire who wanted an annual document stating the direction of travel as a precursor to doing the planning work. They were being encouraged by the local planning authorities to look at an overarching plan to support infrastructure at a higher level to work for the Strategic and Local Plan (SLP); however, things such as energy generation could not be done at SLP level so it was necessary for local planning authorities to work with the County Council etc. In terms of how to approach these issues, this could be done by supporting the work of Climate Leadership Gloucestershire, keeping informed on strategic planning work between the three districts when that was important and talking collaboratively about the long term future of the county. The value of the document was in setting out the areas where the authorities aligned and therefore where collaborative working could take place.
- 85.18 A Member sought clarification as to the rationale for the caveats when the document had been approved by Council in January 2023 and the Leader of the Council indicated that he could not really answer that question as in his view they were common sense or things which would be good to do for the benefit of residents. Whilst it was not a strategic planning document, he felt getting it right was the first step to continuing the wider strategic work through the SLP.
- 85.19 During the debate which ensued, a Member indicated that he was pleased to see this report coming forward and agreed that the caveats should be removed, especially in terms of flood resilience and the strategic response. In terms of Page No. 109 of the report which referenced the climate change agreements, he pointed out that Tewkesbury Borough Council had now declared an ecological emergency. The Leader of the Council indicated that he agreed that the climate and ecological emergency was a risk to the community and that Tewkesbury Borough Council should not have opted out of the agreements in respect of climate change; however, making the change today would demonstrate how far the Council had come in a short space of time. A Member indicated that, as a new Councillor, she could not understand why some of the caveats had been agreed, for instance, recognising the importance of active travel and introducing policies which would require developments to contribute to quality of the walking and cycling network for users of all abilities and disabilities. She was happy that Officers had worked quickly with Members to bring this back to Council and that the recommendation was to fully opt in to all of the agreements.
- 85.20 A Member recognised that it had taken a considerable amount of time to get the document to its current position and there would be great reluctance to change it other than to remove the caveats; however, he would like to see the following agreements strengthened: Page No. 87, Agreement 5 – “wherever possible deliver a positive contribution” to be extended by adding “and never a negative one”; Agreement 6 replaced with “the parties agree that alternative forms of energy will be

a very important part of the county's infrastructure mix. They will investigate their use as a matter of urgency in line with environmental and landscape considerations"; Page No. 89, Agreement 18 and Agreement 22 and Page No. 90, Agreement 25 replace "should" with "must"; and Page No. 90, Agreement 34, replace "seek" with "aim". In his view, having declared a climate change and ecological emergency, saying "should" felt very weak.. Rather than adjusting the wording today, he wished to put on record that there should be an active push to amend the document as soon as practicable to strengthen and reflect what the Council had voted on previously.

85.21 A Member indicated that her issue with the document was that there had always been an urban focus and Tewkesbury Borough was very rural in nature with many outlying villages – she could not see how cycling could become mass transit without an urban-centric policy so she did not feel that statement could be achieved. Another Member expressed the view that she did not think the document was saying that cycling would take precedence over everything else. A Member indicated that she had found it incredibly frustrating when the document had been considered by Council previously and was happy this was one of the first things on the list for the new administration to bring back, particularly as Tewkesbury Borough Council had now declared an ecological emergency.

85.22 Upon being put to the vote, it was

RESOLVED

1. 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.
2. 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.

CL.86 REVIEW OF POLLING DISTRICTS AND POLLING PLACES/STATIONS

86.1 Attention was drawn to the report of the Democratic and Elections Adviser, circulated at Pages No. 113-184, the additional recommendations, circulated separately, and the alternative polling district proposal for Tewkesbury South TSH3(C), circulated around the table. Collectively these documents provided the outcome of the review undertaken in respect of polling districts and polling places/stations within the Borough. Members were asked to approve the recommendations set out at Appendix 1 to the report subject to the amended proposal for Tewkesbury South polling district TSH3(C); pending any further formal review, to delegate authority to the Returning Officer to make any further polling place and/or polling station changes as necessary to enable the efficient and effective conduct of elections; to delegate authority to the Electoral Registration Officer to make any changes necessary to the Register of Electors; to remove numbers from polling district references and replace them with letters (with any reference to 1 becoming A, 2 becoming B, 3 becoming C and so on); and to delegate authority to the Electoral Registration Officer to make any further changes as may be necessary to polling district references.

86.2 The Democratic and Elections Adviser explained it was a statutory requirement for local authorities to undertake a regular review of all polling districts, polling places and polling stations within their area. The last review had been carried out in 2019 but, due to the Parliamentary election that year, it had been light touch in nature. As

such, this was a very fundamental review which took account of 10 years of residential development across the borough, including changes to the Brockworth area where there had been significant development. There was a 16 month window within which to conduct the review but the decision had been taken to carry out the review early in that period so that any new arrangements could be put in place ahead of the forthcoming Police and Crime Commissioner and Parliamentary elections. There had been a comprehensive consultation with Members of Parliament with Constituencies within Tewkesbury Borough, County and Borough Councillors, Town and Parish Councils/Meetings within the Borough, and other interested parties including community groups and local organisations. There had been a relatively good response and he was grateful to Members who had commented and those with whom he had had more detailed discussions, particularly where changes were being recommended, as their local knowledge had been invaluable.

- 86.3 In summary, the majority of the existing arrangements remained fit for purpose against the statutory guidance; however, there were a number of changes proposed largely resulting from residential development that had been carried out but also others where improvements could be made for the benefit of electors. While the next statutory review period would begin in October 2028, the arrangements would be reviewed more informally after each election as a matter of course and, if it was felt further improvements could be made, these could be brought to Members on a full or part borough basis. In addition, where other electoral reviews were conducted - for instance, a review of the Gloucestershire County Council electoral divisions was currently being undertaken by the Local Government Boundary Commission for England - the arrangements would be reviewed to ensure they reflected any alterations arising and remained fit for purpose.
- 86.4 The Democratic Services and Elections Adviser drew attention to the two additional recommendations, circulated separately, and explained these were largely administrative to address concerns regarding the use of numbers in polling district references when combined with elector numbers, and the particular need in cross-boundary Parliamentary constituencies to ensure that there was no duplication of polling district references. In terms of the further paper circulated around the table, this had resulted from a recent request to look again at the proposals for the Tewkesbury South polling district, which he would address in more detail when the debate reached the Tewkesbury South section of the report. He confirmed that he had heard back from the Acting Returning Officers for the Forest of Dean and North Cotswolds Parliamentary Constituencies who were happy with the proposals in the report in terms of the polling stations which would be within those new Parliamentary constituencies. He advised that there had been a request to use Bishop's Cleeve Nursing Home as a polling place but, unfortunately, that was not possible so further investigation would continue for a dedicated polling place for the residents of Cleeve West within the polling district.
- 86.5 Taking each of the Borough Wards in turn, it was noted that no changes were proposed in relation to Cleeve Grange Ward, Cleeve Hill Ward, Cleeve West Ward, Highnam and Haw Bridge Ward, Northway Ward, Severn Vale North Ward, Severn Vale South Ward, Shurdington Ward and Winchcombe Ward.
- 86.6 With regard to Badgeworth Ward, one change was recommended which would effectively split the Ward into two polling districts, one of which would cover a small discreet residential development on the boundary with Cheltenham Borough further away from the Badgeworth village area. As such, a new polling place was proposed at FC Lakeside for electors in that area, as set out on the plan at Page No. 125 of the report.
- 86.7 In terms of Brockworth East Ward, there had been significant development in the area already with further development proposed, largely around Perrybrook. Previously there had been three polling districts but BRE2 and BRE3 could be

legitimately combined, so it was proposed that there be two polling districts using the stream as the dividing line - with the traditional development in BRE2(B) and a polling place at Brockworth Community Centre and the majority of the Perrybrook development and the newer development to follow in BRE1(A) with a new polling place at Brockworth Rugby Football Club. A Member raised concern that the Horsbere Brook was splitting the development in half - there would be new development on both sides of the Brook and she asked if that would be considered going forward. In response, the Democratic and Elections Adviser explained that Horsbere Brook provided a natural boundary for Brockworth East; the new development referenced by the Member related to Brockworth West. He provided assurance that the situation would be monitored as development came forward to ensure the arrangements remained fit for purpose.

- 86.8 The proposals for Brockworth West Ward were set out at Page No. 136 of the report and would mean that residents of BRW2(B) would have their own dedicated polling place at the Victoria Inn which was more convenient for electors in the area and was readily accessible by foot. The other change was in relation to BRW1(A) and BRW3(C) and, as Members had heard from the public question which was part of an earlier Agenda item, there was an area of the Brockworth West Ward which comprised part of the Cooper's Edge development so it was suggested that a discreet polling district be provided to cater for those electors (with a similar arrangement being proposed for that part of Cooper's Edge that fell within Hucclecote parish). The proposed polling place was outside of the borough at The Edge Community Centre, a facility which was already used as a polling place by residents who were part of Cooper's Edge within Stroud District. In effect, the proposals would create an informal arrangement to bring the community of Cooper's Edge together for voting purposes, although some improvements to parking arrangements would be desirable. In addition, the new Parliamentary constituency arrangement would see Brockworth West move to the North Cotswolds Constituency with Upton St Leonards so, from a community cohesion point of view, it was future-proofing polling places at a Parliamentary level. A Member supported this proposal wholeheartedly as it would make life easier for residents of Cooper's Edge. He noted that, if use of The Edge Community Centre was not feasible, the recommended fall-back option was for electors to use St Patrick's Church Hall and he asked if it was possible to use the Victoria Inn instead on the basis it was easier to find and a better landmark. This option was supported by another Member, as it provided a more direct route for vehicles and had better parking provision. In response, the Democratic Services and Elections Adviser explained that the fall-back option had only been included in case the highway and parking issues in Cooper's Edge around the community centre, which was adjacent to a school and had no dedicated parking spaces, could not be resolved. He was in discussion with Gloucestershire County Council to seek a solution to the problems, at least for the upcoming May election(s), and he knew that both the community centre and the school were in contact with County Highways regarding a more permanent solution. Although he believed that The Edge Community Centre was the right polling place for Cooper's Edge residents, it would not be appropriate for the Council to approve it as a polling place without a fall-back in case the issues around highway safety could not be resolved. The Democratic and Elections Adviser suggested that the proposal be amended so that the fall-back could be either St Patrick's Church Hall or the Victoria Inn (so that there was no requirement to refer the matter back to Council); and, if the need arose and it was possible to accommodate a second polling station at the Victoria Inn then that would be the initial fall-back option. He undertook to speak to the Ward Members concerned if it was necessary to consider St Patrick's Church Hall. The proposer of the motion expressed the view this was a sensible compromise and he felt reasonably confident that, unless the area had changed significantly, the pinch point was at school drop-off and pick-up times so there were parking spaces available most of the day. Another Member queried whether having two fall-back options diluted the chances of securing a highway scheme for the The

Edge Community Centre. In response, the Democratic and Elections Adviser provided assurance that the report was very clear that The Edge Community Centre was the right place for that area of Brockworth West, and part of Hucclecote, so the first aim would be to secure that.

- 86.9 With regard to Churchdown Brookfield with Hucclecote Ward, Members were advised that there were two parts to the proposal. In terms of Churchdown Brookfield, attention was drawn to Page No. 141 of the report and Members were informed that, when reviewing the new Parliamentary Constituency boundaries, two anomalies had been identified between the Ward boundaries approved by the Council under its Community Governance Review in 2022 and the revised Constituency boundaries of Tewkesbury and North Cotswolds - one of which was in Churchdown Brookfield Ward. Whilst there were currently no electors in this area, the proposal would provide future-proofing in the event that residential properties were constructed on this land. In terms of Hucclecote, as set out at Page No. 143 of the report, the same arrangements were proposed as for Brockworth West in that HCC1(A) was recommended as a discreet polling district with The Edge Community Centre as a preferred polling place, with a caveat that Pineholt Village Hall be identified as a fall-back option. A Member suggested that the vast majority of people from Cooper's Edge would walk to their polling station and it was only a maximum 10 minute walk from most locations to Pineholt Village Hall; and in the absence of significant local support for the change he felt that no change should be made. In response, the Democratic and Elections Adviser explained that this proposal sought to separate the discreet elements of the Cooper's Edge development, as had been proposed for a similar area falling within the Brockworth West Ward. In addition, there was no direct road link for residents of this part of Cooper's Edge to Pineholt Village Hall. Furthermore, whichever polling place was selected, it was hoped that many electors would walk to their polling stations. It was also explained that proposals from a review of this nature were not restricted to the consultation responses received and it was incumbent on Officers to conduct the review in light of statutory guidance and seek to ensure that, where possible, the most appropriate arrangements were put in place for the benefit of electors. Given the history of Cooper's Edge, and the various representations made not only to this review but also more generally about future governance arrangements for the area, a judgement had been taken by Officers as to what appropriate arrangements might be. However, it was for Members to decide whether to concur with that judgement or to agree an alternative.
- 86.10 In terms of Churchdown St John's Ward, very little change was proposed as outlined at Page No. 144 of the report. Historically, by virtue of a Community Governance Review, two separate polling districts, CHJ3 and CHJ4, had had to be created within the Ward, but that arrangement was no longer required and they could now be combined. The proposed new polling district CHJ4(D) was the other area where there was an anomaly with the new Parliamentary Constituency boundaries. Again, whilst there were currently no electors in this area of land, a separate polling district would future-proof polling arrangements.
- 86.11 With regard to Cleeve St Michael's Ward, no changes were being recommended to the boundary of the two polling districts but a new community facility - Homelands Community Building - was due to be available in March/April and would be a more convenient polling place for electors in BCM2(B).
- 86.12 In terms of Cleeve West Ward, whilst no changes were being made to the current arrangements, attention had been drawn to a potential community facility within the Bishops Cleeve Nursing Home which might have been a possibility for hosting a polling station for Cleeve West electors; however, the Nursing Home could not accommodate a polling station and therefore the new community facility on the Cleevelands site was likely to provide a viable alternative location for the future, albeit that was some way off being delivered. In respect of Longford Ward, a

historic Community Governance Review had split Longford into two polling districts. However, this was no longer necessary, and it was recommended that the two existing polling districts be combined.

- 86.13 Members were advised that no substantive changes were proposed to Isbourne Ward aside from combining the two existing polling districts within Toddington into one. A Member noted that Wormington now had its own Parish Meeting and she asked whether there was any appetite for a polling station within Wormington; particularly as the Church was often used for Parish Meetings and would be a more convenient location for residents to walk to rather than driving to Dumbleton. The Democratic and Elections Adviser explained that all Parish Councils and Parish Meetings within the Borough had been consulted and no formal response had been received in respect of the current arrangements for Dumbleton or Wormington, so the assumption had been made that the current arrangements were acceptable. In addition, unless there was a strong community desire, a standalone polling place would not usually be allocated for what would be less than 100 electors, taking account of postal voters; notwithstanding this, he was happy to monitor the situation going forward.
- 86.14 In terms of Severn Vale North Ward, whilst no changes were proposed, consideration had been given to changing the portacabin arrangement at The Leigh with a potential alternative location at the Farm Shop on the A38; however, given the speed limit of the road, the fact that the access was not particularly good and the site itself was not that large, for the time being the portacabin remained the most sensible option.
- 86.15 With regard to Shurdington Ward, a request had been made by the North Cotswolds Constituency Labour Party to look at whether there was a suitable new polling place for electors from a number of newer dwellings further from the more traditional village core; however, there had been no public request of that nature and the current arrangement was considered to remain fit for purpose for the time being, although the situation would be monitored and if there was further development it might necessitate a change.
- 86.16 Members were advised that no substantive changes were proposed for Tewkesbury East Ward but the Wheatpieces area had been sub-divided by a previous Community Governance Review which was no longer necessary so the two polling districts would be combined. Similarly, in Tewkesbury North and Twyning Ward, it was recommended that TNT2 and TNT3 be combined into one polling district with Twyning remaining as a separate polling district.
- 86.17 Turning to Tewkesbury South Ward, the initial set of amendments was set out at Page No. 173 of the report with a further amendment having been circulated around the table at the meeting. It was noted that concerns had been raised about the location of the Tewkesbury Youth Centre polling station for TSH2 and TSH3 voters. Prior's Park Community Church building had been identified as a suitable alternative or additional polling place and Officers had worked through various iterations to try to provide a sensible split which enabled those in the northern part of the Ward to go to Tewkesbury Youth Centre and those in the southern part to go to the Community Church. It was explained that, in working up the arrangements, every effort was made to ensure that whole streets and roads were not split across polling districts to avoid confusion and that access to polling places was achievable, where possible, on foot. Despite considering numerous alternatives, no perfect solution had been found. However, one option was considered to be workable and met most of the criteria - this was the further proposal tabled at the meeting - and did not involve multiple splits of roads or streets across the two polling districts and there would be benefits in terms of reducing distances for the majority of residents in the two areas to their respective polling places. The other change being proposed was a realignment of TSH3(C) and TSH2(B) along the line of Gloucester Road so rather than making everyone in more rural areas, such as Odessa Park, go to Tewkesbury

Youth Centre, it was suggested that the Members' Lounge in the Public Services Centre be used as a polling place. This had benefits for Gloucester Road residents and, as the development south of Prior's Park had no direct road link to Prior's Park, it was also logical for those residents, and those on the Lincoln Green Lane development, to come to the Public Services Centre. A Member raised concern regarding the use of the Public Services Centre as a polling place for a Parliamentary election given there were likely to be political parties telling outside of the building; while other places such as places of worship and villages halls did not tend to be in use on polling day. As alternatives, he asked whether the adjoining Leisure Centre could be used or whether a separate portacabin on the Council site might be more appropriate. The Democratic and Elections Adviser acknowledged that the Public Services Centre was a sensitive location but the suggestion was to use the Members' Lounge so it was separate from the main entrance to the building with standalone entry. Whilst he understood the concern regarding tellers, electoral law protected the operation of polling stations and the activities and behaviour of tellers. A portacabin might be a viable alternative but he felt that a polling station facility could be operated within the Public Services Centre without undue cause for concern. He would be happy to see if there was a better location but the Centre was a recognised and well-used public facility. In response to a query as to where postal vote opening would take place and whether there would be any conflict with using the Members' Lounge as a polling station, the Democratic and Elections Adviser explained the intention was for postal vote opening to take place in another location within the building and he provided assurance that no electoral business would be conducted at the same time or in the same or adjoining area during polling day. A Member sought clarification as to the recommendations in relation to Tewkesbury South Ward and was advised that no changes were proposed to polling district TSH1(A) where St Joseph's Church would remain the polling place; the revised polling district TSHB would have a polling place at the Public Services Centre; the new polling district TSHC would comprise the area above the red line on the plan circulated around the table, with the polling place being Tewkesbury Youth Centre; and the new polling district TSHD would comprise the area below the red line on the plan circulated around the table, with the polling place being Prior's Park Community Church.

- 86.18 It was proposed and seconded that the recommendations as set out at Appendix 1 to the report be approved, subject to (i) an amendment to the proposals for Brockworth West Ward so that either St Patrick's Church Hall or the Victoria Inn could be used as a fall-back option should the highway and parking issues not be resolved at The Edge Community Centre and (ii) the sub-division of the originally-proposed Tewkesbury South TSH3(C) polling district to reflect the separate plan circulated around the table with electors from properties above the red line to continue to vote at Tewkesbury Youth Centre in a revised polling district TSHC, and electors from properties below the red line to vote at Prior's Park Community Church in a new polling district TSHD; that authority be delegated to the Returning Officer to make any further polling place and/or polling station changes as necessary to enable the efficient and effective conduct of elections; that authority be delegated to the Electoral Registration Officer to make any changes necessary to the Register of Electors; that the removal of numbers from polling district references and their replacement with letters (with any reference to 1 becoming A, 2 becoming B, 3 becoming C and so on) be approved; and that authority be delegated to the Electoral Registration Officer to make any further changes as may be necessary to polling district references.
- 86.19 During the debate which ensued, a Member expressed the view that the report did not make clear that local Ward Members had been consulted in depth regarding the proposals and the Democratic and Elections Adviser apologised if that had not come across strongly enough; he had made reference today to the fact that Members' local knowledge had been invaluable and it was not his intention to

underplay that involvement for which Officers were extremely grateful. With regard to the proposals for Tewkesbury South, a Member indicated that he was not keen to have the added expense of hiring a portacabin when there was an appropriate space within the Public Service Centre and he would be proud to use the Members' Lounge as a place for the community to vote. He felt tellers were more likely to behave with Officers, and the Police, within the building and was sure that any material referencing elected Members would be removed during that time. This view was supported by another Member. The Democratic and Elections Adviser provided assurance that electors would be notified of any changes agreed by Members well in advance of the Police and Crime Commissioner elections; it would not be left to poll cards to inform them in due course of their new polling places.

86.20 Upon being put to the vote, it was

RESOLVED

1. That the recommendations set out at Appendix 1 to the report be **APPROVED** subject to:
 - i. an amendment to the proposals for the Brockworth West Ward so that either St Patrick's Church Hall or the Victoria Inn can be used as a fall-back option should the highway and parking issues not be resolved at The Edge Community Centre and
 - ii. the sub-division of the originally-proposed Tewkesbury South TSH3(C) polling district to reflect the separate plan circulated around the table with electors from properties above the red line to continue to vote at Tewkesbury Youth Centre in a revised polling district TSHC and residents from properties below the red line to vote at Prior's Park Community Church in a new polling district TSHD.
2. That, pending any further formal review, authority be delegated to the Returning Officer to make any further polling place and/or polling station changes as necessary to enable the efficient and effective conduct of elections.
3. That authority be delegated to the Electoral Registration Officer to make any changes as necessary to the Register of Electors.
4. That the removal of numbers from Polling District References and their replacement with letters (with any reference to 1 becoming A, 2 becoming B, 3 becoming C, and so on) be **APPROVED**.
5. That authority be delegated to the Electoral Registration Officer to make any further changes as may be necessary to Polling District References.

CL.87 SCHEME OF MEMBER ALLOWANCES 2024/25

87.1 Attention was drawn to the report of the Democratic and Elections Adviser, circulated at Pages No. 185-194, which asked Members 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 to the report.

87.2 The Leader of the Council proposed, and it was seconded, that no changes be made to the current Scheme of Member Allowances with all current allowances to remain in place for the period 1 April 2024 to 31 March 2025. This was in

accordance with the recommendation of the Independent Remuneration Panel. The Leader of the Council indicated that he has asked for clarification in relation to Page No. 190 of the report which stated that the Independent and Parish Members of the Standards Committee received a co-optees allowance of £1,000. The Monitoring Officer explained that the reference related to the position in 2010 rather than the current position which was that the two Independent Persons, who advised him as Monitoring Officer and attended Standards Committee meetings, were paid £500 per annum; the three Parish Councillors who had recently been appointed to the Standards Committee would receive no payment.

87.3 Accordingly, it was

RESOLVED That no changes be made to the current Scheme of Member Allowances with all current allowances to remain in place for the period 1 April 2024 to 31 March 2025.

CL.88 SCHEDULE OF MEETINGS 2024/25

88.1 The report of the Head of Service: Democratic and Electoral Services, circulated at Pages No. 195-200, asked Members to approve the Schedule of Meetings 2024/25 and to agree that Council meetings shall commence at 6:30pm rather than 6:00pm.

88.2 It was proposed and seconded that the Schedule of Meetings 2024/25 be approved and that it be agreed that Council meetings commence at 6:30pm rather than 6:00pm. The Leader of the Council advised that feedback from Members had suggested that it would be beneficial for Council meetings to be held at the slightly later time of 6:30pm in order to enable them to attend in a timely fashion.

88.3 A Member pointed out that, had the Council meeting this evening started at 6:30pm, it would now be after 9:00pm and she questioned how many Members had requested the later start. In response, the Leader of the Council explained that, as part of the Constitution Review Working Group, Group Leaders had asked their respective Groups their preferred start time of 6:00pm, 6:30pm or 7:00pm and the responses received had been taken into consideration. A Member questioned whether consideration had been given to public transport options and the impact the later start time would have on those who relied on those methods to attend Council meetings. The Leader of the Council felt this was a good point which had not been fully considered; however, Members had been asked for their feedback and that point had not been raised. Another Member indicated that she would be very happy to provide a lift for any Members who needed one to and/or from Council meetings.

88.4 A Member noted that resumption of the Annual Council meeting was due to be held the day after Mayor Making, i.e. 14 May and 15 May 2024, and he asked what had prompted that change as historically there was a week between the two meetings. In response, the Director: Corporate Resources explained that this change had been implemented in 2023 to facilitate a meeting of the Planning Committee in May at the request of the service.

88.5 Upon being put to the vote, it was

RESOLVED

1. That the Schedule of Meetings 2024/25 be **APPROVED**.
2. That Council meetings commence at 6:30pm rather than 6:00pm.

The meeting closed at 8:30 pm

TEWKESBURY BOROUGH COUNCIL

Report to:	Executive Committee
Date of Meeting:	7 February 2024
Subject:	Budget 2024 – 2025
Report of:	Associate Director: Finance
Head of Service/Director:	Executive Director: Resources
Lead Member:	Finance & Asset Management
Number of Appendices:	Three

Executive Summary:

The proposed net budget totals £12.46m and, after deducting Government support and other financing streams, the resultant council tax requirement is £5.43m giving a Band D council tax figure of £144.36.

Recommendation:

To RECOMMEND to the Council:

- i. a net budget of £12,463,511;
- ii. a Band D council tax for Tewkesbury Borough Council services of £144.36 per annum, an increase of £5.00 per annum;
- iii. the inclusion of growth items within the budget for 24/25 as proposed in appendix A;
- iv. the capital programme as proposed in appendix B.

Financial Implications:

As set out within in the report.

Legal Implications:

Section 32 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 as amended places a duty on the Council, as Billing Authority, to calculate before 11th March 2024 its budget requirement for 2023/24.

Under section 25 of the Local Government Act 2003, the Section 151 Officer must report on the robustness of the estimates for the purposes of making the appropriate calculations and of the adequacy of the Council's proposed financial reserves.

Environmental and Sustainability Implications:

A growth in budgetary support for directed towards tackling the Borough wide climate and ecological emergency.

Resource Implications (including impact on equalities):

No new service reductions are included in the budget proposal which result in redundancies. The growth proposal includes the additional of 2.5 full time equivalent permanent post being added to the establishment, the funding of a number of one off posts to add temporary capacity and the transition of a number of temporary roles with the Business Transformation team to permanent roles.

Safeguarding Implications:

None

Impact on the Customer:

The proposals within this report will result in an additional charge of £5 per annum for a band D council tax property. Properties in other bands will be subject to different increases as illustrated in table 6. It should be noted that the £5 per annum increase is for Tewkesbury Borough Council services only and the overall increase in the council tax bill will be determined by any increase agreed by Gloucestershire County Council, the Police and Crime Commissioner and our Town & Parish Council's.

For the current year, the overall annual increase was £92.42 with Tewkesbury's increase again being £5 and out of the total cost of £2028.92, only £139.36 was charged by Tewkesbury Borough Council which is equivalent to 6.87%.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1** The Council considered the Council's financial position as shown in the Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) at its meeting on 12th December 2023.
- 1.2** The MTFS outlines the budget pressures facing this council now and in future years. It depicts the gap between the estimated net budget of the council and the estimated funding available in order to finance that net expenditure. The deficit over the five years of the MTFS is estimated to be in the order of £6.1 million.
- 1.3** The latest MTFS is based on updated information provided through the Autumn Statement and the Local Government Settlement Policy Statement. Although both of these provide some clarity on the direction of travel in the short term, much of the previous uncertainty with funding remains and, as a result, financial projections in the medium term are uncertain and subject to significant change. It is hoped that further clarity will be provided at some point to enable sound financial planning and the setting of budgets over the medium term.
- 1.4** The Spending Review in October 2021 headlined a three year funding position for local government coupled with additional general funding of £4.8bn over 3 years in addition to specific social care funding. Despite the setting of a three year funding position, local government settlements have remained on an annual basis and the Council had to wait for the Provisional Local Government Settlement, received on 18th December 2023, for clarity on the immediate funding proposals affecting the 24/25 budget. The following sections of this report provide further detail on the Provisional Settlement and the Policy Statement but, in summary, the headlines relevant to this Council include:
- A one year only Settlement period, covering 2024/25;
 - Funding reform to be delayed until at least 2025/26;
 - Likewise, a delay to the Business Rates Retention scheme reset;
 - The continuation of a Funding Guarantee;
 - An additional one year, one off payment of New Homes Bonus;

- A requirement for every Council to submit productivity plans to the Government by the summer;
- A continuation of the council tax threshold for District Councils being the higher of 2.99% or £5;
- An increase to Core Spending Power for Tewkesbury Borough of 5.76%.

- 1.5** This report now brings together the information from the Settlement with the detailed figures associated with the 2024/25 budget and the work undertaken by the Transform Working Group. A proposal is then made for a balanced budget and resultant council tax.
- 1.6** Section 25 of the Local Government Act 2003 requires the Chief Financial Officer (nominated Section 151 Officer) to make a statement to the Council on the robustness of the estimates and adequacy of financial reserves. This statement is set out in section 11 of this report. The Council is under a statutory obligation to have regard to this when making its decision on the proposed budget.
- 1.7** In setting the budget for 2024/25, the council has continued to provide the same level of service as in previous years and, in many areas, looks to provide an enhanced service whilst also investing to meet the demands of the growing population of the Borough and the emerging priorities of the new council plan. Despite the financial challenges facing the Council, the proposed budget includes the addition of £472,976 of ongoing growth in our services and £359,754 of one-off growth to further support services and council plan ambitions.
- 1.8** As always, the approval of the 2024/25 budget will mark the start of the process to set a balanced budget for the following year. Much will depend on the timing of a general election and a Spending Review with the hope that the government will provide clear and early information on the funding streams that will support the Borough Council in 25/26 and beyond. The Council will also need to consider its own expenditure plans over the medium term and look to align those plans with the likely level of resources available.

2.0 LOCAL GOVERNMENT FINANCE SETTLEMENT 2024/25

- 2.1** The Local Government Finance Settlement for 2024/25 includes monetary allocations for a variety of funding streams including New Homes Bonus (NHB), Services Grant (SG), Revenue Support Grant (RSG), Rural Services Delivery Grant (RSDG), the Funding Guarantee (FG) and the Business Rates baseline (BRB) funding. In addition, it confirms what the Government deem as an excessive council tax increase which would be subject to local referendum before it could be introduced.
- 2.2** The Provisional Local Government Finance Settlement for 2024/25 was announced on 18th December 2023. The settlement is subject to consultation which ended on 15th January 2024, with the Final Settlement expected at the beginning of February. Historically the figures contained within the Provisional Settlement haven't changed on publication of the Final Settlement but this year's Final Settlement contained significant additional funding for local government. Whilst the majority of the additional funding was allocated for social services (£500m), lower tier authorities benefit from an additional £72m made available to increase the funding guarantee threshold from 3% to 4% and rural authorities have seen a 15.8% (£15m) increase in the Rural Service Delivery Grant.
- The additional funding, which was announced in early February, has seen an increase in Core Spending Power for Tewkesbury of £106,303 from the Provisional Settlement. The budget report has been amended to include the additional funding.
- Given the timing of the decision to increase funding, no immediate decision has been made on its use. Instead, the funding has been set aside to meet needs identified

following the approval of the new Council Plan. A further report will be made to members to agree the use of this funding.

2.3 Despite the Spending Review 2021 providing funding quantum for the following three years, the Department of Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) opted to only provide confirmed funding levels on an annual basis. The Policy Statement's issued in December 2022 and December 2023 attempted to provide some certainty for the following financial years by confirming delays to funding reform and business rates reset but left questions over a number of other aspects that form the Settlement. The 2024/25 Settlement is therefore, in effect, another one year roll over Settlement. A Spending review is expected in 2024 which may provide some greater certainty of funding over longer time frames but the impending General Election places a question mark over the timing of the review.

2.4 Needs based funding

The Governments assessment of funding support required to deliver services to the Borough, net of the resources that could be raised locally, is provided via three funding streams, these being, Revenue Support Grant (RSG), Rural Services Delivery Grant (RSDG) and the Business Rates baseline (BRB) funding.

The figures within the settlement are in line with expectations and Table 1 highlights the confirmed level of support for the next financial year.

Table 1

	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25
Cash levels			
Revenue Support Grant (RSG)	23,990	158,117	168,590
Rural Services Delivery Grant (RSDG)	14,459	16,160	18,712
Business Rates baseline funding	1,846,234	1,915,324	2,004,696
Total	1,884,683	2,089,601	2,191,998
Change in funding (£)			
Revenue Support Grant (RSG)	704	134,127	10,473
Rural Services Delivery Grant (RSDG)	0	1,701	2,552
Business Rates baseline funding	0	69,090	89,372
Total	704	204,918	102,397
Change in funding (%)			
Revenue Support Grant (RSG)	3.02%	559.10%	6.62%
Rural Services Delivery Grant (RSDG)	0.00%	11.76%	15.79%
Business Rates baseline funding	0.00%	3.74%	4.67%
Total	0.04%	10.87%	4.90%

* RSG for 23/24 contains £131,371 of rolled in grants that were previously awarded separately.

2.5 As can be seen from Table 1, the Councils needs based funding has seen an increase of £102,397 or 4.90% for 24/25. There are a number of factors that have contributed to this increase including:

- An uplift to the core RSG of £10,473 which equates to September's CPI figure
- A increase of 15.8% to the rural element of the funding
- A 4.67% uplift to Business Rates baseline funding

More detail on business rates funding is provided in section 4 but in summary the Council's baseline funding should move in line with September's Consumer Price Index (CPI), which for 2023 was 6.62%, as long as this is passed on to businesses in the form of an uplifted business rates multiplier. In order to support businesses in the current economic environment, the multiplier has been split in two – one for small businesses and one for standard businesses – with the small business rate multiplier being frozen and, as a result, the government are required to compensate local authorities in full for the revenue forgone by the government's decision – see section 4. The standard business rates multiplier has increased by 6.62% but the uplift in funding through the Business Rates Baseline is calculated as the weighted average uplift between the small and standard businesses within Tewkesbury's valuation list, hence the lower figure of 4.67%

2.6 Funding Guarantee

In previous years, the funding floor for local government was 0% of existing Core Spending Power (CSP). This meant that the worst-case position for local authorities was that the cash amount of their CSP would not change between years. For councils such as Tewkesbury who were at the 0% floor, courteous of the steep reductions in New Homes Bonus, the Lower Tier Services Grant (LTSG) would be used as a balancing item to ensure that 0% was achieved, paying significant grant if necessary. In reality, even with the LTSG allocation, Tewkesbury was still losing grant funding but was replacing this with increased council tax receipts.

A new funding floor of 3%, in recognition of inflationary pressures, was introduced for 23/24 in the form of the Funding Guarantee. The Funding Guarantee ensures that all councils see at least a 3% increase in their Core Spending Power before any decisions about organisational efficiencies, use of reserves or council tax levels are made. In 2023/24, the 3% Funding Guarantee was worth £300,000 of funding.

The Funding Guarantee has remained in place for 2024/25 but has been increased to 4%. For Tewkesbury, the 4% uplift in its current CSP of £10.6m will result in an uplift in funding support of £424,000. In addition to this, the Council will also benefit from any increase in council tax it agrees to, rather than it merely replacing lost funding. With a £5 increase in council tax generating approximately £188,000, the Funding Guarantee could therefore see an increase in CSP of £612,000 or 5.76%.

The Funding Guarantee will be delivered by uprating existing funding such as the Revenue Support Grant and the Baseline Funding level, adjusting for changes to other grant schemes such as New Homes Bonus and then making an actual Funding Guarantee grant to ensure the 3% target is delivered.

For Tewkesbury, the total accumulated value of the Funding Guarantee in 2024/25 is £2,139,430.

2.7 Services Grant

The Services Grant was introduced as a new, one-off allocation of £822m in 2022/23 in part to compensate authorities for the increased cost of National Insurance. Despite being labelled as a one-off grant, the Services Grant continued into 2023/24 and will again be in place for 2024/25. However, the value of the grant has been significantly reduced, first by an amount to reflect the reversal of the decision to increase National Insurance contributions and then by further top slicing of the grant pot to fund other funding streams on a national level. As a result, the national funding pot for this grant has reduced from £822m in 22/23 to just £87m for 24/25.

The allocation specifically for Tewkesbury has fallen from £127,275 in 22/23 to £71,717 in 23/24 and now just £12,890 for 24/25.

It is not yet known whether this grant will continue into 2025/26.

2.8 New Homes Bonus

The government is proposing to once again to roll-over the current policy on New Homes Bonus (NHB) for a new round of NHB payments in 2024/25. New legacy commitments ceased to be made in allocations from 2020/21, and the government confirmed in February 2021 that it did not intend to reintroduce the concept of legacy payments. As a result, Tewkesbury will see a NHB allocation of £1,125,138 in 2024/25. Full details are provided in section 3.

2.9 Council tax principles

The government has kept the core council tax principle the same as the current year which is a maximum increase in council tax of 2.99%, despite the levels of inflation over the previous year.

For district councils, the Government has also retained the current year principle of being the higher of £5 or 2.99%. This principle once again disadvantages the lowest council tax charging authorities and overall is more restrictive than for other types of authority as well as the Police and Crime Commissioners. The government has been lobbied through the Provisional Settlement consultation to reconsider this position.

The government assumes every authority will increase Band D council tax by the maximum allowed. In its Core Spending Power figures, the government has also assumed that the taxbase will increase in 2024/25 for each authority in line with their average taxbase increases.

Full details of the council tax calculation can be found in section 7.

2.10 Core Spending Power

The Government's preferred measure of financial resources available to local government is called the Core Spending Power (CSP) and takes into account all of the grants referred to in the previous paragraphs, New Homes Bonus and Council Tax to forecast the level of total resources available to local government in the coming year. The only major funding stream excluded for lower tier authorities is Business Rates retention.

The headline figure for local government sees an increase of 7.5% or £4.5bn in funding for 2024/25. This includes assumed increases to council tax income of £2.08bn based on maximum council tax increases and five-year average growth to tax bases. This continues a feature of recent settlements in that a greater burden for funding local government has been placed on the local taxpayer. The figure also includes £1.88bn of additional or repurposed funding for social care.

2.11 Tewkesbury's CSP forecast for 2024/25 is, once again, somewhat less than the national average, standing at 5.76%, but is a significant increase compared to the years prior to 2023/24 and is in line with other lower tier authorities. Table 2 illustrates how Tewkesbury's CSP is calculated:

Table 2 – Tewkesbury’s Core Spending Power

	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25
	£ millions	£ millions	£ millions
Settlement Funding Assessment	1.87	2.07	2.17
Business rates multiplier compensation	0.19	0.33	0.38
Council Tax Requirement	4.81	5.13	5.39
New Homes Bonus	1.63	1.24	1.13
Rural Services Delivery Grant	0.01	0.02	0.02
Lower Tier Services Grant	1.31	0.00	0.00
Services Grant	0.13	0.07	0.01
Funding Guarantee	0.00	1.77	2.14
Grants rolled in	0.13	0.00	0.00
Core Spending Power	10.09	10.63	11.24
Increase (£)	-0.04	0.54	0.61
Increase (%)	-0.43%	5.40%	5.76%

2.12 The £0.61m increase in CSP is the second consecutive increase enjoyed by Tewkesbury Borough Council and is most welcome after a decade of spending reductions. Whilst the uplift is welcome, at 5.76% it remains significantly below the levels of inflation that have impacted the council’s costs over the last twelve months and will not alone cover the increasing cost of providing services.

2.13 It should also be noted that the split between locally controlled funding and funding from central government has, for the first time in many years, started to diverge. The council tax element of CSP is again expected to rise by £0.27m meaning that it will account for 48.0% of the Council’s CSP, a fall of 0.4% on the current year but up from 34.7% in 2015/16. This highlights the journey over the last decade of putting an ever-increasing emphasis on local taxpayers to pay for the cost of services.

3.0 NEW HOMES BONUS

3.1 The Local Government Settlement for 2021/22 confirmed that New Homes Bonus (NHB) would be withdrawn after much speculation in the preceding couple of years. Despite a consultation on a replacement scheme taking place in early Spring 2021, no further announcements have been made. It therefore came as no surprise when the government decided to allow a further year of the scheme in 2022/23 and again in 2023/24.

3.2 For 2024/25, the NHB award will again be awarded for one year only with no legacy payments being awarded in future years. The original scheme made NHB payments for six years for each new property delivered or empty property returned to occupation, but this was reduced to four years in 2018/19 and then the last five awards, including 2024/25, have been for one year only. This has obviously dramatically reduced the value of the scheme to Tewkesbury although the increased levels of house building and the increase to the national average council tax has offset some of that reduction.

3.3 For Year 14, which is based on growth between October 22 and October 23, the value of the NHB will be £1,125,138. This is the third largest annual bonus that Tewkesbury has received since the inception of the scheme and reflects the level of housebuilding in the area over that 12-month period. A total of 957 new properties have been added to the valuation list in the period but this has been partially offset by a growth of 136 properties which are classed as empty. Table 3 below details the allocation of NHB in comparison to the previous three years.

Table 3 – Projection of NHB

	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25
Year 8	£898,713	£0	£0	£0
Year 9	£965,166	£965,166	£0	£0
Year 10	£0	£0	£0	£0
Year 11	£644,982	£0	£0	£0
Year 12	£0	£667,928	£0	£0
Year 13	£0	£0	£1,240,366	£0
Year 14	£0	£0	£0	£1,125,138
	£2,508,861	£1,633,094	£1,240,366	£1,125,138

Variance (£)	-£1,253,895	-£875,767	-£392,728	-£115,228
Variance (%)	-33.32%	-34.91%	-24.05%	-9.29%

3.4 As can be seen from the table, the Council will receive £1.13m in 2024/25 from the NHB scheme. This is a reduction of £0.12m on the current levels. All of the £1.13m will be used to support the base budget of the Council.

3.5 It is generally assumed that this will be the last year to attract a NHB payment although no confirmation of this has been received. No details were presented in the Provisional Local Government Settlement as to what, if anything, might replace the NHB scheme and what transitional arrangements might look like. This is very disappointing as the Government had said in the 2023/24 Settlement that:

‘We also recognise the need to help councils plan and we will therefore set out the future position of New Homes Bonus ahead of the 2024/25 local government finance settlement.’

It is therefore currently impossible to forecast potential sums due from NHB or a revised scheme beyond March 2025.

4.0 BUSINESS RATES RETENTION

4.1 In recent years, Tewkesbury has benefited from significant amounts of retained business rates income to support its base budget. The budgeted current year retained income stands at £1.98m as a result of the growth of the business base within the Borough but also the compensation paid by government to local authorities for national decisions such as freezing the business rates multiplier and business rate relief.

4.2 As highlighted earlier, the Council will receive compensation from the Government for their decision to freeze the business rates multiplier for small businesses and therefore deny local authorities the expected inflationary increase to the business rates baseline position. This is the fourth year where the government has decided to do this and as a result the compensation has increased from £326,257 in the current year to £380,717 for 2024/25 as indicated within our CSP figures.

4.3 Reform of the business rates retention scheme has long been an ambition of the government with a move to 75% retention widely expected and a number of pilots run to test the scheme and its benefits. However, following comments by the Secretary of State in 2021 about 75% retention and its incompatibility with the levelling up agenda, it no longer appears that this move will happen and the sector will remain on 50% retention. The figures for 2024/25 continue to be based on this level of retention.

The national reset of the retention scheme, whereby accumulated growth in individual authorities is taken back by the government and potentially redistributed amongst the whole local government sector, has also been earmarked to occur since 2020. However,

the Local Government Finance Settlement Policy Statement in December 2022 confirmed that the reset will be delayed until at least 2025/26.

- 4.4** The calculation of business rates due to and therefore retained by the Council is contained within our NNDR1 return to DLUHC and is based on the standstill position highlighted in the preceding paragraph, the compensation due highlighted at 4.2, the underlying growth of the business community within the Borough and the reassessment of provisions made for appeals and bad debts. The calculation also includes the changes to the rateable list as calculated by the national revaluation for 2023 and the transfer of the Virgin Media hereditaments to the Central List. The resultant level of expected business rates retention for Tewkesbury Borough Council is £2.04m for 2024/25.

This level is an increase £63,989 on the current year level of retention.

- 4.5** In addition to the budgeted in year retention, the Council budgets for the surplus or deficit arising on the Business Rates Collection Fund in the previous year. As in previous years, a surplus has been generated as the council collected more business rates income than forecast. This position has been boosted by the release of accumulated appeals provisions that are no longer required and provide a significant one off surplus.

The Business Rates Collection Fund surplus to incorporate within the 2024/25 budget stands at £1,201,876. This is significantly more than in recent years so care has been taken to ensure only the average surplus is used to fund on-going activities whilst the balance is used to fund one-offs. If this care had not been taken, then there would likely be an immediate funding deficit for the 25/26 budget as the surplus dropped back to more normal levels. As a result of this, £428,122 has been used to fund ongoing activities whilst the balance of £773,754 has funded one off activities which support the balanced budget proposal.

- 4.6** In addition to our own individual performance, Tewkesbury is a member of the Gloucestershire Business Rates Pool which incorporates all Gloucestershire authorities and, through the inclusion of the County Council, results in a much reduced levy payment being applied, therefore generating higher levels of retained income within Gloucestershire. This increased retention is shared directly amongst the Councils and also with the Strategic Economic Development Fund in Gloucestershire.

Given the government's decision not to make any alterations to the business rates retention scheme and thus maintain the intrinsic benefit of pooling, Section 151 officers have risk assessed the proposed pool and believe there is sufficient benefit and risk mitigation to maintain the pool for a further year. Tewkesbury will therefore continue within the Pool for 2024/25.

As with the current year, the budget will include an estimate of £225,000 for Pool benefit which will therefore directly support the delivery of ongoing services. Any retention generated over this level will be treated as a windfall bonus at the year end. The windfall can be used to boost a number of our long-term planning reserves and therefore mitigate the need for additional ongoing budget growth.

5.0 GROWTH

- 5.1** After more than a decade of austerity in local government and with the Borough expanding rapidly in recent years, our services across the Council, are under severe pressure to meet the demands placed upon them. In addition, the ambition of both national and local government continues to present new challenges and financial demands. Alongside this, the withdrawal of the New Homes Bonus – traditionally used to support growth in the Council - without a replacement scheme has created further financial pressures and removed a growth funding resource from our budget position. The restriction on council tax increases as well as the impact of inflationary pressures

also mean that there is limited ongoing funding available to support the growth requests put forward.

- 5.2** It is against this backdrop that growth bids were requested from services and from which an original £1.6m of additional funding was requested. Clearly this level of additional cost is not affordable for the Council in the current funding climate and so choices needed to be made so that a balanced budget proposition could be developed. The Chief Officer Group (COG) reviewed all bids received and prioritised those bids against the funding that was available.
- 5.3** Having completed this exercise, the final decision on what to include in the budget proposal could not be made until all other parts of the budgetary process had been completed. This was again severely delayed this year given the late notification of the Provisional Settlement and the additional work needed to complete the business rates position. Once the position was known, COG, in consultation with senior politicians and the Transform Working Group, included growth bids in the budget proposal that were affordable within the funding available and decided against including more bids that would require the use of reserves to support ongoing expenditure.
- 5.4** As a result of the additional funding in the Provisional Settlement and the additional income and savings found within the base budget, highlighted at 6.4, a total of £472,976 of ongoing growth is recommended. It should also be noted that prior to this growth round, the Council has previously agreed to fund a new Climate Change Officer and small operational budget, totalling £66,276, and provide additional resources to the Strategic Local Partnership of £160,000 per annum.
- 5.5** Despite the financial challenges faced by the Council, significant investment in our services has been funded in recent years and the recommendation for growth in 24/25, coupled with the in-year growth decisions taken, means that over the last three years, ongoing investment into our services totals £1.79m.
- 5.6** The additional funding in this growth proposal allows for an injection of critical resources into our service areas to meet our desire to provide effective and efficient services to our communities, be able to consult with and listen to those communities more effectively, ensure our IT systems are maintained and secure, bid for funding on behalf of the community and the council itself and meet some of our emerging Council Plan priorities.
- 5.7** The full list of growth items recommended for inclusion in the budget is shown at Appendix A. A number of ongoing growth items are shown as being funded from alternative sources. Other grant schemes and existing reserves can meet the funding need at least in the short term but should these funding streams be exhausted the growth items will be added to the base budget and be funded directly by the council.
- 5.8** In addition to the ongoing funding recommended, £359,754 of one-off funding is also included in the budget proposal. This provides temporary capacity within our People, Culture and Performance team, temporary capacity to support our Garden Communities ambition and provides funding to review and improve the Council's emergency planning and response.
- 5.9** Appendix A also highlights the growth bids that haven't been included in the budget proposal as a priority item. In some cases, alternatives have been found whilst other bids were withdrawn by the service. A total of £765,041 of ongoing expenditure requests have not been included within the budget proposal.

6.0 PROPOSED BUDGET

6.1 The base estimates for the Council in 2024/25 have been compiled, including the proposed growth, and are detailed in table 4.

Table 4

	2023/24	2024/25	Variance (£)	Variance (%)
Executive Services	£627,600	£914,379	£286,779	45.69%
People, Culture & Place	£461,085	£519,658	£58,573	12.70%
Transformation	£972,163	£1,318,943	£346,780	35.67%
Finance	£1,760,368	£1,438,717	-£321,651	-18.27%
IT & Cyber	£897,669	£1,057,863	£160,194	17.85%
Corporate Resources	-£1,195,954	-£1,048,710	£147,244	12.31%
Planning	£951,833	£721,170	-£230,663	-24.23%
Community Services	£6,447,069	£7,115,441	£668,372	10.37%
One Legal	£378,625	£426,050	£47,425	12.53%
TOTAL	£11,300,458	£12,463,511	£1,163,053	10.29%

6.2 The budget proposals for 2024/25 include a number of variances against the current year and are summarised in the following paragraphs.

6.3 Additional costs and reduced income

- A salary growth assumption of 4% on each scale point has been made for the year commencing 1st April 2024. This position has been adopted in light of current and projected consumer price inflation levels, the pressure created by national living wage increases, Union demands on pay and the funding position of the Council. This forecast uplift is estimated to cost the council an additional £487,000 per annum.
- In addition, the extra cost of the 2023/24 salary award needs to be included within the base budget. The 23/24 budget was constructed with a £1,601 increase assumption per scale point for the pay award but the actual award of £1,925 for the majority of employees resulted in an additional cost of circa £128,000.
- With consumer price inflation running between 10.5% and 4% during 2023, this has inevitably affected a number of individual budget lines within the council. Whilst managers have sought to reduce the impact of inflation on budgets, there are some significant increases for expenditure such as computer licences
- The cost of gas and electric has risen steeply since the last budget was set but the contractual arrangements with the Council's supplier, where energy has been purchased in advance of need and in advance of the significant price increases, has meant that the price being paid by the Council is around 60% lower than the market price at the time of fixing the price in November. However, this has still resulted in price increase of 15.9% for electricity. Whilst the price of gas has also risen, the project to install an air sourced heating system will mean that the council has no need to procure gas to heat its offices, saving over £29,000.
- A second office accommodation unit within the council offices remains vacant after over 12 months of advertising and, whilst an aggressive marketing strategy in the new year may help to secure a tenant for the space, it is prudent to remove the expectation of rental income from our budget given the length of the current void period. This is a loss of £40,000 rental income.
- The contract for services delivered by Ubico has increased by £673,000 (13.4%) for 24/25. This increase is predominately driven by a 5% assumption around the 24/25 pay award and the extra salary to be incorporated into the

base budget following the 23/24 pay award. Other small growth items of expenditure such as insurance and vehicle repairs also contribute to the overall increase.

- The Materials Recovery Facility gate fee has risen by £200,000 as the cost to dispose of recycled materials has increased because of reductions in the demand and value of recycled materials
- There has been an increase of £40,000 in the annual cost of the Building Control partnership resulting from more non-chargeable activities
- An increase in demand and cost relating to homeless activities resulting in an increase cost of £74,000.
- External Audit charges have increased by £69,000 as a result of the tender and award of new five year contracts from 2023/24. This increase was expected as a result of the actions taken to correct issues highlighted within the external audit market.
- An increase in cost of £128k within Asset Management and Grounds Maintenance as a result of the impending transfer of facilities at Cooper Edge. This increase is offset by an annual release of the commuted sum associated with the facility transfer.

6.4 Budget savings and increase income

- The Council is able, once again, to reduce its contribution to the pension fund deficit. A further reduction of £97,000 has been factored into the base budget resulting in an annual contribution of £1.07m, a reduction of £858,000 from the position for 2019/20. A further reduction will take place in 25/26 as a result of the valuation of the pension fund in 2022
- The increase in banking rates, has resulted in an additional investment interest estimate of £166,000
- A reduction in the amount of external borrowing required has reduced the annual budget for borrowing by £226,000
- The increase in planning fees which came into effect on 6th December 2023 has resulted in an increased budget forecast of £230,000
- The trade waste service deficit of £130,000 has been removed from the base budget following the cessation of the service.
- Savings on services charges associated with the Swindon Road depot of £100,000.
- An increase in estimated fee income, as a result of increased fees and additional customers, across a range of services including:
 - Garden waste - £70,000
 - Licensing - £77,000
- A reduction in the annual contribution to the Commercial Property reserve of £125,000 per annum
- The introduction of a range of new or stretch income targets within the planning service as a result of the ongoing improvement work has added £58,000.
- Reviewing summons costs and aligning them with neighbouring authorities will result in an additional £35,000.
- Providing for the 2027 Borough Elections via a one off allocation from the Business rates Collection Fund surplus means that there is no requirement for a £41,000 annual contribution towards those costs

6.5 The finance available to fund the Net Budget Requirement is as follows:

Table 5

Financing stream	2023/24	2024/25	Variance (£)	Variance (%)
Revenue Support Grant	-£158,117	-£168,590	-£10,473	6.62%
Rural Services Delivery Grant	-£14,459	-£18,712	-£4,253	29.41%
Business Rates Baseline	-£1,915,324	-£2,004,696	-£89,372	4.67%
Retained Business Rates	-£1,980,458	-£2,044,448	-£63,990	3.23%
Business Rates Pool	-£225,000	-£225,000	£0	-
Business Rates Collection Fund	-£377,475	-£1,201,876	-£824,401	218.40%
New Homes Bonus	-£1,240,366	-£1,125,138	£115,228	-9.29%
Council Tax Collection Fund surplus	-£160,899	-£129,161	£31,738	-19.73%
Minimum Revenue Provision	£926,973	£972,260	£45,287	-4.89%
Net Transfer to / (from) reserves	£820,467	£1,066,793	£246,326	-30.02%
Services Grant	-£71,717	-£12,890	£58,827	-82.03%
Funding Guarantee	-£1,778,232	-£2,139,430	-£361,198	20.31%
Total	-£6,174,607	-£7,030,888	-£856,281	13.87%
Service Expenditure b/fwd	£11,300,458	£12,463,511	£1,163,053	10.29%
Balance to be funded by Tax Payers	£5,125,851	£5,432,623	£306,772	5.98%

6.6 Table 5 highlights the financing streams as described in the previous sections. The funding guarantee and the business rates collection fund surplus have supported a net increase in funding of £0.86m to meet the increased cost of our services.

6.7 Also included within the financing streams are:

- An increase in the Minimum Revenue Provision of £45,287 reflecting the annuity method of calculation used;
- An increase in the net transfer to reserves as a result of the use of the Business Rates collection fund surplus to fund a one off transfer to the Commercial Property Reserve of £250,000 and the Election Reserve of £164,000. These two transfers provide comfort that enough funding exists in reserves to reduce the annual contribution to the Commercial Property reserve by £125,000 on a permanent basis and reduce the annual contribution towards the Borough Elections by £41,000 for the next four years;
- A council tax collection fund surplus of £129,161;
- The benefit of being a member of the Gloucestershire Business Rates Pool into the base budget with an income estimate of £225,000. This is a prudent estimate of the likely full benefit of pool membership and taken now given some certainty that any changes to the retention scheme are now likely to be some years away.

6.8 As a result of the movement on individual funding streams, the net total of funding available to the Council has increased by £856,281 or 13.87%.

6.9 It has not been necessary to use reserves to support the budget proposal. It was widely expected that a significant contribution from reserves would be needed to balance this year's budget but due to the funding settlement, the increased business rates and the additional income generated in the core budget, this has not been necessary. The MTFS reserve remains intact and ready to support future service and budgetary needs.

6.10 After deducting the funding streams from the net cost of services, the balance of expenditure to be funded by Council Taxpayers is £5,432,623 for 2024/25, an increase of £306,772 on the current year.

7.0 COUNCIL TAX

7.1 As highlighted earlier in the report, the government expects all councils to increase council tax to the maximum level permissible before a referendum is required. The increased council tax delivers the national headline 7.5% increase in CSP and in Tewkesbury's case supports the generation of the expected 5.76% increase in CSP for 2024/25.

Whilst this is one of the more generous financial settlements in recent times for Tewkesbury, the increase in CSP does not meet the inflationary storm that has buffeted the budget over the last 12 months. Neither does it meet the extra cost required to meet the additional demand placed on our services by a growing Borough.

It is therefore recommended that a £5 per annum increase at Band D level, equivalent to 3.59%, is approved, generating an additional £188,162 of ongoing income to support the Council's core services.

7.2 The level of increase proposed is in line with the Government's set threshold, of £5 or 2.99%, whichever is the higher, for determining whether a District council tax increase is excessive and should be put to a local referendum. Thresholds for other precepting bodies are:

- 2.99% for basic council tax and 2% for the Adult Social Care (ASC) levy for upper tier authorities
- £13 for Police and Crime Commissioners
- There are again no thresholds for Town and Parish Councils.

7.3 The proposed increase will be the ninth successive year that the Council will have increased the council tax by the maximum £5 per annum. This follows the period from 2011 to 2016 where Tewkesbury decided to freeze its share of the council tax in order to support its taxpayers during tough economic times. The proposed increase would set the Band D Council Tax at £144.36 per annum and most likely keep the Council around the eighth lowest District Tax in England. The proposed tax would also keep the Council in the lowest quartile for Council Tax charges whilst the shortfall against the lower quartile threshold and the District Council average is likely to be circa £39 and £71 respectively given the ability of the majority of District Council's to increase their council tax by more than £5, courteous of a 2.99% uplift on existing council tax levels.

7.4 The impact of this proposal on the Borough taxpayers is illustrated in Table 6.

Table 6

Band	No. of properties	Percent of total	Annual Council Tax 23/24	Annual Council Tax 24/25	Annual Increase
A	6,801	15.18%	£92.91	£96.24	£3.33
B	6,979	15.58%	£108.39	£112.28	£3.89
C	12,634	28.20%	£123.88	£128.32	£4.44
D	6,579	14.68%	£139.36	£144.36	£5.00
E	5,856	13.07%	£170.33	£176.44	£6.11
F	3,655	8.16%	£201.30	£208.52	£7.22
G	2,093	4.67%	£232.27	£240.60	£8.33
H	205	0.46%	£278.72	£288.72	£10.00

7.5 The council's recent record on council tax is shown in table 7 for information.

Table 7

Year	Council Tax	Increase (£)	Increase (%)
2015/16	£99.36	£0.00	0.00%
2016/17	£104.36	£5.00	5.03%
2017/18	£109.36	£5.00	4.79%
2018/19	£114.36	£5.00	4.57%
2019/20	£119.36	£5.00	4.37%
2020/21	£124.36	£5.00	4.19%
2021/22	£129.36	£5.00	4.02%
2022/23	£134.36	£5.00	3.87%
2023/24	£139.36	£5.00	3.72%
2024/25	£144.36	£5.00	3.59%

7.7 Council tax base growth in the Borough was suppressed during the pandemic but has recovered to normal levels of activity in the last two years. As a result, the tax base for 2024/25 has been calculated at 37,632.47 an increase of 851.11 band D equivalents or 2.31%.

7.8 Table 8 highlights the movement on the tax base, the balance to be funded by taxpayers and the corresponding tax increase required whilst table 9 breaks down the additional tax receipts between the tax base increase and the tax charge increase.

Table 8

	2023/24	2024/25	Variance
Balance to be funded by Taxpayers	£5,125,850	£5,432,623	£306,773
Tax base	36,781.36	37,632.47	851.11
Council tax @ Band D	£139.36	£144.36	£5.00

Table 9

Council tax raised through tax base increase	£118,610.69
Council tax raised through charge increase	£188,161.98
Additional council tax raised	£306,772.67

7.9 Table 9 illustrates that the council will be able to raise a further £306,773 of council tax income through tax rate and tax base increases.

8.0 RISKS

8.1 The Council's budget is prepared using best estimates for the level and timing of expenditure, budget & efficiency savings and available resources. However, a number of uncertainties exist which could have an impact on the budget of the Council:

- Government Support – Funding levels beyond 2024/25 are, as yet, unknown. A prudent view of future years funding has been included in the MTFs.
- Business Rates – Until such time as the issues with backdated appeals have been resolved, accurately forecasting the level of business rate income is difficult. Provisions are made within the scheme to deal with expected bad debts and appeals but these may not be sufficient. The Council is also a member of the Gloucestershire Pool and so the performance of neighbouring authorities with regards to rates retention will impact on Tewkesbury's overall retention.
- Interest rate forecasts – our forecast treasury position is built on the central forecast of rate movements over the twelve-month period. There are significant downside and upside risks to this forecast given the competing economic needs

in setting the base rate. Changes will affect both the level of return from investments but also the cost of borrowing should new borrowing be required. Current borrowing is all at fixed rates.

- Budgetary control – whilst every effort is made by services to operate within their set budgets, in some circumstances, overspends are unavoidable.
- The cost of disposing of recyclate is significant and is subject to the market and the quality and quantity of materials collected. Best estimates of prices and tonnages have been made, reflecting the likely position, but this could be subject to significant change. Impact from this change will also affect the level of recycling credit income generated.
- A contract sum with our waste provider Ubico has been agreed for the new year. This is not a fixed sum, and the Council is liable for any overspend incurred by the contractor. Additional expenditure may be incurred through further price rises such as diesel, vehicle maintenance or through a pay award settlement in excess of the 5% within their budget.
- As previously indicated, there is currently no agreement with regards to the 2024 pay award and there remains significant pressure from increases in the National Living Wage on the bottom of our pay scales. The budget therefore carries a risk that there is insufficient money within it to meet the agreement that will be made between the Unions and employers. A pay award reserve exists to support excess pay awards.
- New budgetary pressures may emerge in particular from the council plan as it is finalised and actions agreed.
- Rental levels from our commercial property portfolio remain at risk given the current flux in the economy. It is as a result of this risk that the council sets aside £100,000 per annum from its current rental stream to meet void costs or the costs of inducements for new tenants. A significant reserve exists to meet potential costs.
- Inflation – increased cost as a result of inflation has been factored into expenditure budgets but it cannot be guaranteed that these increased budgets will be sufficient to meet costs as prices continue to rise and supplies are restricted.
- Cost of living – given the ongoing impact of the cost of living crisis, it is possible that forecast income levels will not be achieved as households decide against expenditure in areas such as garden waste collection or planning applications, or simply do not have the funds to meet taxation obligations. As a result, income levels may reduce, and arrears may increase. There is also likely to be increased demand for the services offered by the council.

8.2. As detailed in the following section, the Council does hold reserves which can meet unforeseen costs highlighted within the risks.

9.0 REVENUE RESERVES

9.1 As at the 31st March 2023, the Council had earmarked reserves totalling £17.54m. This maintains the enhanced levels of recent years and reflects planned contributions to reserves, the release of a business rates collection fund surplus and the receipt of external grants for various requirements. Of the total earmarked reserves, a sum of £2.87m is set aside in the MTFS reserve which is used to manage the financial challenges of the council, either as direct temporary support to the budget or to fund the transitional costs of change.

Other reserves exist to manage risk to the authority, such as the pay award reserve and the commercial property reserve, whilst other reserves plan for future expenditure, such as the vehicle replacement reserve and the asset management reserve. The remainder of the reserves provide for service specific activities and in many cases are funded via external grant.

- 9.2** In addition, there is an uncommitted General Fund working balance of £1,000,000. This reserve was increased by £250,000 in June 2019 and by £200,000 in June 2022 in recognition of how low it was in comparison to other District Councils. This was highlighted within CIPFA's Financial Resilience Index. This year's index suggests that this uncommitted balance is now at a more acceptable level but should be increased further should funds become available at the year-end outturn.
- 9.3** The latest financial outturn projection for 2023/24 suggests that the budget is on track to deliver a small surplus although further cost pressure from inflation and service demand cannot be ruled out. This means, on current projections, that it is unlikely that there will be a significant surplus from the base budget at year end to increase reserves, but neither will there be a deficit requiring further reserve contributions.
- 9.4** The Council's reserves are in their strongest position for a long time and allow for the delivery of a number of specific service actions as well as guarding against significant financial impact from inflation and potential changes to the funding of local government. It should, however, be recognised that planned expenditure on a new vehicle fleet of circa £5m will occur in 2024 and 2025 and therefore significantly reduce the overall level of reserves in the medium term whilst that reserve is being replenished.
- The revenue reserves are reviewed and approved annually as part of the closure of accounts. A Financial Outturn report will be taken to Executive Committee in July to approve the reserves of the Council for 2024/25.

10.0 CAPITAL PROGRAMME

- 10.1** The current capital programme is shown at Appendix B and covers forward forecasts of the next five years as well as the current year. It also details actual expenditure for the previous year.
- 10.2** The programme is reduced in size in comparison to previous years and currently totals £10.9m over the next five years. The reduction in the size of the programme is largely as a result of the cessation of the acquisition phase of the commercial property portfolio. The portfolio, currently valued at £60m, is of an appropriate size and risk for our council. Recent changes to the regulatory framework have also made it clear that the purchase of assets solely for the yield they attract is not an appropriate activity for a local authority.
- 10.3** Significant expenditure within the remaining programme includes the acquisition of a new vehicle fleet for our depot based services. The current schedule for acquisition required £4.94m of expenditure in the next two financial years with further, smaller requirements in the three years after. Total planned expenditure on new vehicles over the five year period is £5.57m.
- An ongoing increased level of expenditure on Disabled Facilities Grants (DFGs), based on the recent levels of expenditure, is projected throughout the programme. This totals £4m over the five year forecast and is financed entirely by government grant.
- The annual asset capitalisation programme, which provides funding for the purchase of waste and recycling receptacles as well as the IT replacement programme, has been uplifted to £125,000 p.a. to reflect increased costs and the shorter expected lifespan of personal devices.
- 10.4** The programme utilises significant external capital grant funding with £4m expected to be received to support DFG programmes and other the two prosperity funds in the short term. Revenue financing of capital expenditure is expected to contribute £5.58m to the capital programme which will be used to finance the acquisition of the new vehicle fleet. Given the small balance on the capital receipts reserve, only £0.83m is forecast to be consumed from capital receipts.

10.5 Further additions to the capital programme can be made at any time of the year following Council approval. Members must be mindful of the revenue consequences, both negative and positive of any decision to commit further capital expenditure.

11.0 STATEMENT OF CHIEF FINANCE OFFICER

11.1 Section 25 of the Local Government Act 2003 requires the Chief Financial Officer to make a statement on the robustness of the estimates and adequacy of financial reserves when considering its budget and council tax. The Act requires Councillors to have regard to the report in making decisions at the Council's budget and council tax setting meeting.

11.2 The basis on which the budget for 2024/25 has been prepared has been set out very clearly in this report and in previous MTFs reports. I am satisfied that the budgets for the General Fund and the Capital Programme have been based on sound assumptions. The Council has a good record for only including in the budget income estimates that are deliverable. The Council's core expenditure requirements are well understood, budgeted for accordingly and delivered in accordance with the estimates. It is on this basis that I am satisfied the estimates are robust.

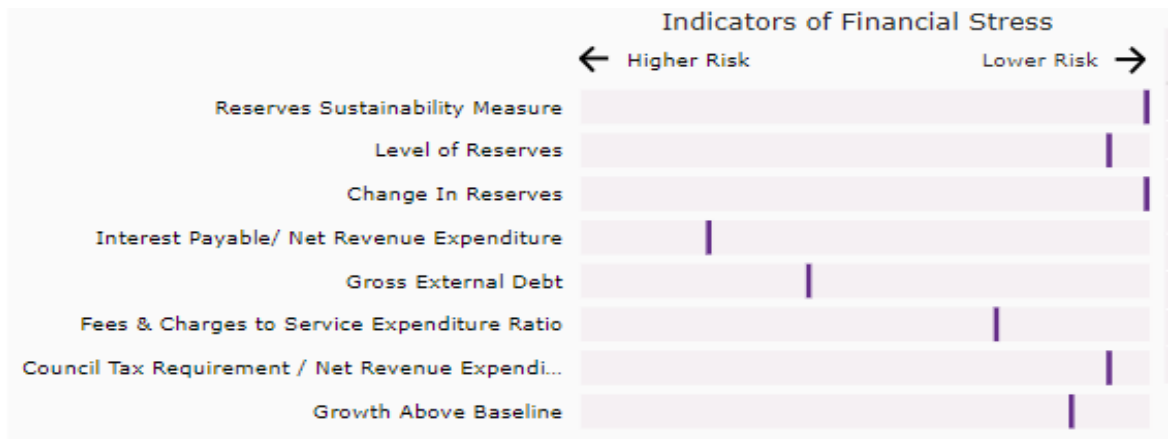
11.3 The grant settlement for 2024/25 and the cost pressure on service areas have had a significant impact on the Council's finances and the current economic climate continues to challenge the financial affairs of the Council.

The high level of uncertainty surrounding the future of local government finance also causes great difficulty. The forecast impact of the withdrawal of New Homes Bonus, without confirmation of a replacement scheme or transitional funding, leaves the Council facing a £1.13m cliff edge in 2025/26. In addition to this, the potential reset of the business rates retention system in 2025/26 is likely to result in significant reductions in retained business rates which will cause further significant financial challenges in the coming years. Potential changes to the funding distribution model, should the Fair Funding Review be concluded, also appear to have a negative impact on Shire Districts and add to the forecast cliff edge in 2025/26.

11.4 Given these financial uncertainties and challenges, it is imperative that our income streams are secure, our services continue to make efficiency improvements and we have adequate reserves to provide a contingency and to effect change if necessary. I am pleased to say that in all three regards the Council is now well placed.

11.5 The Council's income from fees and charges is generally in good health, despite the impact of both the pandemic and current economic climate. The majority retain a good customer base and inflationary increases continue to be applied on an annual basis to the fee charged. As a result, our fees and charges as a percentage of service expenditure is relatively high when compared to other district councils although it is noted that this position has deteriorated compared to the previous year as Council's have pushed higher charges whilst reductions have been made to service expenditure. One area in particular where charges are being pushed by Council's is for car parking. The charges within the Borough's car parks have not been reviewed since 2015 and at that time they were reduced. Officers will therefore bring forward a parking charges review in 2024 as a matter of urgency.

11.6 The Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) Financial Resilience Index for 2023, shown below, highlights this together with other indicators of financial risk, the vast majority of which show the Council to be well placed in comparison to other councils.



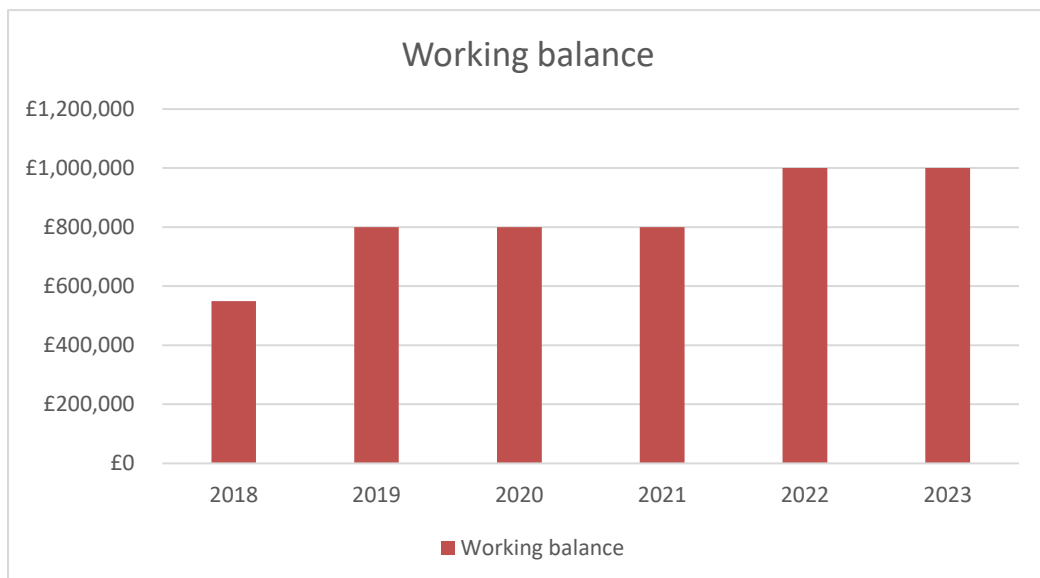
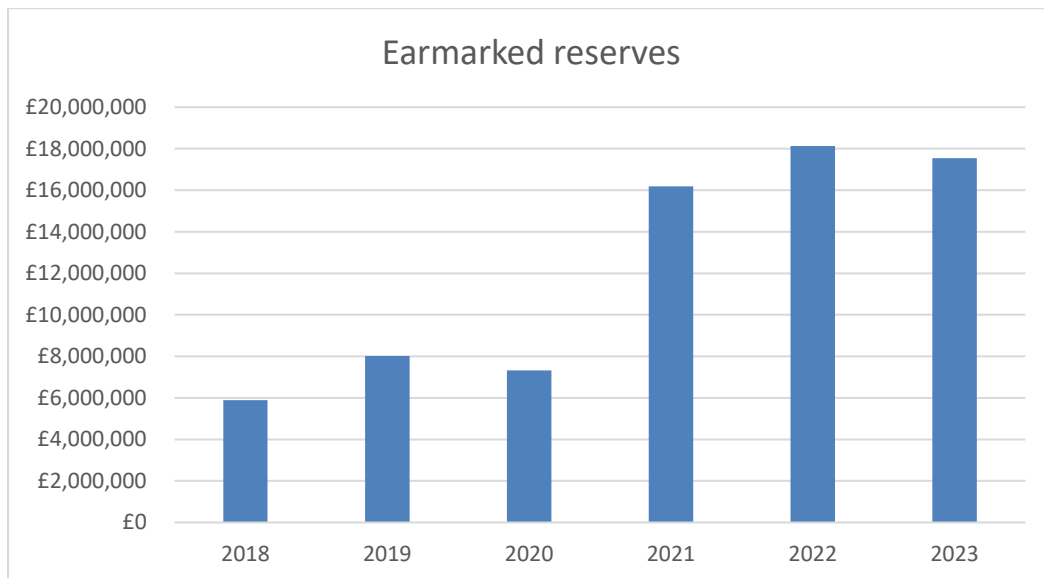
11.7 With regards to Council Tax, which is the largest of the funding streams available to the council, the position is improving but remains low in comparison to other districts and is therefore a higher risk when it comes to financial resilience. The level of council tax income is becoming ever more important to local authorities as the government continues to reduce central funding in favour of higher levels of funding from council taxpayers. Over the last nine years, the percentage of Tewkesbury's Core Spending Power taken from council tax has risen from 34.7% to 48.4%. Nationally the figure now stands at 56.3% of CSP. Tewkesbury's percentage is naturally lower given that the tax that is charged is the eighth lowest in England. In addition, the council's tax base is relatively modest given the rural nature of the Borough and the conversion rate from actual properties into band d equivalents.

These two issues combine to leave the council with a relatively modest income stream from council tax compared to other authorities which not only means less cash to pay for services but also heightened risk to medium term financial planning due to a smaller proportion of 'certain' funding as opposed to the uncertainties and volatility of other funding streams.

11.8 The formation of the Business Transformation team has enabled a number of services to benefit from their support. Further investment in this service area, as recommended within this budget proposal, will mean that the Council can improve both the scale and speed of transformation within our services. The results of this investment are starting to be seen across service areas, a growing reputation across the sector for transformation and the award of government funding to support the work of the team.

In addition to this, a number of service reviews are continuing towards a conclusion including both the Planning and Licensing services with further reviews planned. A review of the Council as a whole is also being led by the Chief Officer Team to ensure that the breadth and depth of services that we continue to offer align with our corporate priorities and our funding envelope.

11.9 In terms of reserves, the Council has seen these grow over significantly in recent years as illustrated in the tables below. Whilst some of the reserves are held for specific purposes, many are at the discretion of the Council and could be utilised to support areas of need should the council run into financial difficulties. As can be seen, both the earmarked reserves and the working balance have grown over the last five years funded in large part by windfalls of business rates retention, year-end surpluses and specific grants.



- 11.10** The requirement for financial reserves is acknowledged in statute. Section 32 and 43 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 requires billing authorities to have regard to the level of reserves needed for meeting future expenditure when calculating the budget requirement.
- 11.11** The Council's earmarked reserves are set in July of each year by the Executive Committee with scrutiny being undertaken on a quarterly basis by both the Executive Committee and the Overview and Scrutiny Committee. The earmarked reserves contain specific project and service reserves as well as risk and forward management reserves. The overall level of reserves is considered to be good and places the Council in a low risk position as highlighted by the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) Financial Resilience Index at 11.6.
- 11.12** The General Fund balance on its own is low when comparisons are made with other District Councils and will require additional monies being added to it at the earliest opportunity. However, in making judgement about the adequacy of reserves, bringing both allocated and unallocated reserves together gives assurance that the overall level of reserves is acceptable.

11.13 Overall, I am satisfied that the projected levels of reserves and balances held by the Council are adequate for the forthcoming year but we will continue to review the position as necessary to ensure adequacy of reserves for future years.

12.0 CONSULTATION

12.1 Consultation on the budget has taken place with the Transform Working Group. In addition, a public and business consultation has taken place on general budgetary principles.

13.0 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

13.1 The proposal within this report is for the Council to increase Council Tax by £5 or 3.59% which is the maximum allowable for Tewkesbury under current referendum thresholds. In producing a balanced budget proposal, officers have considered a number of options for Council Tax. A summary of different levels of Council Tax is shown in the table below alongside the impact on the Council’s on-going deficit.

Table 10 – Council Tax increase options

Council Tax 23/24	Council Tax 24/25	Increase	Increase	Ongoing income produced	Ongoing savings required
£139.36	£144.36	£5.00	3.59%	£188,162	£0
£139.36	£139.36	£0.00	0.00%	£0	£188,162
£139.36	£140.36	£1.00	0.72%	£37,632	£150,530
£139.36	£141.36	£2.00	1.44%	£75,265	£112,897
£139.36	£142.36	£3.00	2.15%	£112,897	£75,265
£139.36	£143.36	£4.00	2.87%	£150,530	£37,632
£139.36	£146.86	£7.50	5.38%	£282,244	-£94,081
£139.36	£149.36	£10.00	7.18%	£376,325	-£188,162
£139.36	£154.36	£15.00	10.76%	£564,487	-£376,325

13.2 A range of options are available within the set threshold as detailed within the table. Also highlighted are a number of options that have been suggested as higher monetary thresholds for District Councils. Whilst these are not currently available to the Council without a referendum, the table highlights the additional ongoing income that would be raised by these levels of increased council tax and the percentage uplift on our existing band D council tax.

A decrease on the Council Tax has been ruled out given the financial outlook and challenges ahead for the council.

13.3 It has been necessary to increase Council Tax by £5 in order to meet the financial pressures facing the council. Whilst lower council tax increases were considered, these did not provide the income required to fund the demand pressures within services. The use of one-off sums to replace an ongoing income stream is not considered prudent and only results in the need for ongoing savings to be postponed. The use of one-offs to support a budget should only be considered as a last resort.

13.4 The recommended increase in Council Tax is also made against the background of a £6.1m projected deficit over the next five years and the uncertainty about Government policy for local government finance. This leaves the Council in a risky position and it is therefore of paramount importance that the council takes the decision to increase financing streams within its control as and when it can and to their full extent.

14.0 MONITORING

14.1 The delivery of the annual budget is monitored on a monthly basis and reported formally to both Executive Committee and Overview and Scrutiny Committee on a quarterly basis.

15.0 RELEVANT COUNCIL PLAN PRIORITIES/COUNCIL POLICIES/STRATEGIES

15.1 In line with Medium Term Financial Strategy approved by Council on 12th December 2023.

Background Papers: Medium Term Financial Strategy

Contact Officer: Simon Dix
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Appendices: A - Growth proposals
B – 2024-29 Capital Programme
C – Detailed estimates 2024/25

Growth requests 2024/25

Section A	Growth included in the base budget on an ongoing basis	Amount	Description
IT	Cyber threat monitoring	£15,000	24 hour monitoring and response to cyber threat through a security operations centre
Audit and Governance	Internal Auditor Post	£46,027	1 FTE Internal Auditor post to support delivery of the internal audit plan and reinstate the Internal Audit team back up to 2 FTE. Also adds additional days for corporate improvement plan.
Environmental Health	New Community Safety Team Leader Position	£11,324	Remove the ASB Co-ordinator post and replace with Community Safety Team Leader post. This would provide overall direction for the team and specialist safeguarding skills which we are currently lacking.
Community and Economic Development	Youth Engagement role	£50,000	The creation of a Young People's Engagement role would enable a youth voice model or a youth council to be created and would be a positive step forward in recognising the value of young people in decision making for the borough.
Digital Transformation	Business Transformation team	£186,970	The Business Transformation Team was introduced in 2020, and in 18 months had secured the council's position as a leading player in digital transformation nationally. This growth bid will make the temporary staff within the team permanent and ensure the continuation of projects which will transform the way we deliver our services.
IT	Application support officer - part time	£24,190	With 1 member of staff currently responsible for maintaining the IT side of our main council IT systems this leaves a resilience issue for service provision. This post will help address the risks surrounding this.
Transformation	Trf Garden waste and Bulky waste to customer service	£6,000	Moving the management of the bulky waste collections and garden waste renewals to Customer Services to ensure continuity of an effective and efficient service
		£339,511	
Section B	Growth funded from other sources	Amount	Description
Finance	Additional Accountancy Manager hours (funded from CIL admin fees)	£3,729	As Tewkesbury is host of the CIL service we provide financial support to the service and are able to recoup these costs from the CIL admin fee.
Housing	Enhanced hours within Housing Services (funded from Homelessness Prevention Grant)	£73,820	These hours have been funded through the Homelessness Prevention Grant for many years and can continue as the grant continues to be provided.
Transformation	Consultation Software (funded from Homes England Grant)	£15,000	There are a number of high profile consultations and engagement requirements set to go live this year with garden towns being one of the main ones.
Environmental Health	Community Funding Officer (funded from Earmarked Reserves)	£40,916	Funded from reserves in the short term while ensuring an inward focus on grant funding is incorporated within the role.
		£133,465	
Section C	Growth included on a one off basis	Amount	Description
Environmental Health	Continuation with SOLACE community safety partnership	£16,960	Contribution towards rural SOLACE team leader, case management system, admin support. One year only to allow a review of effectiveness of partnership.
Audit and Governance	Internal Audit - External Assessment	£5,000	It is a requirement of the Public Sector Internal Audit Standards that an IA activity must obtain an external assessment at least every 5 years by an independent reviewer. This is currently overdue as last one was obtained in 2017/18. This has been brought up by Grant Thornton in the current External Auditors Report as well.
Audit and Governance	Residents Survey	£11,000	LGA best practice states that councils should conduct an annual residents survey to gain an understanding of how their residents see them performing as a council - last survey took place in Oct 2021.
People, Culture and Performance	HR Business Partner	£60,429	A temporary HR Adviser to help support delivery of outstanding actions within the Workforce Development Strategy and the programme to become a High Performing Organisation.
Garden Towns	Garden Town Team	£166,365	Funding to support the essential elements of the actions outlined within the Garden Towns Gateway report.
Communities	Emergency planning	£100,000	Support to improve our emergency planning response
		£359,754	
Section D	Growth not funded	Amount	Description
Finance	Budget/investment headroom	£250,000	This was to provide budget headroom in the light of uncertain government funding and to provide a contingency.
Finance	FinancialsLIVE	£20,000	This would move to cloud based systems removing the need for in house servers and in house IT support. Resource for part-time application support officer provided instead.
Revenues & Benefits	Option 1 - NEC remote database administration (RBDA)	£63,000	This would move to cloud based systems removing the need for in house servers and in house IT support. Resource for part-time application support officer provided instead.
Revenues & Benefits	Option 2 - Additional member of the internal system team	£51,996	The new application support officer has been created to help provide capacity for systems. Resource for part-time application support officer provided instead.
Finance	Trainee AAT	£43,000	This was requested to provide capacity and succession planning however an apprentice has been agreed instead using the apprenticeship budget.
Housing	Housing Team Leader	£14,884	It is proposed that an existing, housing officer position is elevated to a Senior Housing Officer/Team Leader with line management and supervisory responsibility to help relieve capacity issues on the Head of Housing.
Waste and Recycling	New Administration Officer post within the Waste Services Team	£35,598	It is proposed that the Waste Services Team recruit a full-time Administration Officer so that the team is able to accommodate the additional duties arising from the deletion of the Principal Trade Waste Officer position. Service to be absorbed by Customer Services instead.
People, Culture and Performance	Performance Officer	£53,160	To convert the Performance Officer post from a fixed term contract to a permanent post. Evidence of ongoing need to be collated through etc.
Planning	Planning Resilience	£100,000	Providing resilience for the Planning Service through staffing and capacity for major applications. Bid withdrawn whilst improvement programme continues
Planning	Specialist Support for Planning Service	£100,000	There has been an ongoing need to provide design advice since the Urban Design officer left the service in 2021. Bid withdrawn whilst improvement programme continues.
Community and Economic Development	Economic Development and Tourism Assistant Officer role	£33,403	Continuation of Economic Development and Tourism Assistant Officer role (and make permanent). Star Chamber review of Economic Development and Growth Hub to be prioritised
		£765,041	

Appendix B - Forecast Capital Programme 2024 - 2029

Scheme	2022/23 Actual £	2023/24 Forecast £	2024/25 Forecast £	2025/26 Forecast £	2026/27 Forecast £	2027/28 Forecast £	2028/29 Forecast £	Total £
Council Projects								
Land & Property								
Midwinter land purchase	28,927	0	0	0	0	0	0	28,927
Asset Management Plan - heating replacement PSC	0	1,270,000	0	0	0	0	0	1,270,000
Asset Management Plan - solar canopy	649,304	0	0	0	0	0	0	649,304
Ashchurch bridge project	904,165	0	0	0	0	0	0	904,165
	1,582,395	1,270,000	0	0	0	0	0	2,852,395
Vehicles								
Vehicle replacement programme	163,496	381,689	3,252,462	1,685,000	362,000	225,000	49,000	6,118,647
	163,496	381,689	3,252,462	1,685,000	362,000	225,000	49,000	6,118,647
Equipment								
Asset Capitalisation	146,413	125,000	125,000	125,000	125,000	125,000	125,000	896,413
Office Furniture	11,581	0	0	0	0	0	0	11,581
Electric charging points	0	70,000	30,000	0	0	0	0	100,000
ICT Strategy - Equipment	121,917	0	100,000	0	0	100,000	0	321,917
	279,911	195,000	255,000	125,000	125,000	225,000	125,000	1,329,911
Capital Grants								
Safer Streets	0	50,000	0	0	0	0	0	50,000
UKSPF UK SHARED PROSPERITY FUND	0	60,000	179,706	0	0	0	0	239,706
RURAL ENGLAND PROSPERITY FUND	0	100,000	300,000	0	0	0	0	400,000
High Street Heritage Action Zone	0	150,000	0	0	0	0	0	150,000
	0	360,000	479,706	0	0	0	0	839,706
Housing and Business Grants								
Disabled Facilities Grants	748,642	800,000	800,000	800,000	800,000	800,000	800,000	5,548,642
	748,642	800,000	800,000	800,000	800,000	800,000	800,000	5,548,642
Capital Expenditure	2,774,444	3,006,689	4,787,168	2,610,000	1,287,000	1,250,000	974,000	16,689,301
GF Expenditure	2,774,444	3,006,689	4,787,168	2,610,000	1,287,000	1,250,000	974,000	16,689,301
	2,774,444	3,006,689	4,787,168	2,610,000	1,287,000	1,250,000	974,000	16,689,301
Anticipated Capital Receipts								
Right-to-buy receipts	421,209	0	100,000	100,000	100,000	100,000	0	821,209
Land Sales	740	0	0	0	0	0	0	740
Other receipts	7,300	0	0	0	0	0	0	7,300
Capital Receipts	429,249	0	100,000	100,000	100,000	100,000	0	829,249
Capital Resources required								
Capital Receipts	162,425	561,718	225,000	125,000	125,000	225,000	125,000	1,549,143
Capital Grants	1,765,804	1,920,782	1,302,206	800,000	800,000	800,000	800,000	8,188,792
Direct revenue financing	846,215	524,189	3,259,962	1,685,000	362,000	225,000	49,000	6,951,366
Borrowing - external	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Capital resources consumed	2,774,444	3,006,689	4,787,168	2,610,000	1,287,000	1,250,000	974,000	16,689,301
Opening Capital Receipts								
Received in year	1,310,506	1,577,331	1,015,613	890,613	865,613	840,613	715,613	
Utilised in year	429,249	0	100,000	100,000	100,000	100,000	0	
	-162,425	-561,718	-225,000	-125,000	-125,000	-225,000	-125,000	
Capital receipts available	1,577,331	1,015,613	890,613	865,613	840,613	715,613	590,613	

Proposed Budget 2024/2025 by cost centre

		23/24			24/25			Variance
		Gross Operating Income	Gross Operating Expenditure	Net Operating Expenditure	Gross Operating Income	Gross Operating Expenditure	Net Operating Expenditure	
Chief Executive Unit	CECE	-	292,929	292,929	-	318,944	318,944	26,015
Monitoring Officer	MONO	-	-	-	-	70,385	70,385	70,385
Chief Executive Unit Total		0	292,929	292,929	0	389,329	389,329	96,400
People, Culture and Performance								
Human Resources	CCHR	-	303,288	303,288	-	351,434	351,434	48,146
Youth Training	YTRN	-	107,797	107,797	-	118,224	118,224	10,427
Corporate Training	CTRN	-	50,000	50,000	-	50,000	50,000	-
People, Culture and Performance Total		-	461,085	461,085	0	519,658	519,658	58,573
Transformation								
Digital Transformation	CCDT	-	444,555	444,555	-	686,154	686,154	241,599
Policy and Communications	CCPC	-2,400	530,008	527,608	-2,400	635,189	632,789	105,181
Transformation Total		-2,400	974,563	972,163	-2,400	1,321,343	1,318,943	346,780
Corporate Director	CCBS	-	133,623	133,623	-	-	-	-133,623
Corporate Director Total		0	133,623	133,623	-	0	0	-133,623
Executive Director of Resources								
Counter Fraud Unit	COUF	-	82,418	82,418	-	76,975	76,975	-5,443
Executive Director of Resources	DCFA	-	118,630	118,630	-	140,890	140,890	22,260
Executive Director of Resources Total		0	201,048	201,048	0	217,865	217,865	16,817
Finance								
New Homes Bonus	NHBO	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Salary Savings	ZSAL	-90,016	-	-90,016	-180,000	-	-180,000	-89,984
External Audit & Inspections	AUDF	-	105,000	105,000	-	174,652	174,652	69,652
Bank Charges	BACH	-	74,600	74,600	-	76,000	76,000	1,400
Financial Management	DCFS	-10,300	562,524	552,224	-25,925	623,180	597,255	45,031
Insurances Holding Account	INSU	-	223,855	223,855	-	252,728	252,728	28,873
Pensions Compensation	PENC	-	70,000	70,000	-	81,000	81,000	11,000
Non Distributable Costs	PNDC	-	1,170,000	1,170,000	-	1,073,000	1,073,000	-97,000
Treasury Management	TMAN	-	21,064	21,064	-	17,000	17,000	-4,064
Interest on Balances	INTB	-1,000,000	633,641	-366,359	-1,166,421	407,200	-759,221	-392,862
Finance Total		-1,100,316	2,860,684	1,760,368	-1,372,346	2,704,760	1,332,414	-427,953
IT & Cyber								
Central Establishment	CEST	-	28,468	28,468	-	31,780	31,780	3,312
ICT	CCCI	-	869,201	869,201	-	1,026,083	1,026,083	156,882
IT & Cyber Total		0	897,669	897,669	0	1,057,863	1,057,863	160,194
Corporate Resources								
Head of Corporate Resources	CCCS	-	106,079	106,079	-	116,329	116,329	10,250
Internal Audit	CCDP	-	161,982	161,982	-	296,220	296,220	134,238
Corporate Management	CORM	-	16,705	16,705	-	15,106	15,106	-1,599
Council Tax Reduction Scheme Administration	CTBA	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Housing Benefits Admin	HBAD	-170,512	-	-170,512	-165,591	-	-165,591	4,921
Housing Benefit-Rent Allowances	RALL	-11,576,000	11,600,000	24,000	-11,697,290	11,571,000	-126,290	-150,290
Council Tax	CTAX	-100,000	4,000	-96,000	-165,000	3,000	-162,000	-66,000
Non Domestic Rates	NNDR	-126,368	2,000	-124,368	-129,904	2,000	-127,904	-3,536
Revenues & Benefits	FRRB	-65,000	1,161,054	1,096,054	-	1,209,892	1,209,892	113,838
Civic Expenses	CIVE	-	10,400	10,400	-	8,400	8,400	-2,000
Elections	ELEC	-	54,950	54,950	-	14,790	14,790	-40,160
Electoral Registration	EREG	-2,500	80,350	77,850	-3,500	76,540	73,040	-4,810
Democratic Representation & Management	MEMB	-	450,039	450,039	-	482,300	482,300	32,262
Standards Committee	STND	-	1,500	1,500	-	2,000	2,000	500
Democratic Services	CCDE	-	327,015	327,015	-	335,090	335,090	8,075
Central establishment	ACES	-	38,000	38,000	-	41,400	41,400	3,400
Cemetery Bishops Cleeve	BCCE	-65,560	36,239	-29,322	-67,150	33,504	-33,646	-4,325
Bowling Green	BGRE	-1,880	-	-1,880	-1,914	-	-1,914	-34
Holiday Caravan Site	CARH	-45,000	-	-45,000	-45,000	-	-45,000	-
Car Parking	CARP	-641,158	253,576	-387,582	-718,121	258,871	-459,250	-71,668
Cemetery	CEMG	-75,830	72,185	-3,645	-72,640	56,754	-15,886	-12,241
Churchyard Maintenance Bishops Cleeve	CMBC	-	7,049	7,049	-	7,754	7,754	705
Asset Management	DCFP	-33,000	544,704	511,704	-33,125	708,505	675,380	163,676
Depots	DEPS	-	23,950	23,950	-	23,756	23,756	-194
Land Drainage and Flood Prevention	DRAI	-	61,851	61,851	-	72,442	72,442	10,591
Fleet Cars	FLEC	-	61,240	61,240	-	46,952	46,952	-14,288
Golf Course	GOLF	-27,000	-	-27,000	-28,000	-	-28,000	-1,000
Homeless Properties	HOUS	-46,948	28,025	-18,923	-42,120	35,000	-7,120	11,803
Mop Fair	MFAR	-13,578	7,020	-6,558	-13,713	2,500	-11,213	-4,655
Outdoor Sports & Recreation Facilities	OSRF	-2,000	-	-2,000	-1,990	-	-1,990	10
Play Areas and Parks	PARK	-2,500	15,000	12,500	-1,650	28,000	26,350	13,850
Public Offices	POFF	-276,130	405,557	129,427	-262,775	446,199	183,424	53,997
Retained Assets	RETA	-6,000	34,369	28,369	-5,800	124,743	118,943	90,574
Roses Theatre	ROSE	-	500	500	-	500	500	-
Naming And Numbering Of Streets	NOST	-	8,000	8,000	-	9,000	9,000	1,000

Leisure Centre Investment	TNLF	-193,078	-	-193,078	-201,638	-	-201,638	-8,560
Climate Change Costs	CLIM	-	31,250	31,250	-	35,000	35,000	3,750
Clevedon Properties	CLEV	-102,671	-	-102,671	-102,747	-	-102,747	-76
Challenge House	CHAL	-970,949	-	-970,949	-981,693	-	-981,693	-10,743.55
The Chase	CHAS	-320,826	59,659	-261,167	-321,856	73,802	-248,054	13,112.81
Edmund House	EDMU	-230,071	-	-230,071	-230,776	-	-230,776	-704.42
SPL House	SPLH	-262,301	-	-262,301	-262,413	-	-262,413	-112.19
Wickes	WICK	-316,715	-	-316,715	-316,971	-	-316,971	-255.67
Walton on the Naze - Marks	WOTN	-233,144	-	-233,144	-233,298	-	-233,298	-154.08
Property Investment Savings Plan	PROP	-	103,715	103,715	-	10,000	10,000	-93,715
Vaughan Pak, Tipton	TIPT	-646,048	88,635	-557,413	-667,915	78,660	-589,255	-31,842
Volvo, Crawley	VOLV	-499,784	-	-499,784	-500,128	-	-500,128	-343.83
Corporate Resources Total		-17,052,551	15,856,597	-1,195,955	-17,274,718	16,226,008	-1,048,710	147,245
One Legal Services								
Legal Services	CCLC	-2,710,617	3,089,242	378,625	-2,711,293	3,137,342	426,049	47,424
One Legal Services Total		-2,710,617	3,089,242	378,625	-2,711,293	3,137,342	426,049	47,424
Executive Director of Place								
Executive Director of Place	BDPL	-	-	-	-	141,840	141,840	141,840
Garden Communities	GCOM	-	-	-	-	165,345	165,345	165,345
Executive Director of Place Total		-	-	-	-	307,185	307,185	307,185
Planning								
Development Control	BDDC	-	1,323,913	1,323,913	-	1,258,931	1,258,931	-64,982
Local Land Charges	LAND	-127,000	35,343	-91,657	-147,000	35,787	-111,213	-19,556
Planning Development	PLND	-1,010,000	150,500	-859,500	-1,278,970	156,683	-1,122,287	-262,787
Building Regulations	BREG	-	24,410	24,410	-	64,618	64,618	40,208
Development Group	BDGM	-	106,080	106,080	-	112,036	112,036	5,956
Street Naming & Numbering	SNAN	-26,884	16,764	-10,120	-26,947	16,827	-10,120	-
Joint Core Strategy	JCSB	-68,526	128,526	60,000	-67,538	287,538	220,000	160,000
CIL Management	CILM	-110,147	110,147	-	-122,361	122,361	-	-
Planning Policy	PPOL	-	47,272	47,272	-	6,642	6,642	-40,630
Planning Policy Section Costs	BDPP	-6,593	358,028	351,435	-19,978	322,540	302,562	-48,873
Planning Total		-1,349,150	2,300,983	951,833	-1,662,794	2,383,964	721,170	-230,663
Communities								
Director - Communities	DCHE	0	0	0	0	116,257	116,257	116,257
Bulky Waste Service	BULK	-121,943	68,297	-53,646	-122,160	68,019	-54,141	-495
New Bin Deliveries	BIND	-2,000	82,703	80,703	-1,000	78,226	77,226	-3,477
Caravan sites and Mobile Homes Licence	CARA	-7,775	-	-7,775	-5,000	0	-5,000	2,775
Cleansing Operations	CLAD	-	627,468	627,468	-	703,815	703,815	76,347
Fly Tipping	FLYT	-	19,000	19,000	-	19,000	19,000	-
Food Waste Collection Service	FODW	-	768,785	768,785	-	854,829	854,829	86,044
Garden Waste Collection Service	GADN	-1,079,416	712,073	-367,343	-1,150,239	749,984	-400,254	-32,911
Grounds Maintenance Operations	GRND	-15,500	530,731	515,231	-12,776	601,390	588,614	73,383
Recycling Collection Service	RECY	-700,720	1,887,783	1,187,063	-711,845	2,165,126	1,453,280	266,217
Trade Waste Collection Service	TRDE	-335,500	410,407	74,907	0	0	0	-74,907
Household Waste Collection Service	WSTE	-	1,392,460	1,392,460	-	1,396,301	1,396,301	3,841
Housing Strategy	HOST	-	6,000	6,000	-	6,000	6,000	-
Homelessness - Administration	HOME	-208,500	261,000	52,500	-262,950	389,000	126,050	73,550
Housing Advice	HOAD	-	13,050	13,050	-	13,020	13,020	-30
Housing Services	DCHS	-	319,293	319,293	-	333,729	333,729	-
Homelessness Prevention	HPRE	-43,500	43,833	333	-44,231	44,564	333	-
Housing Private Rented Sector	HPRS	-40,000	40,000	-	-40,000	40,000	-	-
Homeseeker Plus	HSEK	-46,927	46,927	-	-48,380	48,380	-	-
Domestic Abuse	DABU	-36,738	36,738	-	-37,430	39,900	2,470	2,470
Burial Expenses	BURE	-1,000	2,000	1,000	-1,000	2,000	1,000	-
Contaminated Land	COLA	-	4,375	4,375	-	4,250	4,250	-125
Environmental Health	DCEH	-22,000	1,268,876	1,246,876	-22,660	1,022,709	1,000,049	-246,827
Dog Control	DOGW	-	2,000	2,000	-	5,000	5,000	3,000
Environmental Health Fixed Penalty Notice	EHPF	-800	-	-800	-1,500	-	-1,500	-700
Environmental protection	ENVC	-1,840	2,100	260	-750	1,100	350	90
Food Safety	FOOD	-1,000	1,430	430	-1,500	3,015	1,515	1,085
Glos County Flooding Works	GCCF	-	250	250	-	-	-	-250
Homes Improvement Agency	HIAG	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Local Air Pollution Control	LAPC	-9,500	1,092	-8,408	-8,200	995	-7,206	1,203
Licensing	LICS	-263,026	12,734	-250,292	-340,647	301,709	-38,938	211,354
Noise Pollution Control	NOPO	-	2,652	2,652	-	2,500	2,500	-152
Pest Control	PEST	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Water Pollution	WAPO	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Workforce Health & Safety	WHAS	-	1,417	1,417	-	1,500	1,500	83
Works in Default	WIDE	-2,000	2,000	-	-2,000	2,000	-	-
Private Sector Housing Notices	PSHN	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Crime and Disorder Act	CDIS	-	5,332	5,332	-	22,476	22,476	17,144
Head of Community Services	DCCS	-	317,701	317,701	-	179,557	179,557	-138,144
Emergency Planning	EMRG	-	24,442	24,442	-	125,000	125,000	100,558

TEWKESBURY BOROUGH COUNCIL

Report to:	Executive Committee
Date of Meeting:	7 February 2024
Subject:	Council Tax Reduction Scheme
Report of:	Head of Service: Revenues and Benefits
Head of Service/Director:	Director: Corporate Resources
Lead Member:	Lead Member for Finance and Asset Management
Number of Appendices:	None

Executive Summary:

There is a requirement to have a Council Tax Reduction Scheme to support residents who qualify for assistance in paying Council Tax. The Local Government Finance Act 1992 requires each billing authority in England to make a scheme specifying the reductions which are to apply to amounts of Council Tax payable by persons, or classes or person, whom the authority considers are in financial need (“a Council Tax Reduction Scheme”). It is proposed the current Council Tax Reduction Scheme remains unchanged for 2024/25.

Recommendation:

To RECOMMEND TO COUNCIL that:

- i. the default Council Tax Reduction Scheme be ADOPTED with effect from 1 April 2024 with a minor revision to the national working age regulations to allow for a de minimus tolerance for income changes and;**
- ii. authority be delegated to the Director: Corporate Services, in consultation with the Lead Member for Finance and Asset Management, to agree the uprating of the working age regulations incorporated into the local Council Tax Reduction Scheme in line with those announced by the Department for Works and Pensions.**

Financial Implications:

The Medium-Term Financial Strategy assumes the continuation of the current scheme and therefore there are no further financial implications arising from this report.

Legal Implications:

The Welfare Reform Act 2012 abolished Council Tax Benefit and instead required each billing authority to design a scheme specifying the reductions which are to apply to amounts of Council Tax. The prescribed regulations set out the matters that must be included in such a scheme.

All authorities in England are required to have a scheme identifying the reductions payable by their constituents who are in financial need under Section 13A of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 (updated in 2012). Schedule 1A paragraph 5 of the Act states that for each financial year, Councils must consider whether to revise their scheme or replace it with another scheme and that such decisions need to be made by 11 March in the financial year

preceding that for which the revision or replacement scheme is to take effect. If the Council does not make/revise its scheme by 11 March 2024, a default scheme will be imposed on the Council which will be effective from April 2024.

The Local Government Finance Act 2012 amended the Local Government Finance Act 1992. Section 13A of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 (as amended) requires each billing authority to make a scheme specifying the reductions which are to apply to the amount of Council Tax payable.

Environmental and Sustainability Implications:

None

Resource Implications (including impact on equalities):

None

Safeguarding Implications:

None

Impact on the Customer:

Remaining on the current scheme ensures consistency for claimants.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1** Since April 2013, the Council has been required to establish a local Council Tax Reduction Scheme to help working age people on a low income to pay their Council Tax. This scheme replaced the national scheme for Council Tax Benefit which was fully funded by central government.
- 1.2** Tewkesbury Borough Council has remained on the national default scheme since Council Tax Reduction was first introduced on 1 April 2013.
- 1.3** A minor amendment was approved in 2020/21 for a revision of a £10.00 tolerance for income charges. This was in response to the impact of the rules regarding the reassessment of Universal Credit and its effect on Council Tax Reduction. It was also agreed that alternative options would be reviewed to ensure any future scheme provides the right level of support for residents as well as its impact on the Council's wider financial position
- 1.4** The legislation requires the Council to review its Council Tax Reduction Scheme on an annual basis.
- 1.5** The Council is also required to administer the prescribed government Council Tax Reduction Scheme for pension age customers and is not able to make any amendments to this scheme.

2.0 COUNCIL TAX REDUCTION SCHEME 2024/25

- 2.1** Council Tax Reduction is currently provided to 4,818 households in Tewkesbury Borough. This includes working age and pension age claimants. At present there are 3,044 working age claimants and 1,774 pensioner claims.
- 2.2** The cost of the Council Tax Reduction Scheme is met by Tewkesbury Borough Council and the major precepting authorities in proportion to their share of Council Tax.

2.3 It is proposed that the Council Tax Reduction Scheme adopted for 2020/21, i.e the default national scheme with a tolerance level of income changes of £10 or less per week, is maintained for 2024/25. This has helped the administration burden for the team which is required to reassess entitlement each time there is a change to income. This will also assist claimants to manage their finances and reduce unnecessary costs in postage for amended Council Tax bills.

3.0 CONSULTATION

3.1 The legislation requires consultation prior to making change to the Council Tax Reduction Scheme, but there is no such requirement where no changes are being made. Accordingly, no public consultation has taken place regarding the proposed scheme for 2024/25 as the proposal is that it remains unchanged.

4.0 ASSOCIATED RISKS

4.1 Retaining the default scheme potentially means a loss of income to the Council but does maintain support to the more vulnerable residents during the cost of living crisis.

5.0 MONITORING

5.1 The impact of the Council Tax Reduction Scheme and its costs will be closely monitored and updated through Lead Member briefings.

6.0 RELEVANT COUNCIL PLAN PRIORITIES/COUNCIL POLICIES/STRATEGIES

6.1 Local Council Tax Reduction Scheme

Background Papers: Council Tax Reduction Scheme adopted for 2020/21

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Appendices: None

TEWKESBURY BOROUGH COUNCIL

Report to:	Executive Committee
Date of Meeting:	7 February 2024
Subject:	Council Tax Discount Scheme for Care Leavers
Report of:	Head of Service: Revenues and Benefits
Director:	Director: Corporate Resources
Lead Member:	Lead Member for Finance and Asset Management
Number of Appendices:	1

Executive Summary:

Section 13A(1)(c) of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 gives the Council discretion to reduce the amount of Council Tax payable. This can be for individual cases or by class/category.

This report proposes a change to the Council Tax Discount Scheme for Care Leavers approved by Council on 19 February 2019. It is proposed to amend the definition of a care leaver to a young person between the ages of 18 and 24 years (formerly ages 18-21), residing in Tewkesbury Borough.

Recommendation:

To RECOMMEND TO COUNCIL that:

- i. the definition of a care leaver be amended to a young person between the ages of 18 and 24 years for the purposes of Section 13A(1)(c) of the Local Government Finance Act 1992; and**
- ii. the Council Tax Discount Scheme for Care Leavers attached at Appendix 1 be ADOPTED with effect from 1 April 2024.**

Financial Implications:

The full cost of any Council Tax discount awarded under Section 13(A)(1)(c) must be borne by Tewkesbury Borough Council. Gloucestershire County Council has agreed to fund its share of the cost of any care leaver discount awarded. Tewkesbury Borough Council will be required to fund the remainder including the Parish and Police and Crime Commissioner part of the bill.

Legal Implications:

Section 13A(1)(c) of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 (as amended) gives the Council discretion to reduce the amount of Council Tax payable by individual cases or by class. The discount for care leavers as defined in Appendix 1 is a class of case.

Environmental and Sustainability Implications:

None.

Resource Implications (including impact on equalities):

This proposal is not detrimental to any groups with protected characteristics.

Safeguarding Implications:

None directly though care leavers can often be considered as vulnerable in terms of managing debt.

Impact on the Customer:

This will have a positive impact on care leavers within the borough through the provision of financial support.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1** Section 13A of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 gives the Council discretionary powers to reduce the amount of Council Tax payable in individual cases or for classes of case. This includes reducing the amount payable to nil.
- 1.2** In July 2016, the government published 'Keep on Caring', a strategy for supporting young people from care to independence, which highlighted awarding Council Tax discounts to this group was best practice. The Council has discretion under Section 13A of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 to reduce the amount of Council Tax payable. It is recommended that a Council Tax discount is introduced for care leavers resident in Tewkesbury Borough using this discretionary power.
- 1.3** A 2016 report by The Children's Society found that when care leavers move into independent accommodation, they begin to manage their own budget fully for the first time. The report showed that care leavers can find this extremely challenging and with no family to support them and insufficient financial education, are falling into debt and financial difficulty.
- 1.4** In 2019, the six local authorities and Gloucestershire County Council worked together to provide a common Council Tax Discount Scheme for Care Leavers providing a consistent approach across Gloucestershire. On the 19 February 2019, Tewkesbury Borough Council resolved that Care Leavers are determined as a class for the purpose of Section 13A(1)(c) of the Local Government Finance Act 1992, effective from 1 April 2019
- 1.5** In May 2023 the Department of Education completed a review of Gloucestershire's Care Leaver offer and, following feedback, the six district authorities and Gloucestershire County Council worked together on changes to the Council Tax Discount Scheme for Care Leavers which provides a consistent approach and better offer across the county. The outcome is a proposal to change the definition of a care leaver and a change to eligibility criteria that will exempt care leavers in Tewkesbury Borough from Council Tax that were formerly a child in the care of Gloucestershire County Council or other local authority in England and are aged 18 to 24 years.
- 1.6** Under the Council Tax Discount Scheme for Care Leavers in 2022/23 the Council awarded a discount to 11 care leavers aged between 18 and 21 years.

2.0 CARE LEAVER'S DISCOUNT SCHEME

- 2.1** The Council Tax Discount Scheme for Care Leavers detailed at Appendix 1 proposes discounts for care leavers between the ages of 18 and 24 residing in the Tewkesbury Borough area, who were formerly in the care of Gloucestershire County Council or other local authority in England.
- 2.2** The scheme will provide for a full exemption from Council Tax to be awarded where care leavers live alone and a 50% discount where they live with others. Some care leavers will already have their Council Tax liability reduced. The care leaver discount will be awarded after all other discounts, exemptions, and Council Tax support
- 2.3** The relevant team at Gloucestershire County Council liaises with the Revenues team to ensure the necessary information is available to enable the care leaver discounts to be awarded. The current Council Tax Discount Scheme for Care Leavers provides for an exemption or discount from Council Tax for care leavers up to 21 years. A change to the scheme would see care leavers between the age of 22 years to 24 years also awarded an exemption or discount from Council Tax and will support them in making an effective social and financial transition from local authority care.
- 2.4** A change to the Council Tax Discount Scheme for Care Leavers will provide a better outcome for care leavers up to 24 years and help to support a local offer that is consistent across the whole county.

3.0 CONSULTATION

- 3.1** All Gloucestershire district Councils and Gloucestershire County Council are jointly supporting this proposal.

4.0 ASSOCIATED RISKS

- 4.1** If changes to the definition and eligibility criteria for care leavers in the Council Tax Discount Scheme for Care Leavers are not approved, then Care Leavers living in Tewkesbury Borough will not get the same level of support as in other areas of the county and could lead to a potential reputational risk for the local authority.

5.0 MONITORING

- 5.1** The number of discounts made will be included in regular reports to the Lead Member for Finance and Asset Management

6.0 RELEVANT COUNCIL PLAN PRIORITIES/COUNCIL POLICIES/STRATEGIES

- 6.1** The current Council Plan (2020-2024) includes priorities on 'Customer First' and 'Supporting Communities.'

Background Papers: Council – 19 February 2019 (recommendation from Executive Committee 6 February 2019)

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Appendices: 1 – Council Tax Discount Scheme for Care Leavers

Tewkesbury Borough Council
Council Tax Discount Scheme for Care Leavers – April 2024

Background

The Government made recommendations in its care leavers strategy “Keep on Caring” that local authorities should consider exempting care leavers from council tax, using their existing discretionary powers under Section 13a of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 (as amended). Many Councils have since introduced discounts for care leavers.

In 2018 the six Gloucestershire Districts (billing authorities) and Gloucestershire County Council worked together to agree a common council tax discount scheme for Care Leavers aged 18yrs to 21yrs effective from April 2019.

It was agreed in December 2023 that the discount scheme should be extended to enable a better outcome for Care Leavers within Gloucestershire and for consistency across the county eligible care leavers up to the date of their 25th birthday may apply for a council tax discount from April 2024.

Discounts made using this power must be funded by the billing authority. However, Gloucestershire County Council, by local agreement, will fund its share of the cost of any Care Leavers discounts proportionate to its share of the council tax.

Legal Provision

Billing authorities have discretion under Section 13(1)(c) of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 to reduce the amount of council tax payable for individuals, or for classes of council taxpayer. This includes the power to reduce the amount payable to nil.

This provision is separate to and distinct from the Council Tax support scheme which is made under Section 13A(1)(a) of the Local Government Finance Act 1992. It allows the Council to reduce the amount payable after all statutory discounts and exemptions and local council tax support.

Eligibility Criteria

- A care leaver, for the purpose of this policy, is defined as a young person aged 18 – 24 who was formerly a child in the care of Gloucestershire County Council or other local authority in England and then became a ‘Former Relevant Child’ as defined by The Children (Leaving Care) Act 2000. The Care Leaver must be resident and liable for council tax on a property in the Tewkesbury Borough Council area.
- A Care Leaver must be aged 18-24 years old to qualify for a reduction under the care leavers discount scheme. A Care Leaver will cease to qualify for the discount from the date of their 25th birthday.

- The Care Leaver must be the liable person for council tax, either solely or jointly and severally with other(s), at the dwelling in respect of which the application is made. The council tax bill must be in their name.
- When a Care Leaver lives in a HMO or other property where they are not the council tax payer no discount will be awarded.
- The Care Leaver discount will apply to occupied properties only.
- Confirmation that a claimant is a Former Relevant Child from a local authority in England must be received from Gloucestershire's 11-25 Permanency Service who will seek confirmation of care leaver status from other local authorities.

Care Leaver Discount

The Care Leaver Discount is effective from 01 April 2024.

Care Leavers that meet the eligibility criteria about will be eligible to apply for a discretionary council tax discount as follows:

- Where a property is solely occupied by Care Leaver(s) 100% discount will be awarded.
 - Where a Care Leaver is in occupation and jointly liable with others 50% discount will be awarded.

The Care Leaver discretionary discount will be awarded after statutory discounts, exemptions, disabled reduction, and local council tax support.

Application Process and Administration

Gloucestershire County Council's 11-25 Permanency Service will provide information to confirm the name, address and date of birth of Care Leavers, living in the Tewkesbury Borough area who will qualify for the discount.

A Care Leaver discount may also be awarded where the following information is provided and the Care Leaver status has been verified with Gloucestershire County Council's 11-25 Permanency Service. An application should provide the following information:

- Full name
- Date of birth
- Current address
- Details of any other adults in the property and relationship to them
 - Details of any circumstances that would be relevant to entitlement to legislative discounts, reductions or exemptions
- Contact details
- Name of Leaving Care Worker (if known)

Awards will be made directly by a discount in council tax liability and notification of the discount being awarded will be by way of the council tax bill.

The Revenues and Benefits Service will undertake periodic reviews appropriate to the individual circumstances of each case.

The Care Leaver (or his/her appointee or a recognised third party acting on his/her behalf) must advise Tewkesbury Borough Council of any changes which may affect entitlement to the discount within 21 days of the change occurring.

Any overpaid Care Leaver discount will be reclaimed through the relevant council tax account and collected and recovered under the Council Tax (Administration and Enforcement) Regulations 1992.

Review of Decision / Backdating

The Care Leaver discount scheme is administered in accordance with the Local Government Finance Act 1992 and is subject to a statutory appeals process. If the applicant disagrees with the decision they must put this in writing giving their reasons. This should normally be received by Tewkesbury Borough Council within a month of the date of the decision, although more time can be given in exceptional circumstances.

If a decision is challenged a reconsideration will be made by the Head of Revenue and Benefits. The applicant will then be notified of the reconsideration, which will clearly state the reasons for the decision made. If the applicant remains dissatisfied with the decision, an appeal may be made to the independent Valuation Tribunal. Further details on this process will be notified to the applicant with the outcome of any previous review of the decision.

The Council will accept applications backdated to the beginning of the financial year, or to the date the Care Leaver became responsible for the council tax so long as the date is not more than 12 months prior to the date of the application. The Care Leaver discount cannot be awarded prior to 01 April 2019 for care leavers aged 18yrs to 21yrs and cannot be awarded prior to 01 April 2024 for care leavers aged 22yrs to 24yrs.

TEWKESBURY BOROUGH COUNCIL

Report to:	Executive Committee
Date of Meeting:	7 February 2024
Subject:	Council Tax Premiums
Report of:	Head of Service: Revenues and Benefits
Head of Service/Director:	Director: Corporate Services
Lead Member:	Lead Member for Finance and Asset Management
Number of Appendices:	None

Executive Summary:

In recent years Government has provided increasing flexibility to local authorities to determine the amount of discount awarded, if any, for empty properties and second homes. In addition, local authorities have been provided with the ability to charge premiums for long-term empty properties. Recognising the national housing shortages, the intention of these changes is to bring properties back into full-time use.

Prior to 23 November 2022, the government had been indicating for some time its intention to extend the powers to charge premiums through the introduction of the Levelling Up and Regeneration Bill. Specifically, it was indicated that it was intended to implement discretionary powers for local authorities to reduce the qualifying period for the long-term empty premium from two years to one and to introduce a premium for 'second homes' (dwellings which are furnished, but unoccupied). This additional income would benefit the Council Tax Collection Fund and consequently would be split proportionately between the major preceptors.

The intention of the policy is to encourage the owners of second properties to bring them back into full time use and occupation through the imposition of premiums. This supports the Council's priorities around the provision of housing. The implementation of the additional premiums will provide additional Council Tax income for the Council; however the main aim is to bring properties back into use to assist with the housing shortages.

Recommendation:

To RECOMMEND TO COUNCIL that:

- i. Council Tax be increased for all properties deemed second homes, which are occupied periodically by 100% from 1 April 2025, subject to any exemptions set out in subsequent Regulations and for implementation to be in accordance with those Regulations and guidance;**
- ii. the Council Tax Empty Homes Premium be increased to 100% for properties empty for between one and five years (currently between two and five years), from 1 April 2025, subject to any exemptions set out in subsequent Regulations and guidance.**
and
- iii. authority be delegated to the Executive Director: Resources, in consultation with the Lead Member for Finance and Asset Management, to amend the Council's policy relating to premiums in line with legislative or government requirements and changes.**

Financial Implications:

There are currently approximately 125 empty homes in Tewkesbury, which have been empty for more than one year and are unoccupied and substantially unfurnished. If these homeowners took no action to bring their properties back into use, it is estimated that introducing the additional 100% Empty Homes Premium could potentially generate additional Council Tax income of approximately £251,498, of which Tewkesbury Borough Council would retain around £17,604.

There are also 247 second homes which are registered in the borough. Introducing the additional 100% Second Homes premium could potentially generate additional Council Tax income of approximately £543,226 of which Tewkesbury Borough Council would retain around £38,025. However, the additional income is likely to be less than this in practice as the new premium will potentially encourage those homeowners to bring their properties back into use instead.

Legal Implications:

Section 11B Local Government Finance Act 1992 (as amended). Section 67(2) of the Act provides that the power to decide to introduce a premium can only be exercised by Council.

The Rating (Property in Common occupation) and Council Tax (Empty Dwellings) Act 2018 provides for the premium to be increased.

There is a legal requirement for the Council to publish any decision using these powers in a local newspaper with 21 days of the decision.

The recommendations set out within this report are subject to the Levelling Up and Regeneration Bill receiving Royal Assent. If the Council wishes to adopt any changes arising from the Bill it is required to make a resolution confirming its requirements by no later than 31 March 2024 as 12 months' notice is required for the implementation of changes

Environmental and Sustainability Implications:

None

Resource Implications (including impact on equalities):

None directly associated with this report other than officer time

Safeguarding Implications:

None

Impact on the Customer:

Owners of second homes and long term empty properties of more than one year will be impacted by an increase in council tax charges.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The government encourages all billing authorities to adopt Council Tax premiums on empty properties with a view to incentivising property owners to bring those properties back into use. Premiums can currently be charged where properties are left unoccupied and unfurnished for periods exceeding two years.

- 1.2** In May 2022 the government published the Levelling Up and Regeneration Bill (the Bill). The Bill included proposals aimed at further addressing empty properties through the application of Council Tax premiums, in addition to measures which recognise the impact that high levels of second home ownership can have in some areas.
- 1.3** The Levelling Up and Regeneration Bill received Royal Assent on the 26 October 2023 and has now passed into law. The core elements of the Council Tax charges remain the same; however, the government has indicated its intention to provide for specific 'exemptions' from the additional premiums and have made provision for this within the Act. Consultation was undertaken over the summer regarding the potential content of these exemptions, but, at the time of writing, we have yet to receive details of the actual exemptions. (NB. The consultation can be viewed at [Consultation on proposals to exempt categories of dwellings from the council tax premiums in England - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/consultation-on-proposals-to-exempt-categories-of-dwellings-from-the-council-tax-premiums-in-england))
- 1.4** Given that these changes have only just come into law and the intention to provide for statutory exemptions from the premiums, it makes sense for Council to formally approve the implementation of 100% additional charge on second homes and the amendment to the period for long term empty properties from two years to one year. Doing so will help to significantly minimise the risk of any legal challenge to these new premiums.
- 1.5** The reduction in the qualifying period for the long-term empty premium can be implemented from 1 April 2025. The decision to implement a second homes premium cannot by law be implemented until 1 April 2025.
- 1.6** Concern was raised in relation to the application of a second homes premium may encourage Council Tax "avoidance", for instance by the owners of such properties transferring the property to Business Rates. Given that the Council Tax rates for second homes mirror those of main residences there may also be issues with the current classification of properties within the Council Tax system, the application of a second homes premium may prompt owners to reclassify properties for genuine reasons; reducing the potential revenue that might be derived from the premium.
- 1.7** Currently, properties that are available to let for more than 20 weeks (140 days) in a calendar year can be rated as Business Rates by the Valuation Office Agency (VOA). The owner of the property would need to support such a claim with evidence advertising the property to let. These criteria will still apply and, from April 2023, owners must also demonstrate that the property was available to let for more than 20 weeks in the previous year. Sufficient proof must be supplied to evidence that the property was actually let for short periods totalling at least 70 days. The burden of providing evidence to support future changes will be the homeowners and will be verified by the Council and reported to the VOA. This change should ensure that any properties transferring from Council Tax to Business Rates relate to genuine circumstances where the property is being utilised for business purposes.
- 1.8** Another concern is that couples who own second homes may claim that they are living separately and are single occupants of each respective property. Reviews are carried out annually to check the circumstances giving rise to any discount or exemption, including single person discounts. The circumstances can be verified against the information that has been supplied to the council to claim the reduction. Financial penalties can be imposed where false information is provided and will assist in ensuring that data held is accurate.

1.9 Legislation to apply a 100% premium on second homes was introduced in Wales in 2017/18, the premium was paid on 24,873 properties in 2021/22. This number had increased across Wales by 2,005 from the number recorded at the outset of the scheme in 2017/18. Some areas, which historically had the highest number of second homes (e.g. Gwynedd), have seen downward adjustments to the numbers of recorded second homes and the maximum recorded reduction in any area is 9%. It is uncertain whether these downward trends have been triggered by avoidance or are evidence that the premiums have achieved one of the intended outcomes of bringing second homes back into use as mainstream housing provision. The second homes figures in Wales suggest that regardless of any avoidance issues that might remain within the system, there should still be sufficient incentive for the Council to adopt a Council Tax premium on second homes.

1.10 The recommendations and policy changes are designed to encourage the occupation of empty premises and bring second homes into use, which should benefit local communities.

2.0 DISCRETIONARY AREAS AND EXEMPTIONS

2.1 A large part of the Council Tax legislation is mandatory on all billing authorities within England. Discounts (such as Single Person Discounts), Disregards and Exemptions are set by statute with no local discretion allowed.

2.2 However, there are an increasing number of areas where each Council may determine locally the type and levels of charge to be made. The current main discretionary areas are as follows:

- a) second homes (premises which are no-one's sole or main residence but are furnished);
- b) unoccupied and substantially unfurnished premises;
- c) unoccupied and substantially unfurnished premises which require or are undergoing structural repairs; and
- d) premiums where premises have been unoccupied and substantially unfurnished for a period exceeding two years.

2.3 The clear intention of government in introducing the powers to levy premiums for empty properties is to encourage such properties to be brought back into full time residential use.

2.4 The government has been indicating for some time its intention to extend the powers of local authorities to levy premiums in respect of certain types of unoccupied properties. Specifically, this includes:

- a) long-term empty properties (i.e. unoccupied and unfurnished properties) where they intend to reduce the qualifying period from two years to one year; and
- b) second homes (i.e. dwelling which are furnished, but unoccupied) where they intend to introduce the power to charge a 100% premium.

2.5 The exemptions will apply to properties in specific circumstances and prevent the Council from charging the levy for a specified period of time. The effect of this is to reduce rather than extend the scope of the premiums and it will obviously also reduce the amount of income that can be generated. The Council has not been formally notified yet of the exemptions, but government did undertake consultation over the summer and it is understood it is likely to include the following types of situations:

- Properties undergoing probate - the government proposes that these properties should be exceptions to both the second homes and empty homes premiums for 12 months. The exception would start once probate or letters of administration are granted. This does not affect the existing Class F exemption or the ability for billing authorities to charge the normal rate of council tax following the expiry of the Class F exemption.
- Properties that are being actively marketed for sale or rent - the government proposes that this exception would apply for up to a maximum of six months from the date that active marketing commenced, or until the property has been sold or rented, whichever is the sooner. It will be essential that the Council will need to determine in its policy, what evidence will be required to support any exception.
- Empty properties undergoing major repairs - time limited to six months - the government proposes that empty properties undergoing major repair works or structural alterations should be an exception to the premium for up to six months once the exception has been applied or when the work has been completed, whichever is the sooner. The exception could be applied at any time after the property has been empty for at least 12 months, so long as the Council is satisfied that the necessary repair work is being undertaken.
- Annexes forming part of, or being treated as, part of the main dwelling - the government proposes that such annexes should be an exception to the Council Tax premium on second homes.
- Job related dwellings - currently, there is a Council Tax discount of up to 50% for properties which are unoccupied because the owner is required to live elsewhere for employment purposes. The discount applies where the dwelling is provided for the better performance of the duties of the employment, and it is one of the kinds of employment in the case of which it is customary for employers to provide dwellings for employees. The government proposes that the job related dwellings provision should also be an exception to the second homes premium. The exception will not apply to cases where someone chooses to have an additional property to be closer to work while having a family home elsewhere or where an individual is posted to a new location but maintains their previous address.
- Occupied caravan pitches and houseboat moorings - the government proposes that these caravans and boats should be an exception to the Council Tax premium on second homes.
- Seasonal homes where year-round or permanent occupation is prohibited or has been specified for use as holiday accommodation or prevents occupancy as a person's sole or main residence - the government proposes that properties that have restrictions or conditions preventing occupancy for a continuous period of at least 28 days in any 12-month period, or specifies its use as a holiday let, or prevents occupancy as a person's sole or main residence, should be an exception to the second homes premium.

2.6 It is understood that regulations or guidance (which has to be followed in accordance with the Levelling Up and Regeneration Act) will be in line with government's proposal. In view of this, the Council will need to ensure that any charging policy or procedure aligns with legislation. It is therefore recommended that authority be delegated to the Executive Director: Resources, as the Council's Section 151 Officer, in consultation with the Lead Member for Finance and Asset Management, to amend the Council's policy relating to premiums in line with legislative or government requirements and changes.

2.7 Local authorities, as billing authorities, are required to make formal determinations as to the levels of discounts and premiums they choose to award and charge in respect of these categories. These decisions have to be taken by Council and once agreed, published within 21 days.

3.0 EXCEPTIONAL CIRCUMSTANCES

3.1 Clearly there may be instances where it is not appropriate, and the Council would not wish to levy an additional premium. Legislation makes provision for this and specifically through:

- a) a range of pre-existing discounts and exemptions to cater for circumstances where properties are left unoccupied as a result of people moving into residential care, following bereavement, living elsewhere to provide care etc;
- b) the new exemptions from the premiums; and
- c) the provisions of our Section 13A 1(c) policy which provide us with general powers to reduce council tax in situations where there is hardship.

4.0 CONSULTATION

4.1 The Bill does not include a statutory requirement to consult, and the Council has concluded that it will not consult on this matter. In cases like this then it is not uncommon for those impacted by the premium to be against it and those unaffected to support it.

5.0 ASSOCIATED RISKS

5.1 There is a risk that for Council Tax 'avoidance' property owners may switch their property for business rate purposes; however, there is strict criteria laid down by the Valuation Office Agency for such an occurrence.

6.0 MONITORING

6.1 The effectiveness of the premiums will be updated to the relevant Lead Member through their Portfolio briefing. In terms of the empty homes being returned into occupation, the Council's Empty Homes Strategy is monitored on a six monthly basis by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee when the Committee reviews the higher level Housing and Homelessness Strategy.

7.0 RELEVANT COUNCIL PLAN PRIORITIES/COUNCIL POLICIES/STRATEGIES

7.1 Housing Strategy Action Plan 2023-25 regarding bringing empty properties back into use.

Background Papers: None

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Appendices: None

TEWKESBURY BOROUGH COUNCIL

Report to:	Council
Date of Meeting:	27 February 2024
Subject:	Gloucestershire City Regions Board
Report of:	Chief Executive
Head of Service/Director:	Chief Executive
Lead Member:	Leader of the Council
Number of Appendices:	Two

Executive Summary:

To consider the emerging form and function of the Gloucestershire City Regions Board (GCRB), the nature of its authority, terms of reference, membership and joint scrutiny arrangements.

Recommendation:

- 1. To AGREE:**
 - i. the establishment of the Gloucestershire City Regions Board; and**
 - ii. that authority be delegated to the Chief Executive, in consultation with the Leader of the Council, to finalise and complete the Inter-Authority Agreement and other key documentation and to take all necessary steps to create the Gloucestershire City Region Board, including finalising the Terms of Reference for the Gloucestershire City Regions Board**

with those recommendations not being effective until all Gloucestershire Councils pass equivalent resolutions.
- 2. Upon the establishment of the Gloucestershire City Regions Board to AGREE to:**
 - i. delegate this Council’s functions to the Gloucestershire City Regions Board as necessary for the delivery of the functions identified in the Terms of Reference at Appendix 1 to this report;**
 - ii. confirm the appointment of Gloucestershire County Council as the Administering Authority; and**
 - iii. appoint the Leader of the Tewkesbury Borough Council to the Gloucestershire City Regions Board as the nominated Member of the Board and to appoint a substitute Member to the Board.**

Financial Implications:

The inter-authority agreement provides for a contribution towards Gloucestershire County Council's Administering Authority role, which includes Committee administrative support together with the statutory officer responsibilities. Funding for Gloucestershire County Council's administering role is drawn from the shared business rates pool funding as part of the GCRB.

Gloucestershire County Council will act as Administering Authority in the overall management of the Board. This will involve Gloucestershire County Council's Democratic Services and its Legal team supporting the Committee formation process and ongoing Committee Secretariat function, plus additional lead officer input, including S151 and Monitoring Officer, as required, in support of the Council's role as Administering Authority.

Future resource requirements over and above these commitments will be duly considered through the Board.

Legal Implications:

Section 101(5) of the Local Government Act 1972 enables two or more local authorities to discharge any of their functions jointly and arrange for the discharge of those functions by a Joint Committee.

Section 9EB of Part A Chapter 2 of the Local Government Act 2000 Act enables the Secretary of State to make Regulations permitting arrangements under Section 101 (5) where any of the functions are the responsibility of the executive of the authority. The relevant regulations are the Local Authorities (Arrangements for the Discharge of Functions) (England) Regulations 2012/1019.

Environmental and Sustainability Implications:

There are no specific implications in relation to the above matters in establishing the Board. However, the Board will consider such implications in making its decisions and in administering the SEDF.

Resource Implications (including impact on equalities):

Gloucestershire County Council will act as Administering Authority in the overall management of the Board. This will involve Gloucestershire County Council's Democratic Services and its Legal team supporting the Committee formation process and ongoing Committee Secretariat function, plus additional lead Officer input, including S151 and Monitoring Officer, as required, in support of the Council's role as Administering Authority.

Future resource requirements over and above these commitments will be duly considered through the Board.

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 Gloucestershire local authorities have worked jointly through membership of several Boards (Severn Vale, Rural Ambitions and Central Gloucestershire City Region) together with the Gloucestershire Economic Growth Joint Committee (GEGJC) for several years. Following a review of the joint working arrangements, Leadership Gloucestershire agreed that the three boards and the Joint Committee should be merged into a single forum under the name of Gloucestershire City Region Board serving the whole of the county. This report sets out the emerging form and function of the Gloucestershire City Regions Board, the nature of its authority, terms of reference, membership and joint scrutiny arrangements.

2.0 THE GLOUCESTERSHIRE CITY REGION BOARD

2.1 Overall Structure and Function

The overall aims of the new Board will be to develop and deliver a vision for the future growth of the economic success for the whole of the Gloucestershire economic area. The new City Region Board will also provide an opportunity to establish the City Region as a nationally defined area that is a single economic functional area. City Regions include urban and rural areas that have inter-related economic activities which have the potential for increased success through coordinated interventions which benefit the whole. Gloucestershire is a county with significant growth aspiration and ambition which integrate with and support the national and regional growth agendas.

2.2 Principles of the Gloucestershire City Region Board

2.2.1 The proposed terms of reference set out in Appendix 1 provide details of the Board's purpose, powers and administrative arrangements.

2.2.2 The following detailed matters explain the nature of the authority given to the Board which 'empowers' the Board to make binding decisions but subject to the following governance arrangements:

1. Whilst the Board's remit is as wide as possible, partner Councils will not have 'delegated' economic development or other functions to the Board.
2. Leaders will still need to operate within the authority delegated to them by their own Councils when participating at the Board's meetings. Leaders and Officers will therefore need to work with their own Councils to secure the necessary authority to facilitate the Board's decisions.
3. A partner Council will be free to undertake any economic activity it deems necessary within its own area. Notwithstanding this, it will be necessary for partner Councils to agree a protocol that they will not decide or undertake any activity which is contrary to those decisions made by the Board.
4. In order to protect the interest of partner Councils it will be necessary to agree a protocol that although the Board's decisions are by majority, the Board will not make a decision which impacts upon one Council's area, without that Council's agreement.

2.2.3 The following principles for the operation of the Gloucestershire City Region Board were developed, following consultation and engagement with Leadership Gloucestershire and all the Gloucestershire authorities:

1. The proposed membership of the Board will be through elected representatives from each of the seven Gloucestershire Local Authorities. Each member will have an equal vote at the Board.
2. The proposal is for the Chair of the Board to be a Gloucestershire County Council Cabinet Member. This supports the government's arrangements through the levelling-up agenda where the upper tier authority in a two-tier county, such as Gloucestershire, is given the lead role in negotiation of any county devolution deals. Therefore, Gloucestershire local authorities recognise the opportunity for a county deal is more about providing devolution from central government to Gloucestershire, rather than a mechanism for realigning and removing powers from an individual Gloucestershire local authority.
3. Meetings will remain in public and external attendees will be invited to present and engage in the discussion about the economy and growth in Gloucestershire.
4. The future development of the Board will be dependent on any County Deal that is negotiated and agreed with central government.
5. The Senior Officer Group comprising of nominated Senior Officers from each of the seven Gloucestershire local authorities will continue to support the work of the Board.
6. The GEGJC Scrutiny Committee will be re-constituted and reviewed to be re-focussed on having oversight of the activities of the GCRB. This will potentially include monitoring the delivery of projects that have received investment from the Strategic Economic Development Fund (SEDF) or making suggestions to the GCRB on potential areas of future investment of the fund.

2.2.4 The proposed Board's operational arrangements between the Gloucestershire Authorities will be the subject of an inter-authority agreement. The agreement will include (amongst other things):

- the establishment of the Board (as a Joint Committee)
- agreed Terms of Reference set out in Appendix 1
- the operational arrangements mentioned above
- the Board's resourcing, the role of the County Council as administering authority
- business plan formulation
- the arrangements should the Board were to widen its powers (which would require all the Gloucestershire authorities to agree such a change)
- the overall constitutional arrangements for the Board

2.3 Strategic Economic Development Fund

2.3.1 The Gloucestershire local authorities established the Business Rates Pool which enabled part of the Pool to create the Strategic Economic Development Fund (SEDF). The former GEGJC administered the fund through an approved eligibility and project approval process in November 2018.

- 2.3.2** At the GEGJC's final meeting in September 2023, Members welcomed the reported growth of the Business Rates Pool and fund. The GEGJC asked whether a more strategic approach could be taken when considering and allocating SEDF funding. The fund operated under the GEGJC on an ad hoc approach – on a first come first served basis. GEGJC noted that projects are not always strategic in nature which risks funding being allocated to projects that may not maximise economic benefit and growth to the county.
- 2.3.3** The proposal is for the Board to administer the SEDF. This will enable the Board to reconsider the approach to the allocation of bids by developing a longer vision and a portfolio approach to assessing funding bids in the pipeline. This will enable the Board to apply a more rigorous selection of projects that would deliver and add value in supporting the growth of the local economy through a more strategic approach.
- 2.3.4** The former GEGJC considered it was important to establish a new strategic process in advance of the inauguration of the City Region Board. It was suggested that this strategic approach could be lined up with the economic dashboard data and the emerging Countywide Economic Strategy.
- 2.3.5** The former Joint Committee Senior Officer Group proposed an approach to the Board's administration of the SEDF Fund as set out in Appendix 2, which will be considered at the Board's inaugural meeting.

2.4 Scrutiny Arrangements

- 2.4.1** The activities of the previous GEGJC were scrutinised by the GEGSC. Through consultation with all Gloucestershire authorities, it has been agreed that a joint scrutiny function will continue to exist to scrutinise the work of the GCRB. As before each local authority will be able to nominate a representative to that committee.
- 2.4.2** The creation of a new GCRB provides a timely opportunity to undertake an appropriate review of the GEGSC to ensure that it aligns with the future activities of the GCRB.
- 2.4.3** It is proposed that, subject to all Gloucestershire authorities agreeing to establish the GCRB, that a review of the GEGSC is undertaken and supported by the Senior Officer Group in conjunction with the Chair and members of the Scrutiny Meeting.
- 2.4.4** The review of the scrutiny function is proposed to include (not an exhaustive list):
- Scope of the Committee
 - Review of scrutiny's oversight and monitoring of SEDF Bid
 - Development of devolution and the implementation of any agreed County Deals
 - Monitoring outcomes and benefits through the implementation of the Gloucestershire Economic Strategy.
- 2.4.5** It is proposed that following this review a report is provided to the GCRB and Leadership Gloucestershire to ratify and agree the future scope and activities of the GEGSC.

3.0 OTHER OPTIONS

- 3.1** As part of the development of the GCRB, alternative options were discussed and discounted. Retaining both a GCRB and a GEGJC was deemed to create significant duplication and would not be effective. Disbanding any joint governance for Gloucestershire authorities to operate individually was also not considered as an option. Without a collective decision-making forum to invest pooled business rates funding via the SEDF and Gloucestershire Authorities would be significantly financially worse off without a joint forum in place. In addition, disbanding a joint decision-making forum and not proceeding with the GCRB would likely limit Gloucestershire's ability to proceed with and secure further devolution and county-wide powers.

4.0 CONSULTATION

- 4.1** None

5.0 ASSOCIATED RISKS

- 5.1** If the GCRB is not established there will be no mechanism to take decisions on the investment of SEDF

If the GCRB is not established, it will limit Gloucestershire's potential for future devolution.

If the GCRB is not established there will be no Gloucestershire-wide forum to support and drive and monitor the implementation of the Gloucestershire Economic Strategy.

6.0 MONITORING

- 6.1** The Gloucestershire Economic Growth Scrutiny Committee will provide overarching scrutiny of the work of the Board and the Scrutiny's overall remit will be taken forward as set out in Paragraph 2.5

7.0 RELEVANT COUNCIL PLAN PRIORITIES/COUNCIL POLICIES/STRATEGIES

- 7.1** None.

Background Papers: None

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Appendices: Appendix 1 - Terms of Reference and Constitution for the Gloucestershire City Regions Board.

Appendix 2 - Principles for the administration of the SEDF Fund

Appendix 1

Terms of Reference and Constitution for the Gloucestershire City Regions Board

TERMS OF REFERENCE/CONSTITUTION

1. Governance

- 1.1 The Gloucestershire City Region Board ("**GCR Board**") is a Joint Committee under ss101(5), 102 Local Government Act 1972 and under Part1A 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.
- 1.2 Political Proportionality rules will not apply to the GCR Board as so constituted.
- 1.3 The GCR Board will include all of the Partner Authorities.

2. Host Authority

- 2.1 The GCR Board will be hosted under local government arrangements by Gloucestershire County Council. The Host Authority will provide Secretary/Clerk, s151 and Monitoring Officer roles of the GCR Board.

3. Functions of the GCR Board

- 3.1 Each of the Partner Authorities empowers the GCR Board to:
 - 3.1.1 engage in strategic discussion and act as the primary consultative forum to set a dynamic vision for Gloucestershire and to present and discuss issues relating to the following:
 - (a) economy and growth;
 - (b) funding and bids;
 - (c) devolution; and
 - (d) skills and employment;
 - 3.1.2 develop and support a shared vision for strategic growth and economic success for the County of Gloucestershire;

- 3.1.3 champion that shared vision and its delivery with a single voice inside and outside Gloucestershire, including with strategic partner organisations such as the Western Gateway Partnership.
- 3.1.4 lobby and bid for funding and support via government growth programmes and Western Gateway Partnership and other partners to support the delivery of the GCR Board's ambitions;
- 3.1.5 promote the success of the Gloucestershire City Region and its strengths to attract inward investment and growth;
- 3.1.6 work closely with all sections of the Gloucestershire City Region communities, businesses and agencies to engage them in the generation and delivery of the vision;
- 3.1.7 build upon the inter-related strengths of the communities of the Gloucestershire City Region to fulfil the ambitions of each place and maintain their identities;
- 3.1.8 create a positive vision for vibrant rural communities, businesses and infrastructure to maximise their contribution to Gloucestershire;
- 3.1.9 work with partners to ensure the Gloucestershire City Region Vision can guide and integrate with future strategic spatial and infrastructure plans;
- 3.1.10 ensure the development of a Gloucestershire Vision complements other visioning and strategic plans in the County of Gloucestershire;
- 3.1.11 aim to create, through the Gloucestershire City Region Vision, a special county which has uniquely attractive offers as a place to live and visit and a vibrant economy firmly based on modern commercial activity, built on the strengths of our communities;
- 3.1.12 discharge on behalf of Partner Authorities the power to do anything it considers likely to achieve the promotion or improvement of the economic wellbeing of the area of Gloucestershire together with such additional functions as the respective constituent Councils may determine from time to time;
- 3.1.13 facilitate and enable collaboration between the Partner Authorities on economic development, employment and skills, and associated activities;

- 3.1.14 formulate and agree the GCE Strategy from time to time and other plans and strategies related to economic growth, and to work jointly to ensure their delivery;
 - 3.1.15 lobby and carry out other activities that help achieve the promotion or improvement of the economic wellbeing of the area of Gloucestershire;
 - 3.1.16 promote the vision contained in the GCE Strategy;
 - 3.1.17 seek the allocation of resources to achieve the promotion or improvement of the economic wellbeing of the area of Gloucestershire; and
 - 3.1.18 ensure a co-ordinated approach to and liaise with such relevant Groups/Boards as the Partner Authorities and/or the Senior Officer Group may determine from time to time.
- 3.2 To provide political and democratic accountability by:
- 3.2.1 monitoring the delivery of each priority, plan, project or programme included in the GCE Strategy and by ensuring that action is taken to review and prepare revised action plans as necessary;
 - 3.2.2 monitoring the Annual Budget;
 - 3.2.3 advising and making recommendations to the Partner Authorities;
 - 3.2.4 providing Leadership Gloucestershire with regular updates in respect of the work of the GCR Board and (where appropriate) the governance of the GCR Board.

4. Membership of the GCR Board and appointment of the Chair

- 4.1 The GCR Board shall be comprised of:
- 4.1.1 One member from each of the District Authorities: each such member to be an appointed executive member (where executive arrangements are in place) from the relevant District Authority (voting); and
 - 4.1.2 One member from the Administering Authority, such member to be an appointed executive member (where executive arrangements are in place) from the Administering Authority (voting), who shall also act as the Chair.

The GCR Board may from time to time at its absolute discretion appoint one non-voting member to the GCR Board from Gloucestershire's business community. Each such appointment shall continue for a fixed term (to be determined by the GCR Board) unless removed earlier by the GCR Board.

- 4.2 Each District Authority shall appoint a substitute member (being an executive member of the relevant District Authority where executive arrangements are in place). The substitute member shall have the same rights of speaking and voting at meetings as the member for whom the substitution is made.
- 4.3 The Administering Authority shall appoint a substitute member (being an executive member of the Administering Authority where executive arrangements are in place). The substitute member shall have the same rights as the member for whom the substitution is made in respect of speaking, voting and acting as the Chair at meetings.
- 4.4 Each GCR Board member appointed by a Partner Authority shall remain in office until removed and replaced by his or her appointing Partner Authority, or in the case of an executive member, until he or she ceases to be a member of the Executive of the appointing Partner Authority.

5. **Voting**

- 5.1 One member one vote for each Partner Authority.
- 5.2 Normal rules as to declarations of interest to be applied in accordance with the Gloucestershire County Council Code of Conduct.
- 5.3 Except as otherwise provided by the Local Government Acts 1972 and 1985 and subject to the protocol in respect of the Chair's casting vote set out in **Appendix 1**, all matters shall be decided by a majority of the votes of the voting members present.
- 5.4 Subject to the protocol in respect of the Chair's casting vote set out in **Appendix 1**, in the event of an equality of votes the Chair shall have the casting vote in addition to their vote as a member of the GCR Board.

6. **Quorum**

- 6.1 The quorum for a meeting shall be the member from the Administering Authority together with 3 (three) other voting members. No business shall be transacted unless quorum is reached. If quorum is not reached within thirty (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.

7. Meetings

- 7.1 The Chair of the meeting shall be the member from the Administering Authority or their substitute, also from the Administering Authority.
- 7.2 Each member entitled to attend will send a substitute member as per paragraphs **4.2** and **4.3** in the event of his or her unavailability. The Secretary/Clerk for the GCR Board shall be informed prior to the commencement of the meeting of any substitute members attending.
- 7.3 A meeting of the GCR Board must be convened by the Chair within twenty-eight (28) days of the receipt of a requisition of any two voting members of the GCR Board addressed to the Secretary/Clerk to the GCR Board. All requisitions shall be in writing and no business other than that specified in the requisition shall be transacted at such a meeting.

8. Constitution

- 8.1 The Constitution of Gloucestershire County Council shall apply to the GCR Board.

9. Attendance

- 9.1 Members of the SOG, together with the Administering Authority's s151 Officer, Legal Advisor and the Clerk shall be entitled to attend meetings of the GRC Board to advise the GCR Board on matters relevant to the functions and activities of the GCR Board but shall have no voting rights.
- 9.2 Each Partner Authority may send any of its officers (as it considers to be appropriate) to meetings of the GCR Board, or any sub-committee thereof, to support its GCR Board Members or those invited to observe the meeting.

10. Responsibilities of the Chair and (if applicable) their substitute

- 10.1 The role of the Chair and (if applicable) their substitute, is to ensure that the meetings of the GCR Board are conducted efficiently and in accordance with the Standing Orders and Rules of Procedures.
- 10.2 The role of the Chair's substitute is to deputise for the Chair during any period of the Chair's absence or at other times as appropriate and his responsibilities shall be the same as those of the Chair.

10.3 Subject to the protocol in respect of the Chair's casting vote set out in **Appendix 1**, the Chair or (if applicable) their substitute shall have a second or casting vote in the event of an equality of votes when presiding at a meeting of the GCR Board.

11. **Meetings of the GCR Board**

11.1 Part I of Schedule 12 of the LGA 1972 shall apply to meetings of the GCR Board.

11.2 At its first meeting and at each Annual General Meeting thereafter the GCR Board shall:

11.2.1 adopt a Scheme of Delegation; and

11.2.2 approve the schedule of meetings for the remainder of the year.

11.3 Subject to paragraph **11.5** below, and the need exceptionally to call additional meetings, the GCR Board shall meet at least four times each year. The Chair shall decide the venue, date and time of all meetings of the GCR Board. Wherever practicable, at least ten (10) Business Days' notice of such meetings shall be given to each GCR Board Member, the Senior Manager, the Administering Authority's s151 Officer, the Legal Advisor and to each of the Partner Authorities by the Clerk.

11.4 Meetings of the GCR Board shall be open to the public and press except during consideration of items containing confidential or exempt information in accordance with the provisions of sections 100 to 100K of the LGA 1972; and reports to and the minutes of the GCR Board shall (subject to the provisions of sections 100 to 100K of the LGA 1972) be available to the public and press as though they were the reports or minutes of a meeting of a Partner Authority.

11.5 Any GCR Board Member may requisition a meeting of the GCR Board by giving notice of such requisition to the Chair and to the Clerk. Immediately upon receipt of such requisition, the Chair shall call a meeting of the GCR Board in accordance with paragraph **11.3** which shall be no later than ten (10) Business Days after the receipt by the Clerk of the notice of requisition.

11.6 The Standing Orders and Rules of Procedure shall be applicable to meetings of the GCR Board. The Standing Orders and Rules of Procedure may only be amended or replaced if the amendment or replacement is agreed by not less than three-quarters of the GCR Board Members.

11.7 If a quorum is not present within thirty (30) minutes of the time set for the commencement of a meeting of the GCR Board (or a quorum ceases to be present during a meeting) the meeting shall be adjourned to the same time and venue five (5) Business Days later or to such other date, time and venue as the Chair (or other person who is chairing the meeting) shall determine.

11.8 The Chair shall normally preside at all meetings of the GCR Board. If the Chair is not present within fifteen (15) minutes of the time for the commencement of a meeting, or being present does not wish to preside or is unable to do so, then their substitute shall preside at that meeting. If (in the event of the absence or non-availability of the Chair) their substitute is not present within fifteen (15) minutes of the time for the commencement of the meeting or does not wish to preside or is unable to do so, the meeting shall be adjourned to the same time and venue five (5) Business Days later.

12. **DELEGATION TO SUB COMMITTEES AND OFFICERS**

12.1 The GCR Board may arrange for any of its functions to be discharged in accordance with the provisions of a Scheme of Delegation as approved by the GCR Board.

12.2 The GCR Board may appoint working groups consisting of GCR Board Members, officers from the Administering Authority (including of the SOG) and officers of any of the Partner Authorities to consider specific matters and report back to the GCR Board or any sub-committee with recommendations.

13. **Scrutiny Arrangements**

13.1 Subject as set out in this paragraph **13** the decisions made by the GCR Board shall for the time being be subject to the Scrutiny Arrangements of each Partner Authority and each Partner Authority acknowledges the requirements in paragraph 13.6 below for cooperation between the respective Scrutiny Committees of each Partner Authority and Stroud's Strategy and Resources Committee.

13.2 Any decision of the GCR Board, except those agreed as urgent in accordance with paragraph 13.3 shall not be implemented until the Scrutiny Arrangements of the Partner Authority whose membership has called in the decision or action has been completed.

13.3 Where the GCR Board decides that a decision must be implemented without delay and as a matter of urgency 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 chairmen of the Partner Authorities Scrutiny Committees and Stroud's Strategy and Resources Committee shall be advised immediately.

- 13.4 A summary record of decisions made by the GCR Board will be made available to the public via the website of the Administering Authority within two (2) Business Days of the decision being made. At the same time the Administering Authority will provide a copy of the summary record of decisions to all Partner Authorities for them to make available to their members as they see fit. The summary record will indicate which of the decisions are subject to the urgency provision and therefore are not available to be 'called in' prior to implementation.
- 13.5 All decisions of the GCR Board (unless urgency is specified in accordance with paragraph **13.3**) to be subject to call-in processes of each Partner Authority. If not called in during that period any decision shall then be available for implementation.
- 13.6 The GCR Board Members and the relevant officers from each Partner Authority shall fully cooperate with the relevant Scrutiny Committee of any of the Partner Authorities or (as applicable) Stroud's Strategy and Resources Committee and attend as directed by the Scrutiny Committee/Stroud's Strategy and Resources Committee. The GCR Board Chair may nominate the GCR Board Member(s).
- 13.7 Where a decision is called in by more than one Partner Authority, the Scrutiny Committee of each of the Partner Authorities or (as applicable) Stroud's Strategy and Resources Committee calling in the decision will be invited to request the County Council to convene a meeting of the Gloucestershire Economic Growth Scrutiny Committee (GEGSC) to hear evidence, views, options considered, reasons for decision and to ask questions of appropriate GCR Board Member(s) and officers of the Administering Authority (including of the SOG) and others invited to participate.
- 13.8 After these "hearings", each relevant Scrutiny Committee or (as applicable) Stroud's Strategy and Resources Committee will meet separately to decide on what comment, view or recommendations (if any) it wishes to make to the GCR Board.
- 13.9 Where the account to be given to the Scrutiny Committee or (as applicable) Stroud's Strategy and Resources Committee requires the production of a report, then the GCR Board Member or officer concerned will be given sufficient notice to prepare the documentation.

- 13.10 Once it has formed recommendations on a call-in (or proposals for development in accordance with paragraph **13.13**) a Scrutiny Committee or (as applicable) Stroud's Strategy and Resources Committee shall prepare a formal report and submit it for consideration by the GCR Board.
- 13.11 The GCR Board shall consider the report of a Scrutiny Committee or (as applicable) Stroud's Strategy and Resources Committee at its next suitable meeting and shall issue a formal response to such a report.
- 13.12 The Clerk shall monitor the operation of the provisions relating to call-in and urgency annually, and submit a report to the GCR Board with proposals for review if necessary.
- 13.13 A Scrutiny Committee or (as applicable) Stroud's Strategy and Resources Committee should notify one of the GCR Board Members for its Partner Authority if it includes in its work programme any aspect of policy development or review relating to the work or functions of the GCR Board.

14. **ANNUAL BUDGET**

- 14.1 The GCR Board and the Partner Authorities will prepare the Annual Budget for future Financial Years in accordance with the following deadlines:
- 14.1.1 No later than 31 July in each Financial Year the Administering Authority or the Senior Manager (if appointed) shall submit a draft Annual Budget to the SOG in respect of the next Financial Year;
- 14.1.2 The SOG shall within twenty (20) Business Days of receipt of the draft Annual Budget consider and provide comments on or suggest amendments to be included in a revised draft Annual Budget;
- 14.1.3 No later than 30 September in each Financial Year the GCR Board will approve the draft Annual Budget;
- 14.1.4 Each Partner Authority will consider, as part of its budget setting process the draft Annual Budget;
- 14.1.5 No later than 30 November in each Financial Year each Partner Authority will provide any comments or proposed amendments to the draft Annual Budget to the GCR Board;
- 14.1.6 No later than 15 January in each Financial Year the Administering Authority's s151 Officer will insert the actual costs to the GCR Board into

the draft Annual Budget and circulate it to the s151 officer and to the GCR Board;

- 14.1.7 No later than 18th February in each Financial Year each Partner Authority will approve any amendments to the draft Annual Budget; and
- 14.1.8 The GCR Board will approve the Annual Budget by no later than 28 February in each Financial Year.
- 14.2 If the Partner Authorities or the GCR Board are unable to approve the draft Annual Budget for a Financial Year before 26 February in any year, the GCR Board shall perform its delegated functions and activities set out in paragraph 2 in conformity with the approved Annual Budget for the previous Financial Year, subject to an adjustment for inflation using indices determined by the Administering Authority's s151 Officer from time to time, until such time as an Annual Budget is approved in accordance with this paragraph 14.
- 14.3 At any time within a Financial Year the GCR Board may agree by a majority vote amendments to the Annual Budget for that Financial Year to accommodate any unforeseen change in circumstances and to assist the GCR Board in performance of its functions.
- 14.4 Where the GCR Board is to consider amendments in accordance with paragraph 14.3 above, the County Council or the Senior Manager (if appointed) shall forthwith notify the Chief Executive of each of the Partner Authorities of the proposed amendments to the Annual Budget. Each Partner Authority shall have a period of twenty (20) Business Days from receipt of the proposed amendments in which to consider them and to notify the County Council or the Senior Manager (if appointed) that such amendments require the approval of the Partner Authority.
- 14.5 Where no Partner Authorities serve notice (in accordance with paragraph 14.4) on the County Council or the Senior Manager (if appointed) the GCR Board may implement such proposed amendment.
- 14.6 Where one or more of the Partner Authorities has notified the County Council or the Senior Manager (if appointed) that it needs to approve the proposed amendments, the GCR Board shall not implement such proposed amendments unless and until the notifying Partner Authority has approved the proposed amendments and informed the County Council or the Senior Manager (if appointed) that it has approved such proposed amendments.

14.7 The Partner Authorities shall pay any due contribution of the Annual Budget to the Administering Authority in accordance with clause **12** of the Agreement and any additional contributions which may arise as a result of the operation of paragraphs **14.3** to **14.6** above shall be paid in accordance with clause **6.2.1** of the Agreement.

15. GCR BOARD MEMBER CONDUCT

15.1 GCR Board Members shall be subject to the code of conduct for elected members adopted by the Partner Authority that nominated them to be a GCR Board Member.

16. LIABILITY OF GCR BOARD MEMBERS

16.1 A GCR Board Member shall have the same responsibilities and liabilities as those that apply when sitting on other committees and bodies as an appointed representative of his nominating Partner Authority.

Appendix 1 (incorporated and referred to within the Inter Authority Agreement)

PROTOCOL IN RESPECT OF THE CHAIR'S CASTING VOTE

The GCR Board agrees the following Protocol in respect of the Chair's right to cast a second or casting vote in the event of an equality of votes at a GCR Board meeting:

Deferral Vote

In the event of an equality of votes the GCR Board Members agree to proceed as follows:

1. the Chair shall move to defer the agenda item ("**Deferral Vote**").
2. If the Deferral Vote is passed by a majority the item shall be deferred and the deferral process will be triggered.
3. If the Deferral Vote is tied, the Chair shall have a casting vote to decide whether to defer the item or not.
4. If the Deferral Vote is lost then the agenda item shall stand and be voted on, with the Chair having a casting vote.

Deferral Process

The deferral process shall be as follows:

1. The agenda item shall be deferred for a period of not less than five (5) Business Days ("**Deferral Period**") and the GCR Board meeting shall be adjourned to a date beyond the expiry of the Deferral Period as determined by the Chair. During the Deferral Period the GCR Board Members shall be able to consult their Partner Authorities and discuss the agenda item with other GCR Board Members.
2. At the adjourned GCR Board meeting the agenda item shall be discussed again and any written views received from Partner Authorities shall be reported to the GCR Board for consideration by the meeting.
3. If, at the adjourned meeting, there is an equality of votes in relation to that agenda item the Chair shall have a casting vote.

Appendix 2

Principles for the administration of the SEDF Fund

- To establish two calls for funding bids in a financial year – for 2023/24. These are currently proposed as November 2023 and April 2024. This will enable the Senior Officer Group and City Region Board to have a pipeline of projects to consider at any time.
- The Fund to remain open to other partners and organisations, as well as all the Local Authority Partners, and LEP successor. Any potential bids will still need to have a Local Authority or LEP successor project sponsor in order for it to be submitted and considered.
- Strategic Alignment/Fit – important that any funding requests align with strategic priorities, as the basis for filtering those bids that can be considered and assessment through the SEDF process. SOG recommend using the strategic priorities in the emerging County Economic Strategy.
- To maximise the impact of the funding, projects need to demonstrate their reach and benefit to as many districts/areas and local communities as possible.
- Projects/bids will need to be able to demonstrate clearly the leverage and impact that any SEDF funding would achieve in particular the economic & social benefits and outcomes. Projects/bids that identify/secure other direct match funding will be viewed favourably.
- Financial sustainability is an important factor, and any projects or bids would need to provide details as part of an exit strategy, to show how they will be financially sustainable once any SEDF funding awarded has been spent.
- For those more commercially focussed projects, to consider on a case by case basis, the potential to recover a proportion of any SEDF awarded – use of a super profits clause (as per Local Growth Deal funded contracts).
- To establish a more robust monitoring regime to assist with the testing of the value for money, and demonstrating the added value and impacts against envisaged benefits and outcomes. This would also assist officers with spotting worthy proposals and bids for future consideration. The scale of monitoring required will also be commensurate to the value of the funding sought/awarded. We would expect more monitoring of a £200k project compared to a £20k project. Officers will amend the current Expression of Interest form, and add an evaluation section for applicant to complete that identifies SMART measures such as amount of public/private sector leverage, job creation/retention, number of beneficiaries, geographic areas that have benefitted.
- To retain the current eligibility criteria, and officers to review the current guidance on the nature and type of projects that could be eligible for funding, and review and revise the current assessment template including the criteria, which translates into a point system.
- To investigate and put in place a light touch independent/external appraisal for any project that makes through the initial pipeline shift process, for consideration for funding by the SOG and City Region Board. This approach has been in place previously for the LEP Growth Deal and Get Britain Building Fund, as well as the GIFF loan funding.

TEWKESBURY BOROUGH COUNCIL

Report to:	Council
Date of Meeting:	27 February 2024
Subject:	Tewkesbury Garden Communities Charter
Report of:	Executive Director: Place
Head of Service/Director:	Chief Executive
Lead Member:	Leader of the Council / Lead Member for Built Environment
Number of Appendices:	Two

Executive Summary:

As part of the earlier gateway review of the Tewkesbury Garden Communities programme, the recommendations of which were reported to Council in September 2023, it was proposed that a programme charter document be developed, which would help stakeholders better understand the concept and set out a shared set of aspirations for the garden community programme. Since that time, the scope of a draft charter was developed through a series of community events, on-line consultation and detailed discussion via the Garden Communities governance structure, a draft was issued for consultation in December 2023.

Attached to this report (Appendix 1) is a 'response report' which lists the comments received during the consultation with a series of responses detailing any actions/amendments included within the charter (Appendix 2) proposed for adoption by Council. Also included within the charter is the opportunity for all stakeholders to 'sign-up' to the document and, subject to Council adoption and authority to proceed, this is recommended as the next step in this process.

Recommendation:

To CONSIDER the draft consultation responses and ADOPT the Tewkesbury Garden Communities Charter and commence the process of stakeholder 'sign-up'.

Financial Implications:

There are no specific financial implications linked to the adoption of the charter. Future Council support for the programme will be predicated on its continued financial support from UK Government as part of its national Garden Communities programme

Legal Implications:

The Charter is an aspirational document and does not bind development within the proposed Garden Communities programme area. Adoption of the Charter is a statement of intent and provides a framework for on going discussion about the scope and quality of the development.

Environmental and Sustainability Implications:

The proposed Garden Communities programme is focussed upon securing sustainable development including an aim of supporting carbon zero development. The charter builds on this ethos explaining further how such objectives can and should be met.

Resource Implications (including impact on equalities):

The development of the charter has involved certain amount of resources. This has been met in the majority, with external funding from Homes England in support of the Garden Communities programme.

Safeguarding Implications:

There are no safeguarding implications resulting directly from this report.

Impact on the Customer:

On the basis the customers are the various stakeholders, the charter should have an impact on the development being proposed in the area. Whilst this will be positive for the majority there may be some impact on the developers who seek to deliver the aspirations of the charter and in most cases this should also be a positive impact.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 In implementing the recommendations of the Garden Town's (now named Garden Communities) gateway review as well as a recommendation from Homes England, it was agreed to develop a charter to detail the expectations/aspiration the Council has for the development proposal.
- 1.2 Critically, the charter is a not a planning policy document – this remains the role of the local planning authority through the statutory Development Plan. Preparation of a new local plan is currently underway - the Strategic and Local Plan (SLP) - and whilst the charter may assist in informing emerging policy, the charter itself will carry very little weight in planning terms for the time being. It may well form the basis for drawing up more detailed guidance, however, as the draft SLP advances.
- 1.3 Another key recommendation within the gateway review was detailed community engagement and so the charter development engagement steps have been critical in this process whereby the new governance structure has been directly involved in the charter's development along with the wider community through the charter consultation.

2.0 CHARTER DRAFTING, ENGAGEMENT/CONSULTATION AND RESPONSE REPORT

- 2.1 The draft charter was developed from earlier work on the Garden Communities proposal with a special focus on the guiding principles of the development generated from the UK garden communities programme "Model Of Development" and listed within the local "Evolution of the Concept Plan", issued in 2021. There are nine 'principles' within the working draft charter and each is further expanded to explain what is expected for any development to deliver that principle.

- 2.2 In addition, the working draft included the previous vision and noted that this requires updating as highlighted from the initial engagement sessions held last year. One of the questions in the consultation document asked for further thoughts on the vision and feedback has resulted in an update to this earlier vision which is also included within the charter document proposed for adoption.

The revised vision:

*To deliver a well-planned networked development in a way which supports “good growth” enabling residents and businesses, both new and existing, to fulfil their potential and improve quality of life. **Revitalising Tewkesbury** as a hub, which serves and supports the wider heartland. A place which drives the success of the borough.*

A working definition of “Good growth” – makes people’s lives, of all ages, better and mitigates the impact of climate change, provides for better jobs and work-places, better housing choices, better health and well-being, improved ecology and access to green spaces and provision of community facilities and infrastructure in advance of or alongside new development. Providing a platform for all communities and businesses to directly influence the best stewardship of their place.

- 2.3 Since December 2023, a number of discussions have been held through the Garden Communities programmes new governance and engagement structures, relevant meetings, engagement sessions held with the wider community and a public consultation on the draft charter which ran from 20 December 2023 to 31 January 2024.

- 2.4 The list of all consultation responses is included within the response report – attached to this report as Appendix 1. This response report details the responses/comments made and highlights changes made to the charter proposed for adoption by Council (Appendix 2). Of note is that many of the responses/comments are of a more detailed nature and will be addressed as the development progresses through the strategic and local plan (SLP) process and/or via any planning applications.

3.0 CONSULTATION

- 3.1 See Appendix 1

4.0 ASSOCIATED RISKS

- 4.1 None

5.0 MONITORING

- 5.1 The Garden Communities governance arrangements will remain fully involved with monitoring the take up and impact of the charter document as the development progresses.

6.0 RELEVANT COUNCIL PLAN PRIORITIES/COUNCIL POLICIES/STRATEGIES

6.1 The delivery of the garden town programme is a priority within the current Council Plan.

Background Papers: None

Contact Officer: Executive Director: Place
chris.ashman@tewkesbury.gov.uk

Appendices: 1: Garden Communities Charter Response Report
2: Garden Communities Charter – clean version

Tewkesbury Garden Communities

Charter Consultation

Response Report

Date: February 2024

This report covers the responses from the recent consultation on the charter document for the garden communities development.

The charter was presented to the governance structure at the various meetings in December 2023 and through these was agreed to publish for wider consultation. The consultation officially closed on Wednesday 31st January 2024 and this report includes the comments received with a response.

Many of the comments received cover the many longer-term processes for example the local plan development – strategic and local plan (SLP) and specific planning applications. Whilst these points may not necessarily be included within this high-level charter document, they will continue to be considered as those other processes continue/develop.

The charter document itself, based upon the comments received will be reviewed and a further version generated with any changes recommended for presenting to Council to be considered for endorsement/adoption – see relevant Council paper.

Of note is that the charter will continue to evolve and whilst this version is a ‘line-in-the-sand’ version, over the development timeline the document will continue to be reviewed and further versions may consequently be proposed/issued.

Table 1:

Comments received from the questionnaire with the relevant response/action.

#	Q1. Did you have any problems reading or understanding the charter? What would have helped to make it easier?	Q2. Recent engagement sessions highlighted the need to update the programme's vision (featured on page 6). Would you like to see anything added or changed in the existing vision? What would you like to add or change?	Q3. Do the development principles include everything you would like to see from Garden Communities' development? What is missing?	Q4. Are there any other comments you would like to make on the charter?	Response/Actions
1	No	No	No Commitment to internet connectivity is not strong enough. High speed broadband is often defined by the companies as a copper connection offering up to 25MBps. The garden community should commit to offering fibre internet connection at Gigabit speeds. With the Cyber Central development just down the M5, many of those working there will choose to live in the garden town instead and will need internet that is actually		<i>Noted, the wording on page 16 will be changed to strengthen the commitment to high speed and fibre internet connection.</i>

			fast rather than Openreach fast.		
2	No	Yes Bridleways to be mentioned	Yes	A lot of the wording is just saying the same thing over & over again.	Public rights of way (which includes bridleways) are a key component to the consideration of development within the Garden Community. <i>Noted, we will remove unnecessary repetition from the document, although there are elements of the principles which are interconnected.</i>
3	No	Yes A greater emphasis on delivering a strategic traffic solution which minimises impact on the communities that border the development area. Not all community residents will remain local and a charter statement on managing impact on traffic volume on the limited road network (A46 E & W, A435) should be referenced in the charter.	Yes	Consequential impact on the wider, boundary villages/communities and inclusion of a statement to manage expectations by and impact on these communities would be welcome.	Managing the impact on existing communities is a key priority for the Garden Communities. This is covered in our principle 'Respect existing communities and reflect local character'. The charter will not cover the details of a traffic solution as it is a high-level document, however the importance of sustainably managing traffic is covered under our principle 'Sustainable wider connectivity'.

4	No	<p>Yes</p> <p>Infrastructure should be in place before any homes built.</p> <p>Alternative to A46 should be in place in order to make the very best of this opportunity to make this an outstanding Garden town.</p>	<p>Yes</p>	<p>Architecture of Garden Town needs to fit in with what Tewkesbury and Cotswolds is famous for so NO more sprawling three storey brick buildings crammed together In narrow streets.</p> <p>Pretty buildings and homes which reflect this area, incorporating water and open green spaces for all ensuring this Garden Town will be the place to live! Large open areas which will be well maintained for all to use.</p>	<p>We agree and support your comments. High quality architecture and design which reflects the character of the area is important to the Garden Community. This is covered within our principles 'A strong identity and character of place', our principles also include 'Interconnected water infrastructure and 'Great green spaces for people and wildlife'.</p>
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5	<p>YES</p> <p>It's too long, you need to realise that the public will see a 20 page document and be completely turned off. You have spaced it out far too much and you have areas when the same or similar text is being used, with some of it being too wordy unnecessarily. If you are not getting the feedback from the public that you want then this is probably the main cause.</p>	<p>Yes</p> <p>The strategy in how you are going to prevent piecemeal development taking over the garden communities development plan needs to be included into this document. There is a level of great uncertainty in the length that this plan will come to fruition will be beaten by independent developers, which ultimately will lead to the public raising concerns that your ideas are nothing more than a waste of tax payers money, please be clear this is a significant point that you need to address.</p>	<p>No</p> <p>The principles need to be slimmed down, the need to not overlap with the same or similar content. Less photos and trying to make it pretty than bullet points will help the public grasp the principles more effectively.</p>	<p>You're asking for public opinion. I gave you formal feedback concerning your "drop in" stand that you had in Tewkesbury town centre and you didn't take a single point forward, when the drop out format went into the local parish/communities. When the formal Garden review took place I asked you to involve the public to get a clear understanding of our thoughts and you ignored that. Therefore I have little confidence that asking for feedback via this questionnaire will lead to any change, with the premise the TBC know best and this is a tick box, lip service exercise. There will be a point where a more formal approach via local media may be necessary before TBC understand that consultation/listening is</p>	<p>Following the gateway review for the Garden Community programme TBC have been running further public consultation events and have set up a new governance structure which includes community representatives. We provide response reports including 'you said' and 'we did' responses. <i>Repetition within the Charter document will be assessed and removed where possible, accepting that some overlap of principles is inevitable and necessary.</i> The Council encourages a holistic and comprehensive approach to the delivery of the Garden Town, with a consistent approach to design. That is why we are producing documents such as the charter, to encourage and support this approach. The council cannot prevent landowners/ developers submitting planning applications but we encourage all the landowners within the Garden Community area to work with us in meeting our aspirations and principles.</p>
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				<p>about understanding the public's concern and have meaningful actions to show that you actually care and do something when the public give you feedback.</p> <p>So my suggestion is from what ever feedback that you get from this questionnaire, that you provide feed back under the following headings: "You said" "We listened and we did"</p> <p>But why am I now wondering if this was just a waste of my time!</p>	
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6	No	No	Yes	<p>Really disappointed that there is little to no mention of young people . I understand that there's a lot of focus on "community" but it feels very much like there's no consideration here for the young people and their families who will eventually be residents. Thinking about the future workforces in 10/20 years time and the developments happening in the region it's likely that aerospace and cyber security will be the largest employers and I'm not sure the development considers what those 21-35 year olds will need. There's a small mention of co-working and living/play but what about makerspaces (which are the new libraries), and arts and culture venues?</p>	<p>The Garden Community aims to provides a comprehensively planned community which provides for all the services and facilities which all members of the community can benefit from young and old. This is covered under our principle 'Integrated live, work, play communities. <i>We agree with your comments regarding 'markerspaces and arts and culture venues and will consider how this principle can include more emphasis on those type of facilities.</i></p>
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7	No	<p>Yes</p> <p>The previous version included the land north of Mitton within the scope. I believe 500-1000 houses are still planned for this area so would seem a missed opportunity to exclude this development from the principles of the scheme. It will directly adjoin Tewkesbury and link to the new developments via Hardwicke Bank Road.</p>	<p>No</p> <p>There seems to be a belief that design will result in everyone walking, cycling or catching a bus to wherever they want to go. Reality is that cars (EV or not), will be the preferred means of travel and that the distance between the connected communities will be the main influence of travel. I would like to see the charter recognise that reality more.</p>	<p>Understanding that all projects start with a vision - will be interested to see the detail on bringing to fruition. It's a nice document but the charter appears to focus more on principles rather than a commitment to deliver anything specific. Apologies for being a doubting Thomas...</p>	<p><i>Whilst the charter is not site specific the Mitton area will continue to be assessed.</i></p> <p>Well-designed places can encourage walking, cycling and public transport use by the way that they are laid out and connected. This is our ambition to reduce car usage where possible, but this does not mean that the car will not be considered in the new development. The charter is a high level document with a focus on principles. Further work in the future will be required to draw out the details.</p>
8	No	No	Yes		
9	No	<p>Yes</p> <p>The impact of climate change should be considered in an area already prone to flooding. Relying on historic data is useless as it is not predictive. Worsening weather conditions and rising sea levels need to be factored in with some attempt at future proofing.</p>	<p>No</p> <p>The nature of development around the town is dictated by the flood plain (as it is now). Increased fragmentation of development caused by future changes to the flood plain will make it very difficult to provide any sort of cohesive structure for services like schools, doctors etc. The existing town centre will just be reduced to a coach trip stop to see the Abbey. Satellite clusters will find it hard to relate to each other or the historic town.</p>	<p>At the end of the day I expect TBC will tinker with the wording and represent the plans that lost so many Tories their seats. The Lib Dems will hail it as a "Brave New World" and the developers will be laughing all the way to the bank. I appreciate this may seem a tad cynical but you always tend to learn from your experience. I feel sorry for the planners as they are pulled in all directions by the amateur members but it's the electorate that</p>	<p>Sustainability to mitigate the impact of climate change is a key part of the vision for the Garden Community. Interconnected water infrastructure, is one of our principles and this covers mitigating the impact of surface water run off and flooding. Connectivity with the existing town centre is a key consideration and challenge for the Garden Community.</p>

				will suffer the consequences not them.	
10	No	Yes It is unclear how you envisage Tewkesbury becoming the hub which serves 10,000+ homes and businesses located 4+ miles to the east. How will delivering Garden Communities make Tewkesbury the hub that drives the success of the Borough?	No There is no mention of new employment opportunities.	The aspiration of the A46 becoming a more attractive route for walking and cycling can only be realised once the Ashchurch Bypass has been delivered which will not be before 2036, whereas the timeline show development (house building) beginning 10 years earlier, in 2026. There is no mention of how increased provision of secondary education, healthcare (hospital, GPs, dentists), supermarkets etc will be accomplished.	The Charter is a high level document focusing on principles, integrated live work, play communities covers the provision of employment opportunities, as well as services and facilities such as healthcare education and retail etc. The Garden Community will be a part of Tewkesbury Town and connections with the town centre are an important part of that. Further work and though the planning system will consider the detail of this and the delivery of services and facilities.
11	No	No	Yes		
12	No	Yes Reference to social housing being included in the Garden Communities Charter	No Reference to housing types - rented and owned is mentioned but I would like specific commitment to a minimum Social Housing	In principle I like the commitment to green developments and carbon neutral homes. I am pleased to hear that Tewkesbury's current residents are being	Affordable homes' is the term which includes, social rented and shared ownership houses. The provision of which is covered by planning policy for all developments.

			provision to be sought from developers.	considered and included. Can we ensure that this stays on track - we are updated regularly and contractors and developers are held to account.	
13	No	No	Yes	<p>Whilst I understand the need for housing the infrastructure needs to be in place to support this BEFORE major house building takes place.</p> <p>We need better roads (we all know the A46 is a nightmare as it stands), we need more dentists and doctors. We need a better supermarket. We need more control over the rivers and streams, cleaning them, maybe widening them to cope with more water that will have to flow somewhere.</p> <p>It also appears that the plan is going to be very piecemeal. Already a developer wanting to build 175 houses at the</p>	It is the aspiration of the Garden Community that infrastructure is delivered early to support the communities, we will add into the principle 'Integrated live, work, play communities' regarding the early delivery of those facilities. 'Integrated water infrastructure is a key principle which supports enhancement of our blue infrastructure (rivers and streams). TBC cannot prevent landowners/developers submitting planning applications but by producing documents such as the charter and our masterplan we can help encourage a comprehensive and coherent approach to the development.

				<p>back of Pamington village, why isn't this on the plan you shared. Where's the joined up thinking of incorporating all this together? You may have grand plans, but it's all going to be built piecemeal and the developers will get out of doing everything they can.</p>	
14	No	<p>Yes</p> <p>Specific costed and detailed plans for how you will solve the current traffic congestion, before massively adding to it</p>	No	<p>Truth, honesty and realism are sadly lacking from this charter, sadly nothing new from the Council - whatever party controls the decision making.</p> <p>The charter is a complete joke because the council have failed to identify 5 years of housing supply meaning developers can obtain planning for developments wherever they want because of the incompetency of the Council.</p> <p>The mention of putting in road infrastructure to cope with the new</p>	<p>Tewkesbury Borough Council has the ambition that development is of the highest quality and is well designed to meet the growing needs of the Borough in a sustainable way. It is the role of the council to not only identify land to meet this growth but to also help positively shape that growth. This document sets out that vision and is the start of a pro-active approach to managing the change that is happening in this area. Supporting the development in this area with improved infrastructure is a key principle for the Garden Community. Ensuring that development is well designed and respects the character of</p>

				<p>housing developments is disingenuous - there are no costed plans whatsoever for a road to take traffic away from the A46 and the development already allowed means this road is frequently a car park. The Council know the only way to fund such a road is to allow even more development on greenfield land to the south of planned developments and that will see Tewkesbury joined with Bishops Cleeve and Cheltenham, completely losing the individual identity of these areas and creating the next step on the way to joining with Gloucester that has already started with the continued development along the the A38. No-one except the Council wants this to happen yet you push ahead with over development that will increase flooding issues</p>	<p>existing villages and towns is also covered in our principles. Enhancing our blue infrastructure and mitigating surface water run off in a sustainable way is also covered in our principles. Designing for walking a cycling and public transport can discourage car usage but cars are considered within the plans for development. There is no mention of banning on street parking. It is expected that people will work outside of the Garden Community as well as within and traffic flows will be mitigated and managed as appropriate. It is of great benefit that there is a train station at the heart of the garden community.</p>
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				<p>and congestion. It is an unrealistic pipe dream that those living in the new communities will not choose car travel above walking or public transport, and as for banning on street parking, we'll see how long you manage to keep that in the plan! The new communities will not create employment for all those living in them and car traffic flows will massively increase as the inhabitants travel to their jobs in Cheltenham, Gloucester, Bristol, Birmingham and further afield</p>	
15	No	No	Yes		
16	No	<p>Yes</p> <p>I would like a less woolly document</p>	<p>No</p> <p>More specifics, i.e. 'Great green spaces for people and wildlife' what does that mean?</p>	<p>I believe that there needs to be a greater specific recommendations, i.e. 'New homes and public buildings that reduce the need for energy. This includes the use of energy-efficient building materials and Passivhaus design</p>	<p>The charter is a high-level vision document based around our principles and as such will not cover such details. We agree with the need for such details and specifics and this is the focus of further work on design guidance.</p>

				techniques', just how efficient should the new properties be. A recent presentation from the Developers indicated that they (the Developers) will NOT meet Passivhaus design techniques.	
17	No	Yes With the massive increase in vehicular traffic utilising Northway Parish as a "rat-run" to access the M5, A46 and various industrial sites at Ashchurch there is zero consideration to the health and well-being to the residents of Northway Parish and evidence has to be provided that details that this scheme does consider Northway Parish AND its residents.	No With the massive increase in vehicular traffic utilising Northway Parish as a "rat-run" to access the M5, A46 and various industrial sites at Ashchurch there is zero consideration to the health and well-being to the residents of Northway Parish and evidence has to be provided that details that this scheme does consider Northway Parish AND its residents.	With the massive increase in vehicular traffic utilising Northway Parish as a "rat-run" to access the M5, A46 and various industrial sites at Ashchurch there is zero consideration to the health and well-being to the residents of Northway Parish and evidence has to be provided that details that this scheme does consider Northway Parish AND its residents.	Respecting existing communities and sustainable wider connectivity are key principles within the charter. Details on traffic mitigation and other measures are for future planning applications by developers and are not covered in this document.

<p>18</p>	<p>No</p>	<p>Yes There appears to be no engagement with locals, this seems to be a done deal. As you can presently see from the local media most of the area that you intend to use for this garden town is under water. I would suggest you relocate this to higher ground within the borough such as between Shuthonger to Twynning. Also there are no clear plans for improving the infrastructure, new supermarkets, schools, doctors, dentists etc</p>	<p>No There is no greenbelt around the proposed area to stop further expansion in the next round of building planning.</p>	<p>This hasn't been very well thought out at all, this just appears to be a 'not in my back yard project' and Northway/Ashchurch lost out. I implore you to look at the local news with the flooding, if you build on this land the flood water has to go somewhere, you just can't make it disappear, it will end up in properties that don't currently flood.</p>	<p>Following the gateway review of the Garden communities programme, the council has implemented a series of engagement events and a new governance structure which includes representatives from the local community. Flood management and surface water drainage mitigation are covered within our principle 'interconnected water infrastructure'. The area of the Garden Community that will be developed is not within a flood zone. Our principle 'integrated live, work play communities includes for the provision of facilities and services and infrastructure necessary for a thriving and sustainable community.</p>
<p>19</p>	<p>No</p>	<p>No</p>	<p>No A need for these principles to extend to infrastructure policy adopted by other agencies (e.g. Gloucestershire County Council, National Highways) as it affects the new Garden Town.</p>	<p>The principle (page 10) to respect existing communities states that "We must see the protection and enhancement of historic villages and their landscape". This is very welcome; however, on evidence seen to date, this is not being followed by the Gloucestershire County Council team in their consideration of a strategic traffic solution (page 15). Over a</p>	<p>We are working closely with the team at Gloucestershire County Council.</p>

				<p>number of years, new bypass proposals have been looking to position a new dual carriageway bypass (to the A46) along the route of the A435. This would have significant adverse consequences for the village of Teddington (environmental, road safety and dislocation from local services). We would like to see Tewkesbury Borough Council and the Garden Town team influence bypass route proposals so that they also adhere to the Programme Charter.</p>	
20	No	<p>Yes</p> <p>The quality & standard of the legacy you leave behind by what is delivered.</p>	<p>No</p> <p>More emphasis on utility infrastructure, roads that are designed not to flood, or highway run off that floods properties. The standard of infrastructure delivery that won't leave systems under capacity.</p>	<p>Some stakeholders are not statutory consultees and they should also be involved. Developer standards meet or exceed the design standards for the work they complete. E.g installing SUDs, Oh we've planned them in - actual delivery is to a minimum design, sides are steep - no bio</p>	<p>This charter is a high level document based around our principles. The details and the delivery of infrastructure is covered by the planning system when detailed proposal are being considered.</p>

				diversity. Infrastructure has capability for expansion. Interconnecting infrastructure is up-sized by developers to get capacity correct for services.	
21	No	No	Yes	I would like to see more information about how Tewkesbury will be enhanced to form a hub for the communities. There are probably going to be services based in Tewkesbury Town Centre which will be needed by residents in the new communities, such as the health services at Tewkesbury Hospital, dental services and a cemetery, etc. Will the Garden Communities project provide funding to enhance and enlarge these to meet the needs of the larger population?	Links into Tewkesbury Town centre are an important part of our aspiration for sustainable wider connectivity. Allowing new residents to access the services within the town centre, with increased patronage giving the town an economic boost. Funding for infrastructure and services are considered within planning applications for development as they come forward.

22	No	Yes The vision needs to be less Tewkesbury-centric.	No Cemeteries are missing, also places of worship and wider health care facilities and mental health provision, pubs, banks, libraries, reading rooms, community centres, banking facilities, car clubs and provision for electric vehicles. Sustainable transport connections to other population centres, eg Bishops Cleeve. Local supermarkets. A requirement to not just meet, but to exceed building standards. Safe and welcoming night-time facilities. Homes for multi-generational living, and 'tiny homes' for single people. Access for emergency services. Places to stay.	Does this charter imply that there could be a new civil parish? Re. point three, prioritise natural flood and water management methods over technical ones.	Integrated live, work, play communities covers the provision for services and facilities that you mention and all others. Sustainable wider connectivity will be added to highlight the importance of links to other centres e.g. Bishops Cleeve and Tewkesbury Town centre. A mixed tenure of homes is covered within the principles further details are specifics are not possible in a high-level charter document. No new civil parish is considered at this stage.
23	No	Yes It needs to ensure any development is future facing and considers future growth but also sustainability and be climate resilient	No The area is a massive access point for people going through from other areas to access work or get through/past to other places. e.g beyond Tewkesbury or the M5. Everything focusses on assuming that people will live and work in the same area and will therefore be able to	There is nothing included or mentioned about EV cars and charging. This is a big issue locally so it would be good to see this mentioned in the principle of 'carbon neutral communities'	Agree this is covered within our principles. EV charging is a level of detail that is not covered in the charter. EV charging is however already a planning requirement for all new homes built.

			travel without a car. Which is great but not always possible.		
24	No	No	Yes		
25	No	No	Yes	Being a local citizen for pat 8 years, with family routes, this project is extremely important to me. i feel it such a important project for the area and i am very excited to see what future plans come from the council. I have contacted the programme coordinator to talk through a couple of concerns and she was incredibly helpful and knowledgeable and was more than happy to listen to me and help with my questions.	Thank you. We are excited for the opportunities that the Garden Community has to deliver positive and sustainable growth in the Borough, meeting the needs of our community.
26	No	No	Yes	Needs to be sympathetic to the historic nature of Tewkesbury	Agree, this is covered under our respect existing communities and reflect local character principle.

27	Yes A better map explaining where everything is	Yes A better map, explaining where the plans are. If one exists please do share.	No An option to ignore this question.	A better map.	Noted - plans are not that detailed yet so better maps will be added in the future.
28	No	No	No Managing water courses doesn't address the fact that the building is taking place on Tewkesbury's remaining flood plains	Environment is far more important than anything else	No development is proposed on the flood plain or in a flood zone.
29	No	Yes would like something like community allotments added (both a shared space and new plots as impossible to get one in Tewkesbury - i have been on waiting list for two years then asked to be removed). Also safety - natural walks and paths are lovely but can be scary at night, how will this be addressed, and how will anti-social behaviour be avoided in secluded areas?	Yes	New homes must have gardens and they must be kept as gardens and not turned into driveways to ensure water can sink into land and not runoff	The Charter is a high level document focusing on principles. Our principle 'integrated live work, play', includes provision for allotments and open space. This document will not go into this level of detail, as it is focussing on high level principles but these details would be considered as part of any planning applications that are submitted.
30	Yes A plan showing the outline of what is going to be come in many years a city. Within the triangle of Cheltenham, Gloucester and Tewkesbury.	Yes The mention of a new sewage system at present sewage is being transported to Gloucester from the Tewkesbury Area	Yes	More emphasis on road structures for the access of emerging services	The charter is a high level document with a focus on our principles. Details of sewage systems and emergency service access, would be covered in any future planning applications.

Table 2 – E-mailed comments

#	Comment	Response
1	<p>The line which reads..</p> <p>Streets designed for people, not cars. Including a maximum 20mph speed limit throughout the garden communities and removing parking from the streets.</p> <p>Can we have 20 mph an hour signage erected within our village also. (Seven Bends) If we are also supposed to be connected then we would also require the speed decrease. As currently 30mph.</p>	<p>Changes to existing roads – including speed limits, will be considered as the garden community development progresses. It is possible – is more likely part of a different process</p> <p>Thank you for your comments, we agree that residential streets should be 20mph where possible. However, this speed limit on existing streets falls under the remit of the County Council and is not therefore something that Tewkesbury can influence.</p>
2	<p>Having read the charter I think the only thing missing, and as there is so much feeling about it locally, the A46 issues seem to be missing and not alluded to which I feel is very important and forefront in a lot of people’s minds as they feel nothing should be started until the problem is solved or at least plans put in place Otherwise I feel it meets all the criteria</p>	<p>Thank you for your comments, The charter is a high level document setting out our vision and principles and does not deal with how challenges such as traffic will be mitigated. Details of required mitigation will be dealt with through future planning applications and the Local Plan process as appropriate.</p>
3	<p>Is there anything missing from the charter?</p> <p>"A need for these principles to extend to infrastructure policy adopted by other agencies (e.g. Gloucestershire County Council, National Highways) as these affect the new Garden Town."</p> <p>Other comments?</p> <p>"The principle (page 10) to respect existing communities states that “We must see the</p>	<p>The Charter is a high level document and does not cover details of planning policy. We are working closely with the GCC team on the route options for the offline solution to the A46 and incorporating our principles where possible.</p>

	<p>protection and enhancement of historic villages and their landscape". This is very welcome; however, on evidence seen to date, this is not being followed by the Gloucestershire County Council team in their consideration of a strategic traffic solution (page 15). Over a number of years, new bypass proposals have been looking to position a new dual carriageway bypass (to the A46) along the route of the A435. This would have significant adverse consequences for the village of Teddington (environmental, road safety and dislocation from local services). We would like to see Tewkesbury Borough Council and the Garden Town team influence bypass route proposals so that they also adhere to the Programme Charter."</p> <p>In addition, we have a couple of questions around the indicative Garden Town locations (page 8 of the charter).</p>	
<p>4</p>	<p>The reference to 'communal growing areas' I would like to see as more specific ie allotments. A communal growing area can be an orchard or anything like that . I think allotments can be very beneficial in the place agenda providing a meeting place for residents, exchanges of ideas and an introduction for young people to nature.</p> <p>The build requirements for sustainability should be more challenging. The standards mentioned will be normal legal requirements (solar panels, ground / air source heat pumps) by the time the build actually takes place. We need to look to the future at possible opportunities and at least include strategies for discussion.</p> <p>Following on from our meeting with HE I think there should be some mention of exploring alternative, sustainable energy. The wind farm model on the flood plains was something HE appeared to favour with nods as well to funding. This could be a golden opportunity to lead on innovation and also perhaps attract new green industries to the area.</p>	<p>We agree we want the Garden Community to be an exemplar and will reconsider the wording on page 13 to better allow for future innovation and best practice.</p>
<p>5</p>	<p>On page 8</p> <p>Siting the proposed industrial areas away from the B4079 at the A435 junction, and closer to the M5 and rail links, would seem far more appropriate and have benefit of helping to reduce impact on the road infrastructure in the area and the environment as a whole.</p>	<p>Thank you for your comments we are working closely with Gloucestershire County Council on the offline solution for the A46, which would re-route the traffic away from the existing A46. Enabling the aspirations which we reference in</p>

“The A46 to become a more attractive route for walking and cycling.” Given the existing and proposed development it’s difficult to see how this could be achieved without re-routing the A46 itself, not least given the volume of traffic that will ensue from the newly built houses.

The A46 is already dangerous for pedestrians and cyclists alike and the new developments will only add to the volume of traffic at all times of the day and night. This means the “Delivery of a strategic traffic solution to reduce existing congestion & support housing and economic growth” cannot be achieved without re-routing the A46.

Page 16

Just looking at the scope/ spread of the Garden Town is worrying. The potential of any ill-considered expansion of the eastern edge of the Garden Town scope will only serve to severely impact existing, and historic, village communities. As a result, there needs to be consideration on limiting the Garden Town spreading too far east to enable any rerouting of the A46 to pass between Aston Cross and the Teddington Hands roundabout, rather than at the roundabout itself. The A435 is already heavily used and it is necessary to ensure communities along this road are not directly, and very adversely, affected by any rerouting of the A46.

I know a lot of people will be responding to your Charter document, however, I wanted to pick up on just these specific items.

Please let me know if you want more, I have plenty of other comment I should like to make with regard to the protection of existing village communities to the East of the M5 and how the impact of the increased volume of traffic in the Ashchurch gully is affecting them.

6

This documents describe a set of Principles that should be applied to the series of Garden Community developments – that have replaced the previous aspiration for a Garden Town. Page 6 – Developing a New Vision. The proposed vision statement – the phrase “Making Tewkesbury the Hub which serves and supports the wider heartland” Refers to Tewkesbury as

the document. The location of the employment area has also been considered with this in mind. The Charter is a high level document and does not set a boundary for the Garden Community, this will be considered in the Local Plan process.

Thank you for your comments the wording of the vision will be re-considered. The size of the Garden Community is a reflection of the National Government programme of which Tewkesbury is

a hub, this has connotations of “commuter hub” If the outlines of this document are to be believed, the garden town vision is to permit Tewkesbury to develop in a controlled manner and NOT to provide a commuter estate for other towns and cities. Suggest the vision is amended to reflect this.

Page 8 – Garden Community Locations

Describes six communities for development. However with the exception of the Ashchurch Army Base (which will now remain) these developments cover the same footprint as the previous Garden Town Proposal. Given that the mandatory government targets for development have been rescinded, What is the justification for this footprint? If the principles described in this document are followed, community development will follow from the needs of Tewkesbury businesses development. The document provides no reference to any studies which describe plans for business development in and around Tewkesbury and the consequent need for staff – which will inform the need for housing. Without this firm foundation then you are creating a commuter town which I’m sure you don't want.

Page 9 – Development Principles

I think these are better illustrated as a spoked wheel, with the hub in the middle representing Garden Communities and each principle representing a spoke. Then underneath you can state that as a wheel if any one of the spokes (principles) fails the wheel (garden community) will collapse. If you are asking stakeholders to commit to these principles (page 19) then I am sure the community will want a strong commitments as described above. After all, the principles are not a Pick’n Mix. There are TWO principles (spokes) missing from this Page 9:

- Balanced Development and
- Travel/Transport improvements aligned with community development.

Balanced Development

Any garden community development must be aligned with the need of Tewkesbury businesses. However the document DOES NOT mention where any business developments will take place. Current reality is that there are more houses than there are jobs in Tewkesbury so it has become a commuter town. Witness the gridlock on the A46 every work day as people head for the motorway. Please amend the list of principles to include a commitment to community development reflecting local business development. [There is a single reference to “mixed use “ on page 15 – but it is not clear if this refers to business/industrial development]. Travel/Transport improvements aligned with community development. Any garden community developments must be aligned with the ACTUAL

a part, Tewkesbury has 'Garden Town' status and as such seeks to provide for development of around 10,000 homes plus employment, services and infrastructure. The housing need in Tewkesbury will be addressed in the Local Plan process. We will consider the graphical representation of the principles. We consider that 'Balanced Development' is covered under our principle 'Integrated live, work and play communities' and 'Travel/Transport Improvements is covered under 'Sustainable wider connectivity'.

Thank you for your comments, providing land for employment uses is an integral part of the Garden Community. We will strengthen the wording on page 16 to highlight the importance of Employment/Business development within the Garden Community. The Charter is a high level document as such does not deal with details of mitigation for either traffic or flood/surface water management. The issue of appropriate traffic and flood mitigation measures is dealt with though the planning process and already exists as a requirements in that process.

We will reconsider that wording on page 13 to strengthen the commitment to sustainability, without restricting innovation or future technologies. The requirement for all new dwellings to have EV charging points is already a requirement under planning policy. The Charter is High level and wouldn't cover this fine detail.

capacity of roads, rail, buses etc. It is all very well to draw a picture of a bicycle and mention “Sustainable wider connectivity” in the principles, the reality is that the A46 is gridlocked every work day and further developments – whether in line with these principles or not will only make the situation worse. The mile of A46 East of M5 J9 has 5 sets of traffic lights and 2 pedestrian crossings. Please add this is a new principle. I believe it is so important that it cannot be buried as part of “Sustainable wider connectivity” [Page 15 mentions Strategic Traffic Solution – but there is no commitment to ensure that Garden Community developments will only proceed alongside transport improvements].

Page 12 – Water Infrastructure

Fails to mention flood management – 2007 and Jan 2024 should tell you that no matter what your studies say, the fundamental is that for every cubic meter of flood plain lost, the water has to go some-place else and if the area it has to go into is smaller, then the water will get deeper. Within the areas outlined for community development there are two significant restrictions to the water escaping – the M5 and the Railway. In 2007 the railway in particular caused water to back up to the East of the railway line – exactly where some of the communities are planned.

Page 12 and the Principles (Page 9) must commit to flood control improvements in order to protect the new Garden Communities and existing Communities. These flood control improvements must be implemented before Garden Communities start being built.

Page 13 – Sustainable development

Mentions buildings should have PV electric generation I think this should be a stronger statement – Developers must commit to installing solar panels on ALL new homes AND new businesses.. Page 13 doesn't mention Electric Vehicle (EV) charging points. I believe the developers must commit to installing EV charging points for each parking space.

Page 15 – Sustainable Wider Connectivity. See comment on Page 9 - Travel/Transport improvements aligned with community development. Describes a principle for 20mph speed limits and no on street parking. I believe this principle to be unrealistic, recent developments have too few parking spaces for each house. If you aspire to no on street parking then you must ensure each house has sufficient off street parking AND is fitted with multiple EV charging points. It is down to the planning approval process to commit to ensuring that houses and businesses have sufficient parking to enable the goal of no on street parking.

Page 15 describes “Development of infrastructure in advance of large numbers of new homes”. Please expand this point to clearly describe what infrastructure you are referring to

We will remove the reference to removing parking from the streets. We will reconsider the wording on page 15 to clarify which 'infrastructure' is being described. The implementation of traffic solutions is dealt with through the planning process and is not appropriate for the Charter document to impose detailed restrictions. We will reconsider the wording on page 18 to clarify what we mean.

AND and which are excluded. Schools, Doctors Surgeries, Roads, Rail, Community Centres, Local Shops. This document is the place for TBC to clearly describe what it believes is infrastructure. That way community expectation will not be disappointed.

Page 15 describes “Strategic Traffic Solution” – there is no commitment that traffic capacity will be improved in parallel with the garden community developments. Likewise there is no commitment that if traffic improvements are delayed then garden community development will also be delayed. I’ve lived here since the mid 1980’s and despite numerous promises of a traffic solution nothing has happened. So I expect these principles to include a clear and binding commitment that development WILL NOT proceed until traffic solution is implemented. I’m also aware of how long it takes to develop and approve a traffic improvement – so I believe you will have to change the outline timescales on Page 7 to show Garden Community Development starting in 2034 or later.

Page 18 – Promoting community ownership and longer-term stewardship.
It is not clear what this means – please be clearer.

Table 3 – List of comments from various TGC governance meetings

#	Meeting	Comment	Response
1	Governance meetings	Make the colours on the map on p8 clearer to what they are meant to represent	Noted
2	Governance meetings	Add a section stating we know there are these problems (such as transport etc) so communities think we are not just ignoring them.	REWORD PAGE 4 TO INCLUDE UNDERSTANDING OF CONSTRAINTS
3	Governance meetings	The word heartland makes you think of Tewkesbury Town and should it be named interheartland.	Vision to be reconsidered as part of this engagement but without ignoring all the previous engagement that was done on it originally.
4	Governance meetings	Add more about flooding, so it does not look like it is being ignored	page 4 to mention consideration of constraints etc.
5	Governance meetings	Page 6 needs to be clearer that this is the old vision.	The text makes this clear.
6	Governance meetings	On page 10 it states that garden communities will connect and compliment the local area. Please can it be confirmed if this is an aspiration or an assumption	The Charter is an aspirational document. It can not make assumptions or requirements on development.
7	Governance meetings	The document does not show business pictures, so this focus needs to be there if we want to keep live, work, play aspect.	Live work play, includes a focus on employment and business uses, the wording will be strengthened to highlight the importance of this.
8	Governance meetings	Things such as internet speed and room to work at home needs to be considered.	This is covered on page 16

9	Governance meetings	This document needs to look at enhancing the area as well. Maybe we need to think about water and how it can be managed to enhance this development.	This is covered by our principle Interconnected water infrastructure on page 12
10	Governance meetings	Youth need to be included more	Amend text on page 16 highlight the needs of all ages and an update in the vision
11	Governance meetings	Ensure employment strategy is clear	Covered by Live work Play principle
12	Governance meetings	Need to look at how we deal with flooding in the document as this is something residents want to know about to give people confidence.	The charter is a high level document that talks about principles. The details of mitigation of issues such as flooding is not for this document but amendment to text on page 4 will highlight the understanding of constraints and challenges. Flood risk and drainage issues are already dealt with via the planning process and our existing SPD on flooding.
13	Governance meetings	The draft charter is very clear and a good point for people to get a general overview. However on the ground there are lots of planning applications coming through. People want to know how these fit in with this programme	The Charter and other work by the Garden Communities team is aimed at managing the growth in this area and working with developers to ensure their applications meet our aspirations. Clear assessment of planning applications against our principles will assist in understanding how they reflect the garden community aspirations. Unfortunately as this stage The Charter has now planning status in the decision making process.
14	Governance meetings	The A46 is a massive issue and should be mentioned	Page 4 will mention the challenges and constrains that the garden community is working with.

15	Governance meetings	The coloured blobs on page 8 makes it look like a unbuilt on area and makes it look like they will all follow garden communities principles. There has been houses in those areas which have been built and do not fit with the garden communities principles. It was confirmed that there would be a foot noted added to reflect this and conversations have been had with developers to look at retrofit.	note to be added in the forward regarding 'retrofit' where possible
16	Governance meetings	Why are there no numbers in this. It was confirmed that the SLP will confirm how many houses will be allocated if any.	For the local plan to consider not the charter. Tewkesbury has 'Garden Town' status under the national government programme and this remains around 10,000 homes, as well as employment, services and infrastructure.
17	Governance meetings	Needs more emphasis on employment	Noted and added on page 16
18	Governance meetings	There needs to be a golden thread through the document showing respect to existing communities.	This is covered under our principle 'Respect existing communities'
19	Governance meetings	Could there be a score chart of what makes a garden community house	The Garden Communities team is working on an assessment matrix, this is a separate piece of work and not an appropriate level of detail for the Charter
20	Governance meetings	Page 8 needs a key of what the colours mean.	Noted
21	Governance meetings	Use photos from this area not random photos.	Noted will amend if possible, where appropriate photos exist
22	Governance meetings	Great starting place, attractive document, is not too wordy and hits the right mark. Great place to start engagement with public.	Noted
23	Parish Council comment	Page 8 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development Map cuts off Eastern side to accommodate text. • It fails to include existing development, resulting in false perception of (usable) space. • North West section crosses railway line – Does this mean the 	Employment is located to work with the location of the 'offline solution' for the A46. The masterplan includes a 'buffer' around Pamington. BNG targets are being considered as

		<p>existing bridge plans will be re-submitted? • Are the most easterly areas, south of the A46 and either side of the B4079, still intended for employment? This would be highly unsuitable as it will bring heavy traffic very close to the AONB. Industrial/ commercial parks would spoil the setting of what is one of the area's greatest attractions. • Siting industrial areas closer to the M5 and rail links would have benefits to both infrastructure and the environment. Page10 • Agree that Tewkesbury Town's role should be protected and enhanced but how will historic villages and their landscape be protected when some are already being overwhelmed by new development, for example Pamington? Page 14 • Only minimum 10% Biodiversity Net Gain targeted – disappointing in view of existing agricultural relative monoculture.</p> <p>Page15 • “The A46 to become a more attractive route for walking and cycling.” Given the existing and proposed development it’s difficult to see how this can be achieved without rerouting. • “Delivery of a strategic traffic solution to reduce existing congestion & support housing and economic growth.” Can this realistically be achieved other than by re-routing?</p> <p>Page 16 • “New Employment areas to South of A46” – not further explained. Implied within the boundaries?</p> <p>Summary - While the draft Charter contains many laudable aims it lacks enough meaningful examples of how these can be achieved</p>	<p>part of a whole 'ask' of developers and viability is a key consideration if other aspirations are to be met, such as affordable housing and sustainable building design.</p> <p>The Charter is a high level document, further work will be required for Design Guidance and Design Coding to set out details.</p>
24	GCC	See separate document within appendix 1	
25	Governance meetings	Consideration of higher BNG requirement - noted that GCC had conducted a review of Councils considering 20% BNG requirement.	

#	Responder (if known)	Comment	Response
1		<p>P11 - "one coherent community"- A little unclear whether it is one community or many....and all be geographically in one place, so not sure how each can reflect it's local context...as surely they all have the same local context?</p> <p>P13 - "smart monitoring of water us, energy use, and water generation to preserve precious resource" How?</p> <p>p14 - "Nature outside every home" - A rather strong promise, if 'compact development' is to be followed</p> <p>P15 - "Promotion of cycling across the garden communities through safe and convenient routes, away from primary roads". - Not practical or efficient to take cycle routes offline - and this conflicts with the point highlighted below...roads don't get much more Primary than the A46!</p> <p>p17 - "Efficient use of the land through the"- The 'compact' community which would seek to make efficient use of the developable area, seems to be at odds with the promise of nature and open space in front of peoples homes etc. We cannot put loads of green space IN the heart of the NDA, without compromising the 'compact' nature of the built form...by necessity it will start to sprawl.</p> <p>P- 17 - "public open space and green, people friendly streets". - This is an unrealistic promise...you cannot possibly front ALL houses onto POS.</p>	<p>Page 11, reconsider wording of distinct settlements to better reflect holistic and comprehensive approach to masterplanning.</p> <p>The charter document is high level and aspirational. The Garden Community expects and requires the highest standards of design and sustainability our principles reflect this, there are other examples around the country where 'offline' cycle routes and nature outside every home have been achieved.</p> <p>The point of page 14 explains how 'nature outside every homes' is expected to be achieved. Street trees for example are compatible with a compact and 'high density of development. Remove reference to all homes fronting POS, but POS should be accessible to everyone. This means that attractive and accessible links to green space should be provided.</p>
2		<p>Thanks for this document and we broadly welcome and support the document's overall approach and philosophy. Of course, it is not a statutory document for planning purposes and is not legally binding.</p> <p>In terms of comments, we identify the following:</p>	<p>Importance of railway station and need for improvement will be added to page 15.</p> <p>reference to cotswold stone will be removed, the Charter does not seek to consider details such as materials, that will be for further work on design guidance and design coding.</p>

	<p>Whilst 50% of open space is a laudable aim, it is possibly somewhat premature at this stage, in terms of assessing the full constraints and opportunities of the Garden Town development area and its capacity to absorb the identified number of homes overall along with all other infrastructure – schools, roads, retail, employment, open space, landscaping and natural areas. We are keen to work the Council, other land owners and partners on the overall master planning of the Garden Town.</p> <p>The key phasing and delivery of infrastructure and development will be a key issue. It would be challenging to deliver infrastructure in entirety in advance of development of homes or other uses. It is normal for development to be phased alongside infrastructure need and requirements.</p> <p>We would identify that the opportunity to enhance and utilise the main line railway station which sits within the middle of the Garden Town and existing community needs to be emphasised more, as this offers the potential for significant modal shift and sustainable trip movements, reducing the need for private vehicle trips and consequently impacts on the A46, J9 of the M5 and the immediate local highway network. As you know Network Rail have developed with Homes England early but outline proposals to provide a third platform and rail line that would facilitate potential increase in services to 4 per hour in both directions.</p> <p>There is reference to the use of Cotswold stone. We would identify that whilst a great material, the Garden Town is not within the Cotswold AONB or conservation areas with such use of natural stone is extensively seen. There are potential issues with availability, cost, labour, waste and energy efficiency of homes. We suggest that the use of this material should be for key buildings or sensitive areas and not</p>	<p>Wording around phasing will be reconsidered</p>
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		<p>wholesale across the Garden Town. Whilst also modern materials and modern design should be welcomed within the Garden Town.</p>	
<p>3</p>		<p>Tewkesbury Borough Council – Garden Communities Charter Many thanks for sharing with us the draft Garden Town Charter that the Council has prepared. We welcome and share many of the ambitions and strategic principles that are set out within the draft. We do however have some limited comments on the detailed wording which we consider would either improve the Charter or assist with its practical implementation. These are as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A preference is expressed in the section entitled 'Interconnected Water Infrastructure' for the use of permeable materials. The experience of our drainage consultant however is that open and well maintained SUDS features are a generally more effective and reliable means of mitigating flood risk during extreme events. Whilst the Charter should not therefore rule out any options for managing flood risk, provided the proposed drainage strategy for a development achieves the overarching objectives, there is no need to specify any particular form of drainage solution. • The section entitled 'Great Green Spaces for People and Wildlife' states that there should be "nature outside every home". If applied literally this would limit the variety of form and character within the residential areas and could limit the Masterplanning opportunities. It is more important in our view to focus on strategic green infrastructure and how development interacts with and supports a robust green infrastructure network which benefits the movement of people and nature. 	<p>Reference to specific drainage solutions is removed.</p> <p>Nature outside every home, could be achieved with 'Street Trees for example and this is very much achievable and an appropriate aspiration for the Garden Community.</p> <p>Your point is noted however, tackling existing congestion is also important for health and wellbeing, air quality and the encouragement of walking and cycling due to improvements in the quality of routes for those users. This does not detract from the goal of encouraging modal shift.</p>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The final bullet point of the 'Sustainable Wider Connectivity' section references "reducing existing congestion". Whilst I can appreciate that for some people the objective of reducing congestion would be a high priority, there is in some respects a conflict between this objective and the sustainability agenda. If congestion is reduced, the car will have a competitive advantage which will inevitably encourage more people to drive rather than use sustainable or active travel options. The clear focus should in our view be on supporting alternative forms of travel as opposed to increasing the appeal of the car. We recognise that such a change would not necessarily be popular with local communities but it is important in tackling the climate emergency. 	
4	North Ashchurch Consortium	<p>I am writing on behalf of the North Ashchurch Consortium (NAC), whom as you know are made up of Bellway Homes, Bromford Housing Group, and Mansfield Partners. They would like to make the following comments and suggested changes to the Council's Draft Programme Charter.</p> <p>Firstly, NAC welcome the continued commitment of the Council to the Garden Communities and fully support the Council's preparation of a Charter. The Charter will provide clarity for all parties as to the type of place that the Council expect to see delivered, and this will assist NAC as it prepares its proposals over the coming months. As you know, NAC are committed to working with the Council and other stakeholders in delivering a high quality development to the North of Ashchurch that befits its status as a Garden Community.</p> <p>Overall, NAC welcome the style and much of the content of the draft document. There are however a few points that need clarification, and</p>	<p>1 . Agree 'framework planning' is not clear, will reconsider wording.</p> <p>3. Meeting simply building regulations is not aspirational or inline with the best practice and sustainable building design which the Garden Community wishes to promote. We can re-consider the word 'carbon neutral but the strength of aspiration on this will not be weakened.</p> <p>We will reword to reference current best practice 'passivahus' or improved future standards, to allow for further developments in technology and innovation.</p> <p>4. bullet will be amended to reference 50% Green infrastructure (which includes gardens) to</p>

	<p>some wording that would benefit from review by the Council prior to its formal endorsement.</p> <p>1. Garden Communities Journey</p> <p>The phrase ‘Framework planning’ on the slide on page 7 would be clearer if it was amended to ‘Framework masterplanning’. This would provide the clear link then with the ongoing work of NAC to prepare a framework masterplan for the northern area.</p> <p>2. Indicative Garden Communities locations</p> <p>Although page 8 is clearly labelled as ‘indicative’, it is suggested the areas on the plan are also labelled as ‘indicative areas’ for the avoidance of doubt.</p> <p>Reference is made here in the text to developers needing to respond to the principles and details in the charter. Could a further reference be added to ‘developers working together to deliver key infrastructure’?</p> <p>3. Development Principles</p> <p>The Development Principles for the most part are fully supported, and reflect the type of place that NAC want to deliver.</p> <p>As the document is an aspirational document and one that all parties are intended to endorse, it is suggested that the wording ‘We must see’ would benefit through being more flexible, through replacing wording such as ‘must’ with ‘aspire’, ‘working towards’ or ‘should see’ to enable future applications to assess the detail at the time.</p> <p>The only principle that warrants comment and review is ‘Carbon-neutral communities and building sustainably for climate resilience’. Carbon-neutral means that any carbon dioxide released into the atmosphere from the development is balanced by an equivalent amount removed. Having a carbon-neutral community from day one (or 2026 as indicated in the programme) will be challenging to deliver from</p>	<p>be consistent with our draft strategic framework plan and other Garden Communities.</p> <p>5. wording will be clarified to define ‘early’ and the quantum of housing triggers etc.</p> <p>6. all homes to front open space, removed and replaced with all homes to have convenient and attractive access to open space.</p>
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	<p>a commercial and practical sense. The technology to achieve net zero homes is developing, and Bellway Homes are at the forefront of this with its pioneering work testing new ideas with Salford University on 'The Future Home'. The results are awaited, however, the cost of providing the technology today needs to be balanced with the need for homes that are affordable and with delivery of wider community benefits. It is suggested that wording is updated along the line of 'development should meet the building regulations at the time of the development' this allows for flexibility during the lifetime of the development avoiding day one restrictions and future proofing the Garden Community.</p> <p>It is recognised the Garden Communities will be developed up to 2050 or beyond, and that through this period technology will evolve, costs will come down, and building standards will change to ensure the Government meet its target to reach net zero by 2050. It is therefore highly likely that through the life of the development, carbon emissions from new buildings will be reduced to support the Government's goal in line with national policy. The Government reiterated just before Christmas that Councils should not be imposing energy efficiency standards that go beyond the Government's programme for improving energy efficiency of new buildings through building regulations¹. In this context, we would suggest the principle is amended to read 'Net zero ready development and building sustainably for climate resilience' to ensure there is flexibility for future proofing to ensure development is possible at the early stage.</p> <p>Further, reference to Passivhaus design techniques being required (page 13) may have similar unintended consequences. It is suggested the sentence is amended to read: 'New homes and public buildings that reduce the need for energy, through measures such as the use of energy- efficient building materials and sustainable design techniques where appropriate to at least meet Building Regulation at that time.'</p>	
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		<p>4. Great green spaces for people and wildlife</p> <p>The requirement for a minimum of 50% allocated public green space goes beyond the general rule of thumb promoted by the Town and Country Planning Association, which instead expects to see 50% green space which includes public space and private gardens. Further, the NPPF definition of open space includes “all open space of public value, including not just land, but also areas of water which offer important opportunities for sport and recreation and can act as a visual amenity”. The implications of the wording as proposed would have a greater impact on the developable area than other developments, and therefore could have unintended consequences on delivery of homes to meet the national and local shortage of supply.</p> <p>In this context, we would suggest the wording is amended to ‘a minimum of 50% of the Garden Communities area allocated to open spaces of public value, and private gardens’.</p> <p>The requirement for a minimum of 10% Biodiversity Net gain to be delivered is also supported by NAC.</p> <p>5. Sustainable wider connectivity</p> <p>The requirement for delivery of infrastructure in advance of large numbers of new homes is acknowledged as important to the Council, but delivery will need to be phased recognising the practicalities of delivery on large sites and viability.</p> <p>In this context, we would suggest the wording is amended to ‘the delivery of infrastructure in parallel with the delivery of new homes’.</p> <p>6. Owned and rented homes, housing types and densities to supporting diverse communities</p>	
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		<p>The NAC support the aim for the Garden Community to be a beautiful and inclusive place for all to live, providing housing that meets the need for the borough. The requirement for ‘all homes to front on to public open space and green, people friendly streets’, is however considered unrealistic as it may not be possible for all homes to front onto public open space.</p> <p>In this context it is suggested that the wording is amended so that ‘All homes are to be near public open space.. ’ to make the deliverability more practicable.</p> <p>I hope these comments are helpful to the Council in taking the Charter forward. Subject to the wording of the final version, NAC would happily endorse the Charter.</p> <p>Look forward to hearing from you on a date to discuss the comments and suggested wording.</p>	
5	Redrow Homes Limited	<p>We understand this is an opportunity to provide feedback on the draft charter and not an opportunity to promote the strategic development of sites. Representations will be made to the Strategic Local Plan consultation separately in the coming weeks. Therefore, the comments below are not exhaustive and are specifically related to the context within the draft charter.</p> <p>Redrow controls c. 108 acres of future development land at Walton Cardiff located immediately to the west of the M5; please see attached masterplan for reference. The land is immediately adjacent to the boundary of the proposed garden communities as identified on page 8. Whilst our land control falls outside of the proposed garden communities boundary, we propose that land west of the M5 at Walton Cardiff be considered in the context of the proposed garden communities and the existing communities within Tewkesbury. The garden community vision emphasises supporting Tewkesbury residents,</p>	<p>We can consider the inclusion of Walton Cardiff site within our masterplanning work. The 'red line' for the Garden Community is not set and will be considered via the local plan process. The Garden Communities team do not have a fixed site boundary and would encourage all development taking place in the area to work with us and consider our principles.</p>

		<p>businesses and the wider community. Land at Walton Cardiff has the potential to play a vital role in the success and delivery of the proposed garden communities, unlocking vital sustainable transport connections between the proposed garden communities and the existing communities in Tewkesbury. The site has to ability to facilitate:</p> <p>A local green corridor along the northern boundary with Tirl Brook, that connects with the wider green corridor as identified in the proposed garden communities;</p> <p>The creation of a green corridor / open space along the existing stream to the south, with potential new development fronting onto it;</p> <p>Enhanced sustainable and active transport connections linking Tewkesbury town centre and the garden community via several PRow traversing the site on the northern part, with a Bridleway / National Trail path crossing at the centre and connecting the site to the east via a pedestrian bridge over the M5.</p> <p>The creation of vehicular access to the north and south of the site via the existing country lane. These access have the potential to: maximise connections within the wider area while limiting vehicular traffic through Walton Cardiff village, and accommodate the southern link road as identified in the garden communities draft masterplan to provide strong connections with this site and the wider garden communities development area;</p> <p>A new community of approximately 25ha with a community hub at the centre of the site.</p> <p>Redrow are generally supportive of the Garden Communities development principles. Redrow has its own set of development principles, the Redrow 8 Manual, which I have attached for reference. The Redrow 8 set of principles are focused on creating places that offer social and environmental benefits for new residents and the wider community they will become a part of. All Redrow developments are designed in accordance with these design principle in mind to ensure a</p>	
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	<p>consistent approach to high quality development. These principles compliment those proposed in the draft charter.</p> <p>Specific comments on wording within the document are as proposed:</p> <p>p.10 "The protection and enhancement of historic rights of way and improved access to the countryside beyond garden communities</p> <p>p.10 "Sustainable travel routes from the garden communities to the heart of the town centre."</p> <p>p.14 "a network of greenways and quiet lanes to preserve rural character and give access to green spaces" - whilst connecting existing communities (via Walton Cardiff)</p> <p>p.15 "most journeys can be via walking, cycling, bus and train." – Consider alternative methods of sustainable transport and active travel.</p> <p>p.15 further focus of multi modal transport. Suggestion of mobility hubs to ensure a range of options for active and sustainable transport methods. - Walton Cardiff can play a key role in the delivery of active transport links from the Garden Communities to Tewkesbury Town centre and the existing wider communities.</p>	
6	<p>Firstly, in principle we believe that the Charter should represent a commitment that Tewkesbury Borough Council and Gloucestershire County Council enter in to, to demonstrate their commitment to the principles of the Garden Communities, and to provide a clear statement of intent that they can return to over the considerable time that it is likely will be required for the Garden Communities to be delivered. Landowners, ownerships and developers can and will change over time and so it seems almost certain that parties will become involved over time who have not and will not sign the Charter. To carry weight, the Charter needs to be a stand-alone commitment by the responsible authorities – ie Tewkesbury Borough Council and Gloucestershire County Council. In summary, the principles set out in the Charter are helpful and set out the broad range of issues that the Garden Communities should aspire to deliver. The individual bullet points which</p>	<p>Noted. The area of the Garden Community is not yet fixed and this is for the local plan to consider. The Garden communities team encourage all development in the wider area to work with us and consider our principles. This is not limited to Northway and Ashchurch. The wording around 'linked garden communities' will be amended to clarify Tewkesbury's official status as a Garden Town and to ensure comprehensive and holistic Masterplanning is a requirement.</p> <p>Noted, regarding clarity of introductory paragraphs and will be considered.</p>

	<p>provide some more detail of how each of the principles should be delivered also seem sensible. However, we have the following broad comments to make regarding the way the Charter has been set out:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Charter misses an opportunity to clearly set out that the concept is for a series of linked Garden Communities. The idea is threaded through but should be a key message set out up front. • The introduction is reads as rather “process heavy” and does not inspire a reader to understand the opportunities represented by the Garden Communities and the potential for the creation of exciting and positive places. The Charter is an opportunity to set out how the Garden Communities will be innovative, inspiring and exciting. The Introduction and initial sections should be used to sell this fantastic concept which will ensure Tewkesbury’s future and create new places truly integrated with nature, landscape and the surrounding countryside communities, rather than focus on references to ad hoc development and the process of developing the concepts. The introductory paragraphs to each Principle are sometimes confusing and do not clearly capture the main elements of each principle. We would suggest looking at the way these have been written to ensure that they set out the essence of each principle and link back to the initial paragraphs setting out the overarching vision for the Garden Communities. We are also concerned that this could be a Charter for anywhere. With the exception of the comments about water infrastructure (which does pick up on some unique elements of Tewkesbury including the River Severn, main watercourses and the fact that management of water is a key aspect of the local area), these principles and statements could equally apply to any garden town project. If the concept grows from local distinctiveness, what is that local distinctiveness and how does it then flow through the principles. <p>Detailed Comments:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pg 1. The title page refers to “A series of linked communities in North Gloucestershire”. We would suggest that this terminology is too vague, and that it would be better, and more locally distinctive, to refer to 	<p>Page 13 wording on carbon neutral will be reconsidered for clarity as per previous comments from others.</p> <p>50% GI wording to be amended as per previous comments from others, to include garden spaces or just public space. This is consistent with the Draft Strategic Framework Plan.</p> <p>Page 15 – noted and will amend as appropriate</p> <p>Page 17 noted – however Tewkesburys housing need is considered on a borough wide basis, the exact requirements of this is a matter for planning policy.</p> <p>The charter is a high level document at this stage does not include a viability assessment, that will be for further work though the Local Plan.</p>
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	<p>Northway and Ashchurch in some way to fix the location of the Garden Communities to this area.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Charter should set out in the introduction who is the expected audience for the document. Is it intended to set out principles for Communities and Parish Councils to understand, for Councillors, or for developers and landowners – or all of these stakeholders? • Pg 11 - A strong identity and character of place. This section essentially begins to set out a design code. The principles need to strike a clear balance to ensure continuity across all phases of the Garden Communities whilst not stifling innovation and creativity, which will in turn create distinctiveness. The challenge is to encourage distinctiveness in the design of each part within a recognisable high level design framework • P13 - Carbon-neutral communities and building sustainably for climate resilience. ‘Carbon Neutral’ needs clarifying - does this refer to homes/construction or does this extend to the wider development. Future Homes standard isn’t Zero Carbon, so messaging needs to be consistent. Standards should require Zero Carbon, with no fossil fuels used. Passive Haus may not be viable and has the prospect to introduce standards/testing and costs that just cannot be achieved, compromising delivery of homes. In addition there should be a recognition that the limit to the actual deliverability of Zero Carbon will be the availability of electricity – do we need a commitment to pursue the Utilities at an early stage to ensure they can put in place infrastructure to deliver zero carbon development <p>P14 - Great green spaces for people and wildlife. The bullet point refers to 50% of the Garden Communities area being open space requirement? We question whether this is deliverable –what work has been done to test the viability of this requirement or whether it can be delivered alongside the quantum of new homes that are required. Biodiversity Net Gain may be achieved across the site without the need to identify that amount of open space.</p>	
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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • P15 - Sustainable wider connectivity. To state that ‘Most journeys will avoid car travel’ is unrealistic and at this stage unevidenced, and risks setting false expectations of what can realistically be achieved. The statement should read ‘the development will promote and encourage alternatives to car use, through the delivery of cycle, bus and pedestrian routes across communities’ • P17 - Owned and rented homes, housing types and densities to supporting diverse communities. Affordable homes should be to meet the needs of Tewkesbury town not the wider region, and it would be helpful to indicate proportions of the affordable housing that are expected to be delivered by the Garden Communities. Reference to ‘compact’ communities, but to ‘efficient use of land appropriate to its setting which will vary across each of the communities’. Homes for later living should be provided ‘where needed’ <p>More generally, we would note that the Charter sets out principles each of which contain many requirements that the Garden Communities must deliver – some of which are discussed above. We are concerned that these requirements are being set out in a Charter which will at the very least raise expectations and may be used in the future as a list of requirements which must be delivered. What thought has been given to funding requirements and sources? If the requirements are all to be provided through development, what evidence work has been undertaken to look at viability and whether the expectations are realistic</p>	
	<p>Tewkesbury Borough Council – Local Planning Authority (LPA)</p>	<p>LOCAL PLANNING AUTHORITY DRAFT GARDEN TOWN CHARTER COMMENTS</p>	<p>Noted and agree</p>

		<p>Thank you for inviting comments from the Local Planning Authority on the draft Garden Communities Charter. I am aware that the promotion of a Garden Town at Ashchurch has been a corporate priority for the Borough Council since the award of Garden Town status in 2019, this followed the area's identification as a broad location with merit for consideration for long term development in the Joint Core Strategy in 2017. It's also clear that this location is relatively unconstrained by any significant planning designations such as National Landscape and Green Belt, does not lie within the highest zones of flood risk and has the potential to be served by an enhanced passenger rail link.</p> <p>I am also aware that much preliminary work has already been carried out, including the preparation of a concept plan and engagement with various site promoters/land-owners as well as with Homes England and other Government departments and infrastructure providers. The Planning service has had some involvement in this where appropriate.</p> <p>I understand the draft Charter marks a re-set for the programme, with a renewed emphasis on public and stakeholder engagement in shaping how the scheme will progress.</p> <p>The context is that north Gloucestershire will undoubtedly continue to be an attractive and successful location for people to live and work. Strong housing, economic and other commercial growth are therefore to be realistically expected, and the Borough Council and its partners</p>	
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		<p>and communities must be prepared to maximise the opportunities arising from growth over the next 20 or 30 years and beyond.</p> <p>Quite understandably, at this stage the draft Charter represents a high-level set of aspirations which would determine the manner in which a Garden Town – or linked series of garden communities – would be delivered.</p> <p>Nonetheless, it helpfully addresses some fundamental principles. Quite rightly, it looks to take the initiative in proposing that new development should be co-ordinated, rather than ad hoc, and identifies the opportunity for comprehensive garden communities to be an important part of the mix of the future growth of the Borough. It further usefully recognises that a coherent vision is needed aimed at delivering high standards of development whilst addresses climate change and securing nature recovery. The aspirations for interconnected and accessible carbon neutral communities, with a strong identity and character, with strategic blue and green infrastructure are also to be welcomed.</p> <p>As part of the approach, the draft Charter also identifies that early provision of health, education, transport, digital and other social and public infrastructure should be made; and that some form of community stewardship should be enabled. In my opinion these are critical considerations.</p> <p>Importantly, there is also welcome recognition that any such new communities should complement and connect with historic Tewkesbury Town, as well as other existing settlements in the area.</p> <p>The LPA perspective</p>	
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	<p>As the statutory planning system is central to delivering sustainable development, Tewkesbury Borough Council's planning department will also naturally be instrumental in ensuring the delivery of any garden communities in the Borough, both in terms of framing evidenced planning policies and making decisions on individual proposals.</p> <p>The overall aspirations in the draft Charter are consistent with the economic, social and environmental sustainable development priorities enshrined in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). I am mindful that the introductory paragraph to the NPPF was amended in December 2023 to emphasise the priority role of local plans in planning for sufficient housing and other development in a sustainable manner; and I note that this principle is acknowledged in the draft Charter.</p> <p>The publication of the draft Charter is timely as the Authority has recently commenced formal public consultation on 'issues and options' the Strategic and Local Plan (SLP) (jointly with Cheltenham and Gloucester councils). The express aim of the SLP is to provide for sustainable development across the wider sub-region, with a draft vision and strategic objectives comparable to those set out in the draft Charter.</p> <p>At this formative (Regulation 18) stage, no specific locations for development are yet being proposed. Instead, alongside seeking views on what overall numerical development requirements should be adopted over the next 20 years or so, we have identified various spatial</p>	
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		<p>scenarios through which the future housing and other development needs of the area might be met.</p> <p>One such option is the development of strategic scale new settlements, with the Tewkesbury Garden Town being expressly acknowledged as a candidate. Whilst other very different development scenarios are also presented (such as urban concentration and rural dispersal), I am mindful that the NPPF highlights that the supply of large numbers of new homes can often best be achieved through planning for new settlements or significant extensions to villages and towns. That is on the proviso they are well located and designed, and supported by the necessary infrastructure and facilities, including a choice of transport. The importance of working with the support of communities is also highlighted as a priority.</p> <p>The implementation of the Garden Communities would inevitably be a long-term prospect extending beyond the timeframe of the SLP. Helpfully, the NPPF acknowledges that this may sometimes be the case, and that the associated infrastructure requirements may not be capable of being identified fully at the outset.</p> <p>Nonetheless, even with that in mind, it appears to me that particular issues that would need to be addressed for Tewkesbury would be green infrastructure, water management, strategic and local highway access including J9(M5), affordable and other forms of housing, school and other social infrastructure such GPs, modal shift including maximising the potential of Ashchurch rail station, landscape, design, sustainable construction and energy efficiency, mix and type of of uses, its relationship with Tewkesbury Town and ongoing community</p>	
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		<p>stewardship. The viability of the overall concept will also be key given the very large scale of the scheme.</p> <p>Given the scale of necessary technical work, I can see great merit in our teams co-operating on these matters, (as indeed the LPA expects to engage constructively with promoters of other large sites, albeit those sites are of a lesser scale).</p> <p>I would therefore welcome your active engagement in the Regulation 18 consultation which runs from 16th January to 12 March 2024. The SLP website and related consultation platform can be accessed here: strategiclocalplan.org</p> <p>I note the recognition at the outset of the Charter itself to the status of the document. The Charter may be capable of being a material planning consideration albeit of limited weight. To this end, the language of the Charter should take care to ensure it does not give the impression of representing planning policy in its own right; this could include words like 'must' or setting what could be implied as policy targets ahead of the emergence of the new Strategic and Local Plan which would be the appropriate forum through which such standards be expressed having been evidenced and tested independently at examination. Similarly, the implication of the Charter being signed up to by stakeholders, developers, land promoters (and or their agents) will not in and of itself represent a significant material planning consideration.</p>	
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	<p>It would be instructive to understand what the intended next steps for the Charter might be and how these relate to the planning policy framework; this may extend beyond any potential allocation in the emerging Strategic and Local Plan, in terms of more detailed policy or guidance. In circumstances where there is a reasonable prospect of applications being considered ahead of the adoption of the Plan (and any formal allocation being made), this could take the form of strategic framework masterplans or more detailed area specific masterplans which could be adopted as Council policy and be capable of being material planning considerations. Beyond the formal adoption of the SLP and any allocation being made this could be through a Supplementary Planning Document and or design guidance as set out in a Local Design Guide / Code.</p> <p>Planning applications may come forward within the area delineated by the Charter as Garden Communities, these applications will need to be determined in accordance with the Development (Local Plan) unless material considerations indicate otherwise.</p>	
	<p>1-We applauds the Development Principles (p9) but feel they are based on ideology rather than practicality. Given how developers have behaved in the past, we have little faith that promises will be kept. We wonder who will be willing to take on community ownership and longer-term stewardship in areas with no previous community to draw upon.</p> <p>2. Who will protect trees, hedgerows and paths? Enforcement of planning laws is difficult at the best of times. We would look for a firm commitment from TBC to pursue breaches and ensure effective reparation is made when necessary.</p> <p>3. 'Streets designed for people not cars'(P11) – is all very well, but people have cars and those streets need to connect to the highway system. How do TBC propose to achieve this? It is unlikely that garden</p>	<p>1 – The charter is a high level document based on our principles, further practical delivery details are for further work and the planning process to consider.</p> <p>2- Noted</p> <p>3 - 'Streets designed for people not cars' prioritises the accessibility for people and active travel methods such as cycling but still maintains access for private vehicles. Further work on 'Design Coding' will be necessary to establish details.</p>

	<p>communities will provide sufficient employment for residents, or that all residents will wish to work within their community. There needs to be a realistic calculation as to how many residents will travel for work. Current bus and train services are unreliable and insufficient. Can TBC really influence changes to these? Recent developments in Bishop's Cleeve have met the agreed requirements for car parking spaces but are plagued by additional residents' cars parking on roads and pavements. Not all behaviour can be influenced by planning.</p> <p>4. We has concerns about the effectiveness of flood prevention. Water courses within communities need to be safe and well-managed. How does TBC propose funding and implementing the necessary maintenance given its current track record on preventing Tewkesbury flooding? Will the proposed 50% of public green spaces actually be flood plain in reality? This would hardly be conducive to the physical and mental well-being of residents.</p> <p>5. We have concerns regarding 'Use of data and local information to support active and sustainable travel' (P15). Beware of desk-top data! For example, accident data showing no pedestrian accidents is of little value if the area currently does not have any pedestrians.</p> <p>6. Whilst we wholly supports the principles of well-designed, high-quality homes which are also characterful and beautiful – we question whether these can also be affordable? In summary, the Draft Charter sets out high aims and principles for the planning and development of garden communities. However, without detailed information on how these aims and principles are to be achieved, it represents a pipe dream. There is a need for far more 'meat on the bones' to evaluate the worth of the Charter</p>	<p>4 – Technicle details of flood mitigation and surface water management will be delt with via the planning process. Some of the green space will be flood plain for not all.</p> <p>5 – Noted</p> <p>6 – The charter is a high level document and we agree that further work is needed on design guidance and design coding to establish the details.</p>
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Appendix 1

Gloucestershire County Council charter response

To: Tewkesbury Borough Council

Economy, Environment and Infrastructure

Our Ref: TGC/RN

Your Ref:

Date: 29th January 2024

Dear Sir/Madam

Gloucestershire County Council Response to Garden Communities Draft Charter Consultation January 2024

Thank you for consulting Gloucestershire County Council (GCC) on the Garden Communities Draft Charter. I have the following GCC officer comments to make. It is acknowledged that some of the comments are quite detailed at this early stage, but they are intended to help inform policies and design as the Garden Communities scheme progresses.

GCC is forming a project team of officers from a range of disciplines who will input into further consultations and will be happy to provide advice as and when requested by Tewkesbury Borough Council (TBC) officers.

Highways Development Management

We are pleased to see that the development principles include references to providing sustainable wider connections, which should include both employment, retail, access to schools and other facilities. One of the key challenges of the garden community is its integration with the wider community and the delivery of high quality, sustainable transport links to these.

Integrated live, work and play communities can help to reduce reliance on the private vehicle and a large degree of internalisation of this development will be key in ensuring it delivers on its sustainable transport credentials. The key to this will be master planning, considering mechanisms such as land equalisation agreements to ensure 'joined up' delivery and understanding the relationships between the various land uses on the site. Further to this is understanding the timescale for delivery of the various aspects of the development. Employment/retail land uses and community infrastructure such as schools should be delivered at the same time as the housing to ensure that this integrated community can be achieved from an early stage.

The document states that "travel routes from the garden communities to the town centre" must be seen, and we would like the wording of this strengthened to put more of an emphasis on active travel.

The document makes reference to a "clear strategy of how to link the town centre". There are several barriers to this development caused by segregation of largescale infrastructure. For example, the A46 provides a significant barrier to north-south movements which will need resolving. The railway line provides significant challenges to east-west movements, and whilst there is a proposed bridge over rail for the northern parcels of

land, there has been little consideration of the southern parcels. The current infrastructure south of the A46 is lacking for east-west movements and this will be a real challenge in permeability both within the Garden Community but also with wider links to Ashchurch/Tewkesbury.

We welcome the reference to streets being designed for people not cars, and this can be a useful tool in reducing car ownership/private vehicle trips. Further details on how this is likely to be achieved would be welcome.

We are pleased to see reference made to walkable neighbourhoods, and echo comments above in respect of the timing of the delivery of these neighbourhood areas as this will be key in ensuring private vehicle trips are reduced from the outset of the development. The design of these is crucial, but so is the supporting infrastructure such as ensuring adequate well designed cycle storage is provided, as well as other tools such as comprehensive robust travel plans.

We are generally supportive of the measures suggested within the “sustainable wider connectivity” section of the document. However, the detail which ensures this will be achieved will be one of the key challenges.

20mph speeds for streets is a welcome aspiration, but it will need to be supported by a range of measures to ensure it can be delivered, through engineering/design works. Removal of car parking from streets can be achieved through either design or measures such as on-street restrictions (double yellow lines, etc). The issue of car parking is a key one for the Garden Community. There is a balance to be struck between providing enough car parking across the development to ensure overspill parking does not occur on the highway, as well as design considerations of having parking located in prominent locations at the front of development. This will be tied closely to any design codes for the development.

It would be useful if the use of data and local information to support active travel could be expanded on, as it’s not clear what the aim of this is. Initial discussions in respect of the site have focussed on a bespoke assessment which moves away from relying on historical travel patterns and trends, reflective of the aspirations of this being a very sustainable community.

The delivery of infrastructure prior to the delivery of large numbers of new homes is key (as discussed in detail above). A strategy for securing this infrastructure will need to be determined at an early stage – will the delivery of this be left for the developer to build or is the plan for

infrastructure to be delivered through S106 agreements? What is the strategy in place should piecemeal development come forward ahead of site-wide proposals?

The site is well located to the Ashchurch for Tewkesbury railway station, and it is vital that good quality, sustainable links are provided to this. It lends itself well to some form of sustainable travel hub with onward connections for the bus routes, etc. It will require input from Train Operating Companies/Network Rail to ensure that adequate capacity is available and that the relevant upgraded service provisions are provided. From experience, this is not a quick process but forms a critical transport aspect for the proposals. An uplift in rail services calling at Ashchurch for Tewkesbury at an early stage to help establish sustainable travel options and avoid reliance on the private car would be welcomed.

Transport – Junction 9/M5 – Atkins Comments

General

The Tewkesbury Garden Town (TGT) concept masterplan that was produced in 2021 has altered and now focuses on garden communities covering six potential areas, to be developed by different developers, with developers having to respond to the garden community principles and charter. There is now no mention of approx. 10,000 houses and approx. 120 ha of employment land and suggests a phased approach to development. This is potentially concerning if the Department for Transport (DfT) and National Highways (NH) are consulted, as it does not specify approx. quantum of development or development type - only potential locations or any real commitment to the amount of development that would give M5 J9 a robust strategic needs case that is required going to Outline Business Case (OBC) stage.

It doesn't give the M5 J9 scheme the necessary policy hook and status at a local level that we think is necessary to remove constraints on growth in this area and to enable the future development proposals. The charter also appears to be focused for developers, giving them the engine to bring forward the six communities at different times without necessarily requiring an M5 J9 offline scheme.

While the concept of a Charter including development principles seems a good one, it is not evident how performance in relation to the principles is intended to be assessed by TBC, and what the implications would be if key parties (e.g. developers) either do not sign up to the Charter or later bring forward development plans that are not fully aligned with the Charter.

Forward Page Para 2 - If a series of linked garden communities are being delivered in preference to a phased garden town, does this mean that different policies and local plan requirements will apply to each community? i.e. some significant developments around the existing communities and on the north side of A46 will be delivered in line with existing planning policies and legal requirements and not the principles defined in the Charter, or any enhanced policy requirements which will become part of the emerging Cheltenham, Gloucester, Tewkesbury Strategic Local Plan (CGTSLP). Will the Charter have any material weight during the planning application process? Is the wording too open so that achieving the Charter could be argued/achieved through very limited action or provision of physical infrastructure above what is legally required as a minimum?

Indicative Garden Communities Locations para 8 - The extent of the Indicative Garden

Communities does not include large potentially developable areas on the west side of the M5 shown in the Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment (HELAA) published with the CGTSLP Regulation 18(1) consultation, areas are shown around the A38 and Walton Cardiff (circa 3,000 houses?). Why aren't these areas included as part of the Garden Community programme? Including these areas would align with the Reg 18(1) and some of the principles identified in the Charter e.g. connections to Tewkesbury, etc.

Page 6 - It mentions the communities journey (programme) and these key milestones:

- 2023-2026 Framework planning - planning exactly what is happening - by how and by whom it will be developed;
- Development will begin between 2026-2035; and
- 2035-2050 Completion depending on the scale of the new communities.

How does this align with M5 J9 scheme planned for RIS 4 2030 - 2035? By the end of 2026 we should have more idea of location and quantum of development? (The CGTSLP should be adopted by 2026).

Principles page 10 - 'Travel routes from the garden communities to the heart of the town centre/ a clear strategy of how to link the town centre with new areas' - it is not clear what is meant by this, i.e. new walking/cycling routes, public transport or new roads? We agree that connectivity between new developments and town centre is important but suggest the wording is made more specific. Presume this should refer to sustainable travel, as increased car-based journeys between developments east of the M5 and Tewkesbury town centre will put pressure on an already congested road network.

Principles Page 15 - The aspiration that 'most journeys can be via walking, cycling, bus and train' is laudable but probably not realistic - even in very optimistic planning scenarios regarding sustainable travel mode share, it is expected that outside of core urban areas most journeys will continue to be made by private car. Increasing adoption of electric vehicles over the next 10-15 years is forecast to reduce the cost of car travel in real terms which will encourage greater car use unless measures are adopted to either restrict car use or apply some form of additional charging to car users.

The focus on walking, cycling and public transport is rightly highlighted, but to address the above paragraph consideration is also required as to whether additional measures to restrict car usage would be expected as part of the Garden Communities development and/or what would be expected in terms of improvements to the highway network to cater for the additional car journeys resulting from development.

Following on from the above point, it is recommended that further thought is given to the wording of the final bullet on this page 'the delivery of a strategic traffic solution to reduce existing congestion and support housing and economic growth.' This implies that there is a single solution but does not state what it is (presumably the M5 J9 scheme?). While the M5 J9 scheme is expected to play a key role in unlocking development (particularly to the south of the A46), it is also likely that other interventions will be required at M5 J9 and along the A46 in the short term to unlock and mitigate the impacts of early phases of development. Upgrades to key routes on the local road network including Northway Lane, Shannon Way and the B4079 are also likely to play a key role in facilitating Garden Community development, even with the focus on sustainable travel.

Principles Page 15 - None of the bullets on this page specifically refer to bus travel. A clear strategy for this mode will be needed if the Garden Communities are to be served by effective public transport that will provide an attractive alternative to travel by private car for journeys which cannot easily be made by walking or cycling.

Principles page 15 - 'Delivery of infrastructure in advance of large numbers of new homes...The A46 to become a more attractive route for walking and cycling..... The delivery of a strategic traffic solution to reduce existing congestion and support housing and economic growth' - could indicate the need for improvements to A46 but no mention of M5 J9 which is the connection to the Strategic Road Network. Also, principles are focused on walking and cycling and sustainable modes of transport, can M5 J9 be specifically mentioned given its strategic importance on the SRN?

Principles Page 16 – We suggest further thought is required regarding employment /workspace provision. Reference is made to 'new employment areas south of the A46', but it is not evident how this would align with housing developments north of the A46 and support sustainable travel principles - particularly if the new employment areas are located in the far south of the Garden Communities area. There could be greater encouragement for ensuring provision of suitable employment opportunities within each of the Garden Communities, rather than concentrating this in one area. Also repurposing of existing employment land in the Northway area - i.e. replacing warehousing / logistics with higher value office and technology based developments close to the heart of the Garden Communities and within walking distance of the rail station.

Principles pages 11,13,15 - Improvements to the existing road network will be needed to connect the new communities to shared facilities and employments areas, there is likely to continue to be a significant demand for private car journeys within, and between the communities. Do principles need to be defined in the Charter for how this will work, including parking facilities, etc. For example, how will increased use of the rail station be achieved?

Public Rights of Way (PROW)

There are some very important principles included in this document that we would want to see taken forward particularly considering a recent planning appeal suggestion that the crossing of the railway at Teddington be closed to enable the development to the immediate west of the railway line. The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) specifically requires priority to active travel and the closure of this at grade crossing without mitigation; (i.e. a new bridge) would be contrary to all the plans and proposals set forth in this document. For example, pages 54, 70, 73 where the need for better connections over the railway line is specified. We would want to see the retention of the crossing point on the railway at RL7 to Hone Downs Farm crossing to be retained as part of the PROW network and active travel network.

PROW are a strategic part of the active travel network and must be protected and improved during development to facilitate the links needed by people who will be residents and working on the sites.

Transport Planning

We think it would help to be clear about what is required regarding distances and land use to make the garden town / community genuinely sustainable from a transport perspective. Key metrics should be built in from the start.

Page 9 development principles – helpful to have a clear statement that people’s daily needs should be within easy walking and cycling distance and on facilities that people of all ages and abilities will feel comfortable using.

Page 10 last bullet – should include a reference for the need to link new settlements to the town centre by sustainable modes of transport i.e. bus /bike.

Page 11 last bullet which is repeated from previous page – same comment as above.

Page 13 - good to see reference to compact communities, but there will be a potential tension with the need to do this to promote sustainable transport and the landscape/water led approach. Metrics will be needed to assess transport accessibility and ensure the distances to daily services and facilities are genuinely accessible on foot and by bike.

Page 13 – needs to be clearer what needs to be within walking distance to really be ‘walkable’. ATE’s recent guidance provides the following advice;

‘NPPF paragraph 105 also prescribes that significant development should be focused on locations which are or can be made sustainable, through limiting the need to travel and offering a genuine choice of transport modes. 2.8 In this regard, a mix of local amenities should be provided within an 800m walking distance of all residential properties or staff entrances for workplace facilities, while a bus stop with regular service(s) should be located within 400m. Local amenities may include but not be limited to a food shop, park or green space, indoor meeting space, primary school, post office or bank and GP surgery. All developments that include new dwellings should demonstrate how local schools, colleges and higher education institutions will be accessed by active travel modes.’

It is important that this approach is built into this early vision and subsequent masterplanning, policies and design guidance for the Garden Communities to ensure there is a genuine option to walk, cycle and use public transport.

Page 14 - need to ensure that the approach to landscape doesn't result in communities that are not well connected by sustainable modes and where the distances to access daily services and facilities and public transport are too far to encourage most people to use these modes of transport.

Page 15 – 5th bullet - cyclists will also need segregated facilities on primary roads where this would be the most direct link or where there are properties/destinations to access of the primary link.

Page 15 – a network of transport hubs should be provided which are in easy reach (400m to 800m) of all housing, retail, employment and education and provide facilities for interchange, access to public transport, strategic cycle networks and access to transport information as well as the opportunities to build in facilities for hire or micro P&R where appropriate.

Page 15 – suggest that parking should be 'designed in' to streets rather than 'removed'. On street (shared) parking when well designed, landscaped and coded can help prevent later problems with ad hoc and pavement parking and also improve open space provision and densities of dwellings.

Next steps should include masterplanning (which would need to consider M5 J9 / A46 role and ideally should probably inform/influence those), design coding and the development of delivery phasing and funding plans.

Public Health (PH)

Recognising this as a high level, aspirational document, which acknowledges its role as table-setting within the planning system, PH are fully supportive of the process to reengage communities, partners and all stakeholders in shaping the vision, plan and objectives for the area.

In responding to the Charter, and with specific reflection on public health, we'd seek a greater narrative of embedding health and addressing health inequalities, into all the stated *development principles*, and for any future plan-making in the area.

Health Impact Assessments (HIAs) for the area should underpin any design principles for future master planning. Understanding the health inequalities for the area will go a considerable way to proactively addressing the differences in experience of the environment rather than just designing specifically for each group.

Additional areas of interest to PH at this stage would be:

Adapting to an ageing population – What’s clear from the most recent Chief Medical Officer’s report [Chief Medical Officer’s Annual Report 2023 – Health in an Ageing Society: Executive summary and recommendations \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](#) is that a large proportion of people migrate away from cities before they reach older age. The result is that urban areas largely maintain their current demographic, ageing only slowly, but, importantly for Gloucestershire, rural and semi-rural areas will age much faster.

Older people often spend a higher proportion of their time in homes than at other times in life and communities and the housing developments and neighbourhoods within are key to supporting an ageing society.

Homes for older people need to be located in places where they can easily and safely reach the everyday shops and services that they need, preferably by active transport (walking or cycling) to help maintain their physical health.

We welcome the aspiration for both open space and blue/green infrastructure and are keen to see any design meet the needs of all users including older people and those with sensory and physical impairments. The Charter’s ambition is for generous, accessible, and good quality green and blue infrastructure which we welcome as a catalyst for promotion of health, wellbeing, and quality of life. We’d add that the inclusion of cool spaces is paramount and has the potential to be achieved somewhat organically, with the intention to ensure access to woodland and blue space from residential settlements. Primary prevention as part of the built environment and wider adaptations can have a major impact in reducing temperature-related risks to health for both heat and cold.

With regard to the respecting local community’s principle, it’s never too early to ensure that planners recognise the impact of the development of existing neighbouring communities, residents and businesses both in construction and operation and to ensure that their health and mental wellbeing is understood and supported.

Social value in design and development –reference to SV plan and partnership with designers/developers even at this early stage would be beneficial.

We’ve no doubt that the plan makers are across the OHID spatial planning and HIA guidance and resource, as well as Sport England’s Active Design framework which sets out how the design of our environments can help people to lead more physically active and healthy lives, but for completeness:

[Spatial Planning for Health: an evidence resource for planning and designing healthier places \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/100000/spatial_planning_for_health_an_evidence_resource_for_planning_and_designing_healthier_places.pdf)

[Active Design | Sport England](https://www.sportengland.gov.uk/active-design)

Public Health are aiming to deliver Healthy Places workshops in 2024 for county and district colleagues and will be in touch in due course.

Ecology

We would like to see the Charter refer to Building with Nature Accreditation, which GCC’s planning team already asks for in the planning policy for minerals, which sees that developers of sites think of the impact on nature, but also climate change, water management, climate resilience and carbon (and for housing communities, inclusivity and accessibility) – far more than just ‘with nature’.

On top of having the principles of the Charter translate into local planning policies and SPGs, **Building with Nature, BwN accreditation**, also pulls together multidiscipline teams, and critically raises the priority of addressing the SUDs and water management, biodiversity, active travel etc. up the agenda when designing the scheme at outline stage. The BwN design award would best suit outline stage. This leads to better wins for people and nature and provides the focus of achieving each of the standards for the scheme.

The aspiration for open space provision of 50% is a good place to start from in terms of green and blue infrastructure, active travel and wildlife corridors, to ensure that open space provision is not squeezed from outline to reserved matters. Will avenues, verges and pocket parks be classed

as open space? There may be merit in a mix of densities for placemaking. We would encourage some use of avenues across main routes to ensure trees in the urban environment.

Public spaces around the Currant and Tirlle Brooks along with natural habitats, wildlife corridors, and other green/blue links connected to the railway corridor would ensure full connectivity. This would also let nature be connected with public breathing spaces like community orchards and pocket parks with pollinator flowers (native wildflowers and nectar rich ornamentals). A successful design would manage to link in these features to community hubs, to allow the most benefit to the local community, and that these places are cared for and get the maximum benefit.

We would like to see mention of natural play, trim trails, etc. and even bridges over some overland water as part of the SuDS. These offer wellbeing benefits and connecting with nature for children and even adults if they have a green gym element.

We would also encourage that the design comes from a study of the existing site, topography for the best places for the SuDS features, retains and uses the existing hedgerows, etc. using the principles of Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG). The design should allow for softer edges, such as wider and taller hedgerows, and bramble edges to encourage the community to relate to the space (e.g. blackberry picking) to promote 'ownership' and connections to the natural seasons.

A suggested edit would be "The protection **and enhancement** of existing trees, hedges and walking paths", as well as including some simple examples would be clearer and provide what good design looked like (although it contains some excellent photos, this needs to translate to the design and plans).

This Charter could refer to some of the best industry standards on BNG, Green and Blue infrastructure and SuDS.

This is an opportunity to promote breathing space in nature to a part of Tewkesbury where it is needed to balance the industrial areas. Incorporating BwN from the outset would ensure that the multidisciplinary teams who will bring this forward to planning achieve the vision of the Charter.

The project team/designers will need to provide the BwN accredited agent with the evidence (signposting/ referencing the relevant plans and paragraphs in the planning documentation – and often the same evidence is used to meet multiple standards so little additional work is required). Full BwN award for constructed schemes is also an option, however the design award is the key one to have in place. BwN is appropriate and proportional/reasonable in terms of cost, for the social and economic benefits it can ensure it brings to a new community.

Flood Risk Management

The Lead Local Flood Authority (LLFA) appreciate the principle described as

‘interconnected water infrastructure’ and believe that in conjunction with the ‘great green spaces’ principle, the LLFA will be able to direct developers to providing high quality SuDS with primarily above ground water conveyance. The requirement for 50% of garden communities being allocated to public green space should be extremely helpful in achieving good SuDS provision. The LLFA are keen to continue dialogue with the relevant TBC team(s) to discuss this further.

Strategic Planning

This is a very aspirational document, but it is not a document with any weight in planning terms, as it’s not currently linked to any planning policy, as per the disclaimer. We would like to see, set out within this document, the process/work programme and timetable to turn this aspiration into planning policy and Supplementary Planning Guidance alongside and parallel to the emerging Local Plan. This will increase its material weight.

The site will be a critical part of the housing delivery. There is nothing in this document, about delivery and how it will be managed, specifically around achieving infrastructure in the right place at the right time and avoiding a ‘first come, first served’ approach to existing capacity within community facilities. We would like to see a development principle on delivery and a one-page statement about delivery and how they expect to achieve it in an equitable way for all developers, e.g. one masterplan, equalisation agreements in place, etc. in a similar way to the other development principles. How will the emerging local community be supported as the development is built out (i.e. school availability, delivery of community facilities, etc).

The document would also benefit from a clear statement of how stakeholders will be engaged in the future and at what stage (stakeholder management plan). We would specifically like to know how GCC will be involved on infrastructure provision and other matters that we are

responsible for. A statement on stakeholder identification and engagement within the development principles and in the document would be useful. We would also note that 'connectivity' applies to people and not just places and transport.

There are some very aspirational terms in this document. At some point these need to be defined e.g. beautiful, characterful, major public space, passiv haus design techniques, human scale, live/work units, etc. We think this document could do more to be clear about how, where and when these terms will be more clearly defined in future i.e. through policy and Supplementary Guidance, perhaps as part of a 'delivery' statement?

The document doesn't specifically state that green and blue (water) infrastructure should be designed together. It's implied but not stated. It should be written into the development principles. This is critical to on-site flood management as the green and blue infrastructure are closely linked. SuD design also needs to be included in this as an important development principle.

'Respect local communities and reflect local character' and 'a strong identity and character of place' are a bit mixed up as development principles. There needs to be clarity about what is local community character (people) and what is design character (place).

Development Principles – carbon neutrality & building sustainably from construction to use. The development principle suggests that the development will look to make the whole development carbon neutral from construction to use. The Homes and Buildings standard, passiv haus techniques, etc. are tools that apply to securing energy efficiency in the functioning of buildings, but the development aspiration goes further than that and suggests that carbon emissions from the production and transportation of construction materials will be considered. Is this the intention and how will it be secured?

Many homes are now built with only one source of heating, so future resilience will need to be considered. Most systems such as solar panels and heat pumps need to connect to electricity networks. Energy producers will need to be involved in discussions about sufficient energy to supply these homes. Also, future building cooling requirements are likely to require energy also. Urban cooling from greening around buildings and building design will be a key design consideration.

There are no statements about how this development may need to support infrastructure more widely such as improvements to M5 J9, water and energy provision, etc.

The provision of 50% green space is welcome, but may have design implications for the rest of the site, which will be higher density. This is efficient for public transport and local services, but may be problematic for local built form and character.

BNG will apply to any community, highways and waste management infrastructure required as a result of this development. GCC would like to discuss how to 'future proof' its future infrastructure delivery from any costs/land requirements for BNG that result from the development.

Will a broadband speed be specified in policy or in SPG?

Air Quality

From an air quality perspective, it would be beneficial to see air quality integrated into any development - from construction to the lifetime of the development. Seeing the below features at the consultation stage /requesting via condition would be ideal, but we believe this may sit with the district Environmental Health Officers/Air Quality Officers.

- EV charging infrastructure - ideally one that goes above the Building Regulations approved documents on EV charging in line with GCC/district EV charging plans;
- Construction Environmental Management Plans;
- Travel Plan/Low Emission Travel to promote sustainable and active travel. As well as accessible public transport links and walking/cycle paths, car clubs and restricted parking or similar could also be viable options to discourage private car ownership;
- Exploration of s.106 funding towards air quality matters (monitors largely);
- Importance of placement of development in regard to future occupiers and air quality exposure. Although Tewkesbury had its Air Quality Management Area (AQMA) revoked, placing development near to roads (A46/M5) may expose future occupiers to poor air quality.

From a climate perspective, we welcome the reference to Passivhaus design in the document and support this and other carbon reduction energy measures such as solar panels and air source heat pumps. Again, evidencing this at the planning stage and exploring if this could be secured via condition would be welcomed.

Minerals and Waste Planning Authority

We have reviewed the documents and just want to take this opportunity to highlight a few points which are relevant to any development in the garden communities. Under 'Carbonneutral communities and building sustainably for climate resilience' this would be supported by:

- Core Policy WCS2 – Waste Reduction of the adopted Gloucestershire Waste Core Strategy 2012;
-
- Policy SR01 - Maximising the use of secondary and recycled aggregates of the Minerals Local Plan for Gloucestershire adopted 2020; and
- Supplementary Planning Document Waste Minimisation in Development Projects.

We would anticipate that any development coming forward would be assessed as to whether there might be mineral resources (likely to be sand and gravel) present on the site – see adopted Minerals Local Plan Policy MS01. If present a Minerals Resource Assessment should be undertaken to prevent the needless sterilisation of any minerals resources that might be present on the site through either prior extraction or incorporation into the development.

GCC officers look forward to working with TBC and other stakeholders on this scheme over the coming months and years. It is probably worth arranging a meeting to discuss the matters raised above once you've had time to consider them. I look forward to hearing from you in due course.

Yours faithfully



Rob Niblett

Senior Planning Officer

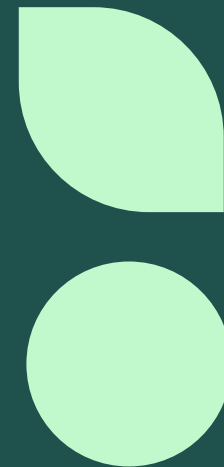
Tewkesbury Garden Communities.

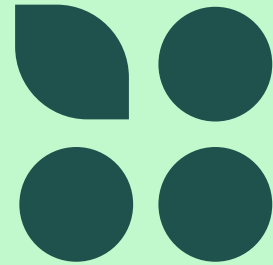
Our charter for
sustainable growth.



Programme charter

A series of linked Garden Communities
in North Gloucestershire.





Tewkesbury Borough is growing fast, with high economic growth and an increasing population.

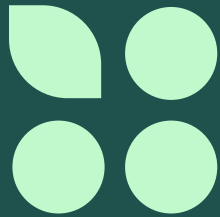
Tewkesbury Borough Council has a role to play to ensure that we manage this growth in the best possible way.

This includes planning for the building of new homes rather than letting development take place in an ad hoc manner, and supporting businesses so that they can flourish and continue to provide employment and prosperity.

Hand-in-hand with housing development, we also need to make sure there is a matching provision of employment uses, education, roads capacity, sustainable travel and community facilities.

The Garden Communities programme aims to do just this, striving to maintain an environmentally sustainable approach to development while helping local communities to flourish.

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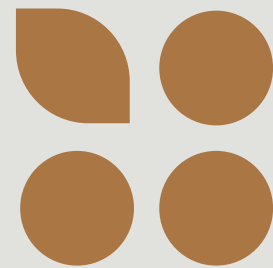
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Disclaimer

The information and ideas shared in this document are intended as guidance only. The concept outlined is consistent with the sustainable development goals of the national Garden Communities programme. At this stage, the principles for development are not set out in local planning policy or endorsed by any local planning authority. Any proposals will still need to be tested through a review of the local development plan, which began in December 2023.



Garden Communities



What are they? The Garden Communities programme is a national government programme, promoting the development of well designed, sustainable communities.

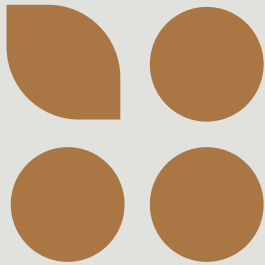
The goal is to help create vibrant, multi-use and characterful areas where people can live, work and play for generations to come.

Within the Garden Communities programme, Tewkesbury currently has 'Garden Town' status. This reflects the scale of the proposed development of a series of linked new Garden Communities and the importance of a comprehensively planned approach, which responds to existing constraints and opportunities whilst also enabling the delivery of shared supporting infrastructure. In Tewkesbury Garden Communities there will be a particular focus on minimising transport impacts and delivering a comprehensive drainage solution. This will need to be managed over an extended period of time, in a series of distinct phases, and over multiple land ownerships.

Our proposed Garden Communities will be located to the east of the M5 motorway, spanning across the railway and north and south of the A46. Creating links to the existing town centre will be a key objective. The development will be led by a set of principles summarised on page 9.



Foreword



A new approach to the delivery of the Garden Communities programme was approved by Tewkesbury Borough Council in July 2023. The programme includes a commitment to increased community engagement and better collaboration with partners and developers.

The decision came after a gateway review of the programme earlier in 2023. The review found no key concerns with the aims or the principles of the Garden Communities programme, although a number of important recommendations were suggested to improve the programmes work. These particularly touched on community engagement and collaboration with partners and stakeholders (with a focus on young people).

Community engagement identified advanced provision of transport infrastructure and a detailed understanding of flood risk as to key objectives for programme delivery.

This charter has been developed to set out the Councils expectations and aspirations for the Garden Communities, including our commitment to valuable engagement. It will serve as an agreement between the Council and developers, on the principles by which development will be guided.

The content of this charter is based around nine key principles (see page 9), which have been developed through previous engagement with the community and draw from the UK governments Garden Communities toolkit. These may change or adapt as feedback continues on this charter and as the programme evolves.

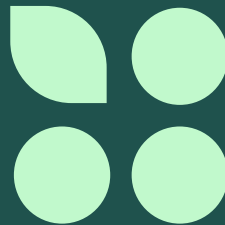
There has also been much debate about the naming of the development project. Respecting existing communities and their identity will be vital to success, so, as proposed developments come forward, stakeholders endorsing this charter commit to involving existing communities when considering the naming of new areas.

By supporting this charter, we set our expectations of the delivery of the Garden Communities to ensure these are the priority and developers can ensure the principles are met.

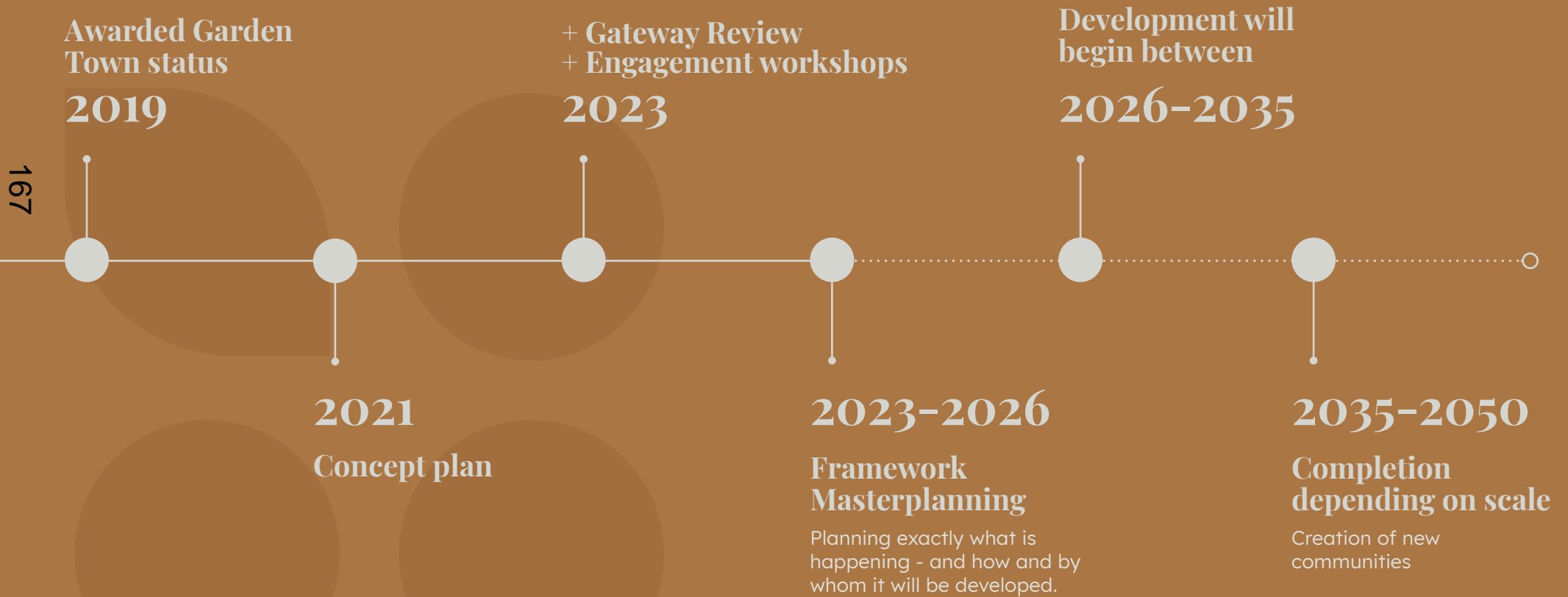
Our vision

To deliver a well-planned, networked development in a way which supports “good growth”, enabling residents and businesses, both new and existing, to fulfil their potential and improve quality of life. Revitalising Tewkesbury as a hub, which serves and supports the wider heartland. A place which drives the success of the borough.

Good growth – makes people’s lives, of all ages, better and mitigates the impact of climate change. It provides for better jobs and work-places and better housing choices. Better health and well-being, improved ecology and access to green spaces and provision of community facilities and infrastructure in advance of or alongside new development. It provides a platform for all communities and businesses to directly influence the best possible stewardship of their place.



Garden Communities journey

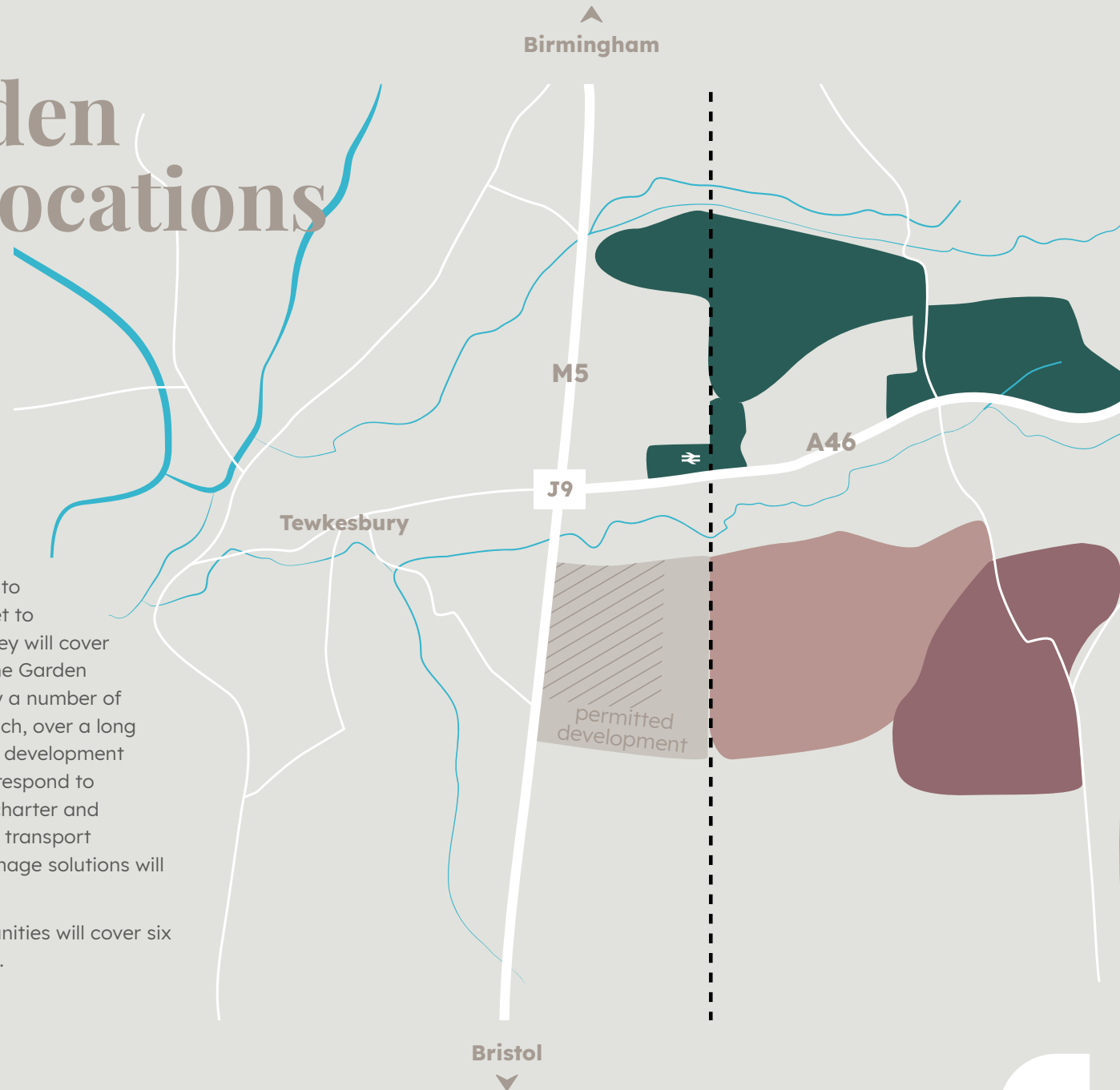


Indicative Garden Communities locations

The proposed Garden Communities programme covers a wide area. From the urban edge of Tewkesbury to more rural areas leading to the Cotswold Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB).

The Garden Communities will be located to the East of Tewkesbury town, they are yet to have defined boundaries but the area they will cover is loosely shown on the map opposite. The Garden Communities are likely to be delivered by a number of different developers, in a phased approach, over a long period of time. All those interested in the development of the Garden Communities will need to respond to the principles and details set out in this charter and collaboration on provision of sustainable transport infrastructure and programme wide drainage solutions will be required.

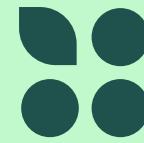
It is anticipated that the Garden Communities will cover six potential areas, as indicated on the map.



(Note: specific proposals in some of these locations are not yet known)





Development principles





Our principles are interconnected - by complementing one another, they are designed to provide flourishing, prosperous communities.

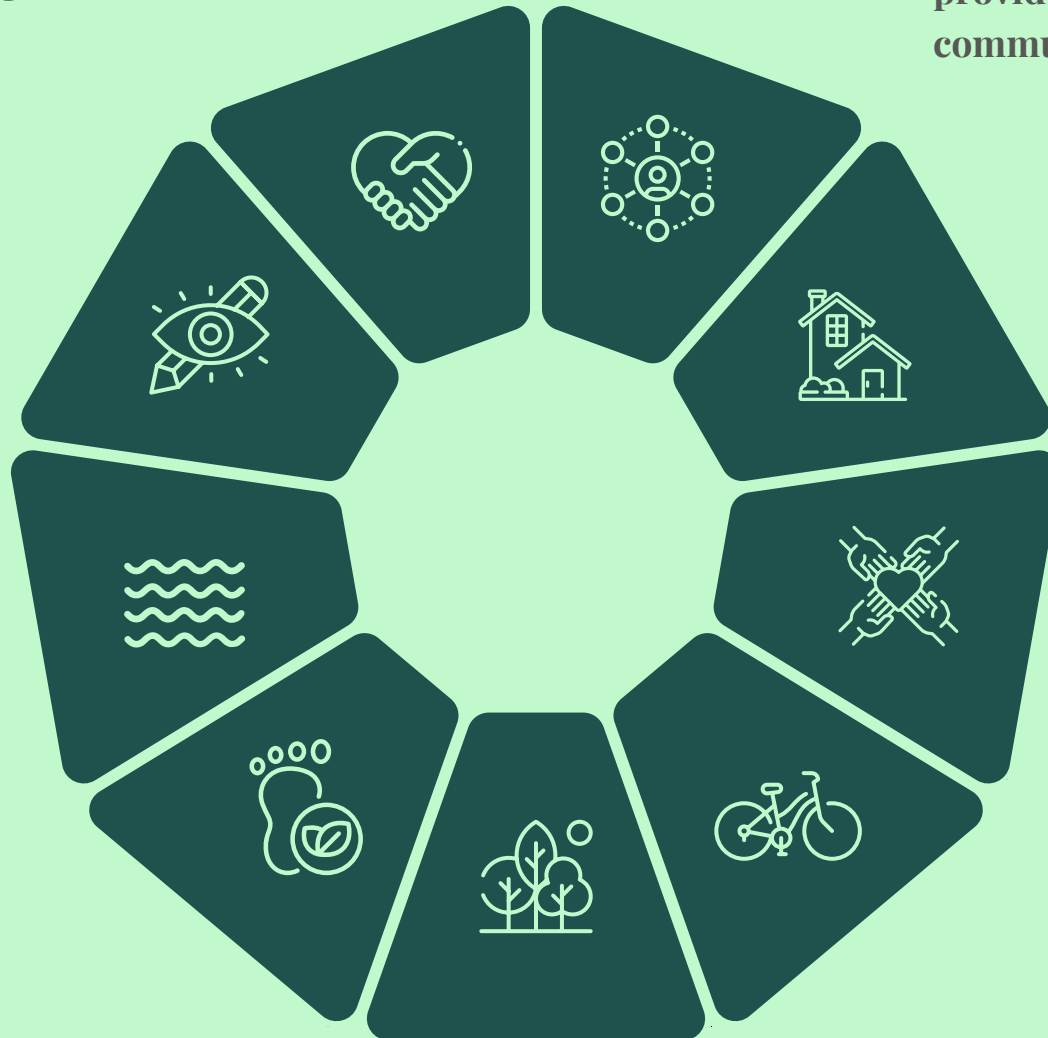
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 Respect existing communities and reflect local character


 A strong identity and character of place


 Interconnected water infrastructure (ponds, brooks, streams, and rivers)


 Carbon-neutral communities and building sustainably for climate resilience




 Great green spaces for people and wildlife

 Sustainable wider connectivity

 Integrated live, work, play communities

 Owned and rented homes, housing types and densities supporting diverse communities

 Promoting community ownership and longer-term stewardship



Respect existing communities and reflect local character.

The Garden Communities will compliment and connect to the Tewkesbury area. This includes neighbouring settlements and the surrounding landscape.

Tewkesbury is a special place. The Garden Communities must support sustainable growth where possible. The programme will need to add to its success as a vibrant and historic market town.

We must see:

- Tewkesbury's central role in the borough protected and enhanced.
- Existing communities becoming engaged in the process.
- The protection and enhancement of historic villages and their landscape.
- The protection of historic rights of way and improved access to the countryside beyond the Garden Communities.
- Travel routes from the Garden Communities to the heart of the town centre.
- The protection of mature trees, hedgerows and walking paths.
- The creation of major public green spaces around the Carrant and Tirlle brooks.
- A clear strategy of how to link the town centre with new areas and addressing the needs of existing communities through new developments.





A strong identity and character of place.

The Garden Communities will be unique, yet rooted to Tewkesbury through use of materials and embracing its art and culture.

Responding to the local character and the borough's identity as a great place to live and work, development will take influence from the historic character of the area. A new community, with distinct character areas will be created.

We must see:

- Existing communities to get involved in the process, sharing understanding of what makes each area unique.
- Different scales of public open spaces, connecting communities with nature from major green corridors to small community gardens and green streets.
- An understanding of historic landscape character and protection of important natural features. For example, hedgerows, watercourses and field patterns.
- Human scale development with streets designed for people, not cars.
- A variety of structural styles. These range from tight-knit urban development around the station to new villages that reflect their rural area.
- Public buildings such as schools and community centres to be at the heart of each new community.
- A clear strategy of how to link the town centre with new areas and addressing the needs of existing communities through new developments.
- New development proposals will undergo a Building with Nature assessment
- New development proposals will undergo a Building for a Healthy life assessment
- New development proposals will be subject to a Design Review.

Principles



Interconnected water infrastructure (ponds, brooks, streams, and rivers).

The Garden Communities will help build climate resilience by protecting and enhancing existing watercourses.

They will support the retention of water in safe areas. More so, they will help to protect Tewkesbury and surrounding communities from the worst impacts of climate change.

The Garden Communities will celebrate water, such as creating a new landscape of ponds, meadows and rain gardens that create space for leisure and wildlife.

We must see:

- Existing watercourses protected and enhanced for nature and recreation.
- Creative and comprehensively planned solutions for flood and water management to support the unique identity of the Garden Communities.
- Thinking across the Garden Communities to create a landscape to reduce water run-off issues that the area faces.
- Water infrastructure to be attractive and a valued part of the public realm.
- Future proofed proposals to ensure climate resilience in the future.





Carbon-neutral communities and building sustainably for climate resilience.

The Garden Communities programme will over time establish a carbon-neutral community. They will support Tewkesbury's wider climate resilience from construction to use.

A programme sustainability plan will be developed to support the borough's carbon reduction strategy. The strategy will be in response to the Climate and Ecological Emergency.

We must see:

- Compact and connected new communities that promote walking, cycling and public transport over private cars.
- Walkable communities where residents have easy access to schools, jobs and leisure.
- New homes that as a minimum meet the future homes and building standards.
- New homes and public buildings that reduce the need for energy. This could include the new and most up-to-date energy efficient building materials and 'passivhaus' design techniques or other innovative measures of similar or better standard.
- Smart monitoring of water use, energy use and waste generation to preserve precious resources.
- The use of renewable energy through current best practice technologies such as Photovoltaic panels, heat pumps or similar on all new buildings.
- Careful selection of materials within the public realm and buildings to reduce carbon.
- The use of permeable materials that help to reduce water run-off in extreme weather events.

Principles



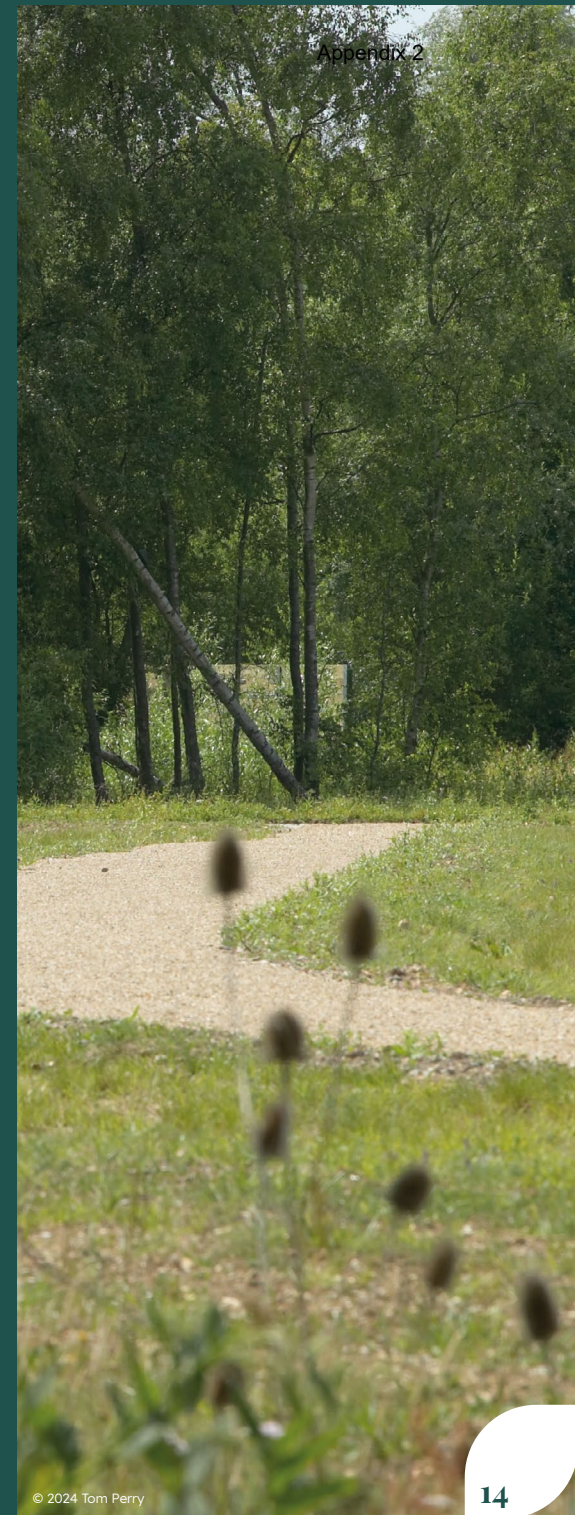
Great green spaces for people and wildlife.

The Garden Communities will follow the existing landscape. They will reflect Gloucestershire's history and the special relationship between communities and the land.

The Garden Communities will value the protection of existing features. The communities will both embrace the natural landscape and create attractive new spaces. The goal is to support residents' physical and mental wellbeing and to connect people with nature.

We must see:

- A minimum of 50% of the Garden Communities area will be allocated to green infrastructure, including public open space, playing pitches, allotments and private gardens.
- Existing landscape features protected and improved to add character within the Garden Communities.
- New publicly accessible landscapes that protect and buffer existing communities.
- Significant new green corridors around the Carrant and Tirlle [brooks](#).
- A network of greenways and quiet lanes to preserve the rural character and give access to green spaces.
- Nature outside every home – through a network of open spaces, community gardens, street trees and pocket parks.
- A minimum of 10% Biodiversity Net Gain delivered. Aimed to support ecological resilience and recovery and following government recommendations as a minimum going forward and as such future proofing new development.
- Inclusive public space for all ages. Set to promote health and wellbeing through exercise, play and community interaction.
- Space for growing fruit and vegetables on a community level.





Sustainable wider connectivity.

The character areas will be well connected as well as connected to Tewkesbury Town, ensuring that residents of both places are linked.

The Garden Communities will deliver sustainable travel options, to encourage journeys to be via walking, cycling or public transport.

We must see:

- Focus on walking, cycling and improved access to public transport.
- Communities that are compact and mixed use, allowing residents to reduce their need to travel long distances.
- Attractive walking and cycle routes across the Garden Communities. Plus, better access to local schools and the town centre.
- Streets designed for people, not cars. Including a maximum 20mph speed limit throughout the Garden Communities.
- Promotion of cycling across the Garden Communities through safe and convenient routes, away from primary roads.
- Use of data and local information to support active and sustainable travel.
- Infrastructure must be delivered alongside the development of housing.
- Development will support the A46 to become a more attractive route for walking and cycling.
- The delivery of a strategic traffic solution to reduce existing congestion and support housing and economic growth.
- Development must support improvements to Ashchurch for Tewkesbury train station to allow for increased usage as well as improved links to the train station.

Principles



Integrated live, work, play communities.

The Garden Communities will be an inclusive, desirable place to live, work and play for all ages. Funding from planning gain will help support this

A new network of neighbourhood centres will be comprehensively designed and planned providing easy access to shops, community facilities and other services such as healthcare.

New employment areas within the development will be accessible by sustainable travel options and will be well connected to new as well as the existing communities.

We must see:

- Local live/work units, co-working space and employment sites for high-value sector growth.
- Focal points for each community. Such as large village centres with schools, shops and business spaces, to small neighbourhood hubs. These will create a space to meet neighbours and friends, grab a coffee or nip to the shops.
- New public green spaces that deliver fantastic play and leisure space for all ages. These will be at the heart of each community.
- New health facilities to be accessible for everyone within the Garden Communities.
- New primary and secondary schools that allow children to walk and cycle to school.
- Improved services from Ashchurch for Tewkesbury station. These will enable sustainable access to other employment centres in the region.
- High speed fibre internet access to all properties to support digitalisation.
- Accessible and inclusive sports facilities. Facilities should be affordable for residents and support existing clubs in Tewkesbury to grow and thrive.
- Employment is an essential part of the Garden Communities and all development will be expected to support the delivery of new employment opportunities.
- Accessible and inclusive cultural and arts facilities.





Owned and rented homes, housing types and densities for supporting diverse communities.

The Garden Communities will be beautiful and inclusive places to live. They will be designed to welcome residents and visitors.

We want to encourage civic pride, investment and ownership by those who call it home. Each community will want to retain or develop its own unique identity, but also reflect the character of the wider area, adding a specific focus on existing architecture and locally distinctive materials to build new homes.

We must see:

- Affordable homes that meet the needs of the borough.
- Efficient use of the land through the creation of well planned new communities.
- Well-designed and high quality homes, regardless of tenure and size, all meeting nationally described space standards and the Future Homes and Buildings Standards.
- Flexible buildings that can evolve with residents over time, enabling people to work from home.
- Beautiful and characterful homes that embrace the history of Tewkesbury and the surrounding area.
- The use of local materials.
- All homes to front on to public open space and green, people friendly streets.
- Every home to have access to private or communal open space.
- Homes for later living to be at the heart of each community.
- Opportunities for community-led or self-build developments.
- Development will undergo a building for a healthy life assessment and meet these requirements.

Principles



Promoting community ownership and longer-term stewardship – the long-term management and maintenance of non-private facilities and services.

The Garden Communities will enable residents to connect. By allowing people to come together and build ties, a sense of community can be created.

They will be inclusive and provide chances for residents to take ownership of community assets. This will be managed with long-term support from developers and Tewkesbury Borough Council.

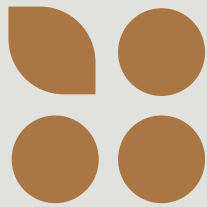
New development will support existing social infrastructure. Development proposals will ensure sustainable models of future maintenance are established ensuring a continued obligation for meeting the future needs of Garden Communities residents.

We must see:

- Provision of new community assets, supported by existing parties for example; clubs, organisations and the parish and borough councils.
- A clear model for stewardship and ownership of community assets. This includes open space, supported through long-term investment.
- High quality and sustainable maintenance solutions for the long-term. For example, ensuring new trees thrive and grow.
- A community ownership and development programme, intended to allow for changing governance plans as the community grows.
- Potential for better delivery of borough and parish services across new and existing communities.



Stakeholder endorsement of our charter



By supporting this charter, we are setting out our shared expectations for the delivery of the Garden Communities, ensuring they are the priority and the principles of the Garden Communities are met.

Name:

Organisation:

Date:

I/We fully endorse the principles set out in the charter and commit to working in partnership with all stakeholders to deliver the vision for Tewkesbury Garden Communities.

