

Corporate Services

Dean Taylor, Deputy Chief Executive and Director
Your Ref:

Our Ref: CC/SAHC

Please ask for: Mrs S Cole

Direct Line / Extension: (01432) 260249

Fax: (01432)

E-mail: scole@herefordshire.gov.uk

TO: ALL MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL

20 November 2012

Dear Councillor

YOU ARE HEREBY SUMMONED to attend the meeting of the Herefordshire Council to be held on **Friday 23 November 2012** at The Shire Hall, St Peter's Square, Hereford. at 10.30 am at which the business set out in the attached agenda is proposed to be transacted.

Please note that car parking will be available at the Shire Hall for elected Members.

Yours sincerely



C CHAPMAN
ASSISTANT DIRECTOR LAW, GOVERNANCE AND RESILIENCE

Working in partnership for the people of Herefordshire
240, Brockington, 35 Hafod Road, Hereford HR1 1ZT

Herefordshire Council Main Switchboard (01432) 260000, www.herefordshire.gov.uk
NHS Herefordshire Main Switchboard (01432) 344344, www.herefordshire.nhs.uk

AGENDA

Council

Date: **Friday 23 November 2012**

Time: **10.30 am**

Place: **The Shire Hall, St Peter's Square, Hereford.**

Notes: Please note the **time, date** and **venue** of the meeting.

For any further information please contact:

Sally Cole, Governance Services

Tel: 01432 260249

Email: scole@herefordshire.gov.uk

If you would like help to understand this document, or would like it in another format or language, please call Sally Cole, Governance Services on 01432 260249 or e-mail scole@herefordshire.gov.uk in advance of the meeting.

Agenda for the Meeting of the Council

Membership

Chairman

Vice-Chairman

Councillor LO Barnett

Councillor ACR Chappell

Councillor PA Andrews
Councillor CNH Attwood
Councillor PL Bettington
Councillor WLS Bowen
Councillor AN Bridges
Councillor MJK Cooper
Councillor BA Durkin
Councillor DW Greenow
Councillor RB Hamilton
Councillor EPJ Harvey
Councillor JW Hope MBE
Councillor RC Hunt
Councillor TM James
Councillor AW Johnson
Councillor JLV Kenyon
Councillor JG Lester
Councillor RI Matthews
Councillor SM Michael
Councillor PM Morgan
Councillor C Nicholls
Councillor RJ Phillips
Councillor GJ Powell
Councillor R Preece
Councillor SJ Robertson
Councillor A Seldon
Councillor J Stone
Councillor DC Taylor
Councillor DB Wilcox

Councillor AM Atkinson
Councillor CM Bartrum
Councillor AJM Blackshaw
Councillor H Bramer
Councillor EMK Chave
Councillor PGH Cutter
Councillor PJ Edwards
Councillor KS Guthrie
Councillor J Hardwick
Councillor AJ Hempton-Smith
Councillor MAF Hubbard
Councillor JA Hyde
Councillor JG Jarvis
Councillor Brig P Jones CBE
Councillor JF Knipe
Councillor MD Lloyd-Hayes
Councillor PJ McCaull
Councillor JW Millar
Councillor NP Nenadich
Councillor FM Norman
Councillor GA Powell
Councillor AJW Powers
Councillor PD Price
Councillor P Rone
Councillor P Sinclair-Knipe
Councillor GR Swinford
Councillor PJ Watts

GUIDANCE ON DECLARING PERSONAL AND PREJUDICIAL INTERESTS AT MEETINGS

The Council's Members' Code of Conduct requires Councillors to declare against an Agenda item(s) the nature of an interest and whether the interest is personal or prejudicial. Councillors have to decide first whether or not they have a personal interest in the matter under discussion. They will then have to decide whether that personal interest is also prejudicial.

A personal interest is an interest that affects the Councillor more than most other people in the area. People in the area include those who live, work or have property in the area of the Council. Councillors will also have a personal interest if their partner, relative or a close friend, or an organisation that they or the member works for, is affected more than other people in the area. If they do have a personal interest, they must declare it but can stay and take part and vote in the meeting.

Whether an interest is prejudicial is a matter of judgement for each Councillor. What Councillors have to do is ask themselves whether a member of the public – if he or she knew all the facts – would think that the Councillor's interest was so important that their decision would be affected by it. If a Councillor has a prejudicial interest then they must declare what that interest is. A Councillor who has declared a prejudicial interest at a meeting may nevertheless be able to address that meeting, but only in circumstances where an ordinary member of the public would be also allowed to speak. In such circumstances, the Councillor concerned will have the same opportunity to address the meeting and on the same terms. However, a Councillor exercising their ability to speak in these circumstances must leave the meeting immediately after they have spoken.

AGENDA

		Pages
1.	PRAYERS	
2.	APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE To receive apologies for absence.	
3.	DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST To receive any declarations of interest by Members in respect of items on the Agenda.	
4.	MINUTES To approve and sign the Minutes of the meeting held on 28 September 2012.	1 - 24
5.	CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS To receive the Chairman's announcements and petitions from members of the public.	
6.	QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC To receive questions from members of the public.	25 - 30
7.	FORMAL QUESTIONS FROM COUNCILLORS TO THE CABINET MEMBERS AND CHAIRMEN UNDER STANDING ORDERS To receive any written questions from Councillors.	
8.	NOTICES OF MOTION UNDER STANDING ORDERS One Notice of Motion has been submitted for consideration by Council. NOTICE OF MOTION This Council notes that despite very difficult retail conditions, the decision delegated to the Director for Places & Communities to progress the Old Cattle Market retail development has been signed, enabling the development to proceed. MOTION This Council recommends that: (a) Cabinet adopt a policy that includes no further relaxation of the restrictions that limit the developers of the Old Cattle Market site from approaching existing High Town retailers and that the list of named retailers that they cannot approach be shared confidentially with Group Leaders and the Chairman of Overview and Scrutiny to ensure policing of this policy. (b) That the appropriate Cabinet Member be requested to arrange for a revised retail impact assessment to be undertaken to understand the potential impact of the new development on Hereford's historic retail area.	

- (c) that the Leader be requested to arrange cross party talks to develop a comprehensive strategy to tackle issues arising out of the revised retail impact assessment detailed in (b) above.

9. APPOINTMENT OF HEREFORDSHIRE COUNCIL CHIEF EXECUTIVE AND HEAD OF PAID SERVICE	31 - 34
To approve the appointment of a Chief Executive and Head of Paid Service.	
10. LEADER'S REPORT	35 - 44
To receive the Leader's report, which provides an overview of the Executive's activity since the last Council meeting.	
11. COUNCIL TAX SUPPORT SCHEME AND COUNCIL TAX DISCOUNTS	45 - 100
To approve the recommendations of the Cabinet meeting held on 15 November 2012, as set out in the attached appendices, to agree a Council Tax Support Scheme in the light of the requirements set by the Government and the outcome of local consultation and determine the level of Council Tax Discount for vacant properties and second homes.	
12. COUNCIL CORPORATE PLAN 2013/15	101 - 110
See proposals for the council corporate plan 2013/15.	
13. INDEPENDENT REMUNERATION PANEL	111 - 140
To consider the recommendations of the Council's Independent Remuneration Panel on the Councillors Allowances Scheme.	
14. BREACH OF THE MEMBERS' CODE OF CONDUCT	141 - 146
To advise Council of the findings of the Audit and Governance Committee in relation to breaches of the Members' Code of Conduct.	
15. COUNCIL MEETING DATES	147 - 150
Consider variations to the schedule of Council meetings.	
16. HEREFORD & WORCESTER FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY	151 - 154
To receive the report of the Hereford & Worcester Fire and Rescue Authority.	

The Public's Rights to Information and Attendance at Meetings

YOU HAVE A RIGHT TO:-

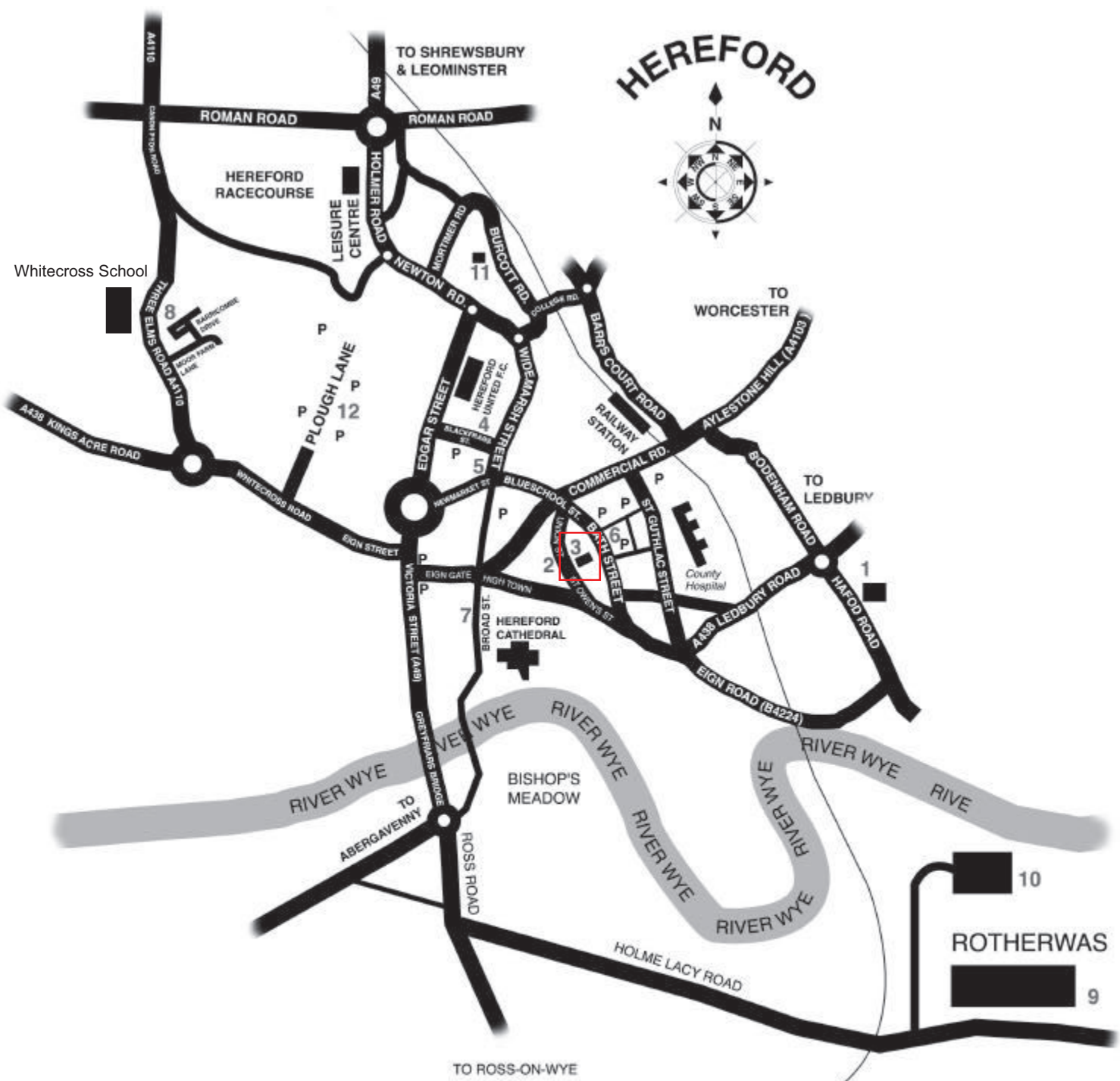
- Attend all Council, Cabinet, Committee and Sub-Committee meetings unless the business to be transacted would disclose 'confidential' or 'exempt' information.
- Inspect agenda and public reports at least five clear days before the date of the meeting.
- Inspect minutes of the Council and all Committees and Sub-Committees and written statements of decisions taken by the Cabinet or individual Cabinet Members for up to six years following a meeting.
- Inspect background papers used in the preparation of public reports for a period of up to four years from the date of the meeting. (A list of the background papers to a report is given at the end of each report). A background paper is a document on which the officer has relied in writing the report and which otherwise is not available to the public.
- Access to a public Register stating the names, addresses and wards of all Councillors with details of the membership of the Cabinet, of all Committees and Sub-Committees.
- Have a reasonable number of copies of agenda and reports (relating to items to be considered in public) made available to the public attending meetings of the Council, Committees and Sub-Committees.
- Have access to a list specifying those powers on which the Council have delegated decision making to their officers identifying the officers concerned by title.
- Copy any of the documents mentioned above to which you have a right of access, subject to a reasonable charge (20p per sheet subject to a maximum of £5.00 per agenda plus a nominal fee of £1.50, for postage).
- Access to this summary of your rights as members of the public to attend meetings of the Council, Cabinet, Committees and Sub-Committees and to inspect and copy documents.
- A member of the public may, at a meeting of the full Council, ask a Cabinet Member or Chairman of a Committee any question relevant to a matter in relation to which the Council has powers or duties or which affects the County as long as a copy of that question is deposited with the Monitoring Officer eight clear working days before the meeting i.e. by 12:00 noon on a Monday in the week preceding a Friday meeting.

Public Transport Links

- The Shirehall is ten minutes walking distance from both bus stations located in the town centre of Hereford. A map showing the location of the Shirehall is found opposite.



Where possible this agenda is printed on paper made from 100% Post-Consumer waste. De-inked without bleaching and free from optical brightening agents (OBA). Awarded the Nordic Swan for low emissions during production and the Blue Angel environmental label.



Whitecross School

HEREFORD



- | | | | |
|---|------------------|----|-----------------------------------|
| 1 | Brockington | 7 | Kemble House |
| 2 | Town Hall | 8 | Trinity House |
| 3 | Shire Hall | 9 | Thorn Office Centre |
| 4 | Education Centre | 10 | Herefordshire Commercial Services |
| 5 | Garrick House | 11 | Merchant House |
| 6 | Bath Street | 12 | Plough Lane |

FIRE AND EMERGENCY EVACUATION PROCEDURE

IN CASE OF FIRE

(no matter how small)

1. Sound the Alarm
2. Call the Fire Brigade
3. Fire party - attack the fire with appliances available.

ON HEARING THE ALARM

Leave the building by the nearest exit and proceed to assembly area on:

GAOL STREET CAR PARK

Section Heads will call the roll at the place of assembly.

HEREFORDSHIRE COUNCIL

MINUTES of the meeting of Council held at Town Hall, St Owen Street, Hereford. on Friday 28 September 2012 at 10.30 am

Present: Councillor LO Barnett (Chairman)
Councillor ACR Chappell (Vice Chairman)

Councillors: PA Andrews, AM Atkinson, CM Bartrum, PL Bettington, AJM Blackshaw, WLS Bowen, H Bramer, AN Bridges, EMK Chave, BA Durkin, PJ Edwards, KS Guthrie, RB Hamilton, EPJ Harvey, AJ Hempton-Smith, JW Hope MBE, MAF Hubbard, JA Hyde, TM James, JG Jarvis, AW Johnson, Brig P Jones CBE, JLV Kenyon, JF Knipe, JG Lester, MD Lloyd-Hayes, RI Matthews, SM Michael, JW Millar, PM Morgan, NP Nenadich, C Nicholls, FM Norman, RJ Phillips, GA Powell, GJ Powell, AJW Powers, PD Price, SJ Robertson, P Rone, A Seldon, P Sinclair-Knipe, J Stone, GR Swinford, DC Taylor and DB Wilcox

37. PRAYERS

The Very Reverend Michael Tavinor led the Council in prayers.

Following prayers the Chairman welcomed the new Councillor for the St Nicholas ward Councillor Anthony Powers as a new Member to the Council.

38. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors:

CNH Attwood	MJK Cooper
PGH Cutter	DW Greenow
J Hardwick	RC Hunt
G Lucas	PJ McCaull
R Preece	PJ Watts

39. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST.

Councillor A Seldon, Non-Pecuniary, Agenda item 14, Ocle Pychard Parish Council.

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST.

Councillor JG Jarvis, Non-Pecuniary, Agenda Item 8, Notices of Motion, member of the Hereford Futures Board.

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST.

Councillor JG Lester, Non-Pecuniary, Agenda Item 14, Ocle Pychard Parish Council.

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST.

Councillor PM Morgan, Non-Pecuniary, Agenda item 14, Ocle Pychard Parish Council.

40. MINUTES

RESOLVED: That the Minutes of the meeting held on 28 September 2012 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman, subject to the following amendment:

- **Minutes No: 29** – A Member commented that the proposals for Hereford City were fundamentally flawed; highlighting conflict with *ward* boundaries within the *Parish of Hereford City* which would *no longer be coterminous* causing confusion when elections were held.
- In response to a comment on the Minutes and that in future the minutes of Council should include any written responses for completeness. The Chairman advised that the query should be referred to the next meeting of the political group leaders.

41. CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chairman in her announcements:

- Reminded Members of the cakes for sale at Council in aid of Macmillan's World's Biggest Coffee Morning.
- Informed Members that this year's Poppy Day Appeal would be launched at ASDA superstore on 27 October at 10.00 am.
- Reported on the Carers Annual Meeting that she attended, which was of great interest to her due to her background in this area.
- Reported on her attendance at the opening of the new head quarters of the Hereford Sea Cadets at Wyeseid opened by the Deputy Lord Lieutenant, Mr Clive Richards OBE.
- Reported on her attendance at the launch of the Scenic Bus Route which travels between Ross-on-Wye and Hereford by way of King's Thorn.
- Expressed her pleasure at attending the Community Games for people with learning disabilities held at Hereford Leisure Centre to mark the 2012 London Olympic and Paralympic Games.
- Congratulated the Council's Markets Team who were runners up in the category of 'Market Team of the Year' at the national competition organised by the National Association of British Market Authorities.
- Referred to the exciting events held over the summer, which included the royal visit by Her Majesty the Queen, the Three Choirs Festival and the Olympic Torch passing through Hereford.
- Informed Members of the reception held on 19 September for the Herefordshire Paralympic Athletes at Point4 and advised of the public home coming welcome for the Paralympians to be held in High Town on Saturday 29 September.
- Reminded Council that this was the last Council meeting for Chief Executive Chris Bull who would be leaving Herefordshire Council on 12 October. The Chairman thanked Chris Bull for all his work as joint Chief Executive for Herefordshire Council and Herefordshire Primary Care Trust.

42. QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

A copy of the public questions and written answers, together with the supplementary questions and answers asked at the meeting are attached to the Minutes as Appendix 1.

43. FORMAL QUESTIONS FROM COUNCILLORS TO THE CABINET MEMBERS AND CHAIRMEN UNDER STANDING ORDERS

A copy of the Member questions and written answers, together with the supplementary questions and answers asked at the meeting are attached to the Minutes as Appendix 2.

44. NOTICES OF MOTION UNDER STANDING ORDERS

Notice of Motion One – Development of the old Cattle Market Site

Submitted by Councillors: MAF Hubbard, EPJ Harvey, C Nicholls, S Michael, J Kenyon, MD Lloyd-Hayes, EMK Chave, A Hempton-Smith, and FM Norman.

Councillor Hubbard proposed the Notice of Motion. After consultation with the Monitoring Officer the Chairman ruled the Notice of Motion out of order.

Councillor Hubbard accepted the ruling of the Chairman but stated that the Notice of Motion had been registered in July and any concerns should have been raised at that stage. Members of Council accepted there were concerns with the Notice of Motion but agreed that any concerns should have been raised prior to the agenda being published.

Notice of Motion Two – Investigation of Possible Amalgamation of Hereford Futures and the Enterprise Zone.

Proposed by Councillor RI Matthews and seconded by Councillor TM James

Councillor Matthews addressed Council and advised that the Cabinet Member Enterprise and Culture, had altered the final paragraph of the original motion before Council, which was agreed by Councillors: Matthews and James.

Altered Final Paragraph:

That a full review take place regarding the Council's support to economic development and enterprise including the funding of Hereford Futures, the Economic Development team, Local Enterprise Partnership, Hereford Business Board, Enterprise Zone and any other relevant bodies with the aim of obtaining considerable financial savings for the taxpayer, achieving a far more effective and appropriate structure to deliver the County's economic priorities.

The following comments were made in debate:

- A Councillor expressed concern that the amendment might have lost the meaning from original motion. The Cabinet Member had been asked to visit Ledbury in order to implement the economic strategy in in the town, as it had significant industry along with young people and families, good road and rail links and broadband in the town.
- The IOC Group Leader stated the focus seemed to be on Hereford City, which appeared too dominant compared to the market towns, and believed there needed to be an organisation which served the County as a whole. This comment was supported by other Members.
- The Leader stated the purpose was to look after business across the county and it was important to ensure everything was in place to carry this out.
- Members expressed concerns about what was happening in the city centre, the fact that there were a number of empty shops and that shop owners and the public were not being kept informed or seeing any benefit regarding the proposals for the city centre.
- The Cabinet Member spoke in support of the motion stating Herefordshire's economy was based on small and medium sized businesses, which would support the economy of the County. Greater focus on EU funding and refocusing on what businesses wanted and what support they could expect to receive was also needed.

Councillor Matthews stated he was delighted with the cross party support for the notice of motion and moved the motion.

RESOLVED:

That a full review take place regarding the Council's support to economic development and enterprise including the funding of Hereford Futures, the Economic Development team, Local Enterprise Partnership, Hereford Business Board, Enterprise Zone and any other relevant bodies with the aim of obtaining considerable financial savings for the taxpayer, achieving a far more effective and appropriate structure to deliver the County's economic priorities.

Notice of Motion Three – Commitment to the Introduction of Support to Staff, Volunteers and Families to Adopt Healthy Lifestyles

Submitted by Councillor RB Hamilton and seconded by Councillor PM Morgan

Councillor Hamilton proposed the notice of motion as outlined in the agenda stating the success of the County depended on having a healthy, committed, focused and well-motivated workforce.

Councillor GJ Powell proposed an amendment to the motion, which was seconded by Councillor Edwards.

Amendment to Motion:

To make a clear commitment to active travel arrangements across the County using the Council's public health role to promote and fund sustainable forms of active travel across the County.

In debate the following points were made:

- Councillor Hamilton supported the amendment.
- It was stated that it was important to remember that rural communities relied on vehicles to get around and provide support to elderly residents.
- In supporting the motion it was asked that pressure was put on supermarkets to promote healthy lifestyles.
- Councillor Robertson, as a Council representative on the Sports Council, supported the motion and proposed that the Council have a sports champion to promote health and sport.
- In supporting the comments on community transport in rural areas, it was stated footpaths and bridleways equally needed to be maintained for community use.

The Cabinet Member Education and Infrastructure stated there were a number of ways of making travel by bus easier, which included being able to take a bike onto a bus for a part cycle part bus journey. The comments on footpaths and bridleways were also noted.

It was moved and seconded that the amended motion be now put.

RESOLVED:

To make a clear commitment to active travel arrangements across the County using the Council's public health role to promote and fund sustainable forms of active travel across the County.

45. LEADER'S REPORT

The Leader of the Council, Councillor Jarvis, presented his report.

Members made comments on the following items:

- Planning for the Future, agenda page 45 – it was requested that all Members were kept regularly informed on issues regarding the Waste Plant. In response the Cabinet Member Major Contracts, stated that things were moving forward and negotiations were being carried out. In addition it was asked if some of the meetings of ‘Your Community, Your Say’ meetings could be held in the day time for some of the more elderly residents.
- Herefordshire’s People, agenda page 45 paragraph 2 – in congratulating the exam results of looked after children it was requested that Members were kept informed of the progress of looked after children as corporate parents. In response to a question on exam results and that a letter was sent to the Minister, the Cabinet Member stated that the local colleges were aware of the issues, however, it was the responsibility of the school to address the issue of which exam board they used.
- Carers in the County Consultation page 46 paragraph 4 – in referring to the consultation on the website it was asked that it be remembered that not everyone had access to the web.
- Council Tax Benefit Scheme page 46 paragraph 5 – assurance was sought that people were being made actively aware of this benefit.
- Hereford Racecourse, agenda page 46 paragraph 6 – it was stated that the impact of the racecourse closing impacted locally as well as nationally and it was requested that Members be kept informed on events and a Member briefing be provided at the earliest opportunity. In response the Leader stated that a timetable had been set and he was working towards a formal agreement in the near future. It was hoped that racing could be resumed in 2014.
- Borders Broadband Project page 46 paragraph 8 – In responding to the points raised the Cabinet Member Education and Infrastructure stated he was aware that the original figure had been £6m however, Broadband Delivery UK (BDUK) had underestimated the rurality of the area and increased the budget in order to achieve what was needed for the County. The Council had decided to match fund to ensure a strong broad band network for the future. Members congratulated the Cabinet Member on what had been achieved with the Border Broadband Project. With regard to the percentage of the County that would be covered by Broadband, the Cabinet Member stated that BDUK were expected to provide high speed broadband to up to 90% of the County. Presently the take up of high speed broadband was 7-8%. He stated that there would be no exclusion, once completed, for lower speed and there were new technologies and bursary schemes to fill any gaps.
- Affordable Housing page 46 paragraph 7 – in response to a question on disused buildings, the Leader asked all Councillors to notify the Cabinet Member of any disused properties that could be reused. In response to a question on the true number of people in need of housing, the Leader stated that officers were working to obtain accurate figures and asked the Cabinet Member to provide a short note for Members.
- In response to a question on a major procurement process being carried out, the Leader advised that all Members were informed and was part of the root and branch review. The forthcoming meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee would provide the opportunity to discuss the issues.
- Finally in noting this was the last Council meeting for Chris Bull as Chief Executive, Members thanked him for the excellent job he had done for Herefordshire in his time as joint Chief Executive for Herefordshire Council and Hereford Primary Care Trust.

The Leader announced to Council that two directors of Stanhope were in attendance at Council and thanked them for attending the meeting.

RESOLVED: That the overview of the Executive's activity be noted.

46. THE ANNUAL COUNCIL MEETING

Councillor Stone, Chairman of the Audit and Governance Committee presented the Monitoring Officer's report on the Annual Council meeting. Councillor Stone supported the report and stated that he felt that currently Council was trying to deal with too many issues at the annual meeting and that more time needed to be given to civic matters. He added that the Committee supported the recommendations.

In debate it was noted:

- Annual Council was an important occasion to welcome visitors from out of the County.
- Annual Council provides the Chairman with the opportunity to recognise the achievements of people within the County.
- It was noted the annual reports from Committees, the Leader's report and questions from Members and the public should no longer be considered at the Annual meeting. It was suggested that consideration be given to a pre-end of year report. The Chairman requested the suggestions be considered by Group Leaders.

RESOLVED

THAT:

- a) **The business to be discussed at the Annual Council meeting in May be amended as shown in Appendix 1 to the report; and**
- b) **The Monitoring Officer be authorised to make any consequential amendments to the Constitution.**

47. REVIEW OF OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY STRUCTURE

The Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee presented the report of the Monitoring Officer on the Review of the Overview and Scrutiny Structure and made the following comments:

- Emphasised that the Lamb report proposed the way forward for the Council.
- At a recent meeting Members had expressed the view that a three Committee structure should be adopted, the Chairman stated he believed a two Committee structure should be adopted comprising of one Overview and Scrutiny and one Health Committee.
- Essential to ensure Cabinet and Overview and Scrutiny worked well together and the Lamb report proposed a working group build upon this.
- It was suggested that the Chairmen of the Task and Finish Groups hold more public meetings.
- It was proposed that the structure of a two Committee system be reviewed in 12 months.

Councillor Robertson proposed an amendment to the recommendations for a three Committee structure to include an Environment Committee based on the away day discussions held by Committee Members in April this year. The amendment was

seconded by Councillor Bowen, who stated it would provide strength and depth to the scrutiny process.

In debate the following comments were made:

- The IOC Group Leader reiterated that the role of the Committees was to scrutinise and not to Monitor and felt that a two Committee structure was enough for Members and their workload capacity, particularly for those Members working full time.
- The Independent Group Leader urged Members to support a three Committee structure to include an Environment Committee to deal with issues such as transportation and highways.
- The Liberal Democrat Group Leader supported a two Committee Structure.
- The Cabinet Member Education and Infrastructure reminded Members that they had been consulted regarding changes and Group Leaders had recommended that Members support the recommendations.

The amendment to the recommendations was lost.

In response to questions to Chairmanship the Leader announced that:

Councillor Seldon would be the Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee and Councillor Harvey would serve as Vice-Chairman.

Councillor Millar would be the Chairman of the Health Scrutiny Committee and Councillor Robertson would serve as Vice-Chairman.

RESOVED

THAT:

- a) the recommendations of the report on the Overview and Scrutiny (O&S) Function as set out at pages 3-4 of Appendix 1 to this report be adopted;**
- b) the authority to exercise the Authority's statutory health scrutiny functions be delegated to the Health and Social Care Overview and Scrutiny Committee;**
- c) the Terms of Reference of the General Overview and Scrutiny Committee and the Health and Social Care Overview and Scrutiny Committee be as set out at paragraph 23 of the report;**
- d) each Overview and Scrutiny Committee consist of 13 Councillors and seats on each Committee be allocated by political proportionality as set out at paragraph 13 of the report appointments to those seats to be confirmed by Group Leaders;**
- e) the change to two Overview and Scrutiny Committees take effect from Monday 15 October 2012.**
- f) Council approve the appointment to the office of Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the General Overview and Scrutiny Committee and the Health and Social Care Scrutiny Committee;**
- g) statutory co-optees serve on the General Overview and Scrutiny Committee;**

- h) the operating principles set out at paragraph 18 of the report form the basis of the new scrutiny model;
- i) the rules of proportionality be not applied to Task and Finish Groups appointed by either of the two Overview and Scrutiny Committees;
- j) the Head of Governance be designated as the Authority's statutory Scrutiny Officer; and
- k) the Monitoring Officer be authorised to make any consequential amendments to the Constitution.

48. GRANT OF DISPENSATIONS UNDER THE LOCALISM ACT 2011

Councillor Stone, Chairman of the Audit and Governance Committee presented the report of the Monitoring Officer to Council on the granting of dispensations under the Localism Act 2011 and moved the adoption of the recommendations.

RESOLVED

THAT:

- a) the power to grant dispensations under Section 33 (2)(b)(d) and (e) Localism Act 2011 or any subsequent amendment be delegated to the Audit and Governance Committee;
- b) the power to grant dispensations under Section 33 (2)(a) and (c) Localism Act 2011 or any subsequent amendment be delegated to the Monitoring Officer with a right of appeal to the Audit and Governance Committee; and
- c) Council Procedure Rules be amended by the addition of:

“4.1.25 Exclusion of Members with Disclosable Pecuniary Interests

Where a Member is prevented by virtue of a Disclosable Pecuniary interest from participating in a meeting, that Member shall immediately vacate the room or chamber where the meeting is taking place (including any public area) unless a dispensation has been granted”

And the insertion of the words “clause 4.1.25” in clauses 4.1.2.1 and 4.1.22.1

49. APPOINTMENT OF INDEPENDENT PERSONS TO THE HEREFORDSHIRE STANDARDS PANEL

Councillor Stone, Chairman of the Audit and Governance Committee rose to address Council on the Appointment of Independent Persons to the Herefordshire Standards Panel. Councillor Stone expressed his thanks to independent panel members Mr Bharier and Mr Stevens for the guidance they would provide the new panel members over the next 12 months and thanked them for their attendance at the Council meeting.

RESOLVED: That it be noted and approved the appointment of Mr Jake Bharier, Mr Robert Cook and Mr David Stevens as Independent Persons to

the Herefordshire Standards Panel, in accordance with the provisions of the Localism Act 2011.

50. APPOINTMENT OF TEMPORARY COUNCILLORS TO OCLE PYCHARD PARISH COUNCIL

Councillor Jarvis, Leader of the Council presented the report of the Head of Governance Services on the Appointment of Temporary Councillors to Ocle Pychard Parish Council and moved the adoption of the recommendations.

RESOLVED

THAT:

- a) **Council agreed to the appointment of the following Councillors as temporary members of the Ocle Pychard Parish Council until such time as an election has been held and the new Councillors have taken up office or failing enough nominations being received, the co-option of three Councillors:**

Councillors: JG Lester, PM Morgan, A Seldon; and

- b) **the Assistant Director, Law, Governance and Resilience, be authorised to make the necessary order with effect from 28 September 2012.**

51. EMPLOYMENT PANEL

Councillor Jarvis, Leader of the Council, rose to address Council with the recommendations of the Employment Panel which met on 13 September 2012. The Leader made the following comments:

- The Employment Panel received evidence of the current salary trends for the Chief Executive appointments to authorities similar to Herefordshire, which informed the recommendation to Council.
- Council is required to approve the salary a part of its published Pay Policy Statement under the Localism Act 2011.
- Should Council approve the salary the Employment Panel will proceed with the recruitment process and make a recommendation to Council on a suitable appointment in due course.
- Under the Constitution during the interim period an officer needs to be appointed to carry out the functions of the Chief Executive. It was suggested that the Deputy Chief Executive is the appropriate person.

Council debated the funding for the post and the need to look at the public sector and the salary boundaries and pay. Council noted the new post would only be responsible for Herefordshire Council and not a joint Chief Executive as previously. Discussion was held on whether any savings would be achieved and Members were reminded that those working in the public sector, particularly those working health, received considerably more salary than this post was offering. Following a vote there were:

For	18
Against	11
Abstentions	03

The Leader moved the adoption of the recommendations of the Employment Panel.

RESOLVED

THAT:

- a) the proposed remuneration for the post of Chief Executive be within a range of £140,000 to £145,000; and
- b) the Deputy Chief Executive fulfil the functions of the Chief Executive under the Constitution on an acting basis pending an appointment to the post of Chief Executive.

INFORMATION ITEM - OLD CATTLE MARKET SITE, HEREFORD

The Leader announced to Council that preparatory work for the start of demolition work on the old cattle market site would commence on 1 October 2012.

The meeting ended at 1.30 pm

CHAIRMAN

PUBLIC QUESTIONS TO COUNCIL – 28 September 2012**Question from Ms B Mark, Orleton, Herefordshire of Councillor RB Hamilton Cabinet Member Environment, Housing and Planning**

Question 1

Local action during flooding

There is much going on to bring in localism but our Parish Council is frustrated that they are left almost powerless when flooding hits Orleton. Localism is about trusting locals, and when flooding hits the county, county resources are stretched. A partnership between local and county, at these times, would seem to be a sensible thing to work toward. Once an area has been proved to be susceptible to flooding could we ask that Highways gives permission for Parish Councils to protect home owners, and road users, by putting up flood signs or even closing severely flooded roads until the flood subsides? There could be a phone-in centre where all the actions of local PC are collected so Highways can monitor road floods and actions.

With all the work the county council is putting into monitoring flooding and ideas of alleviating floods hopefully such actions will be needed less and less. But while flooding persists action has to be fast and local people can do this much better.

Answer from Councillor RB Hamilton Cabinet Member Environment, Housing and Planning

Answer to question 1

We are currently consulting with parish councils on how Herefordshire Council can work better with communities to both assist with the local response to flooding and to help increase local resilience. I very much welcome the suggestions made and will certainly consider them alongside other representations.

As part of the consultation, I have already begun to visit key flood sites throughout the county, and I will ensure that Orleton is included over the coming weeks, in order to better understand the issues faced by local people.

I would also encourage other Parish Councils to get in touch if they would like to meet with me to discuss how we can improve on how we manage the impacts of flooding.

In addition to this the Council offers all Town and Parish Councils assistance in the creation of Town/Parish Community Resilience Plans in line with the Cabinet office's Strategic National Framework on Community Resilience. I am aware that the Council's Resilience team are currently awaiting a reply from Orleton Parish Council for a date to meet with the newly appointed Community Resilience Co-ordinator, in order to create a plan and to validate this with a table top exercise. I would see this as an opportunity for the Parish Council to discuss the specific issues raised in the question.

PUBLIC QUESTIONS TO COUNCIL – 28 September 2012**Question from Mr P Mitchell, Herefordshire of Councillor H Bramer, Cabinet Member Major Contracts**

Question 2

Demonstration of optimum value for money solution for the PFI procurement of the energy from Waste CHP scheme

Would the Cabinet Member responsible provide an assessment explaining and demonstrating that the chosen procurement option and chosen technical CHP solution at Hartlebury offers the best value for money to the tax payers of Herefordshire. Specifically addressing -:

- How he has determined and ensured the optimal technical CHP solution at Hartlebury (against other CHP alternatives considered) to achieve minimum NPV (best value to Council tax payers) for this project within a single tender PFI contract.
- Why he has not considered / adopted commissioning independent technical support to specify, competitively tender and project manage then operate the energy from waste CHP plant on behalf of the Council.
- How within this contractual arrangement he is safeguarding the public purse by independently validating the offered energy from waste CHP technical solution also demonstrating that this delivers lowest NPV or best value for money solution.
- How he has avoided well recognised adverse long term cost implications historically repeatedly delivered under many and varied other public PFI contracts and which are now generally consider as a poor value method of project implementation.

Answer from Councillor H Bramer, Cabinet Member Major Contracts

Answer to Question 2

These matters have not yet been finally determined by this council. Value for money assessments will inform a report to Cabinet expected later this financial year, in accordance with the decision made by Cabinet on 16 February 2012.

Supplementary Question

Councillor Bramer's response to my concerns and requested clarification of how the Council were to overcome likely difficulties achieving implementation of the optimum solution to ensure best value for money of the preferred energy from waste CHP solution via its stated PFI contract mechanism were simply not addressed.

I am reasonably confident that the Council Waste Strategy document has probably identified and directed the correct best value for money residual waste disposal solution.

PUBLIC QUESTIONS TO COUNCIL – 28 September 2012

However having reviewed the developers proposal he does not include any CHP application his solution and will not therefore satisfy the specified or preferred solution and will certainly not deliver potential best value for money solution for the Council Tax Payer. In referring to the plant as an energy from waste CHP the developer is misrepresenting the scheme which has no CHP, and in its absence merely exports available generation to the grid at low thermal efficiency. Meaning that nearly 70% of the potential available heat energy from the scheme is simply discarded.

This heat would have otherwise have been significantly recovered had a suitable CHP application been included in the proposal, producing a very beneficial and significant revenue stream to the project which should be available to offset the capital cost of this scheme and produce a better lower cost solution to the Council Tax Payer.

The Council should postpone sanctioning the developers proposed solution until it has ensured that the developer has determined and included the most technically suitable and financially beneficial CHP application available into the scheme. Otherwise it will not ensure the best value for money solution”

Cabinet Member Response

Councillor Bramer thanked Mr Mitchell for his question and stated that he would take on board his comments.

PUBLIC QUESTIONS TO COUNCIL – 28 September 2012

**Question from Mr P Linnell, Eardisland, Herefordshire of Councillor RB Hamilton
Cabinet Member Environment, Housing and Planning**

Question 3

Affordable Housing

On the evidence base for the LDF, please indicate the likely percentage of the identified affordable housing need which will be met by the implementation of the proposed LDF strategies and policies in full. Please show all data sources and calculations, and indicate estimates of the worst, best and most probable cases along with the assumptions these estimates are based on.

Answer from Councillor RB Hamilton Cabinet Member Environment, Housing and Planning

Answer to question 3

The percentage of affordable housing which will be sought through the policies of the LDF is yet to be finally determined and will be established based on evidence of housing need and viability. The evidence base will partly be drawn from the affordable housing viability report available on the Council website; work currently underway on economic viability will inform the development of affordable housing targets to be set out in the Draft Core Strategy which is due to be published in the new year.

PUBLIC QUESTIONS TO COUNCIL – 28 September 2012

Question from Mr A Fisher, Hereford of Councillor PD Price Cabinet Member Corporate Services

Question 4

Democratic accountability in the contracting out of statutory council services.

According to the Project Mandate for the Council's 'root and branch reviews' of the services it provides, all services are included in the review, with the aim of shrinking the Council budget by 30% and leading eventually to new governance structures.

Which are the laws and regulations applying to the contracting out of statutory council services that ensure continued (and improved) democratic accountability both during and in the culmination of this review process? (Please list the laws and regulations and the statutory services to which they apply.)

Answer from Councillor PD Price Cabinet Member Corporate Services

Answer to question 4

The Root and Branch Review programme is designed to fundamentally review everything that the Council does and will, over an 18 month period, set out what services we will deliver over the next decade to meet the priorities for the County.

We also have an obligation to council taxpayers and residents to consider best value and to understand what alternatives there are to direct service provision by the Council. There will be an option appraisal for each Review about which services are provided in the future and how – there is no presumption in favour of outsourcing services, what matters is what solution provides the best outcomes for residents at a price we can afford to pay.

Any recommendations from the Reviews relating to the future provision of services will be consistent with relevant UK and European legislation and this will be included in the report to Cabinet as appropriate.

The general legislative framework for accountability in all decision making process is contained in the Local Government Act 1972, the Local Government Act 2000 and specifically in the Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Meetings and Access to Information) (England) Regulations 2012.

PUBLIC QUESTIONS TO COUNCIL – 28 September 2012**Question from Ms P Mitchell, Hereford of Councillor PD Price Cabinet Member Corporate Services**

Question 5

Statistically robust opinion surveys of a representative sample of the County's population for the Root and Branch Reviews of services provided by Herefordshire Public Services

The Council propose to learn residents' views on the provision and contracting out of all services (and on the Interim Local Transport Plan) through a 'community engagement exercise', 'Your community - your say', comprising evening meetings, a web forum, twitter and a facebook page. In addition 'there may be some supplementary locality based consultation on aspects of certain Reviews' (report to Cabinet 5th April 2012).

Will the Council be undertaking any statistically robust opinion surveys in connection with the Root and Branch Reviews designed both to be properly representative of the county's population (and including 'hard to reach' groups) and capable of being weighted according to the respondents' stake in the service in question?

Answer from Councillor PD Price Cabinet Member Corporate Services

Answer to question 5

The 'Your community your say' exercise, as the question indicates, is being undertaken through a variety of mechanisms which includes the 'Quality of Life Survey'. This was run earlier in the year, is statistically robust and representative of the county's population. It is weighted by age, gender, household size and locality. The headline results are available online (www.herefordshire.gov.uk/factsandfigures) and further reports will be released in due course. 'Hard to reach' groups are being specifically included in the qualitative part of the 'Your community-your say' engagement in September and October.

Supplementary Question

In the 2012 Quality of Life survey, were respondents asked to comment on the quality of the services they received or which ones they would be happy to lose?

Response by the Cabinet Member

The Quality of Life Survey is a back stop. The team is engaging and using the Quality of Life Survey as the starting point of consultation and everybody will have the opportunity to input into the survey.

MEMBER QUESTIONS TO COUNCIL – 28 September 2012**Question from Councillor GA Powell of Councillor JG Jarvis, Leader of the Council****Cattle Market**

- 1 I have been charged by shop owners and their staff in Hereford city to put the following question to council.

As the former Cattle Market site in Hereford has now been unoccupied for some considerable time, would the cabinet consider allowing the public to park on part of the site providing much needed car parking capacity in Hereford city centre until its development is ready to commence bearing in mind that part of Garrick House car park is under repair?

Answer from Councillor JG Jarvis, Leader of the Council

Answer to question 1

Thank you for bringing this question forward on behalf of shop owners and their staff. There is no evidence of a lack of car parking capacity in Hereford city. However, we will bear this request in mind. I intend to provide a verbal update to this question at the Council meeting.

Question from Councillor GA Powell of Councillor GJ Powell, Cabinet Member Education and Infrastructure**Traffic Lights at ASDA**

- 2 *On the weekend of 15 September the traffic lights at ASDA in South Wye failed, this enabled the traffic to flow freely, and everyone took their turn. I ask Herefordshire Council and the Highways Agency to turn these lights off for a trial period of three months with the hope that they will remain permanently turned off after this time.*

Answer from Councillor GJ Powell, Cabinet Member Education and Infrastructure

Answer to question 2

I am aware of this incident and have received several reports as a result of which I will make representations to the Highways Agency, as the responsible body for this matter.

I would also like to point out that the traffic lights do aid pedestrians and other vulnerable road users who often lose out as traffic dominates. In addition there is the access to side roads and the ASDA store which needs to be taken into account as well.

Supplementary Question

Would the Cabinet Member ensure that pedestrian concerns are taken forward as a matter of urgency.

Cabinet Member Response

MEMBER QUESTIONS TO COUNCIL – 28 September 2012

Yes, this had been noted in the written response. There was also a need to be aware of traffic movement in the side roads for pedestrians.

MEMBER QUESTIONS TO COUNCIL – 28 September 2012**Question from Councillor PJ Edwards of Councillor GJ Powell, Cabinet Member Education and Infrastructure****Sustainable Travel Funding**

- 3 *Please advise why Ward Councillors were not formally informed of the Broad Street Sustainable Travel funded scheme being delayed / cancelled as reported in the Hereford Journal & will consideration now be given to making the River Wye Tow Path more safe & user friendly to encourage more environmental forms of travel in and out of the City?*

Answer from Councillor GJ Powell, Cabinet Member Education and Infrastructure

Answer to question 3

The Central ward Member was made aware of our proposals; a decision on the best use of this funding to support sustainable travel has yet to be taken and I will of course liaise with the relevant ward members in reaching that decision.

Supplementary Question

I was seeking to ensure better communications between Cabinet Members and the whole Council. I understand the Broad Street Plans are on hold.

Cabinet Member Response

Regarding the spend to date, when the consultation was carried out the results of those in favour and those opposed were even. What has been done is to simply defer the scheme. What has been spent on administration is approximately £200k. The work is still valid and when the scheme is revisited the work that has been done to date will be used.

MEMBER QUESTIONS TO COUNCIL – 28 September 2012**Question from Councillor DW Greenow of Councillor PM Morgan, Cabinet Member Health and Wellbeing****Animal Health & Welfare**

- 4 Since the foot and mouth outbreak in the country animal health has vastly improved in the livestock industry thanks to more stringent policing by the animal health department.

We have in Hereford a dedicated group who have built up a valuable store of information across the County of Herefordshire and this is used to maintain the high standards that we currently have in this Country which enables a strong export market for our livestock. Our livestock market in Hereford is thriving and expanding and the standards are very high. This is due to the efforts of our auctioneers but also the animal health staff who keep an astute eye on the welfare of all animals in the market thus ensuring buyers of the high quality of the livestock.

It is rumoured that this department is to be shut down and the work taken over by officers from Worcestershire and Warwickshire Councils. If this were to be true I am concerned that Herefordshire will lose valuable knowledge and experience.

Can you confirm that this will not happen and that we will retain this extremely valuable service thus maintaining our high standards which I believe is significantly higher than most counties?

Answer from Councillor PM Morgan, Cabinet Member Health and Wellbeing

Answer to question 4

It is good to know that the excellent work undertaken by Herefordshire Council's Animal Health & Welfare (AH & W) team which are part of its Environmental Health & Trading Standards Service (EH&TS) is recognised and appreciated by market users and constituents of Herefordshire and beyond. It is also excellent news that the livestock market goes from strength to strength.

I am happy to state that any rumours currently circulating about the immediate future of the AH & W team are unfounded.

Council will be aware however, that all services will be subject of an on-going review through the Rising To The Challenge (RTTC) process. EH&TS including AH & W are part of this process and are currently involved in the wider service review entitled Housing, Economic and Regulatory Services (HERS.) Part of that process is to examine each and every activity we currently perform and to determine whether it should stop, continue unaltered or change in order to ensure that the Council's key priorities and outcomes will be delivered. This work will be complete in the Spring.

MEMBER QUESTIONS TO COUNCIL – 28 September 2012

Question from Councillor WLS Bowen of Councillor RB Hamilton, Cabinet Member Environment, Housing and Planning

Affordable Housing

- 5 *How many planning applications for houses and flats are live but not built?*
- *What can be done to encourage the building of these houses and flats?*
 - Bullet point disallowed – Constitution 4.1.15.4 c: the answer to the question will be substantially the same as the previous answer. See public question 3.
 - *How many applicants for affordable housing on the Home Point register have defined and definite links to Herefordshire?*

Answer from Councillor RB Hamilton, Cabinet Member Environment, Housing and Planning

Answer to question 5

As of April 2011 (the latest published Annual Monitoring Study) there were outstanding planning permissions for 2057 dwellings (1671 were not started and 386 were under construction).

- Once planning permission is granted the planning system can do little to ensure the permission is commenced. However should the developer so request further advice can be given with respect to the possible revision/amendment to the detail and form of any approved scheme. Having said that, I understand the issues and will have a look at what, if anything, could be done to improve the situation. I will be very pleased to hear any ideas or suggestions that the Councillor or other Members may wish to make.
- The Council's current policy in the Unitary Development Plan and Planning Obligations Supplementary Planning Guidance in respect of the provision of affordable and market housing is unchanged. The Core Strategy will include planning policies which will require that an appropriate proportion of affordable dwellings are provided, based upon evidence of housing need and economic viability.
- Of the total of 4,893 applicants registered with Home Point at the end of September, 4511 had defined and definite links to Herefordshire.

Supplementary Question

Is the Cabinet Member aware that if changes are made this could make affordable housing in Herefordshire null and void.

Cabinet Member Response

Yes the Cabinet Member was aware and will need to take this into account for any future plans.

MEMBER QUESTIONS TO COUNCIL – 28 September 2012

MEMBER QUESTIONS TO COUNCIL – 28 September 2012

Question from Councillor WLS Bowen of Councillor PD Price, Cabinet Member Corporate Services

Finance – Hoople Ltd and The Council

6 *Can we be assured that the Council and Hoople Ltd have actually made genuine savings rather than made costly investments, which appear to save the Council money but in reality may have cost us dear?*

- *Can the various transactions be clearly defined and explained?*

Answer from Councillor PD Price, Cabinet Member Corporate Services

Answer to question 6

The Council has assured the savings from the arrangement with Hoople Ltd and built these into the agreed budget over the last two years.

In 2011/12 the savings reduced from the contract totalled £467k, whilst in 2012/13 a further saving of £413k were delivered (fully compliant with the approved business case).

In addition savings have also been delivered to our health partners - £152k in 2011-12 and £16k in 2012-13.

To deliver the recurrent savings one off staff redundancy costs of £82,633 were incurred by the Council.

The savings form part of the base budget and can be identified in the service level agreements being delivered by Hoople Ltd.

MEMBER QUESTIONS TO COUNCIL – 28 September 2012**Question from Councillor MAF Hubbard of Councillor RB Hamilton, Cabinet Member Environment, Housing and Planning****Flooding**

- 7 On Monday 24 September, the Merton Meadow car park was flooded. This, despite spending several million of public money on a flood alleviation scheme in mitigation. Please would the Cabinet Member explain:
- *Why the flooding occurred so soon after the flood alleviation scheme has been completed?*
 - *What are the implications for gaining Environment Agency permission for the housing that is planned for the site?*
 - *How will this affect future insurability of any housing that is developed on this site?*

Answer from Councillor RB Hamilton, Cabinet Member Environment, Housing and Planning

Answer to question 7

I would begin by pointing out that the Yazor Brook Flood Alleviation Scheme has operated four times successfully since its completion and that the scheme was designed to prevent the Yazor Brook from overflowing.

Although the flood alleviation scheme at Credenhill operated as planned during Sunday and Monday of this week some flooding did occur in Merton Meadow car park during this time. This does not represent a failure of the flood alleviation scheme – as it operated as envisaged during this flood event and prevented more severe flooding to houses and businesses west of Edgar Street and in the ESG area in Hereford.

The Yazor Brook Flood Alleviation Scheme at Credenhill has enabled Hereford Futures to bring forward plans for the delivery of an Urban Village housing and other development in the vicinity of Merton Meadow. It has always been known that any scheme on the Merton Meadow will need to include flood storage capacity. This means that detailed plans arising from any planning application will need to ensure that appropriate on site flood mitigation measures are in place to ensure that any new properties are flood free. This would be a factor that insurance companies would no doubt take into account when assessing risk and Hereford Futures has been in discussions with the insurance industry over several years in order to plan for this.

Work continues through Hereford Futures to develop the detailed proposals for development in the area in consultation with Welsh Water and the Environment Agency.

The Council will consider this issue carefully as the development comes forward and through the planning application process.

MEETING:	COUNCIL
DATE:	23 NOVEMBER 2012
TITLE OF REPORT:	QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC
REPORT BY:	MONITORING OFFICER

1 Classification

Open

2 Wards Affected

County-wide

3 Purpose

To receive any questions from members of the public deposited more than eight clear working days before the meeting of Council.

4 Introduction and Background

- 4.1 Members of the public may ask a question of a Cabinet Member or Committee or other Chairmen. Written answers will be circulated to Members, the press and public prior to the start of the Council meeting. Questions subject to a Freedom of Information request will be dealt with under that separate process.
- 4.2 Standing Order 4.1.14.4 of the Constitution states that: a question may only be asked if notice has been given by delivering it in writing or by electronic mail to the Monitoring Officer no later than midday eight clear working days before the day of the meeting (ie the Monday of the week preceding the Council meeting where that meeting is on a Friday). Each question must give the name and address of the questioner and must name the person to whom it is to be put.
- 4.3 A questioner who has submitted a written question may also put **one** brief supplementary question without notice to the person (if s/he is present at the meeting) who has replied to his or her original question. A supplementary question must arise directly out of the original request or reply. The Chairman may reject a supplementary question on any of the grounds for rejecting written questions set out in these Council rules or if the question is too lengthy, is in multiple parts or takes the form of a speech. In any event, any person asking a supplementary question will be permitted only **1 minute** to do so.
- 4.4 The Monitoring Officer may reject a question or a supplemental question if it:

Further information on the subject of this report is available from
Chris Chapman, Monitoring Officer on Tel: (01432) 260200

- Is not about a matter for which the Council has a responsibility or which affects the County or a part of it;
- Is illegal, scurrilous, defamatory, frivolous or offensive or otherwise out of order;
- Is substantially the same as or similar to a question which has been put at a meeting of the Council in the past six months or relates to the same subject matter or the answer to the question will be substantially the same as the previous answer;
- Requires the disclosure of confidential or exempt information;
- Relates to a planning or licensing application;
- Relates to an employment matter that should more properly be dealt with through the Council's Human Resources processes.

4.5 There will be a time limit of a maximum of 30 minutes for public questions and of 30 minutes for Members' questions. If either public or Member questions are concluded in less than 30 minutes, then the Chairman may allow more time for either public or Member questions within an overall time limit of one hour for all questions and supplementary questions. There will normally be no extension of time beyond one hour, unless the Chairman decides that there are reasonable grounds to allow such an extension, and questions not dealt with in this time will be dealt with by written response. The Chairman will decide the time allocated to each question. The register of questions put to the Council meeting, both questions allowed or rejected, is available at a Council meeting for members of the public to view.

5 Questions

5.1 Seven questions have been received by the deadline and are attached at Appendix 1.

PUBLIC QUESTIONS TO COUNCIL – 23 NOVEMBER 2012

Question from Mrs P Churchward, Breinton

Question 1

Refurbishment of Hereford's Historic Butter Market

The Executive Rolling Programme indicated that the Cabinet Member Corporate Services and the Cabinet Member Enterprise and Culture were due to make a decision on the refurbishment of Hereford's historic Butter Market on 18 October 2012 and how the Council plans to fund that refurbishment. Considering that the Council has so far spent millions supporting the ESG retail development could one of these Cabinet Members please advise what the current situation is regarding funding the Butter Market refurbishment?

Question from Mrs E Morawiecka, Breinton

Question 2

Webcasting of Council Meetings

As part of its drive to make democracy more transparent, accessible and open, Herefordshire Council carried out a trial webcast of a planning meeting in February 2012. The Head of Governance said that this was one of the Council's priorities and it also increased the accessibility of such meetings to members of the public and staff who cannot travel to meetings or miss them because of other commitments. The Council press release stated that "The first webcast of a Herefordshire Council meeting proved a resounding success with more than 1,000 people having viewed it...Consideration will now be given to extending webcasting to all of the council's public meetings".

With this resounding success and the fact that many other councils already provide this service for local taxpayers to engage in democracy, can the Cabinet Member responsible for Governance and Democracy confirm when they are due to extend webcasting of meetings to help deliver this priority of Herefordshire Council?

PUBLIC QUESTIONS TO COUNCIL – 23 NOVEMBER 2012

Question from Mrs BC McHarg

Question 3

Herefordshire Council Capital Overspend on Supporting Retail Development

The budget report to Cabinet on 18 October 2012, in Appendix 2, states that there is already a “capital overspend on the Link Road in excess of £1.5million on property purchases”. What other additional costs is the Council incurring in order to facilitate the delivery of this new retail development?

Question from Mr P McKay, Leominster

Question 4

Car Parking Charges – Traffic Regulation Orders

Leominster Town Council minute 09.09.83 of 21 September 2009 records Leominster Town Council request to review waiting restrictions in Broad Street with objective of bringing parking bays marked double yellow lines outside Hintons into use, with minute 09.10.98 of 19 October 2009 advising will be included on list for ranking, with the June 2010 TRO work program showing review of Broad Street waiting restrictions has a project start date of 28 May 2013. Leominster Town Council minute 11.01.129 & 130 of 17/01/2011 record concern about the way in which other parking bays are marked with single and double yellow lines enforced by wardens throughout Leominster, due to waiting restriction orders dating back to 1977 not having been updated when town centre redesigned, seeking to bring all these other parking bays into use, with minute 11.02.159.2 of meeting 21/02/2011 recording that Leominster Town Council’s request for a review of waiting restrictions in the town was noted and that the request would be included on the lists for ranking in June/July 2011.

Requests asking for current information regarding these project start dates remain unanswered, so may I enquire just when we may expect these projects to start, aiming to make Leominster more parking friendly in these times of austerity, and to reduce parking demands on adjacent residential streets?

PUBLIC QUESTIONS TO COUNCIL – 23 NOVEMBER 2012

Question from Mrs V Wegg-Prosser, Breinton

Question 5

5 year Housing Land Availability Target

Could the Cabinet Member responsible for Planning confirm that the Council's decisions to delay the completion of the 5 year housing land availability target and to delay the preparation of the core strategy were agreed in order to take advantage of the relaxation of planning rules that can occur (in accordance with the NPPF) in the event that 5 year housing land availability and core strategy are not in place?

Question from Mr P Mitchell,

Question 6

Explanation and justification of capital funding priority over essential service provision

Against a background of tightened central government funding and relatively stagnant council tax receipts, would the Council explain and justify its reduced budgetary allocations to increasing demand and cost of social and health care support against its clear preference towards provision of land and funding significant project costs to underpin developer profit on the Edgar Grid development (thus compounding the reduction impact to budget due to debt financing costs).

I would ask the Council to address this (and any other) capital funding priority in the context of its primary duty to meet essential core services and especially to provide support to the most needy and vulnerable in society. In particular

- *Provide assurance and demonstrate how it will address recently reported management failures to meet adequate (legal minimum) requirements for ensuring safety and care of children at risk or in care and maintain necessary resources to achieve its statutory and more important moral obligation to ensure good or excellent standards of care provision.*
- *Explain and justify reported cuts in the extent of service provision for care of the elderly against an increasingly demanding demographic going forward.*
- *Explain and justify reported cuts in support to vulnerable families at a time when they are suffering particularly badly due to the current economic climate and are increasing in numbers.*
- *How it will ensure required resourcing of care and support to those with mental health problems under reported reductions in available funding having already been targeted with more stringent benefits requirements (and will otherwise require more care and support getting into and maintaining suitable employment and safeguarding their personal circumstances).*

PUBLIC QUESTIONS TO COUNCIL – 23 NOVEMBER 2012

Question from Ms P Mitchell, Hereford

Question 7

Completeness of traffic modelling for policy evaluation and soundness of the Local Development Framework

The Council is about to embark on another consultation on another version of the Local Development Framework Core Strategy, in part because of concerns expressed by statutory organisations, including the Highways Agency, the Environment Agency and Natural England.

In their 28 November 2011 letter to the Council on the Revised Preferred Option consultation, the Highways Agency stated:

'The Agency currently finds the Revised Preferred Options Consultation as **unsound** due to lack of supporting transport evidence base.' (Letter from Serena Howell, NDD West Midlands Area 9 to Forward Planning)

To remedy this lack of 'supporting transport evidence base', the Council planners proposed, and the Cabinet agreed (at its meeting on the 12th of July), that from July to September of this year there would be 'continuing work on outstanding elements, including ... completion of road studies and **upgraded modelling**' in preparation for 'Consultation upon a Draft Plan and SA/SEA [Sustainability Appraisal and Strategic Environmental Assessment] and HRA [Habitats Regulation Assessment]' (para 50)

The Local Transport Plan 2011-12 Annual Progress Report (APR, October 2012) describes the 'Hereford Transport Model Upgrade' as

'a standard process all models go through every 5 years or so, [to] ensure the model accurately represents existing transport conditions for all types of transport and so can be used with confidence to predict transport conditions in the future to help the council develop its transport strategies and business cases for transport investment.' (p6)

However the APR also reports that. due to 'the very poor weather in the spring' completion of the upgraded model is not expected until spring 2013.

This indicates that not only will the evidence base for revising the Core Strategy and presenting it at the forthcoming consultation still be incomplete but so will the statutory components of the plan — the Sustainability Appraisal, the Strategic Environmental Assessment, and the Habitats Regulation Assessment.

Can Cllr Hamilton confirm either that:

a) *further consultation on the Local Development Framework will be delayed until the upgraded transport model is available to inform policy including 'the business cases for transport investment' and the statutory environmental assessments of the LDF;*

or that

b) *if consultation is to proceed, reasonable alternative policies whose impacts **can** be assessed will be presented alongside the Council's preferred option which, it appears, must remain unsound until the problem of incomplete evidence has been addressed.*

MEETING:	COUNCIL
DATE:	23 NOVEMBER 2012
TITLE OF REPORT:	APPOINTMENT OF HEREFORDSHIRE COUNCIL CHIEF EXECUTIVE & HEAD OF PAID SERVICE
REPORT BY:	ASSISTANT DIRECTOR PEOPLE, POLICY & PARTNERSHIP

1 Classification

Open

2 Wards Affected

County-wide

3 Purpose

To approve the appointment of a Chief Executive and Head of Paid Service.

4 Recommendation(s)

THAT: the appointment of Alistair Neill as Chief Executive and Head of Paid Service for Herefordshire Council be approved.

5 Key Points Summary

- Council approved the remuneration for the post of Chief Executive at its meeting in July.
- The council's constitution provides that shortlisting and interview of candidates for the post of Chief Executive will be carried out by the Employment Panel

6 Alternative Options

- 6.1 The council is obliged by law to appoint a Head of Paid Service. This is separate and distinct from the non-statutory role of Chief Executive. However, in this authority, the Chief Executive is the designated Head of Paid Service.

7 Reasons for Recommendations

- 7.1 The appointment of Chief Executive and Head of Paid Service requires Council approval.

8 Introduction and Background

- 8.1 Herefordshire Council had, since December 2007, shared a single Chief Executive and senior

management team with NHS Herefordshire under the Herefordshire Public Services partnership working arrangement. In light of the national changes in the NHS architecture and the disestablishment of primary care trusts in March 2013, Council agreed, on 20 July, to the redundancy of the post of HPS Chief Executive. Following that decision and taking account of the Employment Panel's recommendations for succession, on 28 September Council approved the remuneration for the post of Chief Executive and Head of Paid Service.

9 Key Considerations

- 9.1 Following a national recruitment campaign and search which resulted in thirty-one applications, the Employment Panel has undertaken the selection and assessment process framed around selection criteria drawn from the agreed role profile.
- 9.2 The selection process, supported by Veredus, included longlisting, shortlisting, individual candidate profiling, informal interviews, stakeholder panels, presentations, and formal interviews. In addition, representatives of partner organisations and all council members were provided with the opportunity to meet the five shortlisted candidates. The support of key stakeholders in this process has been very much appreciated.
- 9.3 Following the final two day selection process, the Employment Panel recommended the appointment of Alistair Neill, currently Chief Executive at Southampton City Council. In accordance with the requirements of the constitution Cabinet Members have been notified of the proposed appointment and no objections have been received.
- 9.4 A conditional offer has been made to Mr Neill. References have been obtained and present no issues. All other pre-appointment processes are in hand including finalising of the contract of appointment.

10 Community Impact

- 10.1 The Chief Executive has a key role to play in representing the organisation and its aims within the community and to enable effective working relationships with partners to deliver the county-wide community and health and wellbeing strategies.

11 Equality and Human Rights

- 11. The appointment process was undertaken in compliance with council policies and having regard to equalities principles.

12 Financial Implications

- 12.1 The financial implications were explored at the time the remuneration for the post was determined.

13 Legal Implications

- 13.1 The Council has a duty to appoint a Head of Paid Service. Under the Local Authorities (Standing Orders) Regulations 2001, this has to be approved by Council and cannot be delegated. The Head of Paid Service, in addition to the statutory role, will undertake all the functions listed in the council's constitution, including overall responsibility for the delivery and direction of council services, fulfilment of Returning Officer functions and Clerk to the Lord Lieutenancy.

14 Risk Management

- 14.1 The appointment of a permanent Herefordshire Council Chief Executive removes a level of uncertainty both internally and externally to the organisation and ensures that staff, trades unions, partners, businesses and other stakeholders know that there is clear, unequivocal officer leadership of the council's operations. The appointment therefore avoids the potential risks associated with prolonged uncertainty in the officer leadership role.

15 Consultees

- 15.1 Representatives from the Herefordshire Safeguarding Boards, West Mercia NHS Cluster, West Mercia Police, Herefordshire Association of Local Councils, Herefordshire Futures, Herefordshire Federation of Small Businesses and Herefordshire Third Sector Board were involved in the stakeholder panels; their views informed the Employment Panel's deliberations and their contribution has been much appreciated.
- 15.2 Cabinet Members were notified of the proposed appointment and no objections were raised.

16 Appendices

- None

17 Background Papers

- None

MEETING:	COUNCIL
DATE:	23 NOVEMBER 2012
TITLE OF REPORT:	LEADER'S REPORT

1 Classification

Open

2 Wards affected

County wide

3 Purpose

To provide an overview of the Executive's activity since the last meeting of Council.

4 Recommendations

THAT:the overview of the Executive's activity be noted.

5 Report

Planning for the Future

5.1 Building on the Quality of Life survey undertaken before the summer, 23 community based 'Your Community; Your Say' engagement events have taken place, with some 450+ people from the community attending and an additional 400 young people's views gathered. What people have told us at these events will help us, through the root & branch reviews and our budget setting process, to understand and explore:

- Whether the Council is focusing on the right priorities;
- Whether the Council is providing the services people believe are needed;
- Which services matter most to the residents of Herefordshire and which are less important; and
- How services could be delivered differently in future

A member's seminar on all the results of the 'Your Community – Your Say' engagement programme is being planned, and I would encourage all members to attend.

5.2 Cabinet has considered reports from the first phase root & branch reviews covering: Older People; Customer Services; Streetscene; and Housing, Economic and Regulatory Services and agreed proposals for development and implementation by officers. Cabinet has also considered proposed revisions to the corporate plan which appear elsewhere on the Council agenda today. Throughout these planning processes we are conscious of the ever tightening financial constraints existing within the public sector. Council will be considering our budget proposals at its next meeting, and we will not know our provisional funding allocation from central government until December although the indications are that we must plan for a reduction of some £5m central government funding in each of the next two financial year.

This, together with increasing pressures in adult social care and in safeguarding, mean that difficult decisions will need to be taken in the coming months to ensure we continue to focus what resources we have on supporting vulnerable people and creating a successful economy.

- 5.3 At its meeting on 12 July 2012 Cabinet agreed a timetable for a draft Core Strategy to be presented to Cabinet in December. The report outlined a number of outstanding matters that would need to be substantially resolved to enable the draft plan to be prepared, these matters included:
- the examination of possible impacts that the Core Strategy proposals may have upon the River Wye Special Area of Conservation (SAC);
 - further analysis of the viability of the package of development proposals contained within the plan; and
 - work to develop an appropriate set of rural policies in the light of the changes to the planning system.
- 5.4 Significant progress has been made in all three areas during the intervening period. However, the issues have not yet been sufficiently resolved to enable a final set of policies to be drafted at this time. Work is proceeding which should enable the draft plan to be presented to Cabinet in February, before consultation takes place, and it remains our intention to submit the Core Strategy to the Secretary of State in the autumn of 2013 and to adopt it in the spring of 2014, following an Examination in Public.

Herefordshire's People

- 5.5 Members will of course be aware that, following a recent unannounced inspection, Ofsted judged safeguarding services for children and young people to be inadequate in Herefordshire. A robust improvement plan has been developed that involves all organisations working to protect children in Herefordshire; an Improvement Board, with an independent chair, Paul Curran, has been set up to drive forward the necessary changes. Whilst we are obviously disappointed in the outcome of this inspection we accept the findings and are determined to work with our partners and drive forward improvements as quickly as we can to make sure that Herefordshire's children and young people are protected from harm.
- 5.6 Following our consultation on the adult social care charging policy the changes to charges have now been confirmed. Having listened to the concerns raised by carers we have amended the proposals to ensure that carers, who play such a significant role in supporting people to remain in their communities, are not subject to charging.
- 5.7 A new taxi marshalling service will operate in Hereford city centre this winter to ensure that people safely find a taxi to take them home on weekend nights. Following a temporary trial last December, the scheme has been commended and supported by West Mercia police, who saw a reduction in crime and disorder and traffic offences. Lasting twelve months and supported by Herefordshire Council, the scheme will see taxi marshals in high visibility jackets working in pairs to aid night-time revelers on their way home, helping to ensure that people stay safe while the city's nightlife remains vibrant.
- 5.8 As I indicated in my September report the Government is ending the national Council Tax Benefit scheme and has required every council to come up with a local system instead; Cabinet has taken account of the feedback received from residents and interested organisations in formulating its recommendation to Council which appears elsewhere on the agenda today.
- 5.9 Children in care are getting a better deal thanks to new ways of working in the council's looked after children's services, but demand for people willing to give a child a loving home

continues to increase. Following adoption week earlier in the month, and to encourage people living in Herefordshire and neighbouring counties to consider giving a child a family for life, an adoption information event is taking place on Saturday, 24 November from 10.30am to 1pm at Moor House, Widemarsh Common, Hereford.

- 5.10 Further to my report to Council in July, following a request from the school's governing body as a result of very low pupil numbers and the statutory consultation, the decision was taken on 16 November to formally close Holme Lacy Primary School; no pupils had been in attendance at the school since July. Small and declining numbers of pupils and small class sizes do affect the viability of individual schools and their future sustainability in delivering first class education to their pupils; given national government proposals to alter the balance of funding across the educational system these pressures will place greater demands on school governing bodies and we will continue to support governing bodies in addressing these challenges.

Herefordshire's Economy & Communities

- 5.11 I am delighted to report to Council that, following the decision taken by Cabinet earlier this month, the development of the Old Livestock Market site is now progressing. I would also like to place on record my thanks to Overview & Scrutiny Committee for their robust scrutiny of the decision. This landmark deal provides Herefordshire not only with the only retail scheme to open in the UK in 2014, but also the creation of significant numbers of construction, retail and service industry jobs and further additions to the overall retail attraction of our county town. The traditional heart of the city remains a vital part of the overall Hereford visitor and shopper experience and we will continue to support promotion of the city retailers as a whole, and retailers in the market towns through initiatives such as Shop Herefordshire (<http://www.herefordbest.com/>), hosted by Hereford Futures, and Truffle Herefordshire (<http://www.truffleherefordshire.co.uk/>) which provide an excellent demonstration of the range and quality of goods already available in Hereford and the county. By providing further reasons for visitors to come to the city and shop, we know that existing retailers can benefit – as evidenced during the recent Flavours of Herefordshire event.
- 5.12 H.Energy week provided a timely opportunity for the Council to demonstrate its commitment to environmental sustainability by becoming a signatory to 'Climate Local' focussing on carbon reduction actions. Three particular projects are being explored to provide a practical demonstration of this commitment: the extension of our existing programme replacing street lights and traffic signals across the county with state of the art LED lighting to cut carbon emissions, reduce costs and maintain community safety; the delivery of a network of electric car charging points across Hereford and all market towns through a joint project with the 'Plugged-in Midlands' grant scheme; and rolling out solar panels across public buildings providing an exciting opportunity for local people to jointly invest in this project though the development of community owned energy co-operatives. This approach builds on the success of schemes already completed at Hereford Crematorium and the Leominster Community Solar Co-operative which deliver strong financial returns, reduce carbon emissions and improve local energy security.
- 5.13 Following consultation with the respective town councils who were encouraged to submit options that met their resident's local needs, annual increases in car parking charges are being implemented this year because of the ongoing budget challenges due to demographic pressures, reductions in central government funding and the council's continuing commitment to look after our most vulnerable citizens.
- 5.14 We have decided to put on hold proposals to carry out a major development of Broad Street, Hereford; instead, we are planning a major expansion of city cycle networks Funding for the Broad Street development came from 'Destination Hereford' a programme funded by the Department of Transport aiming to reduce congestion, increase low carbon transport use and

support sustainable economic growth around Hereford. Following a number of consultation events with the local community organised by the council, it became clear that, whilst there was support for the refurbishment scheme generally, the lengthy period of disruption (over 12 months) whilst construction was underway, could harm local businesses. We listened to and acted on this feedback to reallocate the funding to a programme of other pedestrian and cycling projects aimed at supporting sustainable travel in the city.

- 5.15 Once again 'Flavours of Hereford' demonstrated what a wonderful range of high quality products Herefordshire has be proud of – our producers should be congratulated; the new location and style of the two day festival, organised by Visit Herefordshire and sponsored by allpay, linked the event more closely to the city centre and was welcomed by exhibitors and visitors alike. It is especially pleasing to note that visitor numbers reached a record 32,000 this year and I understand that some existing retailers in town experienced an up to 50% increase in sales over the period showing how much benefit additional retail attractions can bring to the overall retail economy.
- 5.16 Another demonstration of the creativity and talent in the county could be seen at the Hereford Contemporary Craft Fair at the Courtyard Theatre; many of the exhibitors are based in the county and particular congratulations go to Ita Drew who won the new exhibitor's award this year.

Other Issues

- 5.17 In addition, the Executive has considered the following issues:
- a) *Performance and Budget Monitoring* – Cabinet has considered reports on performance and budget outturn for the past quarter.
 - b) *Accommodation Strategy* – Within the overall framework of the strategy, the Cabinet Member Enterprise & Culture, approved the principle of the development of the Herefordshire Archive and Records Centre at Rotherwas, and the next steps necessary to secure development on the site.
- 5.18 As we enter the winter period, once again we and our partners have been preparing for the coming winter. Amey have ensured that gritting supplies are in place to keep our key road networks running, and the annual programme of flu vaccination to those most vulnerable is well underway. Whilst public services provide a range of support to people during severe weather, we also know there is much that individuals and the community can do to help themselves and each other. Some basic advice on some of these actions is available on our website at the following web link:
http://www.herefordshire.gov.uk/advice_and_benefits/winteradvice.asp
- 5.19 Finally Cabinet. This is an information item only and is for receiving without debate. I have reduced my cabinet support team by two member and increased my Cabinet by one with the addition of Councillor Johnson to the Cabinet team. Attached at Appendix 1 to this report is the list of portfolio holders.

CABINET MEMBER PORTFOLIOS

<p>LEADER (CORPORATE STRATEGY AND FINANCE) COUNCILLOR JG JARVIS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Corporate policies and strategies • Recommend to Council the Policy Framework (as defined in the Council Constitution) • Agreeing and leading the process for setting the budget • Agreeing and leading the process for recommending to Council the Council Tax, NNDR • Communications Strategy, promotion of the Council and external liaison • Local Government issues including functions, structure, Boundary Commission • European, national and regional matters • Key partnerships including Local Strategic Partnership (Herefordshire Partnership) and the Hereford Futures Board • Any initiative not specifically allocated to any other portfolio.
<p>CORPORATE SERVICES- COUNCILLOR PD PRICE (DEPUTY LEADER)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Legal and Democratic Services • Land Charges • External and Internal Communications Implementation and Delivery • Locality Working • Research • Shared Services Programme • Customer Services (including quality assurance, INFO, Insight and feedback) • Community engagement • Registration Services (life events) • Modern Records • Human Resources & Organisational Development • Emergency Planning & Business Continuity • Performance Management & Improvement framework • Equalities & Human Rights • Coroner's Service • Asset management (strategic) • Property (strategic) • Risk Management • Smallholdings Estates

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ICT and e-government • Information Governance (including security & data sharing) • Policy development, quality assurance, external liaison, localities development, performance improvement and risk assurance relevant to the portfolio • Any other specific responsibilities as allocated by the Leader <p>NB For the avoidance of doubt these responsibilities exclude any functions allocated to the Audit and Corporate Governance Committee.</p>
<p>FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT – COUNCILLOR AW JOHNSON</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Financial practice and standards • Financial management, business planning and challenge • Audit • Housing/Council Tax Benefits • Corporate Transformation Programmes (Rising to the Challenge, Root & Branch reviews) • Efficiency & Value for Money • Policy development, quality assurance, external liaison, localities development, performance improvement and risk assurance relevant to the portfolio • Any other specific responsibilities as allocated by the Leader <p>NB For the avoidance of doubt these responsibilities exclude any functions allocated to the Audit and Corporate Governance Committee.</p>
<p>EDUCATION & INFRASTRUCTURE – COUNCILLOR GJ POWELL Support Team Member: Councillor AM Atkinson</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Broadband • To provide leadership across the range of Local Authority services and through engagement with a particular focus on education and achievement • School improvement and achievement • Services for schools • Educational achievement of looked after children • Post 16 education and training • Lifelong Learning • Highways policy • Streetscene design & policy • Streetscene delivery • Highways maintenance

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transportation planning and traffic management • Parking policy and services • Policy development, quality assurance, external liaison, localities development, performance improvement and risk assurance relevant to the portfolio • Any other specific responsibilities as allocated by the Leader <p>NB For the avoidance of doubt these responsibilities exclude any functions delegated to school governing bodies; AND these responsibilities exclude any functions allocated to the Planning or Regulatory Committees This Cabinet Member exercises education services functions conferred on the lead member for Children's Services in accordance with the Children Act 2004.</p>
<p>ENTERPRISE & CULTURE - COUNCILLOR RJ PHILLIPS</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cultural Services • Heritage Services • Archive Services (public records office) • Library Services • Tourism • Voluntary/Community Sector Support (Strategy) • Economic Development • Regeneration Strategy & Projects • Rural issues including access to services • Enterprise Zone Programme • Markets • Community Safety • Hereford Futures Programme • Policy development, quality assurance, external liaison, localities development, performance improvement and risk assurance relevant to the portfolio • Any other specific responsibilities as allocated by the Leader <p>NB For the avoidance of doubt these responsibilities exclude any functions allocated to the Planning or Regulatory Committees</p>
<p>ENVIRONMENT, HOUSING & PLANNING – COUNCILLOR RB HAMILTON <i>Support Team Member: Cllr Paul Rone</i></p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Environmental Sustainability • Fair-trade and local produce & products • Common Land • Land drainage and flood alleviation • Rivers and waterways • Gypsies & Travellers • Planning and land use policy • Conservation • Housing (strategic) • Homelessness, housing allocation and housing condition • Public Conveniences • Cemeteries, crematoria and disused burial grounds • Policy development, quality assurance, external liaison, localities development, performance improvement and risk assurance relevant to the portfolio • Any other specific responsibilities as allocated by the Leader <p>NB For the avoidance of doubt these responsibilities exclude any functions allocated to the Planning or Regulatory Committees</p>	<p>HEALTH & WELLBEING – COUNCILLOR PM MORGAN</p> <p>Support Team Members: Children: Cllr J Hyde Adult Social Care: Cllr N Nenadich</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To provide leadership and ensure co-ordination across the range of Local Authority children’s services, and through engagement with partners, with a particular focus on health & wellbeing and safeguarding: • Children’s services including family services and child protection • Corporate parenting • Early Years/Sure Start • Youth Service including youth offending • Children’s social care commissioning • Lead member for Children’s Services in accordance with the Children’s Act 2004 • Leadership re Health & Wellbeing Board • Environmental Health • Animal Health & Welfare • Trading Standards
--	--

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Licensing • Environmental promotion and protection • To provide leadership and ensure co-ordination across the range of Local Authority adult social care services, and through engagement with partners • Adult social care including Supporting People and Learning disabilities • Older peoples services • Adult social care and integrated commissioning • Safeguarding of vulnerable adults • Public Health • Policy development, quality assurance, external liaison, localities development, performance improvement and risk assurance relevant to the portfolio • Any other specific responsibilities as allocated by the Leader
<p>MAJOR CONTRACTS – COUNCILLOR H BRAMER</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Waste Disposal • Waste Collection • Parks and Countryside • Public Rights of Way • Leisure • Procurement (strategic) • Co-ordination and overview of major contracts (e.g. Amey, HALO) as directed by the Leader • Policy development, quality assurance, external liaison, localities development, performance improvement and risk assurance relevant to the portfolio • Any other specific responsibilities as allocated by the Leader <p>NB For the avoidance of doubt these responsibilities exclude any functions allocated to the Planning or Regulatory Committees</p>

MEETING:	COUNCIL
DATE:	23 NOVEMBER 2012
TITLE OF REPORT:	COUNCIL TAX SUPPORT SCHEME AND COUNCIL TAX DISCOUNTS
REPORT BY:	CHIEF OFFICER FINANCE AND COMMERCIAL

1 Classification

Open

2 Wards Affected

County-wide

3 Purpose

To approve the recommendations of the Cabinet meeting held on 15 November 2012, as set out in the attached appendices, to agree a Council Tax Support Scheme in the light of the requirements set by the Government and the outcome of local consultation and determine the level of Council Tax Discount for vacant properties and second homes.

4 Recommendation(s)

THAT:

- (a) **the Council Tax Transitional Grant be accepted;**
- (b) **Council adopt a new Council Tax Support Scheme for 2013/14 based on the adoption of two of the principles that were consulted upon as indicated in paragraph 31 of the Cabinet report, so that the requirements of the grant be met; and**
- (c) **changes to Council tax discounts outlined in the report be implemented from 1 April 2013.**

5 Reasons for Recommendation

- 5.1 The Cabinet is required to recommend to Council a new Local Council Tax Support Scheme for implementation on 1 April 2013. The Government has recently made available transitional funding for new schemes that ensure people currently receiving 100% of council tax support pay no more than 8.5% of their council tax liability from 1 April 2013.

6 Community Impact

- 6.1 On 14 June Cabinet considered “Understanding Herefordshire”, the integrated evidence base and needs assessment. This was reflected in the draft corporate plan proposals reported to Cabinet on 18 October prior to consideration by Council.
- 6.2 Key elements in the draft corporate plan link to reducing inequalities in health and wellbeing outcomes. The approach taken in designing the scheme has been to continue support for the vulnerable and the wider community impact will be monitored as the scheme is implemented.

7 Equality and Human Rights

- 7.2 An Equalities Impact Assessment (EIA) for the proposed changes arising from the local scheme was completed and placed on the council's website along with the consultation documents.
- 7.3 The EIA looked at the potential for not only protecting pensioners (as required under the legislation) but also retaining a large amount of the protections already present for working age claimants within the existing council tax benefit scheme.

8 Financial Implications

- 8.1 The current Council Tax Benefit subsidy is £13m. The Government announced in the 2010 Spending Review that their funding of council tax benefit would be reduced by 10%. The Government will replace the current council tax benefit with grant funding. The estimated grant is £11.6m leaving a potential gap of £1.4m if the scheme continues without change.
- 8.2 Until the Council receives confirmed regulations, estimates continue to be used for income levels.
- 8.3 The terms of the Council Tax Transitional Support Grant can be met if only two of the nine principles are implemented in 2013/14. These are limiting council tax reduction to 91.5% of liability (£530k) and removing the second adult rebate (£21k). The acceptance of the transitional grant and changes to council tax discounts will provide the balance of the sums required to close the estimated £1.4m funding gap as follows:

Proposed Changes or Funding Streams	£'000
Limit council tax reduction to 91.5% of liability (Principle 1)	530
Remove second adult rebate (Principle 3)	21
Empty Property Class A discount for maximum of 12 months at 25%	105
Empty Property Class C discount for maximum of 6 months at 25%	600
Remove 10% discount for second homes	120
Transitional Grant	312
TOTAL	1,688

The above is an estimate and a cautious approach has been taken given that a number of changes are not yet known. The numbers in receipt of support under the scheme may

increase and it is prudent to allow for this change. The council also has to meet any additional costs relating to pensioners' costs including an increase in numbers. . This is now a matter for the Council to fund including the impact of any potential council tax increase.

9 Legal Implications

- 9.1 As the new support scheme will be a localised scheme, if the Council fail to take into account views from the consultation in deciding the shape of the final scheme, there is potential for a legal challenge if the Council choose to adopt the transitional grant scheme. As this will change the draft scheme used in the consultation a decision will need to be made on whether any further consultation is necessary

10 Risk Management

- 10.1 The scale of the changes is likely to have a significant impact on workloads and ICT systems not least because of the short timescales for implementation. We are working with our software provider to maximise the time available for testing changes to include local elements of the scheme as any delays could have an impact on the annual billing cycle for 2013/14.
- 10.2 This situation could be further complicated by the potential for further changes to the draft regulations to reflect the outcomes from central government consultations which have not yet been completed.
- 10.3 With an increase in the number of claimants, who will either be paying council tax for the first time or paying more and in many cases small amounts, there is likely to be an increase in collection costs through greater debt recovery workloads plus the potential for a higher level of uncollectible debt. Plans are being developed to respond to this.
- 10.4 Because the new scheme is no longer a national scheme which is applicable to all billing authorities there is also potential for local challenges to schemes and it is not clear what impact this could have on both the scheme and on implementation timescales.
- 10.5 A copy of the draft support scheme has been passed for approval by Legal Services.
- 10.6 The potential for fraud may arise as the new scheme will not be covered by current Department for Work and Pensions rules. Further information and draft regulations have been promised to provide powers that will ensure Councils can pursue fraudulent claims for support. The Council has a very good track record dealing with benefit fraud.

11 Consultees

- 11.1 The major preceptors (Police, Fire and Rescue) were consulted on the scheme. They were in favour of the proposed approach.
- 11.2 Consultation ran from 30 August to 26 October 2012. The consultation questionnaire was published on line using Herefordshire Council's website together with a consultation document. In addition around 1,000 paper copies were issued, of these 500 copies were sent to a sample of working age residents who are currently receiving council tax benefits. Questionnaires were provided to social landlords and voluntary organisations to distribute to their tenants and contacts, and at the "Your Community Your Say" events.
- 11.3 Workshops were held for local organisations, voluntary groups and social landlords. Social landlord newsletters made reference to the consultation.

11.4 All parish clerks were notified of the consultation.

11.5 In total 231 responses were received by the end of the consultation period. The following table summarises the response to the nine principles (questions):

Principle	Agree/ Strongly Agree	Disagree/ Strongly Disagree	Neither agree or Disagree
1. All taxpayers should pay Something	138	76	15
2. Support should be capped at Band D level	114	72	42
3. To remove second adult rebate	135	70	25
4. To limit the level of savings	144	68	18
5. To increase contributions for non-dependants	129	50	49
6. To include child benefit as income	91	128	9
7. To remove extended payments	92	111	28
8. To include maintenance as income	126	76	29
9. To reduce the earnings disregard for lone parents	110	82	37

11.6 The outcome sees support for the majority of the nine principles (if those who neither disagree or agree are removed from the calculation). The two principles not supported in the consultation are the inclusion of child benefit as income and the removal of extended payments. Neither option is included in the scheme that meets the announced guidelines for the transitional grant.

12 Appendices

- Cabinet report 15 November 2012
- Appendix A: consultation documents
- Appendix B: council tax support scheme consultation report

13 Background Papers

- Equality Impact Assessment

MEETING:	CABINET
DATE:	15 NOVEMBER 2012
TITLE OF REPORT:	COUNCIL TAX SUPPORT SCHEME AND COUNCIL TAX DISCOUNTS
PORTFOLIO AREA:	CORPORATE SERVICES

CLASSIFICATION: Open

Wards Affected

County-wide

Purpose

To seek agreement for a Council Tax Support Scheme in the light of the requirements set by the Government and the outcome of local consultation and determine the level of Council Tax Discount for vacant properties and second homes.

Key Decision

This is a key decision because it is likely to result in the council incurring expenditure, or making savings which are significant having regard for the Council's budget for the service or function to which the decision relates;

AND

This is a key decision because it is likely to be significant in terms of its effect on communities living or working in an area comprising one or more wards in the County.

It was included in the forward plan.

Recommendations:

THAT

- (a) The Council Tax Transitional Grant be accepted;**
- (b) Subject to the above, Council be recommended to adopt a new Council Tax Support Scheme for 2013/14 based on the adoption of two of the principles that were consulted upon as indicated in paragraph 31 of the report, so that we meet the requirements of the grant; and**
- (c) The changes to council tax discounts outlined in the report be implemented from 1 April 2013.**

Key Points Summary

- The Council must adopt a new Council Tax Support Scheme to come into effect on 1 April

2013. The scheme must be formally adopted by 31 January 2013 or a default scheme will be imposed which would have a significant financial impact on the council.

- Funding for the new scheme will be 10% less than the funding currently received for council tax benefit and there will be no additional government funding to cover any in year increases in caseload.
- The Government has prescribed a number of elements that must be included in support schemes and these include full protection for pensioners whose council tax support must remain at the same level as their current council tax benefit. They have also indicated that schemes should protect vulnerable claimants and provide incentives for work.
- Having carried out consultation on the proposed support scheme members must determine which principles from the consultation should be included in the new scheme to help meet the shortfall in funding. All residents and local organisations were invited to respond to the consultation and a summary of their responses is included in this report.
- The council will have discretion to set the level of council tax discount for some categories of empty property from 1 April 2013
- The primary legislation is the Local Government Finance Act 2012 which was approved on 31 October 2012 but the precise regulations for the new Council Tax Support Scheme and the changes to Council Tax Discounts have not to date been approved by Secretary of State.
- A recent government announcement is offering additional funding for the first year of the new Council Tax Support Scheme provided any council taxpayer who currently receives 100% council tax benefit does not have to pay more than 8.5% under the new support scheme.
- If the criteria for the transitional grant is met this will reduce the amount working age claimants have to pay in order to help meet the gap in funding resulting from the cut in subsidy.
- As this transitional grant will only be available for one year the support scheme would need to be reviewed for the 2014/15 financial year.

Alternative Options

1. Up to now the design of benefit schemes in terms of rules has been a central government responsibility. Even so other options could be taken up including making up the shortfall in central government funding from elsewhere in the budget.
2. The recent announcement of transitional central government support for one year has meant that one off additional transitional financial support is now available to reduce the impact of the changes in 2013/14.
3. An alternative would be to refuse the grant on offer and see a wider impact on residents.

Reasons for Recommendation

4. The Cabinet is required to recommend to Council a new Local Council Tax Support Scheme for implementation on 1 April 2013. The Government has recently made available transitional funding for new schemes that ensure people currently receiving 100% of council tax support pay no more than 8.5% of their council tax liability from 1 April 2013.

Introduction and Background

5. The Government has decided that the current national Council Tax Benefit Scheme will be abolished at the end of March 2013. The current national scheme is fully funded by the government and must be replaced by a local scheme. This will be known as the “Council Tax Support Scheme” and must be in place from 1 April 2013.
6. The Government has also said that it will no longer fully fund the replacement scheme and the cut in funding is 10%, meaning a reduction of £1.4m for Herefordshire.

Key Considerations

Localising Support For Council Tax

7. The Council had to work within broad requirements set by the Government that indicated any local scheme should:
 - Not change the level of support for pensioners
 - Consider the needs of vulnerable people
 - Encourage people to work rather than discourage them to do so.
8. As a result of the broad framework set by the Government, the Council established its own overarching approach to guide its planning for the local scheme.
 - All council tax payers should pay something, unless they are covered by policy exemptions for example pensioners;
 - Support would have an upper limit of 90% of a council tax bill;
 - The Council Tax Scheme should incentivise work;
 - Support would be restricted to band D equivalent for those taxpayers living in properties higher than band D.
9. The Government’s decision to exclude pensioners from the impact of local schemes meant that claimants of working age would be affected by changes to the current system. This covers all local Council Tax Support Schemes.
10. The broad principles outlined above were developed into a consultation document that covered a more detailed set of nine questions (principles). The questions are included in the attached consultation document but in summary the nine questions asked in the consultation process from 30 August to 26 October are as follows:
 - All taxpayers to pay something;
 - Capping council tax support to the level of a Band D property;
 - Removing second adult rebate;
 - Eligibility limit on savings;
 - Increased contributions from other adult members of the household;

- Include child benefit as an income;
 - Removing extended payments;
 - Including maintenance payments when calculating benefit entitlement;
 - Reducing disregarded earnings for lone parents.
11. The scheme must have regard to the vulnerable, but there is no national agreed definition either in government, or elsewhere, that advises what characteristics make an individual “vulnerable”. No guidance has been issued for designing local schemes. Herefordshire has approached the requirement to protect the vulnerable by including in the draft scheme the premiums from the existing council tax benefit scheme applied to a wide range of claimants who are considered as vulnerable. These include claimants receiving Disability Living Allowance, Incapacity Benefit, Employment and Support Allowance, the disability element of Working Tax Credits and Carers Allowance. These premiums currently apply to 2000 claimants

Council Tax Transitional Support Grant

12. By end of August Herefordshire Council had entered into consultation on proposed local Council Tax Support Schemes. The scheme met the broad guidance that the Government indicated should form the approach to determining a local scheme.
13. However, in mid-October the Government announced a new transitional grant for local authorities that conform to the Government’s view of an “appropriate” replacement for the current Council Tax Benefit Scheme. A national budget of £100 million has been earmarked for this purpose. The amount on offer to Herefordshire is £259,451. In addition Police, Fire and Rescue will receive £52,693 as major preceptors.
14. The grant will be good news for some claimants affected by the proposed changes. However, it does mean that the Government is now providing a template for the scheme.
15. In addition the announcement was made without prior warning after Herefordshire and other authorities had already designed and consulted on individual local schemes. The key requirement for receipt of the new grant is that a scheme must ensure that the maximum effect is a variation of 8.5% for those currently in receipt of 100% council tax benefit.
16. The assessment made following the announcement is that two of our nine principles can be used to deliver a scheme that complies with the Government’s requirements so that we meet their view of a “good” scheme and receive the grant on offer.
17. The two principles from our consultation proposed to be used in the scheme that meets the grant requirement are that all working age taxpayers pay something (limited to a maximum of 8.5% for those eligible for support) and that the second adult rebate is removed. Both principles received a majority of support when adding the responses of those who either strongly agreed or disagreed.
18. The grant is one-off and transitional in nature. Unless it continues in future years it does not stop the requirement to deliver a new overall scheme in 2014/15.

Changes to Council Tax Discounts

19. As previously indicated the Government is cutting current funding for council tax benefit by 10% and we have consulted on principles to help deliver within the new funding envelope of

£11.6m (a reduction of £1.4m).

20. The approach taken has been to seek mitigation from reduction to benefit payments but given the scale of the cut in funding another source has been sought.
21. The Council has discretionary power to set the level of Council Tax Discount for some categories of empty properties. The two categories concerned are Class A and C and the following outlines the definitions:

Council Tax Discount Changes	Percentage Discount	Additional Income (£000's)
Class A discount for a maximum of twelve months	25%	105
Class C discount for a maximum of six months	25%	600
Remove 10% discount for second homes	0%	120

22. In addition councils have the power to include second homes in this category.
23. By reducing the levels of relief to 25% for Class A for a maximum of 12 months and Class C properties to 25% for a maximum of six months; the estimated yield is £105k and £600k respectively.
24. The removal of 10% discount for second homes yields £120k. In total the Council Tax Discount changes proposed will make an estimated £825k contribution to the gap caused by the cut in government funding.

Community Impact

25. On 14 June Cabinet considered "Understanding Herefordshire", the integrated evidence base and needs assessment. This was reflected in the draft corporate plan proposals reported to Cabinet on 18 October prior to consideration by Council.
26. Key elements in the draft corporate plan link to reducing inequalities in health and wellbeing outcomes. The approach taken in designing the scheme has been to continue support for the vulnerable and the wider community impact will be monitored as the scheme is implemented.

Equality and Human Rights

27. An Equalities Impact Assessment (EIA) for the proposed changes arising from the local scheme was completed and placed on the council's website along with the consultation documents.
28. The EIA looked at the potential for not only protecting pensioners (as required under the legislation) but also retaining a large amount of the protections already present for working age claimants within the existing council tax benefit scheme.

Financial Implications

29. The current Council Tax Benefit subsidy is £13m. The Government announced in the 2010 Spending Review that their funding of council tax benefit would be reduced by 10%. The Government will replace the current council tax benefit with grant funding. The estimated grant is £11.6m leaving a potential gap of £1.4m if the scheme continues without change.
30. Until the Council receives confirmed regulations, estimates continue to be used for income levels.
31. The terms of the Council Tax Transitional Support Grant can be met if only two of the nine principles are implemented in 2013/14. These are limiting council tax reduction to 91.5% of liability (£530k) and removing the second adult rebate (£21k). The acceptance of the transitional grant and changes to council tax discounts will provide the balance of the sums required to close the estimated £1.4m funding gap as follows:

Proposed Changes or Funding Streams	£'000
Limit council tax reduction to 91.5% of liability (Principle 1)	530
Remove second adult rebate (Principle 3)	21
Empty Property Class A discount for maximum of 12 months at 25%	105
Empty Property Class C discount for maximum of 6 months at 25%	600
Remove 10% discount for second homes	120
Transitional Grant	312
TOTAL	1,688

The above is an estimate and a cautious approach has been taken given that a number of changes are not yet known. The numbers in receipt of support under the scheme may increase and it is prudent to allow for this change. The council also has to meet any additional costs relating to pensioners' costs including an increase in numbers. . This is now a matter for the Council to fund including the impact of any potential council tax increase.

Legal Implications

32. As the new support scheme will be a localised scheme, if the Council fail to take into account views from the consultation in deciding the shape of the final scheme, there is potential for a legal challenge if the Council choose to adopt the transitional grant scheme. As this will change the draft scheme used in the consultation a decision will need to be made on whether any further consultation is necessary

Risk Management

33. The scale of the changes is likely to have a significant impact on workloads and ICT systems not least because of the short timescales for implementation. We are working with our software provider to maximise the time available for testing changes to include local elements of the scheme as any delays could have an impact on the annual billing cycle for 2013/14.

34. This situation could be further complicated by the potential for further changes to the draft regulations to reflect the outcomes from central government consultations which have not yet been completed.
35. With an increase in the number of claimants, who will either be paying council tax for the first time or paying more and in many cases small amounts, there is likely to be an increase in collection costs through greater debt recovery workloads plus the potential for a higher level of uncollectible debt. Plans are being developed to respond to this.
36. Because the new scheme is no longer a national scheme which is applicable to all billing authorities there is also potential for local challenges to schemes and it is not clear what impact this could have on both the scheme and on implementation timescales.
37. A copy of the draft support scheme has been passed for approval by Legal Services.
38. The potential for fraud may arise as the new scheme will not be covered by current Department for Work and Pensions rules. Further information and draft regulations have been promised to provide powers that will ensure Councils can pursue fraudulent claims for support. The Council has a very good track record dealing with benefit fraud.

Consultees

39. The major preceptors (Police, Fire and Rescue) were consulted on the scheme. They were in favour of the proposed approach.
40. Consultation ran from 30 August to 26 October 2012. The consultation questionnaire was published on line using Herefordshire Council's website together with a consultation document. In addition around 1,000 paper copies were issued, of these 500 copies were sent to a sample of working age residents who are currently receiving council tax benefits. Questionnaires were provided to social landlords and voluntary organisations to distribute to their tenants and contacts, and at the "Your Community Your Say" events.
41. Workshops were held for local organisations, voluntary groups and social landlords. Social landlord newsletters made reference to the consultation.
42. All parish clerks were notified of the consultation.
43. In total 231 responses were received by the end of the consultation period. The following table summarises the response to the nine principles (questions):

Principle	Agree/ Strongly Agree	Disagree/ Strongly Disagree	Neither agree or Disagree
1. All taxpayers should pay Something	138	76	15
2. Support should be capped at Band D level	114	72	42
3. To remove second adult rebate	135	70	25
4. To limit the level of savings	144	68	18
5. To increase contributions for	129	50	49

non-dependants			
6. To include child benefit as income	91	128	9
7. To remove extended payments	92	111	28
8. To include maintenance as income	126	76	29
9. To reduce the earnings disregard for lone parents	110	82	37

45. The outcome sees support for the majority of the nine principles (if those who neither disagree or agree are removed from the calculation). The two principles not supported in the consultation are the inclusion of child benefit as income and the removal of extended payments. Neither option is included in the scheme that meets the announced guidelines for the transitional grant.

Appendices

- Appendix A: consultation documents
- Appendix B: council tax support scheme consultation report

Background Papers

- Equality Impact Assessment

Council Tax Support Scheme Consultation

What is this consultation about?

The Government is ending the national council tax benefit scheme and has asked every council to come up with a local system instead. This means that Herefordshire has to plan its own council tax support scheme and decide who should be eligible for help to pay their council tax, and by how much. The new scheme will start on 1 April 2013.

We want to hear your views on how we should plan the local scheme in order to help us make a decision that is as fair as possible. This consultation will run from 30th August 2012 and will close on 26 October 2012. Responses will then be evaluated so that Herefordshire's scheme can be finalised and published to meet a Government deadline of 31 January 2013.

Pensioners will not be affected by the changes. The Government has prescribed eligibility rules that will be applicable to all councils for those people who fall under the Pensioner Regulations. This means they will continue to get the same level of support as they do now.

You can complete this questionnaire online or print it off and post it Freepost to Herefordshire Council Research Team, FREEPOST SWC4816, PO Box 4, Hereford, HR4 0BR. Any information you provide will be treated as strictly confidential. It will only be used for the purposes described here and will not be shared with any other parties. Any comments you provide may be included in anonymous form in the published results.

If you have any queries, need help to complete the questionnaire, or would like it in another format or language, please call 01432 260443 or 01432 383254, or email benexsupport@herefordshire.gov.uk. The results of the consultation will be published on the council's website at the end of November 2012.

What is the background to the new system?

These changes are part of the broader overhaul of the benefits system that the Government is carrying out. In future, the Government will give a fixed amount of money to Herefordshire Council for reducing council tax payments for people with a limited income. As the Government will give us at least 10 per cent less than the current cost of council tax benefits for Herefordshire, this would leave a gap of an estimated £1.3 million in 2013-14.

If there is an increase in the number of claims for support this will increase this gap even more. When we plan who should be eligible for help with council tax support, the Government says we must consider the impact on our most vulnerable residents and create a system that encourages people to work, and that does not act as a disincentive to working.

What would this mean for Herefordshire?

The level of support for Pensioners will not be affected, as the Government has decided that the new scheme will not change the eligibility rules or the amount of support they will get.

For claimants of working age, Herefordshire Council has considered the possible options to meet the shortfall in funding from central Government. Although these options would cover some of the gap through changes to council tax discounts and exemptions, they would not be enough to meet the shortfall. This means that those of working age who currently qualify for council tax benefit will be affected by the changes, as they would all have to pay something towards it in future. At the moment, those below a certain income level pay nothing at all.

We are committed to ensuring that support continues for our most vulnerable residents. We want your views on how it will affect different groups of people if everyone currently on benefit has to pay something towards their council tax. The principles guiding our planning are:

- All council tax payers should pay something, unless they are covered by policy exemptions, for example pensioners.
- Support would have an upper limit of 90 per cent of a council tax bill.
- The council tax scheme should incentivise work.
- Support would be restricted to band D equivalent for those taxpayers living in properties higher than band D.

What are the proposed changes for Working Age taxpayers?

All taxpayers to pay something

At the moment, those with income below the threshold for council tax benefit can have 100 per cent support, which means that some do not pay anything. We propose that everyone should pay at least 10 per cent of the council tax.

Capping Council Tax Support to Band D

Council tax benefit is currently based on the property band and does not necessarily take into account the size of the property. This restriction will mean that for taxpayers living in properties above band D their reduction will be based on the band D charge rather than the higher band.

Removing Second Adult Rebate

Until now, some households with a single taxpayer and another adult family member resident can have a reduction of up to 25 per cent because a second person on a low income lives there too, even if the taxpayer's own income means they are not eligible.

Eligibility limit on savings

Taxpayers with savings over £10,000 will not be eligible for council tax support (the savings limit for council tax benefit is currently £16,000).

Increased contributions from other adult members of the household

A deduction is currently made from a taxpayer's council tax benefit entitlement where other residents aged 18 and over live in the household (unless they are a tenant) depending on their income. The proposal is to deduct more for these other adults when calculating entitlement to a council tax reduction.

Include Child Benefit as an income

At present, child benefit is paid for each child but is not taken into account for calculating council tax benefit entitlement. In the new scheme, it is proposed that it would be taken into account as income.

Removing extended payments

Extended payments of council tax benefit are currently available for four weeks where someone who has received a qualifying welfare benefit, for a continuous period of 26 weeks, moves into work.

Including maintenance payments when calculating benefit entitlement

At present, payments are not included in the benefit calculation and we are proposing that they should be treated as income for calculating the level of council tax support. However, where the maintenance payments apply to children we propose to allow a weekly disregard of £30 a week for each child.

Reducing disregarded earnings for lone parents

For lone parents, weekly earnings of £25 are currently disregarded (compared to £10 for a couple and £5 for a single claimant). A review of this higher level of disregarded earnings is being considered for the new scheme with a reduction in the disregard to £20 per week.

Questionnaire

Principle 1

All working age taxpayers to pay something

At the moment, those below the threshold for council tax benefit can have 100 per cent support, which means that some do not pay anything. We propose that everyone should pay at least 10 per cent council tax.

To what extent do you agree or disagree this principle is fair?

- Strongly Agree* *Agree* *Neither agree nor disagree* *Disagree* *Strongly Disagree*

Principle 2

Capping Council Tax Support to smaller properties (Band D)

Council tax benefit is based on the property band and does not necessarily take into account the size of the property. This would mean that support for taxpayers living in properties above band D will be based on the band D charge rather than the higher band.

To what extent do you agree or disagree this principle is fair?

- Strongly Agree* *Agree* *Neither agree nor disagree* *Disagree* *Strongly Disagree*

Principle 3

Removing Second Adult Rebate

Until now, some households have had a reduction of up to 25 per cent on their council tax bill because a second adult family member on a low income lives there too, even if the tax payer's own income is above the threshold. The proposal would remove second adult rebate.

To what extent do you agree or disagree this principle is fair?

- Strongly Agree* *Agree* *Neither agree nor disagree* *Disagree* *Strongly Disagree*

Principle 4

Reducing the amount of savings or capital a claimant can have before support is given

In the current benefit scheme people of working age are not entitled to benefit if their savings are more than £16,000. The proposal for the new scheme is to restrict the savings limit to £10,000.

To what extent do you agree or disagree this principle is fair?

- Strongly Agree* *Agree* *Neither agree nor disagree* *Disagree* *Strongly Disagree*

Principle 5

Increased contributions from other adult members of the household

Other adults living in a household where the council tax payer (and their partner) claim council tax support should be asked to pay more toward the council tax bill than they do now.

To what extent do you agree or disagree this principle is fair?

- Strongly Agree* *Agree* *Neither agree nor disagree* *Disagree* *Strongly Disagree*

Principle 6

Include Child Benefit as income

At present, child benefit is paid for each child but how much they receive is not taken into account for calculating council tax benefit. In the new scheme, it is proposed that it would be taken into account as income.

To what extent do you agree or disagree this principle is fair?

- Strongly Agree* *Agree* *Neither agree nor disagree* *Disagree* *Strongly Disagree*

Principle 7

Removing extended payments

If someone who is out of work has been receiving council tax benefits continuously for 26 weeks and moves into work, they are currently allowed an extra 4 weeks benefits. We are proposing to remove extended payments.

To what extent do you agree or disagree this principle is fair?

- Strongly Agree* *Agree* *Neither agree nor disagree* *Disagree* *Strongly Disagree*

Principle 8

Including maintenance payments when calculating benefit entitlement

At present, these payments are not included in the benefit calculation and we are proposing that they should be considered as income for calculating the level of support. However, we propose to disregard £30 a week for each child.

To what extent do you agree or disagree this principle is fair?

- Strongly Agree* *Agree* *Neither agree nor disagree* *Disagree* *Strongly Disagree*

Principle 9

Reducing disregarded earnings for lone parents

When calculating the income for lone parents, the council currently disregards £25 per week from any earnings (compared to £10 for a couple and £5 for a single person) it is proposed that this disregard should be reduced to £20 per week.

To what extent do you agree or disagree this principle is fair?

- Strongly Agree* *Agree* *Neither agree nor disagree* *Disagree* *Strongly Disagree*

Please use this space to provide any comments you wish to make about the principles or in support of your answers above (please make clear which of the principles you are referring to).

We want to ensure that any changes made are fair to everyone. To help us do this, please tell us if you think that any of the principles above will particularly affect any group of people due, for example, to age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, or sexual orientation.

- Yes*
 No
 Don't know

If yes, please explain which groups and the reasons they might be affected:

Are you responding on behalf of an organisation or group, or as an individual?

- Organisation or group Individual

If you are responding on behalf of an organisation or group, please tell us the name of the organisation/group:

If you are responding as an individual please answer the following questions about yourself. This will help us to better understand how views may differ between different people across the county.

About You

Do you currently pay council tax to Herefordshire Council?

- Yes No

If yes, please tell us which council tax band (A - H) the property you pay council tax on is in? (If unsure leave blank)

Are you currently receiving council tax benefit in Herefordshire?

- Yes No

If you are not currently receiving council tax benefit have you ever received it?

- Yes No

Are you currently receiving housing benefit in Herefordshire?

- Yes No

Which of these activities best describes what you are doing at present? (please tick all that apply)

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Employee in full-time job (30 hours plus per week) | <input type="checkbox"/> Full-time education at school, college or university |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Employee in part-time job (under 30 hours per week) | <input type="checkbox"/> Retired whether receiving a pension or not |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Self-employed full or part-time | <input type="checkbox"/> Looking after the home or family |
| <input type="checkbox"/> On a government supported training programme | <input type="checkbox"/> Long term sick / disabled |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Unemployed and available for work | |

What is your age group?

- Under 18* *25-44* *65-74*
 18-24 *45-64* *75+*

What is your gender?

- Male* *Female*

Do you have parenting responsibilities?

- Yes* *No*

How would you describe your ethnic group?

- White British/English/Welsh/Scottish/Northern Irish*
 Other White (please specify below)
 Any other ethnic group (please specify below)

Thank you for completing the questionnaire.

Council Tax Support Scheme Consultation report

Issue 1.0

Herefordshire Council Research Team
October 2012

Contents

Introduction.....	3
Results	4
Principle 1: All working age taxpayers to pay something	4
Principle 2: Capping Council Tax Support to smaller properties (Band D).....	5
Principle 3: Removing Second Adult Rebate.....	6
Principle 4: Reducing the amount of savings or capital a claimant can have before support is given	7
Principle 5: Increased contributions from other adult members of the household	8
Principle 6: Include Child Benefit as income.....	9
Principle 7: Removing extended payments	10
Principle 8: Including maintenance payments when calculating benefit entitlement.....	11
Principle 9: Reducing disregarded earnings for lone parents.....	12
About You	15
Do you currently pay council tax to Herefordshire Council?	15
Are you currently receiving council tax benefit in Herefordshire?	16
If you are not currently receiving council tax benefit have you ever received it?	16
Are you currently receiving housing benefit in Herefordshire?.....	17
Which of these activities best describes what you are doing at present?.....	17
What is your age group?	18
What is your gender?	19
Do you have parenting responsibilities?	19
How would you describe your ethnic group?	20
Appendix A: List of comments	21
Appendix B: The Questionnaire and Letters	36

If you need help to understand this document, or would like it in another format or language, please call Research Team on 01432 261944 or e-mail researchteam@herefordshire.gov.uk

Introduction

The Government is ending the national Council Tax Benefit scheme and has asked every council to come up with a local system instead. This means that Herefordshire has to plan its own Council Tax Support scheme and decide who should be eligible for help to pay their council tax, and by how much, for introduction in April 2013. The council tax support scheme consultation was launched to seek the views of residents and interested organisations on how the Herefordshire Council should plan the local scheme in order to help make a decision that is as fair as possible.

The consultation questionnaire was published online in Herefordshire Council's website together with a consultation document. In addition around 1000 paper copies were issued, of these 500 copies were sent to a sample of working age residents who are currently receiving council tax benefits. Questionnaires were also distributed to social landlords and voluntary organisations to distribute to their tenants and contacts. The survey period ran from 30th August 2012 until 26th October 2012, however all responses received up to and including 29th October 2012 were included in the results.

This report details the results of the consultation questionnaire. In the tables and charts in this report, all the percentages are calculated as a proportion of the total number of responses to each question unless otherwise stated. All the percentages have been rounded to the nearest whole number.

Note that if respondents could select more than one answer to a particular question, the percentages may add up to more than 100%.

Answers to questions requiring a free text answer are listed in the appendix A. Every effort has been made to anonymise references to named or identifiable persons without losing the gist of the comments.

Results

There were a total of 231 responses received by the end of consultation period, of these 130 were submitted online and 101 were paper questionnaires.

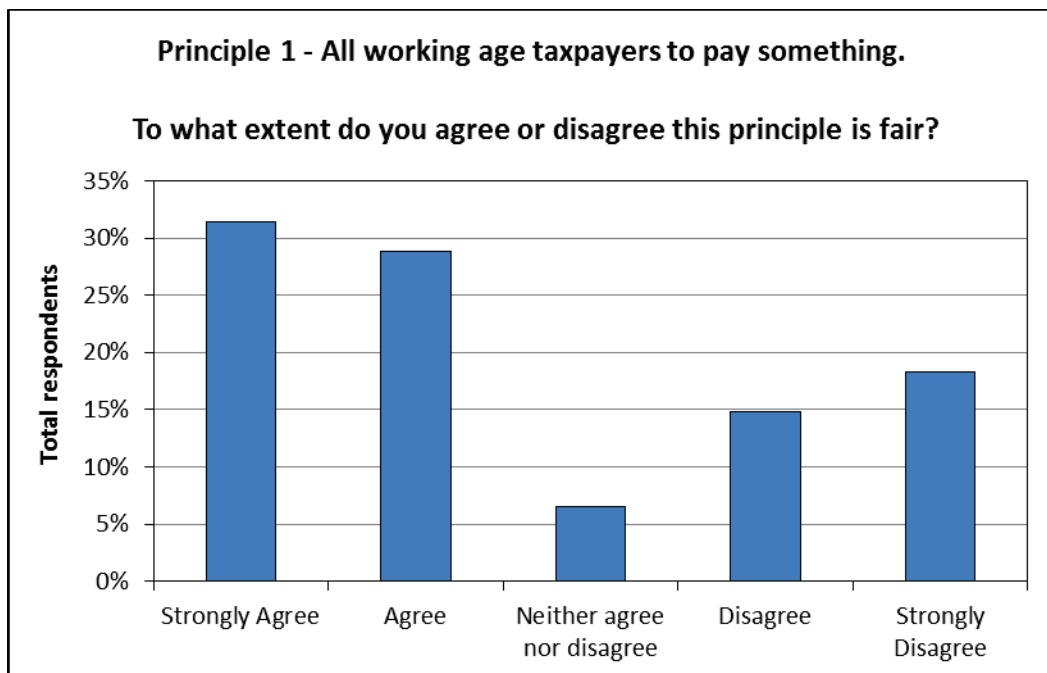
Note: There were three responses submitted by Kington Town Council; one submitted online and the other two were letters providing extended comments. One of these letters was attached to questionnaire. The online response only provided responses to the questionnaire, which were exactly the same as paper questionnaire attached to the letter; however it didn't contain any comments. Only the paper response sent with the letter was included in the analysis. The letter is attached as an Appendix to this report.

Principle 1: All working age taxpayers to pay something

At the moment, those below the threshold for council tax benefit can have 100 per cent support, which means that some do not pay anything. We propose that everyone should pay at least 10 per cent council tax.

To what extent do you agree or disagree this principle is fair?

	No.	%
Strongly Agree	72	31%
Agree	66	29%
Neither agree nor disagree	15	7%
Disagree	34	15%
Strongly Disagree	42	18%
Total respondents	229	
Not answered	2	

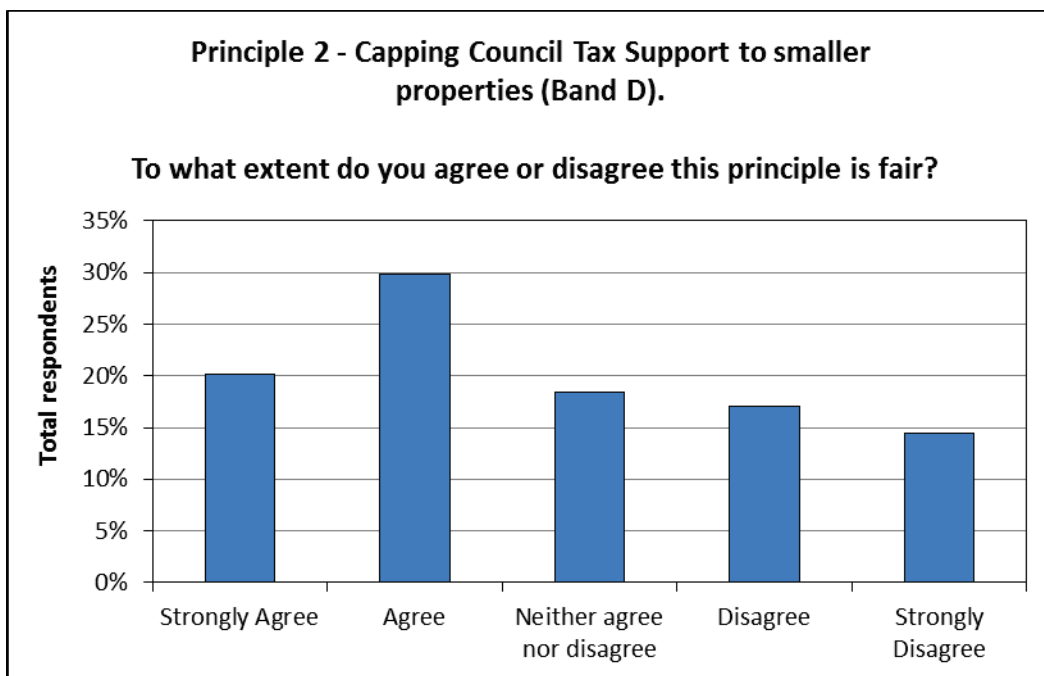


Principle 2: Capping Council Tax Support to smaller properties (Band D)

Council tax benefit is based on the property band and does not necessarily take into account the size of the property. This would mean that support for taxpayers living in properties above band D will be based on the band D charge rather than the higher band.

To what extent do you agree or disagree this principle is fair?

	No.	%
Strongly Agree	46	20%
Agree	68	30%
Neither agree nor disagree	42	18%
Disagree	39	17%
Strongly Disagree	33	14%
Total respondents	228	
Not answered	3	

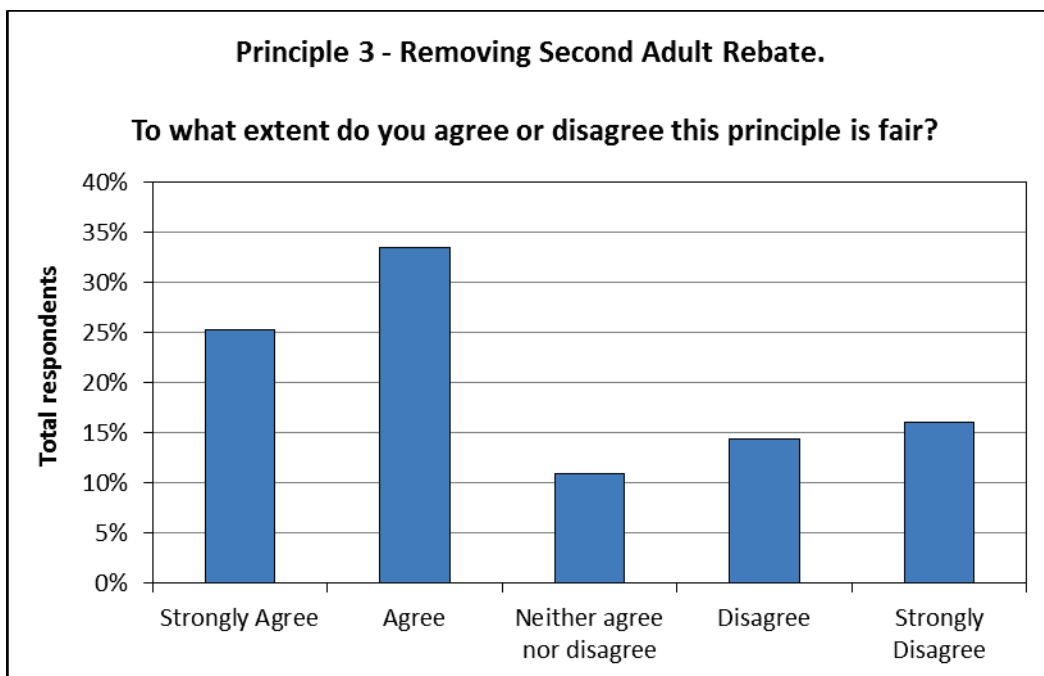


Principle 3: Removing Second Adult Rebate

Until now, some households have had a reduction of up to 25 per cent on their council tax bill because a second adult family member on a low income lives there too, even if the tax payer's own income is above the threshold. The proposal would remove second adult rebate.

To what extent do you agree or disagree this principle is fair?

	No.	%
Strongly Agree	58	25%
Agree	77	33%
Neither agree nor disagree	25	11%
Disagree	33	14%
Strongly Disagree	37	16%
Total respondents	230	
Not answered	1	

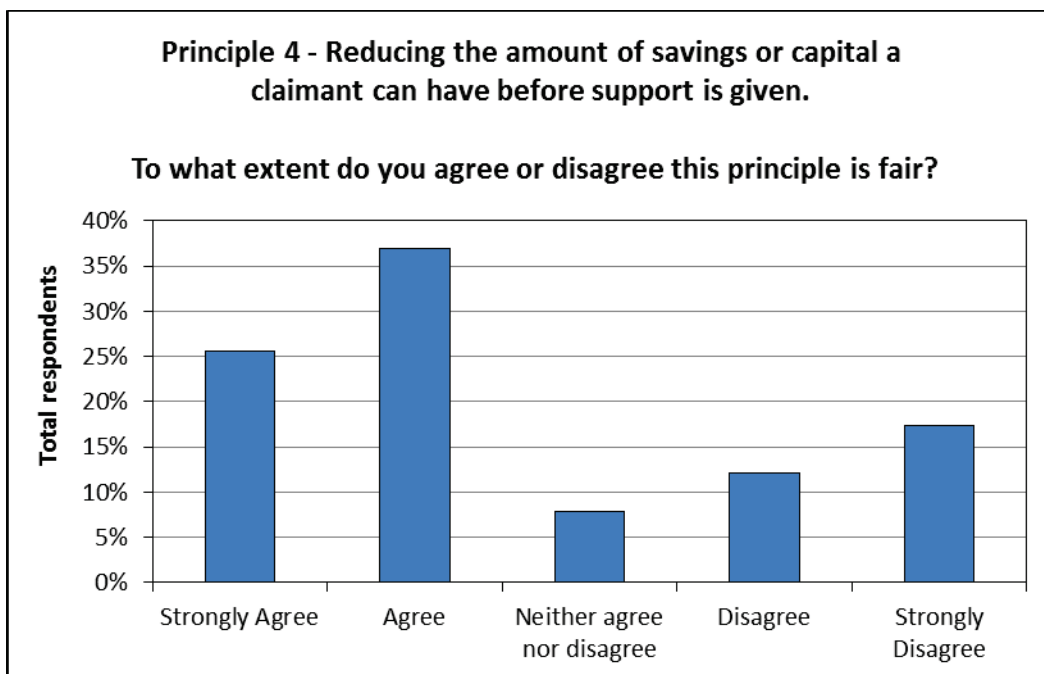


Principle 4: Reducing the amount of savings or capital a claimant can have before support is given

In the current benefit scheme people of working age are not entitled to benefit if their savings are more than £16,000. The proposal for the new scheme is to restrict the savings limit to £10,000.

To what extent do you agree or disagree this principle is fair?

	No.	%
Strongly Agree	59	26%
Agree	85	37%
Neither agree nor disagree	18	8%
Disagree	28	12%
Strongly Disagree	40	17%
Total respondents	230	
Not answered	1	

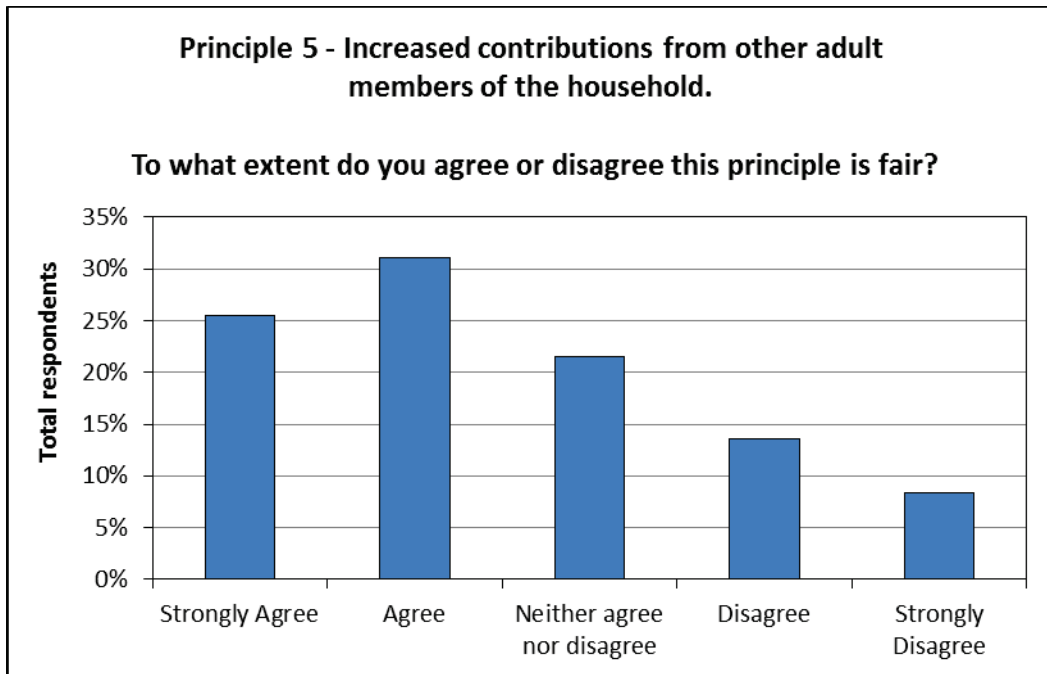


Principle 5: Increased contributions from other adult members of the household

Other adults living in a household where the council tax payer (and their partner) claim council tax support should be asked to pay more toward the council tax bill than they do now.

To what extent do you agree or disagree this principle is fair?

	No.	%
Strongly Agree	58	25%
Agree	71	31%
Neither agree nor disagree	49	21%
Disagree	31	14%
Strongly Disagree	19	8%
Total respondents	228	
Not answered	3	

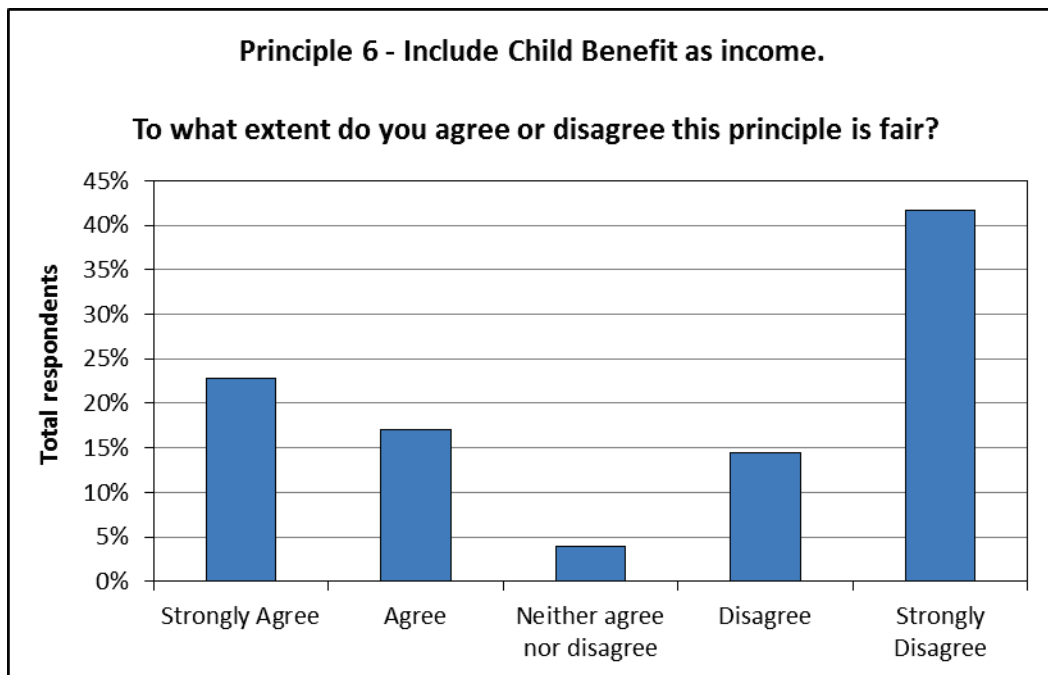


Principle 6: Include Child Benefit as income

At present, child benefit is paid for each child but how much they receive is not taken into account for calculating council tax benefit. In the new scheme, it is proposed that it would be taken into account as income.

To what extent do you agree or disagree this principle is fair?

	No.	%
Strongly Agree	52	23%
Agree	39	17%
Neither agree nor disagree	9	4%
Disagree	33	14%
Strongly Disagree	95	42%
Total respondents	228	
Not answered	3	

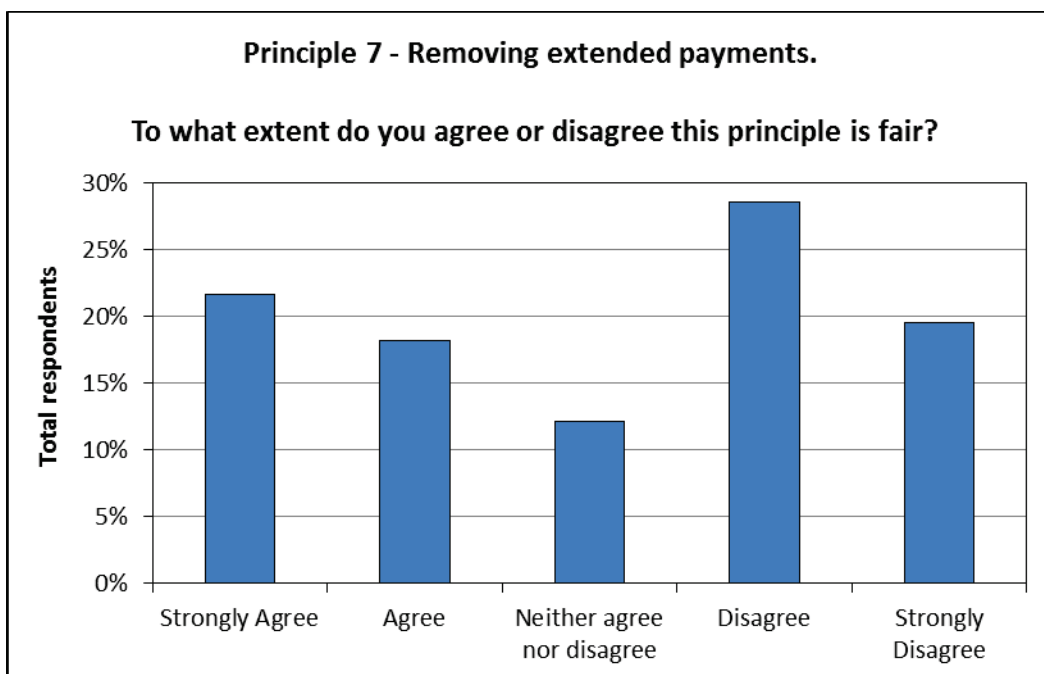


Principle 7: Removing extended payments

If someone who is out of work has been receiving council tax benefits continuously for 26 weeks and moves into work, they are currently allowed an extra 4 weeks benefits. We are proposing to remove extended payments.

To what extent do you agree or disagree this principle is fair?

	No.	%
Strongly Agree	50	22%
Agree	42	18%
Neither agree nor disagree	28	12%
Disagree	66	29%
Strongly Disagree	45	19%
Total respondents	231	

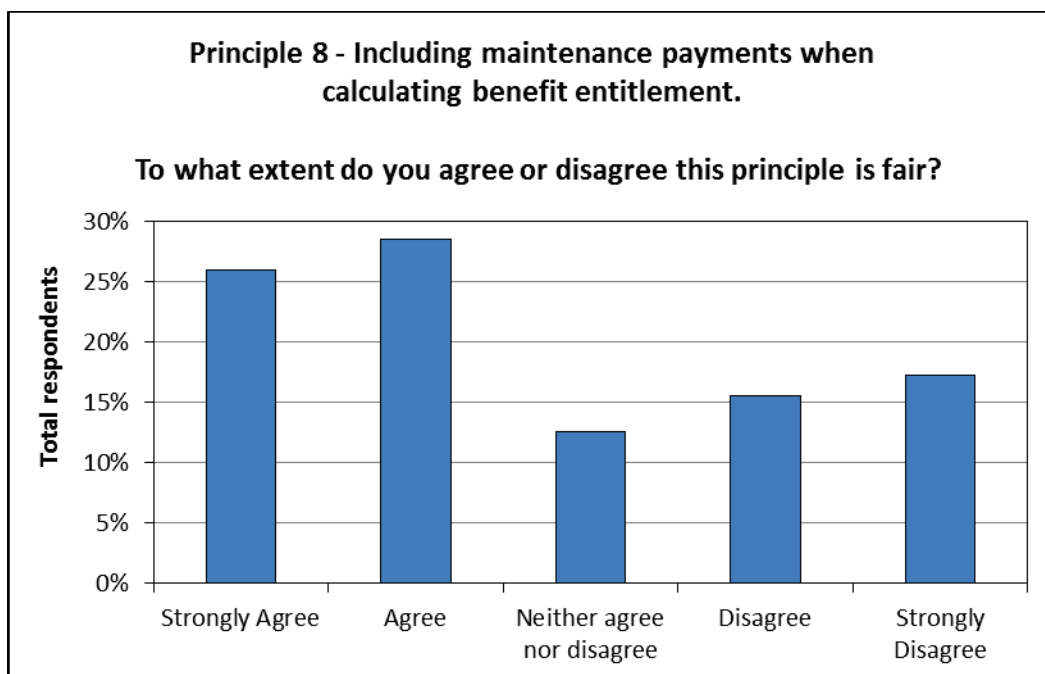


Principle 8: Including maintenance payments when calculating benefit entitlement

At present, these payments are not included in the benefit calculation and we are proposing that they should be considered as income for calculating the level of support. However, we propose to disregard £30 a week for each child.

To what extent do you agree or disagree this principle is fair?

	No.	%
Strongly Agree	60	26%
Agree	66	29%
Neither agree nor disagree	29	13%
Disagree	36	16%
Strongly Disagree	40	17%
Total respondents	231	

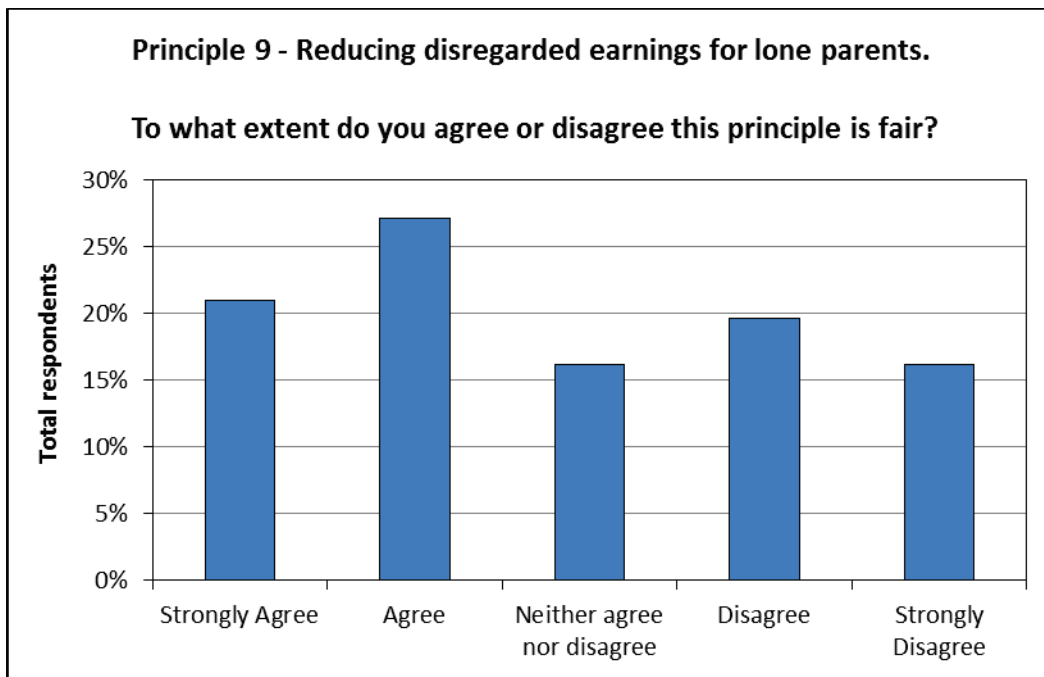


Principle 9: Reducing disregarded earnings for lone parents

When calculating the income for lone parents, the council currently disregards £25 per week from any earnings (compared to £10 for a couple and £5 for a single person) it is proposed that this disregard should be reduced to £20 per week.

To what extent do you agree or disagree this principle is fair?

	No.	%
Strongly Agree	48	21%
Agree	62	27%
Neither agree nor disagree	37	16%
Disagree	45	20%
Strongly Disagree	37	16%
Total respondents	229	
Not answered	2	

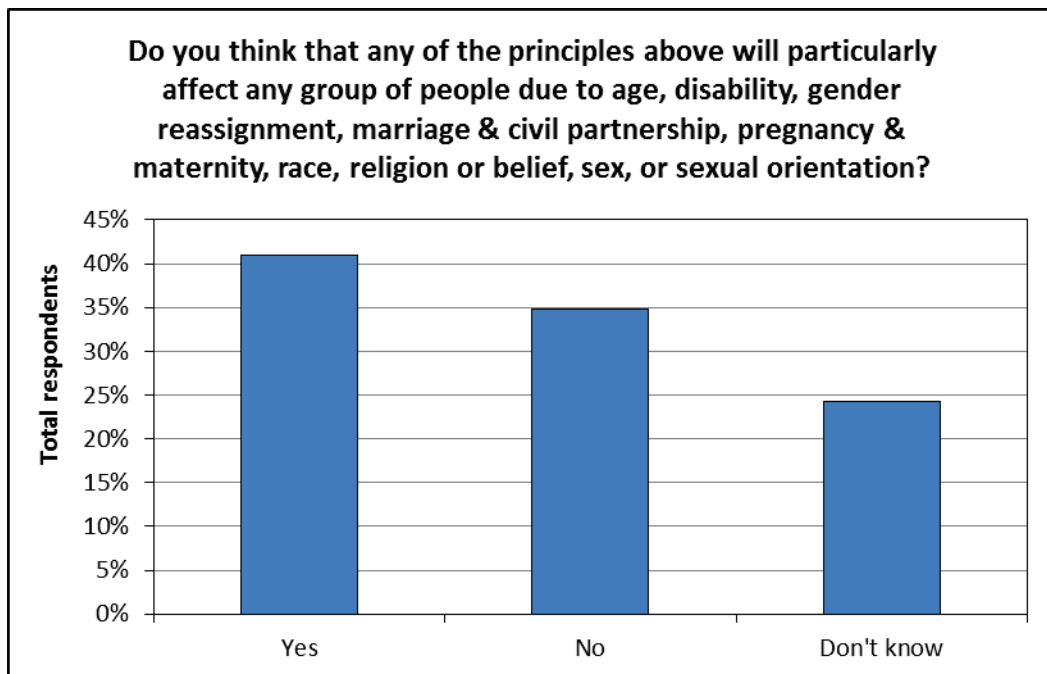


Please use this space to provide any comments you wish to make about the principles or in support of your answers above (please make clear which of the principles you are referring to).

There were 102 comments made, please see appendix A for the full list.

We want to ensure that any changes made are fair to everyone. To help us do this, please tell us if you think that any of the principles above will particularly affect any group of people due, for example, to age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, or sexual orientation.

	No.	%
Yes	86	41%
No	73	35%
Don't know	51	24%
Total respondents	210	
Not answered	21	

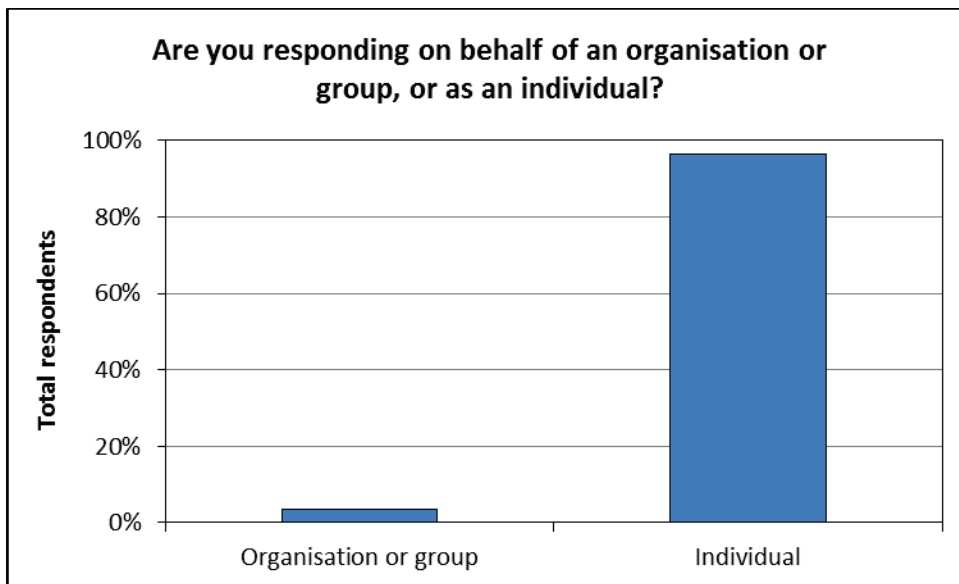


If yes, please explain which groups and the reasons they might be affected:

There were 86 comments made, please see appendix A for the full list.

Are you responding on behalf of an organisation or group, or as an individual?

	No.	%
Organisation or group	8	4%
Individual	211	96%
Total respondents	219	
Not answered	12	



If you are responding on behalf of an organisation or group, please tell us the name of the organisation/group:

There were 8 organisations responded to the consultation:

Adult placement care homes.

Aymestrey Parish Council

Kilpeck Group PC

Kingsland Parish Council

Kington Town Council: sent in x3 sides of A4 comment with questionnaire (See Appendix B)

Llangarron PV

Middleton and Leysters Parish Council

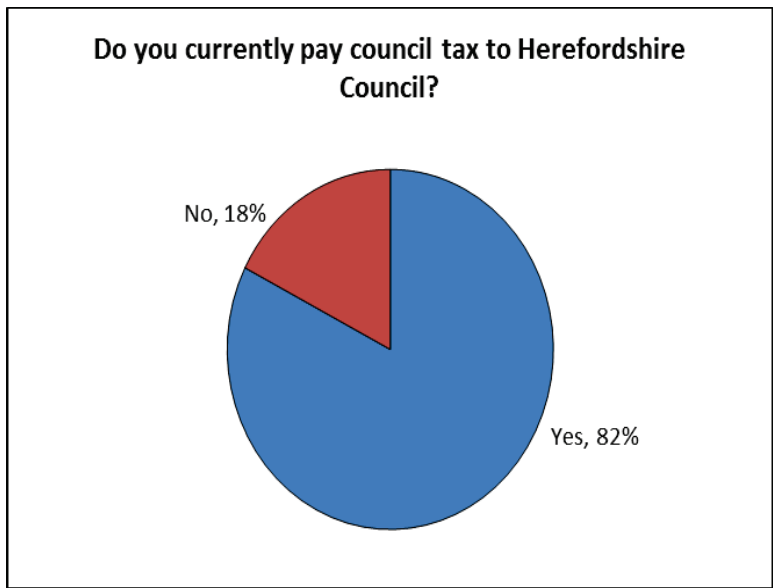
Pencombe Group PC

About You

Note: This section only applied to respondents who replied in an individual capacity.

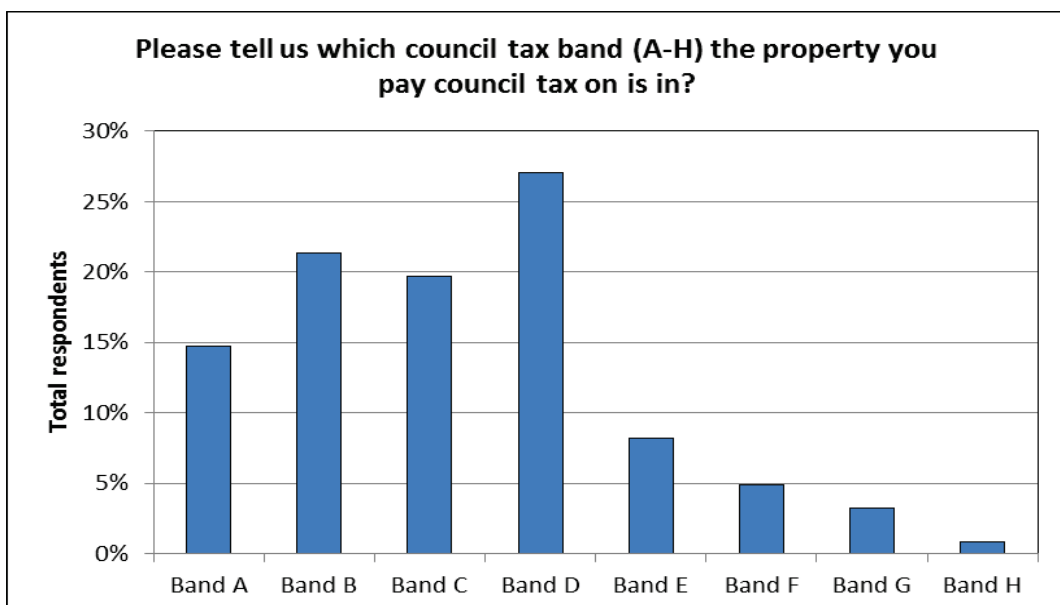
Do you currently pay council tax to Herefordshire Council?

	No.	%
Yes	179	82%
No	38	18%
Total respondents	217	
Not answered	14	



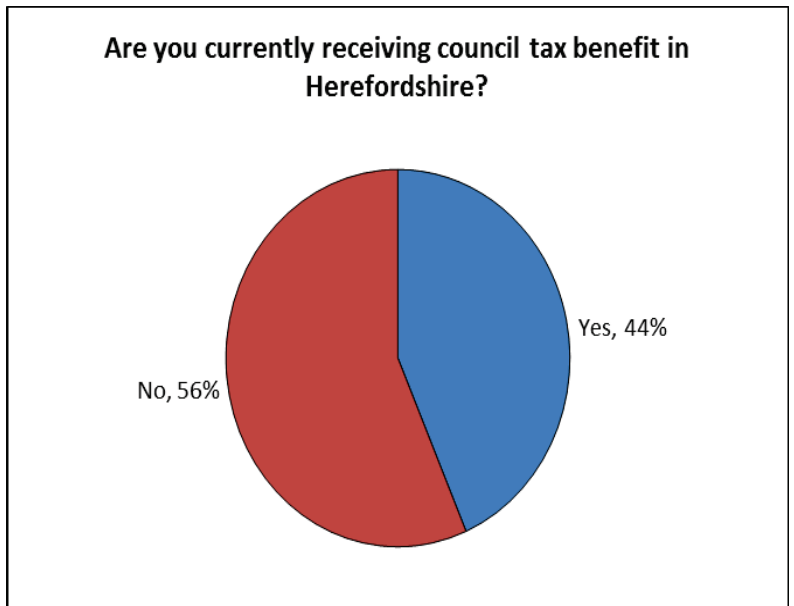
If yes, please tell us which council tax band (A - H) the property you pay council tax on is in? (If unsure leave blank)

	No.	%
Band A	18	15%
Band B	26	21%
Band C	24	20%
Band D	33	27%
Band E	10	8%
Band F	6	5%
Band G	4	3%
Band H	1	1%
Total respondents	122	
Not answered	109	



Are you currently receiving council tax benefit in Herefordshire?

	No.	%
Yes	94	44%
No	122	56%
Total respondents	216	
Not answered	15	

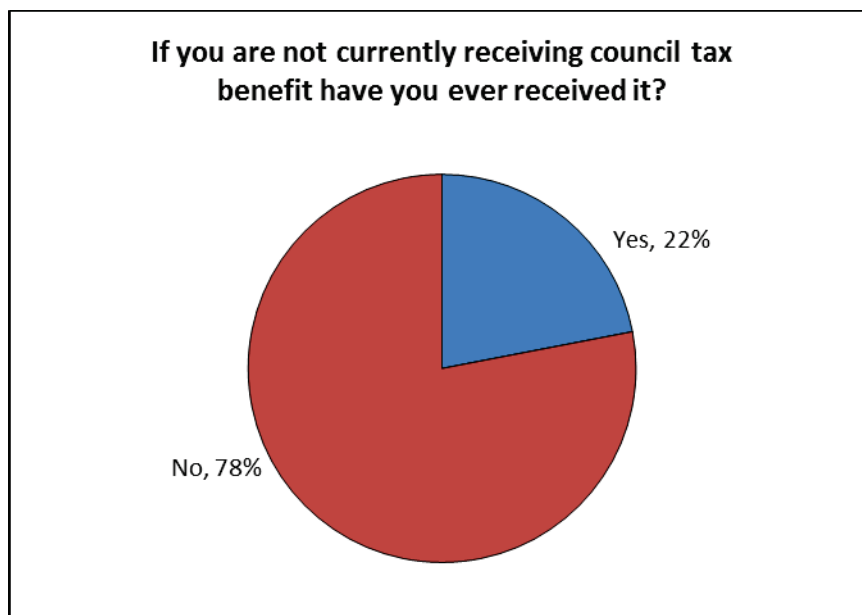


If you are not currently receiving council tax benefit have you ever received it?

Note: The number of respondents who answered this question is greater than those who indicated they were not currently receiving council tax benefits in the previous question.

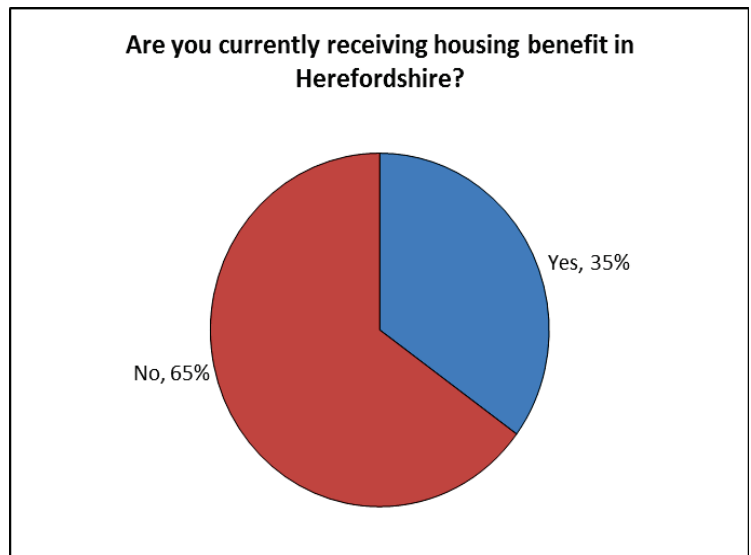
	No.	%
Yes	29	22%
No	103	78%
Total respondents	132	
Not answered	99	

Please note that very high number of respondents didn't answer this question.



Are you currently receiving housing benefit in Herefordshire?

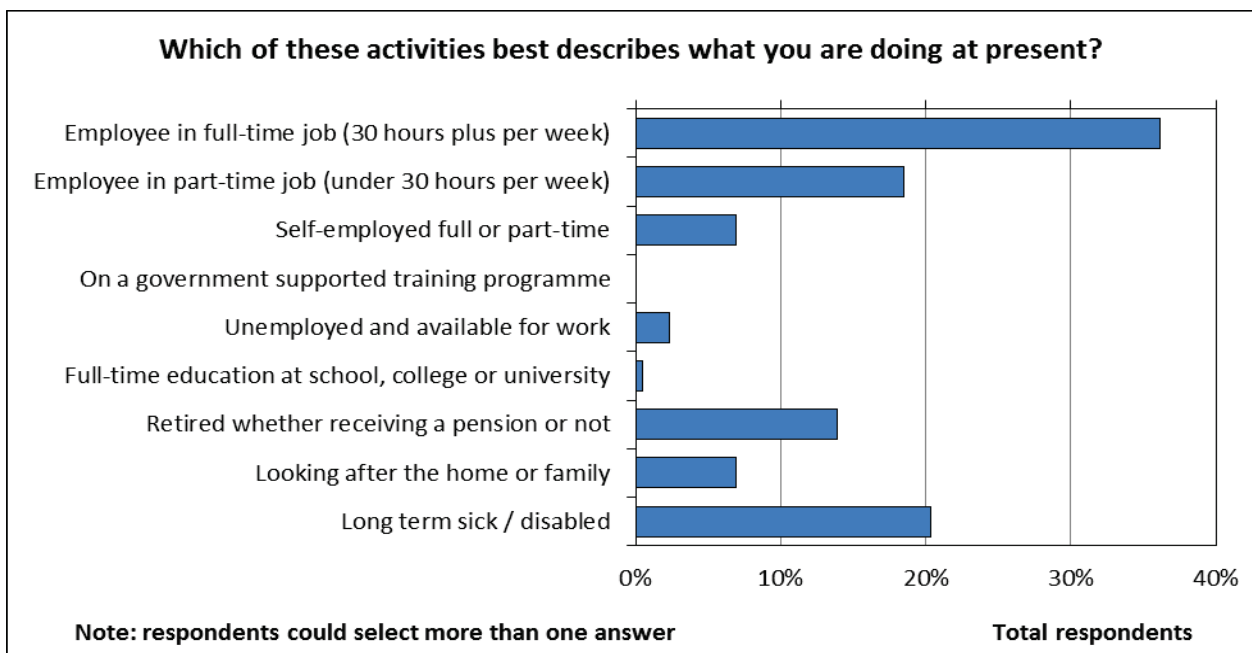
	No.	%
Yes	76	35%
No	141	65%
Total respondents	217	
Not answered	14	



Which of these activities best describes what you are doing at present? (please tick all that apply)

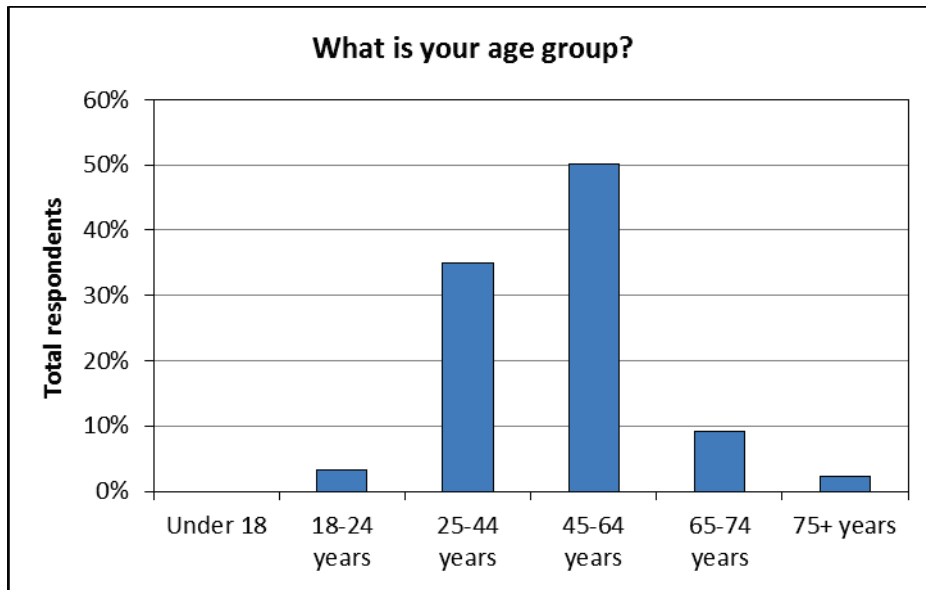
	No.	%
Employee in full-time job (30 hours plus per week)	78	36%
Employee in part-time job (under 30 hours per week)	40	19%
Self-employed full or part-time	15	7%
On a government supported training programme	0	0%
Unemployed and available for work	5	2%
Full-time education at school, college or university	1	0%
Retired whether receiving a pension or not	30	14%
Looking after the home or family	15	7%
Long term sick / disabled	44	20%
Total respondents	216	
Not answered	15	

Note: respondents could select more than one answer.



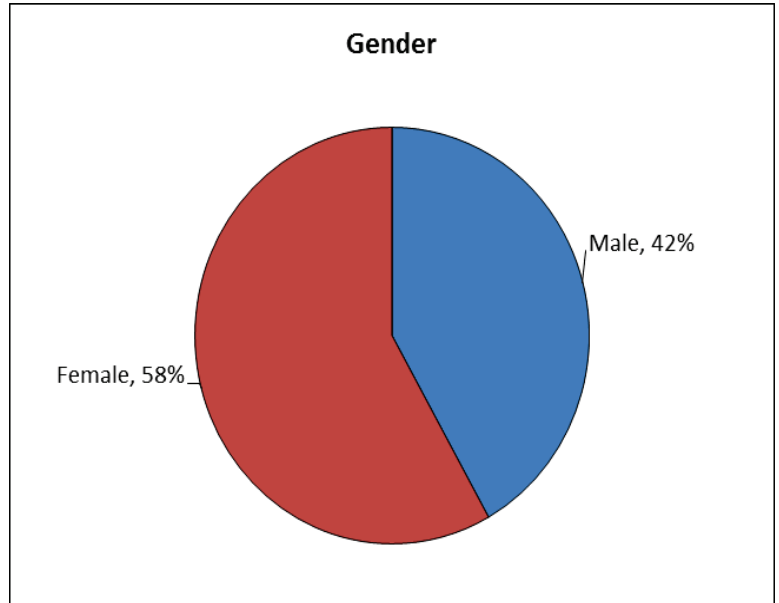
What is your age group?

	No.	%
Under 18	0	0%
18-24 years	7	3%
25-44 years	76	35%
45-64 years	109	50%
65-74 years	20	9%
75+ years	5	2%
Total respondents	217	
Not answered	14	



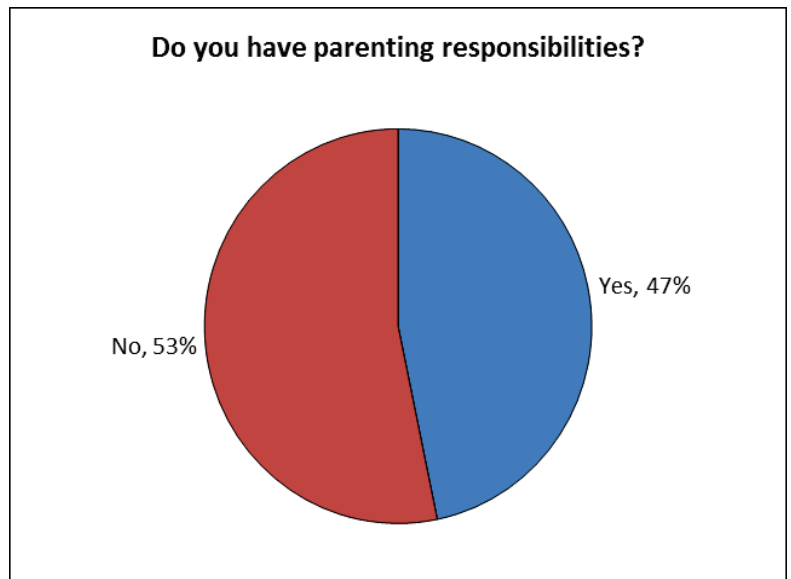
What is your gender?

	No.	%
Male	90	42%
Female	125	58%
Total respondents	215	
Not answered	16	



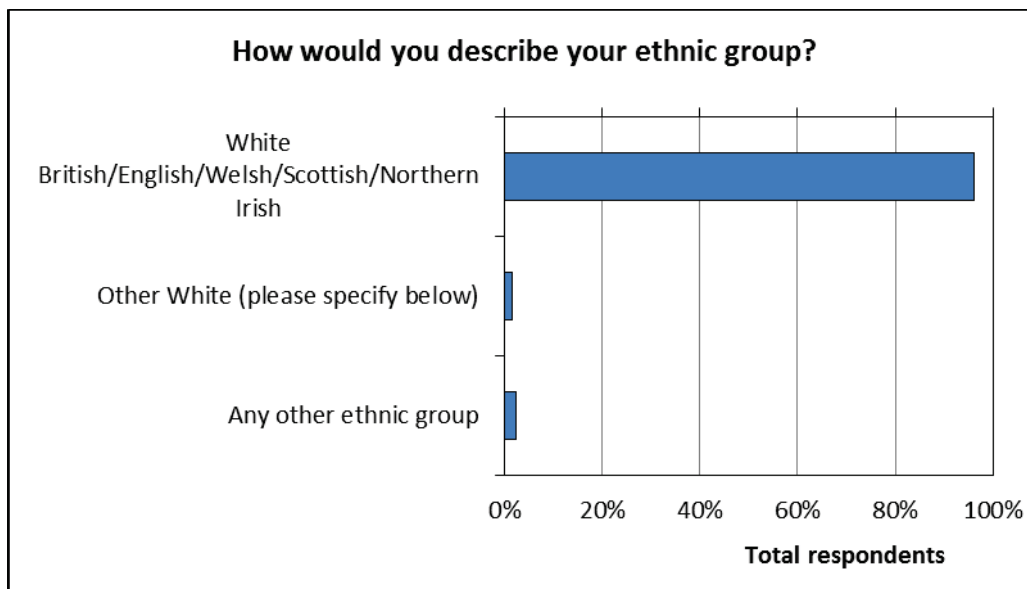
Do you have parenting responsibilities?

	No.	%
Yes	101	47%
No	115	53%
Total respondents	216	
Not answered	15	



How would you describe your ethnic group?

	No.	%
White British/English/Welsh/Scottish/Northern Irish	202	96%
Other White (please specify below)	3	1%
Any other ethnic group (please specify below)	5	2%
Total respondents	210	
Not answered	21	



Any other ethnic group (please specify below):
 There were four comments made:

- “Mixed race - white Southern Irish / West Indian”
- “Mixed white/ black African”
- “White Polish”
- “White traveller”

Appendix A: List of comments

Any remarks added by data entry personnel are shown in parenthesis for example [A4 size letter attached].

Please use this space to provide any comments you wish to make about the principles or in support of your answers above (please make clear which of the principles you are referring to):

Comments:
<p>1 - Amount of benefit should be based on need. If anyone is too low to pay anything then none should be paid. 2 - Individual needs should be assessed. If a family claiming benefit are assessed as needing a band A property then band A benefit should be paid. However someone living in a band A property that is assessed as only needing a band D property then benefits should be based on that need. 5 - Benefit should be assessed against the combined income of all adults first. 7 - Agree providing a safety mechanism for delayed payments (whilst waiting for first salary) is in place.</p>
<p>1 & 2. With the changes proposed by the government to Disability Benefits any changes would have to allow for the changes that are predicted by these changes. I am disabled and I am becoming very concerned about any changes in Benefits that target the disabled.</p>
<p>1: People on low income, should not have to pay 10% unless their income is exceptionally high meaning they can reasonably afford to LIVE and pay it. 2: People in larger houses than they need SHOULD be made to pay extra council tax, but I personally don't think it's right to charge people extra if they NEED to bedrooms i.e. for children, carers. 3: removing the 2nd adult rebate should be considered if together their income is over a certain threshold. 4: YES - If someone has savings of £10,000 then they should be able to afford to pay some council tax. 5: If someone lives in a house of someone on council tax benefit, then that person should contribute to the council tax, but I believe it should be under the name of the person who should pay and not the person who's renting/bought the house. 6: ABSOLUTELY NOT. This principle is completely absurd and I for one know there will be uproar if this principle goes ahead. Child Benefit is paid to look after children, NOT the parents. Children are expensive! Nappies, food, clothes etc... I have two children and ~£33.70 a week for BOTH of them doesn't even come close to what they cost to look after properly, let alone if this was taken off us too, by being included as income and taken off us for council tax payments. 8: YES DEFINATELY. Child Benefit and child tax credits are paid to look after children, so those benefits SHOULD NOT be classed as income, but for this reason exactly, I believe child maintenance payments SHOULD be included in income.</p>
<p>1: Though I wonder, should it be 10%? What about £1 or £2 per week instead? It would be good to promote a sense of ownership + responsibility. 2: I'm concerned this might affect families with children disproportionately. 3: I think the whole household income should be taken into account. 4: though maybe reducing it to £12,000 would be more palatable it's a big reduction in one go. 6: Difficult because it's a universal benefit, for some households it's a useful extra, for others it's a vital income. Better to look at total household income rather than singling this out. 7: The difficulty would be when their first pay day is - and how they're supposed to manage until then! 8: It would depend, surely, on levels of maintenance - I don't think disregarding £30 per child per week is really enough. There again, it depends what the total household income is, and what percentage of it the maintenance forms. 9: A flat rate, no matter how many children? Not fair! Individual cases probably need individual assessment. I'd be particularly concerned about the possible effects on households with children, and also on single householders. I hope you have ensured the Voluntary Sector have received this - e.g. Shelter, SHYPP, Homeless Forum, The Community Leaders, Open Door, the children's centres etc. These are the people who will really know the difference having to pay a few more pounds will mean to some households. I think the big issue that this highlights is really council tax should be levied on household incomes (or even individuals' incomes) rather than these incredibly out of date and unfair household bandings. I know it's not LA's fault - but the 25% reduction in council tax for single a householder always was ridiculous - and the concept that a Band A householder should pay 6/9ths of a Band D cost, while a Band H householder paid only twice that of band D almost always for a considerably more substantial property always felt unfair. It makes a difference too - is the property owned or rented? I think we're asking the wrong people to make the sacrifice and pay more - there are plenty of well-off, and even wealthy people in Herefordshire who could contribute more - some of them may even be pensioners - yet they have an automatic exemption. Why? ! Hereford City Council 2012 - 13 - totals A = £999.23 - H = £2,997.68.</p>

Comments:
2: But excluding 25% for sole occupants which must be based on actual charge up to and including band F at least we strongly agree with this cap but not capping 25% sole occupancy discount to bands B and D only. to clarify my comment on principle 2: strongly agree with the exception of 25% discount for sole occupancy which should extend to at least band F. There are many people in higher band properties who are bereaved & not yet ready to move on or (in current climate) cannot sell to trade down. Also - single people only make use of services provided for them i.e. one person and council tax should be reduced to reflect this. These people will not all be pensioners. 3: Yes - 2 people = twice use of services provided.
4 - People need to save to get into a better financial position so they can stop getting benefit - lowering the threshold just means people will save less so they can stay on benefits.
7: Because work is rarely paid weekly the 4 week benefits all for the gap before first salary arrives. 9: It is important that earning is not disadvantaged and that it is encouraged.
Absolutely disgusting in which you can take control the income of a lone parent bringing up a child and taking into account their child benefit and any maintenance that they may have. What will you do next, I wish I lived in another town as if this was to happen it is shameful for Herefordshire Council to even consider. Money grabbing and shameful!
All your proposals mean lower entitlement higher contribution less benefit. I'm not going to support that. Benefits are getting worth less and less as it is. Your proposals make life worse. I hate being on benefits I don't need even more pain on top of what I have now. I don't really understand 'bands'.
As a single parent with 2 children following the death of their father I have to strongly disagree with any plans to take benefit away from these groups particularly, unless the single parent earns enough to cover all child care related costs especially when there is no entitlement to child tax credits for a salary above 40,000 I think. I feel everybody should pay something but not if the money left pushes them onto the breadline.
As a single parent with 2 children, I work 28 hours a week, I continually work hard to provide for my children, the last thing I need in this tough economic climate is to pay more for council tax.
Because of my disability I can only work a certain amount of hours a week, I feel I will be penalised for trying to work and have some self-respect. If you take away my benefit I will be working for nothing and you will therefore force me out of work and into the benefit system. Unless I come from another country and this government will give me every benefit going and more.
Child Benefit is awarded for the child and should not be regarded as adult's income (Principle 6)
Claiming council tax benefit is very hard to do as the forms ask far too many personal questions. People who claim have usually had a kick in the teeth by losing their job and loosing self-esteem, the last thing they need is a huge form to fill in. Instead the council should invite the claimant to a meeting to help them to claim, take advantages of other benefits (non-council included) and help to find work. It is after all in the council's interest to support that person to find a job and be able to pay and contribute to local society as a whole. The principle should be to help people and not to kick them when they are down by reducing benefits and making it hard to claim what they are entitled to. When councils have millions in the bank, a little consideration, practical help and discretionary financial help goes a long way and should be part of a caring council. The real principle is of course not to treat the weak, disabled and people who have fallen on hard times as if you do not want them. Benefits are not something to be cut because they cost too much, they are supposed to be caring help. There are some very costly staff working for Herefordshire council but no one thinks we should cut them instead. Why?
Council tax should take into account all forms of income without undue bias (e.g. item 9). However, every encouragement is needed for occupants to save for e.g. shared ownership on own house and to maintain employment. There needs to be sufficient incentive to get a job and keep some of the pay, before benefits are reduced.
Disability, please consider.
Do people who receive Working Tax & Child Tax Credit receive any reduction in council tax? Income into a house and number of dependents in that house should be taken into account when income is below the considered "bread line" amount. Unemployed. Persons not in work & receiving benefits should be made to work for the good of the community to receive a discount. i.e. the council should provide them with an unpaid position to deliver a service to receive their discount/benefit if unemployed. Hours of work equivalent to basic hr. pay rate. It could be tidying up park areas, removing graffiti etc.

Comments:
Downstairs living rooms that have to be converted into bedrooms due to disability should be excluded in calculation
Everyone should contribute to council tax - it is unfair on those paying the tax that those that don't have a vested interest in the benefit system remaining as it is with an ever increasing level of expenditure.
For each of the principles as follows; 1. This would only increase the chances of more people being pushed into poverty, benefits should be calculated on a means tested basis and should reflect the income of the household with no upper limit on entitlement. 2. I fail to understand how anyone who can afford a property of a higher band than D should even qualify for any entitlement. 3. This is punishing people who are willing to take low paid jobs, if they fall below the threshold they should be entitled to claim regardless of the first person's income. 4. Totally agree 5. I disagree unless the other adults are in a wage earning situation and that wage is above the limit currently imposed, many college & six form students undertake part time work at weekends, they should not be penalized (or their parents) for doing so. 6. Never, not ever should this be done? Child benefit should not become a tax burden on the people who have a need for it. 7. Should depend on the circumstances, most people have to work at least a month before receiving wages, to expect them to find extra outgoings in this time is unfair, placing those people into a debt situation. 8. Disagree. However I would agree if the amount being paid out in maintenance is also included in any benefit calculation. i.e. maintenance received ?150/month, maintenance paid ?100/month difference for calculation ?50/ month. I strongly believe that the majority of these principles will affect those people already living on the "bread line", by losing some benefits you would render them to become part of the poverty people, and as such these principles are in the main unfair and very misguided.
I am a married man in my 30s, with a wife who is studying <removed the specified course> and a <age removed> child. At present we have a reduction in our council tax as I am the only earner in the household (and its not a great income either!!). My wife is not earning and hasn't taken any loans out as we do not want to be in debt when she qualifies. I feel the way the Government are going is clearly targeting those who are married and who are trying to better themselves and have children. I feel that people with bigger houses and on higher incomes should be paying more, but also those who are 'free loading' off the Government should also be made to look harder for a job etc. It appears this whole proposal from the Government is targeting the 'average job' in society
I believe that to erase the extended payments could/would discourage a lot of people getting back into work. Perhaps if it was reduced to two weeks it would still save money, but also support people back in to work. The rest of the ideas are very fair.
I disagree with principle 2, as I think that capping at band D will give HC the excuse to penalise properties in the lower banding in the future "we are no longer able to charge above band D therefore will need to increase the amount of CT for lower band households! To 'even it out'? make it 'fair'?
I do not agree with the 1st principle as it will leave people on basic incomes such as income support with less available income than current DWP rules state they need to live on per week. There is also a high risk that people on benefits will not pay and the cost of recovering these small debts could outweigh any potential additional income for the council. This will also impact on people with disabilities who are likely to be affected by other reductions in their income due to changes in DLA - PIP. I think you should take account of other welfare reform changes when considering the impact of this principle. Principle 7 does not support the government agenda to support people back into work. If you are still required to provide this support in HB payments, I believe you should continue to provide it in tax benefit. Regarding principles 6,8, and 9. I agree that these income types should be counted providing the means-test provides an allowance for children. However I disagree with the proposed disregards. The lone parent disregard should not be higher than the couple rate.
I do not think the elderly who saved should have to pay for spendthrifts who have never saved anything. There are large families some with several working sons / daughters who have never had to pay council tax (non dependent deductions bear no relation to the REAL cost of council tax).
I don't think that people who receive lots and lots of benefits should be given even more council tax benefits as some people have loads of kids just to receive lots of free money and do nothing all day long. I also feel that people who work very hard, don't receive any benefits and scrap by should have their council tax increased to help with the government cuts.

Comments:
I don't want to comment on the principles above but shouldn't the council be making people with second homes in the county pay far more than they currently do? It should be a disincentive and encourage people to either live here or not so that local people might be able to purchase a house. I think that second homes should be taxed far more than a first home and that would help with the shortfall.
I feel it is about time that the people that have worked hard all of their working lives should not have to keep taking the brunt for people that do not pay. I have one occasion spoken to people that are better off than me and they claim benefits and I work full time and have to pay all of my own bills, how can this be a fair system? Let people on benefits start to take responsibility for the home they live in.
I feel strongly that the amount of savings you have should NOT be reduced to £10,000. Some people may have saved for a long time to have a little nest egg and they should not have to be penalised for that !!!
I find that even though my property is a 3bdrm detached bungalow with rent of £550pcm I am still penalised for having a 3rd bedroom "beyond my needs". I am registered disabled with Multiple sclerosis, work part time as the demands of full time would be detrimental to my health + mobility. I do require an occasional carer sleep over - who required a room not a sofa, I also have a child with special needs BUT I still find this ruling unfair in general. The rent I pay - private landlord - who has never put my rent up in 6yrs - is still classified too high ! Unfair and no compassion for the disabled !
I get housing and council tax benefit. I'm on low income I got to try to survive on just over 300 pound a week. I'm married got 1 child age 14. I don't get much council tax benefit 5 pound a week. At the moment time probably 10 pound better off than I would be then on the dole. I think there should be more help 4 people working. When u work out benefit you work out the benefit as a family on the dole a family should be on at least 60 pound better off then not working.
I have had no wage increase by next year in 4 years, so for a change let council tax and rent etc. reflect what happens in the wages.
I have made the above response on behalf of Aymestrey Parish Council. At its meeting last Wednesday, the council discussed the proposals and came to the conclusion that in general, expenditure had to be brought into line with tax and grant income and that this necessitated some reductions in benefits paid. The above proposals seem to be a reasonable approach to achieving this in this area of tax/benefit.
I strongly agree with the answers I have given. The current benefit system has created dependence. We need to instil independence that will lead to the more people working and putting something back into society.
I strongly disagree with most of these proposals which will hit the poor hard, particularly including child benefit and maintenance as income and removing extended benefits. Everyone should pay something is reminiscent of the Poll Tax. Jobs are hard enough to come by in Hereford without being penalised for taking one. Many people will have to wait a month for their first pay packet and need all the help they can get.
I strongly disagree to principle one because, its just myself who works 16 hours a week so I pay all the bills. My partner is a wheelchair user and desperately wants to work but with no luck but it does not stop him trying. strongly disagree with principle 2. Because I personally think that when I have house hunted in the past I always tried to rent a lower band property knowing that it will be cheaper. Principle 4 - I disagree because if you have children / partner who needs help or things you have a little money to do it. Principle 5 I think it is up to the house owners / renting to pay the main bills. Then it up to them what they take of others to contribute. Principle 6 - All my child benefit goes on my growing son also so does the child maintenance I received. It also pays some of my son's school trips / milk etc. Principle 7 I totally agree with then so people go back to work they are earning so should pay what they are meant to. I hope that this makes sense.
I strongly disagree with a number of principles because no account is taken of somebody who, through no fault of their own, has no other income than job seeker allowance, which I understand is £71 per week for an individual. It seems right to me that this is already the minimum and to take some from that is wrong. An exception should be made for those on the most basic benefit. As regards the principle 'extending payments' it seems to me that by doing this you are discouraging individuals from going back to work since it would effectively mean starting a new working life in debt. I am a pensioner, have no other income, very little savings and should add that I am not on benefits and never have been. We should ensure equity and to me that means those at the bottom of the pile have to receive at least a minimum to buy essentials and to me £71 per week is as low as it goes.

Comments:
I strongly disagree with discontinuing the 4 week run-on period for those returning to work. Most people who start a new job do not get their first wage for at least 4 weeks, and we should be making it as easy as possible for people to return to work and stay in their new jobs. Whilst I think that most working age tax payers should pay something, I do not think this should apply to the severely disabled, who will never be able to work.
I strongly think that these changes are going affect everyone, who are in receipt of benefits, and on disability, and with families in receipt of benefit.
I think in a time when circumstances mean many people cannot afford their own home and are having to remain with their parents in family homes far longer because of mortgages being harder to get and high rents that making people pay even more is just heaping on misery.
I think it is unfair to penalise parents with children, the child benefit does not cover the full costs of maintaining a child, even when child maintenance is awarded. Children do not bring income into the house, let's face it, apart from child benefit and the working tax credit system. I think you can remain fair to all whilst giving some allowances to encourage people to try to get work i.e. the 4 week feed in time to being asked to pay full council tax. Disabled people I take it will not have any assistance with council tax?? as it all hinges on whether someone is in work.
I think larger family's with at least 3-4 or more children under the age of 18 or 16 and both work should be able to get some help or even a percentage of their bill instead of just being for those who sit on their backside having kids and not working but get everything handed to them on a plate.
I very strongly believe that all sections of society should equally bear the burden. This includes pensioners who on the whole have a higher standard of living than the groups you have identified above, yet at the same time have much more generous council tax benefit allowances.
I would have my own system for which I would qualify.
I would not wish to see single mothers with young children targeted. I was once in that position myself and if the ex-partner suddenly stops paying anything towards the care of children (assuming that a partner is making a contribution) then that can have serious implications on the care of the children. At the same time however, when the children are old enough (which in my opinion is when they attend secondary school) then mothers should be encouraged back into the workplace so that they can start to contribute back into the 'melting pot' which helped them out when they needed it. The only exception I might make to this is where those children have additional needs which require above normal parental care and attention. I am not highly paid and also have a long-term health problem for which I'm not entitled to claim anything and if I can work and pay taxes then people who receive benefits (which after all are forms of 'income') then everyone who can, should pay something.
I'm a single male in my forties , I do believe if you take from the poorer family's that are working on a low pay, more next year , you will cause unimanagble suffering, single parent family's having pay the full amount on council tax even with children at further education, I believe you should aim to lower spending all areas over council to bring down the tax rate that all people pay. How can you expect low earning family's that live in council or rented property's afford the full amount to that of some on living in a mortgage free 4 bedroom house. This don't make sense, you will create such divide with in the community. I could tell dozens of stories whereby, a person has come from a different country , they have full rent paid, council tax, act.. and they have not paid in to any system , sort what you hand out first before taking from them that need it.
I'm not in a position to understand the consequences for a lone parent. The present system was presumably devised as being as fair as possible, spreading the burden of the council charge over the community. These proposed changes hit the poorer, more disadvantaged members of society, disproportionately.
Increase council tax on second homes - if someone can afford a second home, they should be able to support an increase in council tax which in turn can support the community. If they cannot afford the costs of a second home and do not choose to have one, this in turn will release a property that can become someone's primary home.
It is a very unfair system. Often there are several adults living under one roof who all have access to council facilities but their contribution is much less than a pensioner living alone. make it so that the burden is shared and not on the shoulders of a few.

Comments:
<p>It is impossible to agree to any of these changes without an adequate impact assessment and particularly an equalities impact assessment. They would seem to disproportionately impact on lone parents, particularly women, with no reason given. Also the principle that all should pay is reminiscent of the ill-fated Poll Tax. The principle could be softened by setting a limit on the extra amount any household has to pay of £3 per week (see Brighton and Hove Council) . In the absence of an adequate impact assessment these proposals would seem reckless at the present time. The growth of food banks in Herefordshire is indicative of growing poverty. The combined effects of price inflation, particularly food, loss of income in real terms, welfare reform cuts, fuel costs (a particular feature in a rural county, is hitting people hard yet HC seem to have taken no account of these issues. Instead they are presented in isolation. Also where is the assessment of the effect of the taper? If it is to incentivise work I suspect that it could have the opposite effect where a small increase in income could be discouraged by a harsh marginal rate of tax that these proposals may cause. Can we have the figures on that, please? I might add that the scenarios produced are also misleading and inadequate. So I could not agree to anything here without having the necessary information on which to form a balanced opinion.</p>
<p>It seem to me lone parent and children are getting a very bad deal.</p>
<p>It would seem like you are trying to penalize the people who are trying their hardest to bring up their children on their own due to an absent parent. In my experience I have been awarded a maintenance award in the past and it was not held up, thus he now owes over £10,000 which I will never get. My kids are now grown up and moved on. But if your new system was to be introduced I'd have been charged and then had to pay towards my council tax and still not had the money I was due. So I'd have lost out big time.</p>
<p>Little allowance is made of those whose available income may be lower because of their circumstances (such as disability, low pay, children or care for relatives). This is why I disagree with principles 1 (no allowance made for the expenses arising from disability for disabled people of working age), 5 (other adults in a household are likely to be low paid, otherwise they would be able to afford their own accommodation), 6 (child benefit should ensure that children are properly fed and clothed) and 7 (wages are paid in arrears). I support principles 8 and 9 provided that principle 6 does not apply. The principles do remove council tax support from some who can probably afford to lose it. This is why I support principles 2 and 4. The total household income should determine whether council tax support is provided, so I am undecided on principle 3, as it does not address this.</p>
<p>Lone parents that go to work, often work hard and every penny counts. Not all lone parents have got pregnant for benefits & a house. I feel anyone trying to work and get off benefits in anyway should be supported better to encourage working. Charging more council tax to people working in any way is also unfair. Many families struggle along with adult children who are unable to find work & move into their own homes. Charging more for these or not giving benefits to those unemployed is not a good idea as it just costs the parents more. This leads to parents having to evict adult children. Children's benefits or maintenance should not be taken into calculations as it means they will get less of what they need.</p>
<p>Low income families with children will be badly hit by principles 6 & 8 It is not fair that children will be effectively paying council tax.</p>
<p>Many of the proposals affect those on low income. Whilst central government seem intent on demolishing the welfare state, there is no mandate for Herefordshire Council to do so. I appreciate your hands are tied with regard to pensioners, but you must take proper note of the fact that low income families will be hardest hit once all the pensioner households are removed from the equation.</p>
<p>Maybe if someone is genuinely trying to sell there house they exception should be more than 6 months as the climate at the moment is very difficult and 6 months isn't long enough I think up to a year max would be more suitable,.</p>
<p>Not a benefit directly, but removing second home reduction would bring in more council tax overall.</p>

Comments:

Overall I agree with the new scheme however I wish to add a point regarding the principle below At present, payments are not included in the benefit calculation and we are proposing that they should be treated as income for calculating the level of council tax support. However, where the maintenance payments apply to children we propose to allow a weekly disregard of £30 a week for each child. While I agree that child maintenance should be included as an income for cuts. I feel it is unfair to still allow a disregard for each child where maintenance is received as I believe this is going against the incentives of families staying together. For example if the principle that child benefit is treated as income is in the council tax scheme. Couples who live together who are married will have no extra disregard in relation to income for their child (except the extra in applicable amount of £64.99 per child as of 2012/2013) Whereas a single parent/ couple receiving child maintenance and child benefit would also be entitled to the same amount per child added to their applicable amount plus the maintenance disregard so in effect? £94.99 per child. I hope this makes sense and I would be happy to discuss this further <removed name & the organisation>

P2 This might help combat under-occupancy. P5 Unworkable. P7 Help to ease the unemployed back to work. P8 All income to be assessed. P9 £25 disregard is neither here nor there so leave it alone and encourage people to at least try to make things better for themselves. Fraudulent disregards have to be investigated though.

People who work a 40-hr week are expected to contribute more of their earnings and it follows that people living on benefits should also share in the contribution until the economy (and council income) recovers. Everyone has to contribute.

Please don't hit lone parents, there are some out there that study full time and work to provide for their child & household. The support that the Council give is very much appreciated but it only helps us survive - it does not cover all outgoings & bills and give you the life of Riley. Not all of us have flat screen TV's and sit on our bottoms all day! Some of us work really hard, maybe look at other areas and re list some of your principles! Why does a couple and single person have disregarded income? They either have 2 incomes or no dependents? Child Benefit is a payment for the child - this is not an income!!

Please see attached letter [Respondent included x2 A4 pages] – see Appendix B

Principle 1 - Strongly agree with this idea, however would argue that a 10% contribution is not sufficient to make this local system workable in the longer term, and feel that a minimum contribution should more reasonably be set at 25%. Principle 2 - Again, strong agreement for the capping, however would again argue that the cut off point should be band C rather than D. Principle 3 - Agree that 2nd adult rebate should be removed in the situation described, however would be keen to ensure that single adult occupancy households discount is protected. Principles 4-9. Agree that the measures of income should be much wider and certainly incorporate child benefit and any maintenance paid. Would prefer a more overarching approach where all forms of income and benefits are taken into account with a small disregarded figure (say £25) applied. Wider comment - would ask that the Council consider wider cost saving options on council tax and providing incentives to use. For example widening the use of direct debits, and offering an annual discount for using direct debit as an incentive. My understanding is that it is possible to offer such an incentive and also deliver a small service delivery saving, and would like to see ideas such as this considered carefully.

Comments:
<p>Principle 1 - the level of taxation in this country is already crippling hard pressed families on low incomes and benefits I am totally against any increase of taxation in general for these vulnerable groups. Principle 2 - many people have inherited property from a deceased family member etc. the deceased may have had a high level of disposable income compared to the person whom lives there now. Taxation should be based on the taxpayers ability to pay. Principle 3 - again I feel strongly that because one partner is on low income/benefit then the other person/partner should be penalised with a reduction in a family budget by increase in council tax. Principle 4 - I support a reduced saving limit to £10,000. Again taxpayers with the ability to pay SHOULD pay. Principle 5 - Any increase in any taxation should be based on the ability to pay not by the amount of people residing there. I always thought council tax was calculated by the property/location not the amount of people under the roof. Such an increase may force the couple to force out a 3rd party thus causing more homeless and pressure on councils to provide homes for individuals. Principle 6 - Child Benefit is exactly that - to provide support for a child. No way should it be calculated as income to prop up council expenditure, there is too much 'back door' taxation in this country. Principle 7 - when taking up employment nobody is paid in advance the 1st month without pay and benefit payment is the hardest time to live. On taking up employment the cost to the individual i.e. new work wear, lunch and more importantly fuel/travel costs are crippling, don't remove extended payments, but perhaps defer payment to the final month of the council tax year. Principle 8 - it takes 2 to bring a child into the world and both child dependent on ability to pay and amount of maintenance paid.</p>
<p>Principle 1. Being of working age and a tax payer does not mean that there is money to spare. Council Tax cannot be avoided but spare a thought for those of us on low wages. Principle 3. This does not take the second adult's circumstances into account. Principle 4. Unfair but we have to be realistic. Principle 6. This could be disastrous for parents on low wages. Child Benefit is one of the few statutory non-means tested benefits available and families on low incomes rely on this guaranteed income. It really should not be included as 'income' in means testing for those on a low income. Principle 7. The transition into paid work from benefits frequently results in a long gap between the final benefit payment and the first pay cheque and it can be very difficult, almost impossible to budget during this time. Removing extended payments would cause hardship to many, and, would be (rightly) seen as petty penny pinching on the part of the Council. Principle 8. Have you ever been on the receiving end of 'voluntary' maintenance payments? They are frequently irregular, late, or missing, nearly always paid with bad grace and are not a reliable income source! Principle 9. Seems unfair - why penalise lone parents? An awful lot of parents become 'lone' through the actions of another person and do not choose their single parenthood status. A lone parent's earning ability is severely curtailed as childcare is the prime objective and a lone parent cannot 'get a second job to make up the shortfall'</p>
<p>Principle 1: I strongly agree that everyone should pay something towards council tax and rent. Nothing should be free. My husband is disabled and yet we use any benefit he has to pay our rent and council tax, I also work Sunday's just to contribute to the rent/council tax. Principle 3: Removal of 2nd adult rebate. Although I have ticked agree for this question I do not believe it should be removed in circumstances where there is a disabled or mentally ill person living at the property.</p>
<p>Principle 1: as benefits are now linked to the lower CPI rather than RPI the poorest are already going to be worse off without having to find a contribution towards Council Tax from an ever decreasing income. Universal Credit is coming in soon to replace the various benefits that can currently be claimed. It is estimated that hundreds of thousands of the poorest will be worse off following this change as, unsurprisingly, many will find their entitlements reduced. Principle 6: It is morally wrong to include Child Benefit as income that can be used to calculate entitlement to CT Benefit. The very poorest children will, again, be hit the hardest. THE COUNCIL MUST RETHINK THIS PROPOSAL.</p>
<p>Principle 2 - What happens to the very elderly living alone in large family property. If they are in a high council tax band with low income this should be taken into account. Principle 4 - £16,000 savings is very little if you are suddenly landed with large bills e.g. repairs to roof, plumbing problems etc. which easily eat up savings.</p>
<p>Principle 3 Income from any source should be treated equally. Rebate for low income second adult. If the second adult is disabled or frail this reduction should remain, since the householder is effectively subsidising the state.</p>
<p>Principle 5 - this would, of course, have to exclude over 18's who are still in full time education, even though they are 'working age', or if they have been unable to get a job, the term 'adult' is obscure, circumstances must be investigated, one size does not fit all.</p>

Comments:

Principle 5. Definition of adult? 16 or 18[?] Should only pay if working. Principle 6. Child Benefit should be stopped to middle & high earners. Principle 7. To truly help people back to work the extended payments [are] needed. Principle 2. Tax high earners & larger properties. Once again the poor take the wrap for the rich & why are you spending so much on recruiting & paying a C.E.O.? [Note added to end of questionnaire reads:] P.S. Sorry for mistakes, partner filled out some of this, corrected it as my name is on the questionnaire! (he feels very strongly about some issues raised here!!).

Principle 6 and 8 I think is an unfair look at parents who may be struggling. I receive child benefit and don't even count that as an income as I don't even see it. it goes straight into my child's nursery and maintenance payments are for the child not for the parent and I think that is important as that may be the only money they have to spare on their child.

Principle 6 seems most unfair. Child benefit should not be classed as income; as its very name suggests it is there to benefit the child. It isn't a great sum of money to begin with and to squeeze it further would have a dramatic affect on many households and children.

Principle 6:- Child benefit, whilst given to the parent(s) is predominately for the child, I do not think it fair to take this into account as income as you will be in effect taking money from children!!! Principle 8:- Maintenance payments should not be included as income. The payments received are for the child(ren)to buy them food, clothing, shoes etc. and NOT to be used to pay bills!! Principle 9:- Lone parents have it hard enough trying to run a household on 1 income and now you want to take even more money off them??!! Disgusting!! The principles I have mentioned above I feel quite strongly about. As a lone parent of 2 myself, I find it a struggle to get the bare essentials as it is. I do work, however, if it was not for the benefits I receive (which I am not proud of receiving) my family would be living on the breadline! If you bring in these unnecessary measures, I think there will be a lot more families and more importantly children living in poverty! Do you really want that on your conscience??!!

Principle 8: Child Benefit is for children, we must not increase child poverty. P.9: It is understandable to want working adults to contribute to the household bills. I am deeply concerned that in doing so, changing the rules, child poverty will be increased, so it is important to take account of the number of children a lone parent has in full time education, even after 18! However, taking a small % from most people who can work is fair but pushing some of those into poverty is not sensible - it will increase NHS bills etc. For rural areas it is important to take into account the cost of travel to/from work, especially for those on low incomes.

Principle 9 - Although I have ticked 'strongly agree' I disagree that the amount of £20 should be disregarded for lone parents. I see no reason why the amounts should differ between them, couples or a single person, especially when other allowances are also being disregarded. The amount disregarded should be £10 across all categories.

Principle 9. Why should Single parents still receive a 'higher' amount disregarded as other members of the population. It is often the parents wish to be a single parent, and they appear to receive more support proportionally than other income groups. I would regard this as grossly unfair. Principle 7. It is often difficult for people returning to work. Their benefits cease as of the first day they begin work yet they may have to wait several weeks (and at least 2 weeks because of the 'week in hand' practice) before receiving any remuneration. During this time they have to provide transport costs etc. in addition to meeting their regular commitments for food, fuel bills etc. This would result in people arriving at the end of the first month, in an arrears situation with their Council tax which could act as a deterrent in returning to work. Principle 1. Many people are unemployed through no fault of their own, or through sickness/disability. Their fixed income is extremely low and the increased burden of yet another 'bill to pay' would prove intolerable.

Principle nine should be reduced to ten pound I don't see why single parents should be given preferential treatment over couples it should just go on household income. I don't think that child benefit should be included as income as this is meant to be for children not to pay tax. Also I do not really think that maintenance payments should be counted as this is for children however I suppose it would depend on overall household income and circumstances.

Comments:
Principles 6, 8 and 9, targeting child benefit, maintenance and lone parent I feel is the wrong way to go. This will put more pressure on a single parent who wants to work. I am a single parent and have been for 14 years. Out of those 14yrs I have worked 10yrs. it has been a struggle but have managed. If you consider taking more money of me it will be even more difficult. The maintenance I get (£40 per week) and the child benefit is my daughters money. It pays for everything that she needs. I do not use this towards anything else other than the well being of her. And I am sure that I speak for many, some people in receipt of council tax discount probably earn more than some people working. 'I am not going to work I cannot afford to go' is what I hear.
Principles 7 & 9 I feel that every effort should be made to get - keep people in employment. By withdrawing the extra 4 weeks benefit (principle 7) will just encourage people to stay on benefits and the same applies to principle 4.
Proposals do not go far enough and the working person is penalised again Maintenance disregard should be £15 per child Attendance Allowance / DLA care & Mobility Allowance should have 50% disregard the remainder taken into account especially if the carer is a member of the family or a relative.
Question 8.....All maintenance payments should be used as Income with NO deduction for any children. I feel it's fair to disregard Child Benefit for all to make it fair for everyone.
Regarding principle 4, we believe if your claiming any help or benefits you shouldn't have any savings. Benefits are for people that really need them and have nothing left to fall back on.
Savings limit should be kept at £16000 after working and paying taxes all ones life £16000 is not a huge amount. Pensioners are being hit by a higher inflation rate than employed people An all time low savings rates is having a devastating affect How councils and government think £1 is earned weekly for every £500 in a building society account beggars belief! Many with small savings say up to £16000 are struggling with increasing heating and food costs the next thing could be "do I eat, keep warm or pay the council tax" Also reducing this would deter young people to save anything even if they could
Should not take child maintenance into account as sometimes the mother/father do not always receive payments.
Some parts of these proposals sound rather like the poll tax, some parts would be a small improvement to the way we pay council tax.
Some proposals will further impoverish those on low incomes, benefits and lone parents. Help should be targeted at the poorest. Those with larger properties have far more options than those in modest dwellings or rented accommodation. In particular, those older (and often single) people occupying large properties should not be subsidised any more than those in modest property. All taxpayers should pay something. 10% of a band D charge is fairly modest - around £2.55 per week in my case. Lone parents are already challenged with the latest changes to benefits legislation - for example, Tax Credits will in future be available to workers working 25 hours per week rather than the current 16, thus impoverishing a particular group of workers, and those probably more likely to be women in already low-paid occupations. The current disregard should apply, unless it takes the actual payable Council Tax below 10% of the full charge, in which case, I propose that the 10% minimum applies. However, in general, I support the concept of a local income tax, for money to be spent and accounted for generally, so welcome the proposals to devolve the Council Tax scheme to local authorities an a step in the right direction.
The Council is consulting on the assumption it will lose grant of £1.3million whilst the Local Government Minister has stated that Herefordshire will lose £1,033,778-the council is therefore looking to take from benefit claimants £266,000(26%)more than it is losing. Principle 1 will bring a fairness like the poll tax tried and failed to achieve. Principle 2 will disadvantage large families in large property and widows left in the family home. Principle 5 needs a limit placing on contribution Principle 6 this is a national benefit assed as needed by a family unit and should remain as a disregard Principle 7 should remain as support and encouragement back to work Principles 8+9 taken with other changes can reduce benefit to a lone parent by up to 96% surely an unfairness in anyone's eyes
The fundamental problem with all benefits, whether at national or local level, is how to distinguish between those who genuinely need them and those who play the system. Few people object to helping the former group; many bitterly resent subsidising the latter. This comment particularly applies to maintenance payments.
The parish council felt that some of the principles were ambiguous and some of the questions loaded.

Comments:
The poor should not be penalised for the mistakes of the rich. With all costs rising how do we expect those people on low incomes to cope. Council Tax has been a tax on property not on the individual. If the government wish to tax working people and their families more, let them at least have the courage to do this through income tax and not on another indirect stealth tax.
These principles you are proposing will hit the poorest people in the county. This is unfair, especially for people in low paid jobs or those with low incomes who are working hard without the benefit of fair remuneration. The wealthier in society should pay more. Corporations that are getting away with tax evasion should be paying more - companies like Starbucks, Google and Amazon. Also bankers who are getting large bonuses out of the public purse. This is so unfair. There is plenty of money around, but most of it is being trapped and hoarded by the elite. Legislate against the elite. Look at your own salary structures. Are there savings to be made in Council practises? Of the hiring of staff and the amount senior staff get paid at the Council.
Think council tax charges (or at least the police and fire brigade element) should be higher for higher band properties than present. This may mean lower band properties could charge less. Don't support council tax benefit.
This government do not care about anybody but the rich who can afford to do things like this they the Tories are bunch of arrogant Bastards who want to keep the poor in their place.
When people start receiving state pension after being on guaranteed pension credit there can be a large increase in outgoings such as council tax that the state pension does not replace
Where maintenance is concerned it could be that you would have to change the payment every month as not all ex partners keep to the agreements they have been given so you would have people contacting you every month to change your payments
Whilst understanding that the council has the responsibility to keep a balanced budget and council tax levels at reasonable limits, I am concerned that for Herefordshire this is very challenging, in the light of the fact that it has one of the lowest pay levels in the country, a rural county where travelling distance for work, accessing shopping areas and accessing services has a large impact on those who are less well off. Many people are already struggling to make ends meet with continued rises in food and utility prices as well as fuel for heating and for vehicles, many people are not on a bus route so public transport is not even an option in many parts of the county. This is even more difficult for those working in a low wage employment and the loss of benefit as well as cutbacks in the working tax credit levels would mean that maintaining that employment will become increasingly difficult and potentially add to the demands on the benefit resources through loss of employment or inability to take up employment opportunities due to financial viability. I feel that unless these sort of issues are taken into account in a wider context these cut backs instead of saving money could actually increase the problem and add to the hardship of many residents in the county.
Why ??? Any disregard? Questions poorly presented with little explanation for those not au fait with the system. A cap of amount of children being claimed for would be appropriate e.g. 2 per household the present system appears to favour those with children (unmarried families) in particular. Childless married couples and pensioners, also young single males who get very little help.
Why is the single occupancy set at 25% discount surely a fairer way would be 50% discount or somewhere near.
Why should the single mothers, who have children as a source of income from the state rather than working, get the choice of houses and areas to live in, they get enough benefits as it is.
Your questionnaire has completely ignored a very large and very important section of Herefordshire's society - CARERS !!!

Q12. We want to ensure that any changes made are fair to everyone. To help us do this, please tell us if you think that any of the principles above will particularly affect any group of people due, for example, to age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, or sexual orientation.

If yes, please explain which groups and the reasons they might be affected:

Q11. Yes/ No/ Don't know	Q12. Comments:
Don't know	Council tax on vicarages is paid by the Hereford Diocese or Board of Finance.
Don't know	Principle 5: I may have misunderstood, but I am concerned that parents of 18 year olds still in full time education may need to pay extra council tax when their children reach 18, because the children obviously won't be able to pay. I think this may cause hardship to parents of 18 year olds in their last year of school/college.
Don't know	The less well off Disabled and the old.
No	All groups should be expected to pay 10% after all they use the same services as the working individual & are the first to complain if something goes wrong. Fairness across the board would give a working people a reward as well. Welfare Reform cannot come to soon.
No	I feel that all adults whatever their income should pay something towards the council tax to take ownership of local services, they might then be able to respect what they receive. If they pay nothing it is just too easy to remain on benefits and not make an effort to get off them
Yes	6: Child benefit must not be treated in such a way as to disadvantage mothers and children.
Yes	Age - disability and Marriage.
Yes	Age - harder for youngsters to get jobs due to less experience, qualifications often do not count for anything.
Yes	All ages will be affected especially the elderly who have worked hard and paid taxes for over 40 years and have small to modest savings of say £16000 This will discourage young people to save and would be better off spending as the state will take care of everyone who has no savings
Yes	All of these as they are more likely to be in the lower paid or benefit sector.
Yes	As explained above I feel it will be unfair re couples who live together/ married
Yes	As given above the proposed reforms would affect all working age benefits claimants in the same way, given similar household arrangements: I am concerned that this may, whilst motivating the idle, unintentionally impoverish the incapable.
Yes	As stated above, lone parents are going to be penalised for raising their children on their own, whilst the absent parent may pay maintenance, if this is going to be considered as income, that maintenance will be used for bill paying and not the children - HOW is that right??!!
Yes	British white people will be penalised, for living and working in their own country.
Yes	Capping at band B the bigger the property the more should be paid. Multiple adults in each property should all contribute again this government appears to be penalising the low or disadvantaged people
Yes	Capping council tax benefit at Band D might affect disabled people who have to live in larger properties because of their particular needs.
Yes	Child maintenance and child benefit. Child benefit is used to help parents buy food and clothes
Yes	Children - using their money as part of the calculation means they will get less. Lone parents - allow them to keep some of their wages to encourage them to work, they need every penny.
Yes	Disability due to extra bedroom.
Yes	Disabled - uncertainty about future payments with regards to DLA. Severe disability for those over 16 years of age who become as adult but cannot live independently lone carers of disabled individuals who cannot work due to their caring duties.

Yes	Disabled and full time carers.
Yes	Disabled people already have to use their benefit money to pay rent and council tax instead of using it for their care needs. Removal of 2nd adult rebate will leave vulnerable persons at risk.
Yes	Disabled people as explained above. As the proposals only affect people of working age then clearly this group will be most affected.
Yes	Elderly on fixed incomes and savings which have failed to attract interest (subsidising low interest mortgages) should not have to pay more council tax just because they do not claim CTB. If so-called low income families do not contribute more inevitably older people older people would have to pay more.
Yes	Every case is different every need also different depends on entitlement of individuals.
Yes	Everyone is different, reducing a benefit will always effect some group in society in a detrimental way. The challenge must be to provide real help to each claimant to mitigate from any benefit reductions.
Yes	Families, especially single parent families
Yes	Families with children will really suffer and it is hard enough already for low income families to ensure children get all they need.
Yes	Families with children. Reasons above.
Yes	Family on low income one wage earner in the family
Yes	Gender - women will be disproportionately affected by some of the proposals. Statistical, they are more likely to be lone parents, carers and in receipt of maintenance payments. In addition, maintenance payments may not be regularly received or even where agreed, not paid at all.
Yes	I am concerned about single mothers losing out with the result that their child/children will lose out accordingly
Yes	I have been thorough with my reasons on the previous page. Any changes must be based on the ability to pay. Taxation in this country is grossly unfair i.e. fuel duty and the VAT component and Road Fund Licence. I pay the same level with my £100 per week disability money as a multi millionaire in a Ferrari driving along the same roads. Totally wrong
Yes	I think it effects the family unit...especially families with working age children who cannot get on the property ladder. They pay a fair chunk of rent for living with parents (who don't work) and pay council tax too. To get rid of the rebate would be just unfair. It also aims to take money off those who are lucky to find employment if doing away with the 4 week grace they give at the moment it just means you will end up with more people in debt but you seem to have overlooked this. Remember it usually takes 4-6 weeks to get first wage therefor you would start off in debt to rent and council taxalways playing catch up but never getting there and you will then send loads of letters saying how much we owe and how quick you want it.
Yes	I think it will affect everyone. I think it is very hard to afford to live at the moment and to charge people more would mean the most vulnerable would suffer (children + the disabled)
Yes	I think it would make things easier for people who pay maintenance because some people pay too much maintenance so to take it in to consideration is great.
Yes	I think single parent household and couple households should be treated the same. I don't think money meant specifically for children should be counted as income, i.e. child benefit, child tax credit, maintenance payments.
Yes	I think there is a danger some of them will discriminate against children
Yes	I would be concerned that some of these changes would impact those people who are least well off the most.
Yes	I would not want young families to be affected by changes, or any vulnerable person who is not in a position to lose money.
Yes	If having been on additional benefits for medical reasons, e.g. bipolar and having got their medication sorted find their benefits reduced. What you proposing is that they would receive even less. It seems to me that it should be a graduated reduction rate so that any reduction is less noticeable.

Yes	It appears that you are being targeted if you are married and have children
Yes	It appears that Herefordshire Council is deliberately targeting lone parents and wants to reduce their income. Very questionable intentions indeed. Secondly, councillors and MP's of a certain age and in positions of power continually seek to protect their pensions, benefit entitlements and standards of living in general at the expense of the young. A national disgrace that will come back to haunt society no doubt about it. Very short sighted and selfish in the extreme.
Yes	Lone parents and their child or children.
Yes	Lone parents, mostly women will particularly be adversely affected, as will the poor.
Yes	Lone parents, young people e.g. NEETS living at home, possibly student. But again without an adequate impact assessment this question is meaningless.
Yes	Lone parents-War Disabled-War Widows and families in larger properties War pensioners currently have disregards of payments-no reference to continuing this discretionary disregard
Yes	Long term disabled.
Yes	Low income families, increasing child poverty
Yes	Modifications to the lone parent disregard could adversely impact upon women, for the reasons described above.
Yes	No principal in particular. But disability should be taken into account when calculating council tax benefit. Those with disabilities may find it harder to gain employment so may need more help.
Yes	Old people, young people, single parents.
Yes	Older people, people with mental health problems, Learning difficulties, Physical health disabilities. Any disadvantaged person.
Yes	Parents or parent with "child" or young adult in college or university, or even apprenticeship, with very low incomes.
Yes	People with disabilities due to them often being on low income anyway.
Yes	People with Disability - those with learning disabilities are very vulnerable people and do not understand the value of money. The above changes (if they all went through) would mean a big reduction in their weekly income/allowances and expenditure would greatly increase. Also people on low wages (many with children) would have to stretch their already low income to beyond breaking point.
Yes	Pregnancy - not all able to get grants or maternity pay.
Yes	Principle 1 would disadvantage disabled people, where their disability gives rise to expenses relating to their disability.
Yes	Sex - most lone parents are women and they would be discriminated against as they are the ones left home looking after children!!
Yes	Single adult households
Yes	Single mums
Yes	Single parent families, or couples living on or near the bread line.
Yes	Single parents - have to pay more tax
Yes	Single parents and children would mostly be affected.
Yes	Single parents who are working but on a low income
Yes	Single parents, disabled, chronic low incomes.
Yes	The household has a person who is wheelchair bound and unable to do most things. The heating is on all day - most nights in the winter which with any extra Council Tax to pay something has to go ! ! !
Yes	The long term sick, and unemployed would be severely disadvantaged by these proposals
Yes	The proposals will affect lone parents. The majority of lone parents are female; Therefore one sex will be disproportionately affected.
Yes	The proposed changes would seem to affect largely those on low incomes. They are precisely the people who we are likely to suffer the most during an economic downturn.

Yes	The single parent. I live in a road and the past 6years, one household has had 8 working adults living there and pay 1 council, I live alone with a child and get a discount. More needs to be done to target every earning adult.
Yes	The unemployed unemployable people who think the state should support them when the fill their lives with drugs and drink and then expect tax payers to pay for their reckless pointless lives.
Yes	The worrying effect is on elderly living in their own homes on fixed incomes based on savings.
Yes	They will affect the poorest in society, especially the working poor regardless of age, gender, sex etc. By the way the notion of race is scientifically and socially outdated. There is only one race - the Human Race. We all originate from the same, very small group of humans in Africa many thousands of years ago. The word race, referring to a plurality of races should never be used.
Yes	Those who are disabled !
Yes	Women for at least 2 principles as most lone parents are women.
Yes	Women will be more affected by proposed changes then men. As most single parent households are headed up by a woman.
Yes	Yes single parents.
Yes	You are discriminating on age by omitting pensioners (only working ages people's benefits are being considered - see above).
Yes	You will affect everyone apart from the well off, FACT !
Yes	You would seem to be targeting low income families/parents by proposing that you include child benefit and maintenance payments in your calculations. Also - your statement does not make sense! It should read ..'and the reasons why they might be affected'
Yes	Your principles are targeting parents / lone parents..... Child Benefit? Maintenance? Lone parent income?
Not answered	Already stated.
Not answered	How on earth can you be fair as you will do what you like any way.
Not answered	People on reduced benefits, those in supported housing, vulnerable people who are now routinely being housed in the community
Not answered	Principle 8. - single parents and their child(ren) should not be penalised.

MEETING:	COUNCIL
DATE:	23 NOVEMBER 2012
TITLE OF REPORT:	COUNCIL CORPORATE PLAN 2013/15
REPORT BY:	ACTING CHIEF EXECUTIVE

1 Classification

Open

2 Wards Affected

County-wide

3 Purpose

To agree proposals for the council corporate plan 2013/15

4 Recommendations

THAT:

- (a) **the corporate plan 2013/15 (as set out at Appendix B) be approved; and**
- (b) **authority be delegated to Cabinet to agree in year amendments to outcome measures as necessary.**

5 Key Points Summary

- The corporate plan provides the key strategic policy framework document for the council.
- The proposals within the plan were informed by a situational analysis including policy direction, current performance, financial context and a latest summary of our evidence base including Understanding Herefordshire and the Your Community, Your Say community engagement process.
- The plan has been strengthened from a public health perspective reflecting the transfer of responsibilities to local authorities.
- The plan will provide the context for development of budget proposals, the Medium Term Financial Strategy and 2013/14 service delivery planning.

6 Alternative Options

6.1 Not to revise the plan. The current plan reflects the joint priorities and objectives set by the

Further information on the subject of this report is available from
Jenny Lewis, Assistant Director People, Policy & Partnership on (01432) 261855

council in partnership with NHS Herefordshire in early 2011. Given the changing partnerships with health, and the current evidence base, this plan becomes less meaningful as the prime strategic document for the council.

- 6.2 To amend the proposals. It is open to Council to recommend amendments to the proposals made by Cabinet. However any alternatives should be informed by the evidence base available and the prevailing financial and policy context. Any such amendments would, in accordance with the requirements of the constitution, require a further report to Council from Cabinet before the plan can be implemented.

7 Reasons for Recommendations

- 7.1 The corporate plan forms part of the council's budget & policy framework; approval is reserved to Council.

8 Introduction and Background

- 8.1 Cabinet have agreed a corporate planning cycle that enables the corporate plan, as the overarching policy document for the council, to be informed by, amongst other considerations, an integrated evidence base (considered by Cabinet in June), and in turn, to inform future service planning and budget setting. The delivery plan which underpins the corporate plan is scheduled for consideration by Cabinet in March, following the setting of the budget by Council in February. In formulating the delivery plan, Cabinet will also be reviewing the underpinning delivery principles to ensure they remain fit for purpose in light of the revised corporate plan and budget.
- 8.2 The current plan (attached at Appendix A for ease of reference), as well as reflecting the then joint priorities of the council and primary care trust, was found in practice to have too many themes (six) with rigidly aligned outcomes (thirty-four) which, as well as being over complex, were not reflective of the cross-cutting nature of much of the council's activity and did not clearly identify the priorities of the council.

9 Key Considerations

- 9.1 The corporate plan does not seek to set out everything the council is seeking to achieve; however it does provide the overarching policy framework within which decisions will be taken and resources allocated.
- 9.2 The plan identifies the council's contribution to meeting the broader county vision set out in the Herefordshire Partnership community strategy (currently under review), and the draft Health & Wellbeing Strategy. It is underpinned by a number of key thematic strategies such as the economic development strategy, child poverty strategy, strategic delivery plan for transforming adult services, and Yes We Can the strategic plan for children and young people.
- 9.3 The proposed plan (Appendix B) sets out the identified priorities for the council on the basis of the situational analysis. The ongoing Root & Branch Review programme, scheduled to make key change proposals until September 2013, will inform the need for further refinement of the corporate plan, as the reviews aim to redefine the role of Herefordshire Council and other public services, set out the priorities for the next decade, and enable the rebuilding of budgets with clear links between spend and results. The plan also sets out the key activities around people, resources, customer services and partnership that we will undertake across the organisation to deliver the agreed outcomes. These activities incorporate the "Principles of Service Delivery" agreed by Cabinet on 11 October 2012 as part of the Phase 1 Root and

Branch Reviews.

- 9.4 Whilst the proposed plan reflects the priority given to health and wellbeing including public health, further refinement of the outcome measures may be needed in year to take account of the national public health outcomes framework, due to be published shortly. In addition some proxy indicators have been included where outcome measures have not yet been established; these will be amended as outcome measures are confirmed.
- 9.5 Once the content of the plan has been approved, further work will be undertaken to ensure the plan is presented in a more user-friendly way, and reflecting the council's identity and branding.

10 Community Impact

- 10.1 Cabinet considered *Understanding Herefordshire*, the integrated evidence base and needs assessment, at its meeting on 14 June. Recommendations from *Understanding Herefordshire* were that we:
- Be proactive about our changing demographics, identifying the predicted rise in need for services and ways to address it.
 - Develop the infrastructure, services and support networks needed to promote self-help and a sense of personal responsibility and to enable people to live independently. This will include direct service provision as well as housing and accommodation that facilitates independence, the economy, spatial planning, transport, engagement with the third sector and communities, and support for carers.
 - Continue to build on a community based approach, developing our assets of volunteers, carers, third sector organisations, active communities and statutory services.
 - Adopt this community based approach to provide comprehensive and integrated services and support for people living with Dementia.
 - Ensure that the environment and infra-structure enables people to make healthy choices such as cycling and walking, as well as supporting economic growth and improved connectivity.
 - Target preventative activities at the major causes of morbidity and premature mortality, in particular smoking, alcohol and falls.
 - Make childhood obesity a priority for all stakeholders, tackling the underlying causes as part of a joined up strategy.
 - Ensure continued improvement for Early Years and Foundation Programme, primary and secondary school children to achieve top quartile performance.
 - Ensure the various strategies targeting families living in poverty are joined up to provide an integrated response.
 - Address social inequalities through a comprehensive approach, encompassing opportunities such as employment as well as lifestyle behaviours, access to services and community engagement.
 - Undertake more in depth analysis in the following areas:
 - Domestic violence
 - The care needs of people with learning disabilities
 - Impact of changes to the welfare system, particularly on families

- 10.2 Cabinet considered a summary of key findings from the Quality of Life Survey. There was general support for the six priorities proposed in the survey, however the top three were clearly identified as **creating a successful economy, improving health and social care, and raising standards for children and young people**. The recent *Your Community Your Say* engagement events confirmed this feedback on overall priorities.
- 10.3 Taking into account the situational analysis, including the evidence base, the proposed plan reflects two broad priorities: supporting the development of a successful economy, and improving quality of life for the people of Herefordshire. For the latter a particular emphasis is placed upon ensuring that public services are prioritised to meet the needs of the most vulnerable within our communities (i.e. those in need of services to maintain their independence or stay safe) whilst enabling an improved quality of life for the wider population less reliant upon existing models of public sector service delivery. The proposed plan has also been strengthened from a public health perspective, prioritising the need to reduce social inequalities, increase prevention and encourage greater independence.

11 Equality and Human Rights

- 11.1 Reducing inequalities are clearly articulated outcomes within the draft corporate plan. Individual elements of activity within the delivery plan would undergo equality impact assessments as an integral part of their planning and implementation.

12 Financial Implications

- 12.1 There are no direct financial implications arising from this report. The corporate plan, once approved, will provide the context within which the Medium Term Financial Plan is agreed.

13 Legal Implications

- 13.1 There are no legal implications arising from this report; the budget and policy framework rules within the council's constitution have been followed in the development of this report.

14 Risk Management

- 14.1 There are risks associated with the production of any strategic plan at a time of significant change. However, without a clear indication of the strategic priorities, there is a greater risk that resources may not be directed to areas of greatest need. Risk assessment of individual activities planned to implement the corporate plan will be assessed as an integral element of the delivery planning process.

15 Consultees

- 15.1 The views of residents and the community have been captured and incorporated into the evidence base. In addition the recent 'Your Community, Your Say' engagement process began with the Quality of Life survey; a postal survey to 4,125 households in the county, stratified to reflect the three sub-localities of Hereford and the eight other localities. Fieldwork started on 21 May 2012 and at the time of the cut off for replies, 16 July, 1,346 valid responses had been received, giving a response rate of 33%. The key findings of this survey (outlined within the community impact section of this report) were further explored through locality based engagement events held through the early autumn to, amongst other things, gather the views of residents and partners about the future priorities for the council. The outcomes from these further events are currently being evaluated and collated and will be used to further inform development of delivery plans.

- 15.2 The initial analysis has shown that this exercise has highlighted slightly different priorities in different geographical areas; an issue that the Council will need to consider over the coming months as it further develops locality working.
- 15.3 Overview & Scrutiny Committee considered the draft plan on 12 October and endorsed the approach taken by Cabinet in formulating the Corporate Plan. In addition, the committee recommended that the Council's values, as spelt out in the acronym PEOPLE, should be utilised as the foundation and delivery of any project proposed as part of the Corporate Plan.
- 15.4 The values set out the principles by which the behaviours of council employees, members and service delivery partners should be guided in serving the community. As well as being actively used as a measure of individual performance through the staff appraisal and development process, qualitative assessments of how well we are collectively demonstrating these values are captured through routine customer experience surveys.

16 Appendices

Appendix A – Current Herefordshire Public Services Corporate Plan

Appendix B – Proposed Herefordshire Council Corporate Plan 2013/2015

17 Background Papers

- *Understanding Herefordshire* – integrated evidence base and needs assessment (available at: <http://www.herefordshire.gov.uk/factsandfigures/1922.aspx>)

THE HEREFORDSHIRE PUBLIC SERVICES VISION

Working together to deliver efficient, excellent services and improve outcomes for the people of Herefordshire. We aim to put **PEOPLE** at the heart of everything we do.

Our shared values are;

- P**eople – treating people fairly, with compassion, respect and dignity,
- E**xcellence – striving for excellence and the highest quality of service, care and life in Herefordshire,
- O**penness – being open, transparent and accountable for the decisions we make,
- P**artnership – working together in partnership and with all our diverse communities,
- L**istening – actively listening to, understanding and taking into account people’s views and needs,
- E**nvironment – protecting and promoting our outstanding natural environment and heritage for the benefit of all.

OUR PRIORITIES TO MEET THE VISION ARE TO

1. Create a thriving economy	2. Improve health care & social care	3. Raise standards for children and young people	4. Promote self reliant local communities	5. Create a resilient Herefordshire	6. Commission the right services
-------------------------------------	---	---	--	--	---

We will ensure that our priorities are met by the achievement of the following long term outcomes

LONG TERM OUTCOMES

1.1 The regeneration of Herefordshire with a particular focus on Hereford City	2.1 Improved intervention and support for older people and keeping them safe	3.1 Sustainable educational provision throughout Herefordshire	4.1 Vibrant cultural opportunities	5.1 The preservation and enhancement of our environment.	6.1 High quality assessments of need
1.2 The delivery and maintenance of key infrastructure including actions to reduce congestion	2.2 A robust & healthy provider market	3.2 Improved intervention and support for children & young people and keeping them safe	4.2 Safe places where people feel secure	5.2 Accessible services and countryside	6.2 Streamlined, working practices
1.3 Growing businesses, jobs & wage levels.	2.3 Financial balance across Herefordshire’s health & social care economy	3.3 Improved performance by early years and primary school pupils including vulnerable groups relative to their peers	4.3 Enhanced local democracy and community engagement.	5.3 A strong regional and national reputation	6.3 High levels of customer and citizen satisfaction
1.4 The development of employment skills, including access to higher education	2.4 The development of a new local commissioning infrastructure	3.4 Reduced child poverty	4.4 Ways of working that reflect the needs and priorities of people & place	5.4 The protection of people’s health & wellbeing	6.4 A high quality workforce
1.5 A reduction in health inequalities for the working age population	2.5 Good quality corporate and clinical governance standards are embedded in all services provided	3.5 Families & communities that are able to support all children & young people effectively	4.5 A balanced housing market to meet residents needs	5.5 Increased equality of opportunity	
1.6 Improved access to superfast broadband and wider use of technologies	2.6 A reduction in health inequalities for frail, elderly people	3.6 A reduction in health inequalities for children & young people		5.6 Sustainable public transport provision	
	2.7 More people retaining their independence through greater choice and control				

Ensuring that our policies improve the **localities** where we live, work and play

Ensuring that our policies are **evidence** based

Ensuring that our policies improve **well being** in Herefordshire

We will deliver our vision through the implementation of our “Rising to the Challenge” change programme which has the following five work streams:

Customer focus

Communities first

Streamlining the business

Better services

People and Performance

OUR VISION

Herefordshire - a place where people, organisations and businesses work together within an outstanding natural environment, bringing about sustainable prosperity and well-being for all.

OUR PRIORITIES TO MEET THE VISION ARE TO...

ECONOMY

Create and maintain a successful economy that:

PEOPLE

Enable residents to be independent and lead fulfilling lives so that:

- Supports economic growth & connectivity (*includes broadband, local infrastructure, transport and economic development*)
- Make Herefordshire more attractive to younger age groups for a more balanced age profile
- Has good quality housing to meet everyone's needs
- Supports the improvement in quality of our natural and built environment
- Embraces new ways of responding to changing pressures (*includes sustainable & more local water, fuel and food supplies*)
- Has vibrant town centres with shops, restaurants and leisure facilities that keep people spending locally

- People are physically and mentally healthy and stay healthy for longer
- Outcomes for children and young people improve
- There is increased equality of opportunity and access, to reduce inequality in health & wellbeing outcomes
- There is access to excellent education and learning opportunities at all levels (*includes early years/schools/FE/HE/ adult learning*)
- People are able to take more responsibility for themselves (*includes making healthy choices & focus on prevention*)
- People are active in their communities and look out for the more vulnerable so they can live independently
- Public services are prioritised to support those in need of services to maintain their independence or stay safe
- People stay safe

PROPOSED OUTCOME MEASURES:

- Increase GVA and narrow the gap between the county and the region.
- Increase earnings (workplace based) and narrow the gap between the county and the region
- Increase the business survival rate up to three years after registration
- Increase % of workplace jobs in knowledge intensive industries
- Improve average journey time per mile during the morning peak
- Increase the % finding it easier to use public transport
- Increase the % of existing broadband connections achieving 2Mbit/s speeds.
- Lower the house price to earnings ratio (lower quartile) to narrow the gap with the regional ratio
- Increase the % of houses meeting standard condition in line with national rates
- Reduce the average level of nitrogen dioxide (NO2) within the Air Quality Management Areas in the county
- Reduce fuel poverty (% of households spending more than 10% of income on fuel)
- Reduce levels of income deprivation
- Increase the % of Sites of Special Scientific Interest land in favourable condition
- Reduce CO2 levels per capita
- Maintain the % of residents satisfied with their local area as a place to live
- Increase % of under 65 year olds in the county to national level

Performance indicators:

- Increase the % of local sites where positive conservation management has been/is being implemented
- Increase the number of adults with learning disabilities in employment (NI 146)

- Reduce the numbers of years of life lost by premature death (all causes)
- Increase the % of adults who do not smoke
- Increase the % of people with a healthy weight
- Reduce the % of people who drink over the recommended limit
- Reduce inequality in life expectancy in Herefordshire
- Reduce the % of children in poverty
- Increase the % of residents finding it easy to see a GP or NHS dentist
- Improve attainment levels in early years and schools
- Narrow the inequality gap for attainment at all key stages (in particular looked after children, those in receipt of free school meals, gender)
- Increase the % and number of 16-18 year olds in education and training or employment
- Decrease the % of working age population with no qualifications
- Increase the % of working age population qualified to level 3 or higher
- Increase the % of residents who volunteer at least once a month
- Maintain levels of satisfaction with social care
- Increase the number of unpaid carers receiving support
- Increase the % of residents who feel safe in their local area after dark
- Reduce the % of repeat incidents of domestic violence
- Increase the quality and effectiveness of early health and protection services

Performance indicators:

- Reduce emergency admissions of people over 65 to accident and emergency as a result of a fall
- Reduce the number of alcohol related hospital admissions
- Increase % pupils achieving 5 or more A*-C grades at GCSE or equivalent, including Maths & English
- Increase dementia diagnosis rates
- Increase in % of vulnerable people on protection plans where assessed level of risk is reducing

TO SUPPORT THE DELIVERY HEREFORDSHIRE COUNCIL WILL OPERATE EFFICIENTLY AND EFFECTIVELY BY:

PEOPLE	RESOURCES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Building on our strengths to develop our culture, capability, capacity and effectiveness to deliver excellence, fairness and value for all our communities ▪ Creating an engaged, agile, flexible and responsive workforce that is resilient into the future ▪ Developing a strong, integrated performance management culture and process that is effective in managing risk, maximising opportunity and promoting continuous improvement (<i>includes linking performance outcomes to cost, risk management, corporate governance systems, lean systems thinking</i>) ▪ Ensuring HR resources are aligned to priorities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Managing our finances effectively to secure value for money and deliver a balanced budget ▪ Developing a robust commissioning framework and capability (<i>includes evidence-based planning & commissioning, clear decommissioning strategies, development of markets to drive down costs, improve quality and generate inward investment</i>) ▪ Making best use of the resources available to us in order to meet the council's priorities (<i>includes money, buildings, IT, information</i>) ▪ Ensuring we make the best use of funding opportunities both at national and regional level ▪ Being transparent about our resources
<p>Measures</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Increase number of apprentices ▪ Cost of workforce ▪ Reduce sickness absence levels ▪ Increase % of staff with a performance appraisal in past year ▪ Increase participation rates re Employee opinion survey ▪ Improve EOS results ▪ % of staff who are: women/ from an ethnic minority/ disabled ▪ % of top paid (5%) staff who are: women/from an ethnic minority/disabled 	<p>Measures</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Proportion of Capital projects delivered to time and to budget ▪ Forecast outturn against budget (overall and by directorate) ▪ Borrowing ▪ Investments ▪ Progress against delivery of savings targets (overall and by directorate) ▪ Level of assurance re savings (% delivered; % assured; % at risk) ▪ Compliance with information governance requirements ▪ Unqualified accounts ▪ Unqualified value for money conclusion
CUSTOMER	SERVICE & PARTNERSHIP
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Involving, engaging and influencing others at as local a level as possible (<i>includes enhancing local democracy, partnership working, locality working, customer engagement, lobbying</i>) ▪ Ensuring that all council and partner delivery services are responsive to customer needs, engage customers effectively, and enable access to services at as local a level as possible and information through the most appropriate channel ▪ Maximising self-help where possible, focussing on prevention and demand management, and diverting unnecessary demand on services. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Continually looking for improvement and remaining open to challenge ▪ Being focused on delivery and impact ensuring that benefits are realised and resources are linked to outcomes ▪ Ensuring decisions are evidence-based ▪ Maintaining openness and accountability for decision making and service delivery and impact ▪ Forming countywide and local strategic partnerships for the benefit of both the organisation and the community ▪ A strategic approach to prevention and early intervention to improve outcomes for people and promote independence
<p>Measures</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Satisfaction with the way Herefordshire Council runs things ▪ Satisfaction with other public services (GP, hospital, dentist, police, fire service) ▪ Number of contracts with Customer Quality Schedules ▪ Increase in the % of residents who feel they can influence decisions affecting their local area ▪ Strong regional & national reputation/recognition (<i>how will this be measured?</i>) ▪ % of issues resolved at first contact ▪ Compliments and complaints measures ▪ Increased self- service and independence 	<p>Measures</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ % of service based performance indicators improving ▪ % of services based quality assurance evidencing improvement in practice ▪ % of strategic risks above tolerance level
<p>We aim to put PEOPLE at the heart of everything we do.</p> <p>OUR VALUES (principles to guide behaviour)</p> <p>People – treating people fairly, with compassion, respect and dignity, Excellence – striving for excellence and the appropriate quality of service, care and life in Herefordshire, Openness – being open, transparent and accountable, Partnership – working in partnership, and with all our diverse communities, Listening – actively listening to, understanding and taking into account people's views and needs, Environment – protecting and promoting our outstanding natural environment and heritage for the benefit of all.</p>	

MEETING:	COUNCIL
DATE:	23 NOVEMBER 2012
TITLE OF REPORT:	REPORT OF THE INDEPENDENT REMUNERATION PANEL
REPORT BY:	ASSISTANT DIRECTOR LAW, GOVERNANCE AND RESILIENCE

1 Classification

Open

2 Wards Affected

County-wide

3 Purpose

To consider the recommendations of the Council's Independent Remuneration Panel on the Councillors Allowances Scheme.

4 Recommendation(s)

THAT:

- (a) the Independent Remuneration Panel be thanked for its report;
- (b) the Council consider and have regard to the following recommendations of the Independent Remuneration Panel as set out in the Panel's appended report:
 - 1 The level of allowance paid to the Chairmen of the two Overview Scrutiny Committees be set at Band 2, and that this rate should be reviewed not later than 2015;
 - 2 An allowance be paid to the Vice-Chairmen of the two Overview Scrutiny Committees and that this be set at Band 4, subject to the Vice Chairmen chairing at least 50% of the Task and Finish Groups held by that Committee. An allowance should otherwise be set for Vice-Chairmen at Band 5. These rates should be reviewed in 2015;
 - 3 That an allowance of £500 be paid to Chairmen of special Scrutiny Task and Finish Groups appointed by the relevant Overview and Scrutiny Committee subject to appropriate criteria being met. The number of payments should be reviewed at the end of 12 months;
 - 4 That a separate allowance be paid to the Deputy Leader of the Council, and that this should be set at 60% of the Leader's allowance, an

amount of £16,763. Only one special responsibility allowance should be paid to any one Member, and the rate of the allowance for the Deputy Leader of the Council should be reviewed in 2015;

- 5 That Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs Service rates be paid regardless of the fuel type used by a vehicle and that these rates should be reviewed by Herefordshire Council before 2016;
- 6 That, where practicable, Members requiring overnight accommodation utilise three star accommodation or equivalent, evidenced by receipts. If no suitable accommodation is available, Members may, with approval of the Monitoring Officer, book accommodation to the value of £120 per night, evidenced by receipts;
- 7 That no allowance be recommended for the Chairmen of the Rural and the Urban Forums. However, the activities of both Forums should be reviewed by the Panel in December 2013; and;

(c) The new Allowances Scheme should take effect from 23 November 2012.

5 Alternative Options

- 5.1 The Council can decide to accept the Panel's recommendations in full, or in part, or determine such allowances scheme as it sees fit, subject to possible referral back to the Panel in relation to any matters on which the Panel has not made a recommendation.

6 Reasons for Recommendations

- 6.1 To comply with the requirement that, under the Local Authorities (Members' Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003, before amending its Councillors' Allowances Scheme the Council must have regard to the recommendations made in relation to it by an independent remuneration panel.

7 Introduction and Background

- 7.1 The Council is required to establish and maintain an Independent Remuneration Panel to advise on a Scheme of Allowances for Members and any proposed amendments. The Council is required to publish details of the Panel's recommendations and the main features of any Scheme that the Council adopts.
- 7.2 The report of the Independent Remuneration Panel is attached at appendix 1. The report to the Panel on which it based its recommendations is attached at appendix 2.

8 Key Considerations

- The Panel was asked to consider the implications of changes to the Council's Overview and Scrutiny arrangements and whether, in consequence, an allowance should be paid to Chairmen and Vice Chairmen of the General Overview and Scrutiny Committee and the Health and Social Care Overview and Scrutiny Committee which had replaced the single Overview and Scrutiny Committee appointed by Council in May 2011.
- Whether, in light of the new Scrutiny arrangements, a sum of £500 should be payable to a

Chairman of special Task and Finish Review Groups, commissioned by the two Committees. Payment would be identified at the outset as part of the scoping of the review and be subject to the scope of the review being agreed by the relevant Overview and Scrutiny Committee; the timescale being met and the quality of the review meeting the expectations of the Committee. A maximum of six reviews a year would be commissioned between the two Committees.

- The Panel was asked to consider whether a separate allowance be paid to the Deputy Leader of the Council.
- Whether Members driving electric vehicles should be entitled to claim the same mileage rate as those driving cars fuelled by petrol or diesel.
- The Panel was asked to consider a proposal that the subsistence allowance for Councillors for overnight accommodation should be altered.

9 Community Impact

- 9.1 Consideration of Members Allowances needs to take account of the current financial climate. The IRP Members are independent of the Council and represent the wider interests of the county.

10 Financial Implications

10. The budget for Members' Allowances for 2012/13 is £629,840 made up of £366,494 for the basic allowance and £218,580 for Special Responsibility Allowances. There is an additional budget of £44,770 for National Insurance payments.
- 10.2 The recommendations are that expenditure on any additional Special Responsibility Allowances will be contained within existing budgets.

11 Legal Implications

- 11.1 In order to comply with the Local Authorities (Members' Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003, it is necessary for Council the Panel's review of the Allowances Scheme at its Annual meeting in May 2011.

12 Risk Management

- 12.1 Not complying with appropriate legal requirements could have a detrimental impact on the Council's reputation

13 Consultees

- 13.1 Political Group Leaders as at October 2012.

14 Appendices

Appendix 1 – Report of the Independent Remuneration Panel

Appendix 2 – Report to the Independent Remuneration Panel on 31 October 2012 on which it based its recommendations

15 Background Papers

- None identified.

HEREFORDSHIRE COUNCIL

NOTES of the meeting of the Independent Remuneration Panel held in the Committee Room, Brockington on Wednesday 31 October 2012 at 2.00 pm

Present: Mr N Kerr and Mr W Lindesay

Officers: D Taylor (Acting Chief Executive); C Chapman (Assistant Director Law, Governance & Resilience), J Jones (Head of Governance) and DJ Penrose (Governance Services)

5. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Mr C Oliver and Mr D Stevens.

6. REVIEW OF COUNCILLORS ALLOWANCES SCHEME

The Head of Governance/Deputy Monitoring Officer outlined the background to the development of the Councillors Allowances Scheme.

The Panel then reviewed the Scheme, discussing each recommendation in turn.

Overview and Scrutiny Committee Chairmen's Allowance

The Panel was asked to consider the implications of further changes to the Council's Overview and Scrutiny arrangements. New arrangements provided for two Overview and Scrutiny Committees each of equal status which had replaced the single Overview and Scrutiny Committee appointed by Council in May 2011. Each Committee had a Chairman and a Vice-Chairman.

The Head of Governance said that the General Overview and Scrutiny Committee had a very broad remit which would mean that the Chairman's role would be pressured. Whilst the Health and Adult Social Care Scrutiny Committee was more focused, it would initially be operating during a period of complex change within the health economy, as the Health and Social Care Act 2012 was implemented.

Recommendation to Council

That the level of allowance paid to the Chairmen of the two Overview Scrutiny Committees be set at Band 2, and that this rate should be reviewed not later than 2015.

Overview and Scrutiny Committee Vice-Chairmen's Allowance

The Head of Governance said that the Vice-Chairmen of the two Scrutiny Committees would have a role in planning the delivery of the Scrutiny function which would include the attendance at liaison meetings with the Cabinet. It was intended that they would Chair a significant proportion of the Task and Finish Groups run by that Committee without additional special responsibility allowance.

It was noted that the Scrutiny Annual Report would outline the work that had been undertaken by the Vice Chairmen of the Committees.

Recommendations to Council

That:

An allowance be paid to the Vice-Chairmen of the two Overview Scrutiny Committees and that this be set at Band 4, subject to the Vice Chairmen chairing at least 50% of the Task and Finish Groups held by that Committee. An allowance would otherwise be set for Vice-Chairmen at Band 5.

These rates should be reviewed in 2015.

Chairmen of Task and Finish Groups

The Head of Governance reported that Task and Finish Groups would continue to form part of the Scrutiny Structure. These Groups would look at an issue in greater depth generally taking evidence from a range of bodies and undertaking research compiling a report setting out its findings and recommendations to the Executive. These studies could take one or two meetings to complete or up to six months for a more detailed review.

It was suggested a sum of £500 be payable to a Chairman of one of these special reviews. To avoid distorting the work programmes of the two Committees and having regard to the available budget a maximum of six reviews would be commissioned between the two Committees rather than imposing an artificial limit of 3 per Committee. The Chairmen of the two Committees would negotiate in the event of any disagreement. The Vice-Chairmen of the two Committees would not be eligible for payment under this provision.

The decision to make a payment available for a special review would be identified at the outset as part of the scoping of the review and be subject to the scope of the review being agreed by the relevant Overview and Scrutiny Committee; the timescale being met and the quality of the review meeting the expectations of the Committee. This would ensure that there would be no perverse incentive, for example to deliberately and unnecessarily extend the timescale for a review.

Recommendation to Council

That an allowance of £500 be paid to Chairmen of special Scrutiny Task and Finish Groups appointed by the relevant Overview and Scrutiny Committee subject to appropriate criteria being met. The number of payments should be reviewed at the end of 12 months.

Deputy Leader of the Council

The Panel considered the suggestion that a separate allowance be paid to the Deputy Leader of the Council. The Deputy Leader of the Council actively supported the Leader, and was undertaking aspects of the work of the Leader.

Following a discussion, the Panel stated that whilst it accepted the principle of separate remuneration for the role of Deputy Leader of the Council, the information before it did not allow it to make a decision on this matter. It was agreed that a job description that outlined the role of the Deputy Leader of the Council would be circulated to Panel members in order that a decision could be made outside the meeting. It was acknowledged that only one Special responsibility Allowance would be paid under the Councils scheme.

Recommendation to Council

That a separate allowance be paid to the Deputy Leader of the Council, and that this should be set at 60% of the Leader's allowance, an amount of £16,763.

Only one special responsibility allowance should be paid to any one Member, and the rate of the allowance for the Deputy Leader of the Council should be reviewed in 2015.

Travel Allowance

The Panel considered a proposal as to whether Members driving electric vehicles should be entitled to claim the same mileage rate as those driving cars fuelled by petrol or diesel. It was noted that Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs Service (HMRC) approved mileage rates did not specify fuel type but the merely vehicle type. Therefore employers could currently reimburse electric car owners up to 45p/mile for business journeys without the recipient incurring a tax liability. To pay the same rate, regardless of fuel type, was a no cost incentive to choose lower emission cars, and could also be seen as a reward for those who have already chosen such cars.

Recommendation to Council

That HMRC rates be paid regardless of the fuel type used by a vehicle and that these rates should be reviewed by the Council before 2016.

Travel and Subsistence

The Panel was asked to consider a proposal that the subsistence allowance for Councillors for overnight accommodation should be altered. Currently, Members were able to claim for three star accommodation or equivalent up to a value of £80, evidenced by receipts. This was not always appropriate, especially if Members had meetings in central London where such accommodation was not easily secured.

The Head of Governance was aware of the sensitivities which surrounded this issue, and said that it was not recommended that any change be made to the rule that Councillors should seek three star accommodation wherever possible, but that there should be flexibility built into the system.

Recommendation to Council

That, where practicable, Members requiring overnight accommodation utilise three star accommodation or equivalent, evidenced by receipts. If no suitable accommodation was available, Members may, with approval of the Monitoring Officer, book accommodation to the value of £120 per night, evidenced by receipts.

Allowances for Town and Parish Councillors

The Head of Governance reported that the Chief Executive of the Herefordshire Association of Local Councils had requested that, as a matter of course, the Panel should consider the payment of allowances to Town and Parish Councillors.

The Panel last considered the question of Town and Parish Council Allowances in October 2006. The Panel decided that, due to lack of interest and information from any of the councils involved, "no further action be taken at present with regard to introducing such a scheme." If a formal request were to be received consideration could be given at that point to convening a meeting of the Panel. A letter had been sent to Town and

Parish Councils inviting replies by 3 December 2012. The Panel would be informed of the outcome and proposals brought forward as appropriate to a future meeting.

Chairmen of Rural and Urban Forums

The Panel was asked to consider a proposal that the Chairman of the Rural and Urban Forums should attract a special responsibility allowance. The Rural Forum was established in late 2011 to allow Members representing rural wards to discuss matters of rural interest and to make representations to the Portfolio Holder. The Forum was a consultative group, not a decision making one, and an Urban Forum, which had yet to meet, had also been established following requests from some Members. As yet, no Chairman had been appointed to the Urban Forum.

The Panel was of the view that both these Forums should be in operation for twelve months and a report on its activities considered before a decision is made as to whether the Chairmen should attract a Special Responsibility Allowance. The Panel would consider the matter further at the end of that period

Recommendation to Council

That no allowance be recommended for the Chairmen of the Rural and the Urban Forums. However, the activities of both Forums should be reviewed by the Panel in December 2013.

The meeting ended at 16.05

MEETING:	INDEPENDENT REMUNERATION PANEL
DATE:	31 OCTOBER 2012
TITLE OF REPORT:	REVIEW OF COUNCILLORS ALLOWANCES SCHEME
REPORT BY:	HEAD OF GOVERNANCE

Wards Affected

County-wide

Purpose

To review aspects of the Councillors Allowances Scheme and the payment of allowances by Parish and Town Councils.

Recommendation(s)

THAT: the Panel considers whether to recommend that:

- (a) the level of allowance paid to the Chairmen of the two Overview Scrutiny Committees be set at Band 2 or at Band 3;
- (b) an allowance be paid to the Vice-Chairmen of the two Overview Scrutiny Committees and if so at what level that allowance should be;
- (c) an allowance of £500 be paid to Chairmen of special Scrutiny Task and Finish Groups appointed by the relevant Overview and Scrutiny Committee subject to appropriate criteria being met;
- (d) an increased allowance be paid to the Deputy Leader and if so at what level that allowance should be; and
- (e) there should be any change to the current arrangement that HMRC rates are paid regardless of the fuel type used by a vehicle.

Key Points Summary

- The report sets out the background to the payment of basic allowances, special responsibility allowances, travel and subsistence allowances, and childcare and dependent carer's allowances. It invites the Panel to consider making recommendations on a number of specific proposals.
- The Panel is asked to consider the implications of further changes to the Council's Overview and Scrutiny structure. This entails the function being delivered through two Committees rather

than one, each Committee having a Chairman and Vice-Chairman. The Panel is asked to consider the level of payment to Chairmen and Vice-Chairmen

- Task and Finish Groups continue to form part of the Overview and Scrutiny Structure. The Panel is invited to consider whether an allowance should be paid to the Chairman of a Task and Finish Group established for a special purpose, subject to appropriate criteria being met.
- The Panel is invited to consider an increase in the allowance paid to the Deputy Leader.
- A question has been raised as to whether the mileage rate payable under the allowances scheme should be the same irrespective of the type of fuel used (eg electricity.)

Alternative Options

- 1 The Panel can recommend various other amendments to the Scheme as it sees fit.

Reasons for Recommendations

- 2 To consider whether it would be appropriate to amend any elements of the Scheme, taking account of any issues that have been raised since the last review of the Scheme.

Introduction and Background

- 3 The Local Authorities (Members' Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003 (the Regulations) require Councils to appoint Independent Remuneration Panels to make recommendations about the level of allowances for Councillors. A local authority must have regard to the recommendations of the Independent Remuneration Panel (IRP).
- 4 The Herefordshire Panel consists of four members:

The Chairman of the Herefordshire Business Board

Branch Secretary Herefordshire Unison

Chief Executive Herefordshire Voluntary Organisations Support Service

Representative of Cargill Meats Europe
- 5 The Councillors Allowances Scheme (part 6 of the Council's constitution) was last reviewed by the IRP in May 2011. The IRP's recommendations were approved by Council on 27 May 2011.
- 6 The allowances which can be paid to Councillors include:
 - basic allowance
 - special responsibility allowance
 - travel and subsistence allowance
 - childcare and dependent carer's allowance

- 7 Town and Parish Councils may also pay allowances to their Councillors subject to them having regard to the recommendations of the IRP.
- 8 The basis on which these allowances were calculated is described in detail in reports of the IRP to Council which are available for inspection by the Panel on request. The main provisions are summarised below for ease of reference.
- 9 This report does not consider the allowances as a whole but rather seeks the Panel's views on specific elements of the Scheme.
- 10 A copy of the current Councillors Allowances Scheme is attached at Appendix 1. A copy of the public advertisement showing payments to each Councillor in 2011/12 is attached at Appendix 2.

Key Considerations

Index for the purpose of annual adjustment of allowances

(This section is for information)

- 11 The Regulations provide that

(4) A scheme may make provision for an annual adjustment of allowances by reference to such index as may be specified by the authority and where the only change made to a scheme in any year is that effected by such annual adjustment in accordance with such index the scheme shall be deemed not to have been amended.

(5) Where an authority has regard to an index for the purpose of annual adjustment of allowances it must not rely on that index for longer than a period of four years before seeking a further recommendation from the independent remuneration panel established in respect of that authority on the application of an index to its scheme.

- 12 The last review of the Scheme took effect in May 2011. The IRP agreed to recommend the updating of allowances annually in line with the NJC for Local Government Services pay award for a further 4 years.

Basic Allowance

(This section is for information)

- 13 The Government guidance states that:

“Each local authority must make provision in its scheme of allowances for a basic, flat rate allowance payable to all members. The allowance must be the same for each councillor. The allowance may be paid in a lump sum, or in instalments through the year.

Basic allowance is intended to recognise the time commitment of all councillors, including such inevitable calls on their time as meetings with officers and constituents and attendance at political group meetings. It is also intended to cover incidental costs such as the use of their homes.”

- 14 In recommending the Basic Allowance in 2002 the IRP took three main elements into account: a calculation of the time commitment of being a Councillor; a public service discount that

reflected the importance of a voluntary element in this work; and an hourly rate that should be applied to the net hours after the subtraction of the voluntary discount.

- 15 Council agreed the IRP's recommendation that the Basic Allowance should be calculated on the basis of an average monthly average of 90 hours less a public service discount of 33.3% multiplied by the Herefordshire average hourly earnings (then) £7.82 multiplied by 12 (months).
- 16 This sum has been inflated on an annual basis since then in line with the Local Government Pay Award.
- 17 There are no proposals to change this approach.

Special Responsibility Allowances

(This section sets out the background to special responsibility allowances and then invites the Panel to consider some specific proposals)

(Background)

- 18 Special responsibility allowances may be paid to Councillors with special responsibilities as defined in the Regulations.
- 19 The Government guidance notes: *"Regulations do not limit the number of special responsibility allowances which may be paid, nor do the regulations prohibit the payment of more than one special responsibility allowance to any one member. However, these are important considerations for local authorities. If the majority of members of a council receive a special responsibility allowance the local electorate may rightly question whether this was justified. Local authorities will wish to consider very carefully the additional roles of members and the significance of these roles, both in terms of responsibility and real time commitment before deciding which will warrant the payment of a special responsibility allowance."*
- 20 The IRP set a rate for the most time consuming and responsible elected post within the Council, that of the Leader, based on a range of comparative information and set special responsibility allowances pro rata for other roles.
- 21 In May 2011 the IRP considered two proposals to increase the number or levels of the Special Responsibility Allowances.
- 22 The first proposal related to posts subsequently designated Cabinet Support Officers: that a Special Responsibility Allowance be paid to Advisers/Assistants to Cabinet Members, if appointed, which should not exceed more than 50% of the Band 2 Allowance in the Allowances Scheme currently paid to individual Cabinet Members, subject to the total budget currently allocated for individual Cabinet Members not being exceeded.
- 23 The Leader subsequently agreed that Cabinet Support Members should receive a Special Responsibility Allowance of 50% of the SRA of Cabinet Members.
- 24 The second related to the payment of allowances to the Chairmen of Scrutiny Task and Finish Groups. The recommendation of the Independent Remuneration Panel was that a Special Responsibility Allowance be payable in principle to Chairmen of Scrutiny Task and Finish Groups, subject to the total amount currently payable to the 5 Chairmen of Scrutiny Committees not being exceeded, the level of such Allowances to be determined in accordance with a Scheme to be prepared by the Assistant Director Law, Resilience and

Governance and submitted to Council for approval.

- 25 At the time of preparing that report the detail of how the new scrutiny model would operate was still to be developed. At the Council meeting in May Council appointed 6 Vice-Chairmen from within the Membership of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee. It was confirmed that the Vice-Chairmen would lead on themed areas of scrutiny work. Council agreed that an allowance of £3,500 be payable to each Councillor with the exception of the Vice-Chairman for the Health and Wellbeing theme which it was considered would carry an additional workload to whom it is proposed that an allowance of £4,000 be payable.

(Specific Proposals)

Review of Overview and Scrutiny Structure

- 26 The Panel is asked to consider the implications of further changes to the Council's Overview and Scrutiny arrangements.
- 27 The new arrangements provide for two Overview and Scrutiny Committees each of equal status replacing the single Overview and Scrutiny Committee which had been appointed by Council in May 2011.
- 28 Each Committee has a Chairman and a Vice-Chairman.

Chairmen's Allowance

- 29 The former Chairman of the single Overview and Scrutiny Committee was paid at the same level as a Cabinet Member (Band 2 £11,383). This continued the level of allowance payable prior to May 2011. That allowance had originally been set on the basis that the Chairman fulfilling that role bore heavier responsibilities compared with other major Chairmanships.
- 30 Prior to May 2011 when there were 5 Scrutiny Committees, Chairmen of those Committees were paid an allowance at Band 3 £8,795.
- 31 One option would therefore be to pay each Chairman at Band 3 rather than Band 2.
- 32 The Committees are being scheduled to meet monthly. This compares to the scheduling of quarterly or bi-monthly meetings of Scrutiny Committees under the previous arrangements. However, the Panel may also wish to consider whether the responsibility of these two Chairmen equates to that of Cabinet Members who have individual decision making powers in addition to taking decisions collectively in Cabinet.

Vice-Chairmen's Allowance

- 33 The Vice-Chairmen of the two Scrutiny Committees will have a role in planning the delivery of the Scrutiny function including attending liaison meetings with the Cabinet and will doubtless lead some of the Task and Finish Group Work
- 34 The Vice-Chairman of the Planning Committee and the Regulatory Committee do not receive allowances, in fact the only Vice-Chairman to do so is the Vice-Chairman of Council (Band 5 £1,552). However, the IRP's decision to recommend the payment of allowances to the Chairmen of Task and Finish Groups post May 2011 recognised that the work associated with the delivery of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee function extends beyond deputising for a Chairman in the event that they are unavailable or unable to take the chair.
- 35 One option is that the Vice-Chairmanships of the two Committees should continue to be paid

at the level previously set for five of the Vice-Chairmen posts under the previous structure either at £3,500, or at the £4,000 allocated to one of the Vice-Chairmanships.

- 36 This level of allowance would be just below that paid to the Chairman of the Audit and Governance Committee (£4,398) (Band 4). An alternative would be to place the Vice-Chairmanships into Band 4. If the Chairmen are paid at Band 2 and the Vice-Chairmen at Band 4 this would represent 39% of the Chairmen's allowance. If the Chairmen are paid at Band 3 and the Vice-Chairmen at Band 4 this would represent 50% of the Chairman's allowance.
- 37 The budget for Special Responsibility Allowances for the former Chairman of the OSC and the five Chairmen of the former Scrutiny Committees was (£11,383 + (5x£8,795) £55,358. The revised total post May 2011 was (£11,383 plus 21,500) £32,883. The options in this part of the report would, subject to the Panel's recommendations, entail expenditure of a maximum of £31,562 in a full year an annual saving of £1,321.

Recommendation

The Panel considers whether to recommend that:

The level of allowance paid to the Chairmen of the two Overview Scrutiny Committees be set at Band 2 or at Band 3; and

An allowance be paid to the Vice-Chairmen of the two Overview Scrutiny Committees and if so at what that allowance should be.

Chairmen of Task and Finish Groups

- 38 Task and Finish Groups will continue to form part of the Scrutiny Structure. These Groups will look at an issue in greater depth generally taking evidence from a range of bodies and undertaking research compiling a report setting out its findings and recommendations to the Executive. These studies can take one or two meetings to complete or up to, say, 10 for a more detailed review.
- 39 The IRP agreed last year that Special Responsibility Allowances be payable in principle to Chairmen of Scrutiny Task and Finish Groups, subject to the total amount currently payable to the 5 Chairmen of Scrutiny Committees not being exceeded, the level of such allowances to be determined in accordance with a Scheme to be prepared by the Assistant Director Law, Resilience and Governance and submitted to Council for approval.
- 40 If the Panel accepts the proposals for the Chairmen and Vice-Chairmen of the two Scrutiny Committees this would leave a sum of £3,117 in that budget.
- 41 One of the intentions in implementing the new system is to encourage the undertaking of some scoped, in-depth demanding reviews of perhaps six months duration.
- 42 It is suggested a sum of £500 be payable to a Chairman of one of these special reviews. To avoid distorting the work programmes of the two Committees and having regard to the available budget a maximum of six reviews would be commissioned between the two Committees rather than imposing an artificial limit of 3 per Committee. The Chairmen of the two Committees would negotiate in the event of any disagreement. The Vice-Chairmen of the two Committees would not be eligible for payment under this provision.
- 43 The decision to make a payment available for a special review would be identified at the outset as part of the scoping of the review and be subject to the scope of the review being

agreed by the relevant Overview and Scrutiny Committee; the timescale being met and the quality of the review meeting the expectations of the Committee. This would ensure that there was no perverse incentive, for example to deliberately and unnecessarily extend the timescale for a review.

Recommendation

The Panel considers whether to recommend that an allowance of £500 be paid to Chairmen of special Scrutiny Task and Finish Groups appointed by the relevant Overview and Scrutiny Committee subject to appropriate criteria being met.

Deputy Leader of the Council

(Specific Proposal)

- 44 The post of Deputy Leader has to date been graded at Band 3 for allowances purposes if the Deputy Leader is not a member of the Cabinet.
- 45 More often than not the Deputy Leader has been a Cabinet Member and has therefore been paid the Band 2 Allowance.
- 46 The Leader of the Council does not consider that this reflects the responsibilities of the Deputy Leader.
- 47 The allowances paid by neighbouring authorities are as follows:

Council	Deputy Leader's Allowance 2012/13	Rationale	Notes
Gloucestershire	£21,999 (83% of Leader)	Basic allowance £8, 800 Leader of the County Council: £26,399 Deputy Leader of the County Council: £21,999 Cabinet Member: £17,599	
Shropshire	£14,392 (62% of Leader's Allowance)	The Leader of the Council receives a Special Responsibility Allowance which is twice the level of the Basic Allowance. (£23,028). (The Basic Allowance is £11,514) Deputy Leader receives a Special Responsibility Allowance which is 1.25 times the Basic Allowance. Cabinet Member £17,599	
Worcestershire	No separate allowance. Payment is the same as Cabinet Member (£16,499) (equivalent to 75% of Leader's salary)	Basic £8,515 Leader £21,999 Cabinet Member £16,499	

- 48 The Deputy Leaders of the three Councils serve on the Cabinet with responsibility for specific portfolios.
- 49 If the current allowance for the Deputy Leader (if not a Cabinet Member) were to be combined with the allowance of the Deputy Leader as a Cabinet Member this would amount to £20,178 (72% of the Leader) almost mid-way between the percentage paid by Gloucestershire and Shropshire. A payment of 60% of the Leader's allowance would be £16,763. A payment of 50% of the Leader's allowance would be £13,965.

Recommendation

The Panel considers whether to recommend that an increased allowance be paid to the Deputy Leader and if so what that allowance should be.

Travel and Subsistence

- 50 As outlined in the current scheme at Appendix 1 the single rate at which travel may be claimed is at the rates used by Her Majesty's Revenues and Customs Service (Members are entitled to choose between claiming mileage allowance for bicycle travel, or claiming for an annual service for their bicycle instead.)
- 51 A subsistence allowance for Councillors is paid on the basis of actual reasonable expenditure and where overnight accommodation is necessary, this will be for three star accommodation or equivalent, evidenced by receipts.

Mileage Payments for Electric Cars

(Specific Proposal)

- 52 A question has been raised as to whether Members driving electric vehicles should be entitled to claim the same mileage rate as those driving cars fuelled by petrol or diesel.
- 53 The HMRC approved mileage rates don't specify fuel type, merely vehicle type, e.g. car/van, motorcycle, pedal cycle. Therefore, as it stands at the moment, employers may reimburse electric car owners up to 45p/mile for business journeys without the recipient incurring a tax liability.
- 54 Employers may set their own reimbursement rates which, when compared with the HMRC approved mileage allowances, may or may not generate a tax liability. In other words, the Council does not need to differentiate if it does not want to do so. It could be argued that to pay the same rate, regardless of fuel type, is a no cost incentive for people to choose lower emission cars, although that is rather simplistic as most people don't base their choice of vehicle solely on what they get paid for business mileage. It could also be seen as a reward for those who have already chosen such cars.
- 55 Alternatively, data could be obtained from various sources which will give a reasonable idea of electricity costs per mile. Leaving aside hybrid vehicles, this would raise the prospect of periodic reviews of electricity prices and possibly counterclaims from petrol and diesel users that their rates don't reflect their running costs.
- 56 It appears that much the simplest option is to pay HMRC rates which do not specify fuel type.

Recommendation

The Panel considers whether to recommend that there should be any change to the current arrangement that HMRC rates are paid regardless of the fuel type of vehicle

Childcare and Dependent Carer's Allowance

(This section is for information)

- 57 As outlined in the current scheme at Appendix 1 allowances are payable evidenced by receipts at the current market hourly rates.

Allowances For Town And Parish Councillors

(For information at this stage)

- 58 The Chief Executive of Herefordshire Association of Local Councils has requested that as a matter of course the IRP considers the payment of Town and Parish Councils.
- 59 The IRP last considered the question of Town and Parish Council Allowances in October 2006. The Panel decided that, due to lack of interest and information from any of the councils involved, no further action be taken at present with regard to introducing such a scheme." If a formal request were to be received consideration could be given at that point to convening a meeting of the Panel.
- 60 A letter has been sent to Town and Parish Councils inviting replies by 3 December. The Panel will be informed of the outcome and proposals brought forward as appropriate to a future meeting of the Panel
- 61 The provisions governing payments to Town and Parish Councils and the IRP's considerations to date is summarised below for reference.

(For reference)

- 62 A Parish or Town Council may choose to make an allowance available to its Chair only or to all of its members but there is no obligation, however, to do so unlike other local authorities.
- 63 The Chair's allowance may be paid at a different level to that for other members. The allowance paid to the other members must be the same amount as each other.
- 64 Just like other local authorities, a Parish or Town Council must have regard to the recommendations of its remuneration Panel if it wishes to pay a basic and/or Chair's allowance.
- 65 The Independent Remuneration Panel did consider a report in October 2005. The Panel agreed that, before it could make any recommendation on the level of allowances, the Herefordshire Association of Local Councils, the Market Town Councils and Hereford City Council, be asked about interest in introducing a scheme for payment of a Parish Basic Allowance, and if interested, to present information on time commitment and level of responsibility and comment in support.
- 66 The Panel did, however, express the view that it would not wish parish councillors to be out of pocket as a result of their voluntary activities as parish councillors. They therefore

recommended that town and parish councillors be eligible to claim travel expenses. However, as most meetings take place in the evening, it did not feel it appropriate to recommend a subsistence allowance. Council agreed on 4 November 2005 that Town and Parish Councillors be eligible to claim reimbursement for travel associated with their parish council duties at the same level as Herefordshire Council elected Members (currently 40p per mile);

- 67 The Panel gave further consideration to the issue in October 2006. None of the bodies approached, as referred to above, had provided any information in support of an allowance scheme.
- 68 The Panel decided that, “due to lack of interest and information from any of the councils involved, no further action be taken at present with regard to introducing such a scheme.”
- 69 If a formal request were to be received consideration could be given at that point to convening a meeting of the Panel.

Community Impact

- 70 Consideration of Members Allowances needs to take account of the current financial climate. The IRP Members are independent of the Council and represent the wider interests of the county.

Financial Implications

- 71 The budget for Members' Allowances for 2012/13 is £629,840 made up of £366,490 for the basic allowance and £218,580 for Special Responsibility Allowances. There is an additional budget of £44,770 for National Insurance payments. The Allowances are uplifted each year in line with the National Joint Council for Local Government Services Pay Awards.
- 72 The proposals in this report can be accommodated within the sum available for Special Responsibility Allowances. If accepted as proposed the special responsibility allowances total is estimated to be at a maximum of £209,771.
- 73 The financial implications of any proposal from the IRP will need to be clearly outlined in the report considered by Council.

Legal Implications

- 74 The Local Authorities (Members' Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003, require the Local Authority to appoint an Independent Remuneration Panel to make recommendations about the level of allowances for Councillors. A local authority must have regard to the recommendations of the Independent Remuneration Panel.

Risk Management

- 75 Not complying with appropriate legal requirements could have a detrimental impact on the Council's reputation.

Consultees

- 76 Political Group Leaders

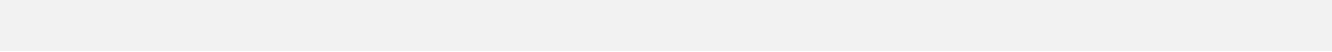
Appendices

Appendix 1 – Current Councillors Scheme of Allowances

Appendix 2 - Advertisement of Allowances paid to each Councillor in 2011/12

Background Papers

- None identified.



PART 6

COUNCILLORS' ALLOWANCES SCHEME

6.1.1 The Councillor's Allowances Scheme has been agreed following consideration of the recommendations of an Independent Remuneration Panel. The Scheme was last reviewed in May 2011.

6.1.2 The main features of the Scheme are:

- a Basic Allowance for all 58 members of £7,244.
- a one off allowance of up to £1,000 available to all Councillors in the first three years of the life of this Council's administration to equip themselves sufficiently with ICT to carry out their Council duties.
- an entitlement to claim expenses for consumables including Broadband subscription up to a maximum of £200 per year.
- a scheme of Special Responsibility Allowances as shown below:

BAND 1	Leader of the Council	£27,939
BAND 2	Cabinet Members Chairman of Overview and Scrutiny Committee	£11,383
Band 3	Chairman of Council, Deputy Leader (<i>if not a Member of the Cabinet</i>) Chairman of Planning Committee and Chairman of Regulatory Committee	£8,795
Band 4	Independent Chairman of the Audit and Governance Committee Independent Chairman of the Standards Committee	£4,398
Band 5	Vice-Chairman of Council Group Leaders (and £124 per Group Member) – provided Group membership exceeds 10% of the Council's total membership.	£1,552
Cabinet Member Support Team	An allowance is payable for these posts up to 50% of the Band 2 Allowance currently paid to individual Cabinet Members, subject to the total budget currently allocated for individual Cabinet Members not being exceeded.	Up to £5,691
Scrutiny Task and Finish	Vice Chairman of Overview and Scrutiny Committee (Health and Wellbeing)	£4,000

Group Chairmen	All other Vice Chairmen of Overview and Scrutiny Committee	£3,500
----------------	--	--------

- c Special Responsibility Allowance to be in addition to Basic Allowance. Excluding Group Leaders' Allowance, only one Special Responsibility Allowance is payable per **Elected** Member.
- d A Childcare and Dependant Carers' Scheme: allowances payable for eligible duties where costs are incurred in the care of children aged 16 or under, and in respect of other dependants where there is medical or social work evidence that care is required, and where the work claimed for has been undertaken by persons other than family members resident in the household; all claims must be evidenced by receipts and will be paid at the current market hourly rates.
- e All allowances to be updated annually in line with the N.J.C. for Local Government Services pay award.

6.1.4 In addition attendance whether as an appointed member or at the invitation of a Director, Cabinet Member or Chairman of the relevant body at any of the following will entitle a Councillor to claim for travel and subsistence:

- g Council meeting
- h Council committee and sub-committee meeting
- i Any of the other bodies described in this Constitution including Cabinet and PACT meeting;
- j A Working Group established by any one of the above bodies (including attendance as a member of a Best Value Review team at a team meeting or related activity);
- k Official briefing session called by the Chairman of Council, Leader, Cabinet Member, Chairman of a Committee, Sub-Committee or Panel, Community Forum or Working Group, or by a Group Leader or his/her substitute - such attendance being limited to one Councillor from each group per session;
- l Meeting of any other approved body.

6.1.5 The undertaking by any of those listed below of any duty associated with the Council or its committees and other bodies approved for such purposes by the Chief Executive or Monitoring Officer in consultation with the Leader:

- a The Chairman/Vice-Chairman of Council
- b A Cabinet Member
- c The Chairman/Vice-Chairman of any Committee, Sub-Committee or Working Group, or Chairman of a Community Forum.
- d The leaders of the political groups

6.1.6 Attendance on site visits approved by the relevant Committee or body.

6.1.7 Attendance at Cabinet by the Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the Strategic Monitoring Committee;

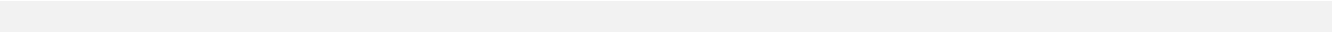
6.1.8 Attendance at a meeting of any Scrutiny Committee by the Chairman of the Strategic

Monitoring Committee or in the absence of the Chairman and with his/her permission the Vice-Chairman.

- 6.1.10 Attendance at Cabinet by the Chairman or in the absence of the Chairman and with his/her permission the Vice-Chairman of a Scrutiny Committee where Cabinet is addressing matters within that Committee's terms of reference.
- 6.1.11 Attendance at any conference by any Councillor authorised by the relevant Director.
- 6.1.12 Any other attendance for which prior approval has been given by the Chief Executive or Monitoring Officer after consultation with the Leader.
- 6.1.13 In general allowances will not be payable for meetings of outside bodies. A list of appointments to outside bodies, which shall be approved by the Chief Executive or Monitoring Officer following consultation with Group Leaders, will be maintained by the Monitoring Officer. This list will also identify those appointments to outside bodies where allowances are payable.
- 6.1.14 **Note:** The single rate at which travel may be claimed shall be at the rates used by Her Majesty's Revenues and Customs Service (Members are entitled to choose between claiming mileage allowance for bicycle travel, or claiming for an annual service for their bicycle instead.

A subsistence allowance for Councillors is paid on the basis of actual reasonable expenditure and where overnight accommodation is necessary, this will be for three star accommodation or equivalent, evidenced by receipts.

Co-opted and other non-elected Members are entitled to claim Travel, Subsistence and Dependant Carer's Allowances on the same basis as Members of the Council.



HEREFORDSHIRE COUNCIL

PUBLIC NOTICE

LOCAL AUTHORITIES (MEMBERS' ALLOWANCES) (ENGLAND) REGULATIONS 2003

The following table is published in accordance with the above Regulations. Herefordshire Council have published Councillors' allowances annually since 2003, when the above Regulations came into force. The published allowances have been advertised in the local press, publicly available to view on the website, or for inspection at the Council offices at Brockington, since 2003. The table shows the total sum paid by Herefordshire Council to each Member of the Council for the period 1 April 2011 to 31 March 2012 in respect of Basic Allowance (BA) and Special Responsibility Allowance (SRA), Childcare and Dependant Carers Allowance, Travel and Subsistence Expenses and Co-optees Allowance.

Name	Basic Allowance	Special Responsibility Allowance	Travelling & Subsistence Allowance	Total
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
Cllr. P A Andrews	£7,244.04	£1,371.27	£649.83	£9,265.14
Cllr. A M Atkinson	£6,610.97	£1,166.68	£498.00	£8,275.65
Cllr. W U Attfield	£778.93	£193.55	£0.00	£972.48
Cllr. C N H Attwood	£6,484.58	£0.00	£760.06	£7,244.64
Cllr. L O Barnett	£7,244.04	£9,222.17	£2,263.37	£18,729.58

Cllr. C M Bartrum	£7,244.04	£0.00	£139.50	£7,383.54
Cllr. P L Bettington	£7,244.04	£0.00	£1,338.95	£8,582.99
Cllr. A J M Blackshaw	£7,244.04	£11,382.96	£3,067.49	£21,694.49
Cllr. W L S Bowen	£7,244.04	£1,371.27	£1,936.65	£10,551.96
Cllr. H Bramer	£6,832.99	£7,588.64	£651.89	£15,073.52
Cllr. A N Bridges	£6,484.58	£0.00	£1,145.97	£7,630.55
Cllr. A C R Chappell	£7,244.04	£1,999.87	£171.20	£9,415.11
Cllr. E M K Chave	£6,484.58	£0.00	£493.95	£6,978.53
Cllr. M E Cooper	£778.93	£0.00	£0.00	£778.93
Cllr. M J K Cooper	£6,484.58	£0.00	£554.50	£7,039.08
Cllr. P G H Cutter	£7,244.04	£7,447.41	£981.50	£15,672.95
Cllr. S P A Daniels	£778.93	£0.00	£0.00	£778.93
Cllr. H Davies	£778.93	£0.00	£0.00	£778.93
Cllr. G Dawe	£778.93	£0.00	£0.00	£778.93
Cllr. B A Durkin	£7,244.04	£0.00	£0.00	£7,244.04
Cllr. P J Edwards	£7,244.04	£1,774.76	£468.30	£9,487.10
Cllr. J P French	£778.93	£1,223.97	£0.00	£2,002.90
Cllr. K S Gaster	£7,244.04	£0.00	£294.75	£7,538.79
Cllr. J H R Goodwin	£778.93	£0.00	£108.90	£887.83
Cllr. A E Gray	£778.93	£0.00	£75.37	£854.30
Cllr. D W Greenow	£7,244.04	£0.00	£275.10	£7,519.14
Cllr. K G Grumbley	£778.93	£0.00	£0.00	£778.93
Cllr. R B Hamilton	£6,484.58	£4,819.40	£0.00	£11,303.98
Cllr. J Hardwick	£6,484.58	£0.00	£1,468.48	£7,953.06
Cllr. M J Hardy-Bishop	£778.93	£0.00	£0.00	£778.93
Cllr. E P J Harvey	£6,484.58	£2,493.31	£0.00	£8,977.89
Cllr. A J Hempton-Smith	£6,484.58	£0.00	£33.35	£6,517.93
Cllr. J W Hope	£7,244.04	£8,795.04	£1,714.65	£17,753.73
Cllr. M A F Hubbard	£7,244.04	£2,675.37	£217.18	£10,136.59

Cllr. B Hunt	£778.93	£0.00	£0.00	£778.93
Cllr. R Hunt	£7,244.04	£0.00	£1,532.98	£8,777.02
Cllr. T W Hunt	£778.93	£945.70	£65.10	£1,789.73
Cllr. J A Hyde	£7,244.04	£6,594.16	£1,499.76	£15,337.96
Cllr. T M James	£7,244.04	£4,280.55	£825.20	£12,349.79
Cllr. J G Jarvis	£7,244.04	£29,821.84	£4,721.28	£41,787.16
Cllr. A W Johnson	£7,244.04	£4,819.40	£1,558.38	£13,621.82
Cllr. P Jones	£7,244.04	£0.00	£1,740.41	£8,984.45
Cllr. J L V Kenyon	£6,484.58	£0.00	£629.97	£7,114.55
Cllr. J F Knipe	£6,484.58	£0.00	£0.00	£6,484.58
Cllr. J Lavender	£778.93	£0.00	£0.00	£778.93
Cllr. J G Lester	£6,484.58	£0.00	£1,403.16	£7,887.74
Cllr. M D Lloyd-Hayes	£7,244.04	£0.00	£1,000.00	£8,244.04
Cllr. G Lucas	£7,244.04	£0.00	£1,118.13	£8,362.17
Cllr. R I Matthews	£7,244.04	£4,602.27	£383.25	£12,229.56
Cllr. P J McCaull	£7,244.04	£0.00	£986.03	£8,230.07
Cllr. S M Michael	£6,484.58	£0.00	£0.00	£6,484.58
Cllr. J W Millar	£6,484.58	£2,849.43	£1,167.19	£10,501.20
Cllr. P M Morgan	£7,244.04	£11,010.07	£1,711.15	£19,965.26
Cllr. N P Nenadich	£6,484.58	£4,819.40	£656.40	£11,960.38
Cllr. C Nicholls	£6,484.58	£0.00	£857.58	£7,342.16
Cllr. F M Norman	£6,484.58	£0.00	£901.28	£7,385.86
Cllr. A Oliver	£778.93	£0.00	£0.00	£778.93
Cllr. J E Pemberton	£778.93	£0.00	£7.65	£786.58
Cllr. R J Phillips	£7,244.04	£14,816.35	£8,028.56	£30,088.95
Cllr. G A Powell	£7,244.04	£0.00	£481.44	£7,725.48
Cllr. G J Powell	£6,484.58	£4,819.40	£0.00	£11,303.98
Cllr. R Preece	£6,484.58	£2,493.31	£694.39	£9,672.28
Cllr. P Price	£7,244.04	£11,382.96	£2,291.55	£20,918.55

Cllr. S J Robertson	£7,244.04	£0.00	£968.71	£8,212.75
Cllr. P Rone	£6,484.58	£0.00	£0.00	£6,484.58
Cllr. A Seldon	£7,528.70	£5,120.95	£1,738.25	£14,387.90
Cllr. P J Sinclair-Knipe	£6,484.58	£4,819.40	£1,531.25	£12,835.23
Cllr. R H Smith	£778.93	£0.00	£86.30	£865.23
Cllr. R V Stockton	£778.93	£0.00	£78.00	£856.93
Cllr. J Stone	£7,244.04	£5,095.38	£0.00	£12,339.42
Cllr. G Swinford	£6,484.58	£0.00	£1,485.00	£7,969.58
Cllr. A P Taylor	£778.93	£0.00	£0.00	£778.93
Cllr. D C Taylor	£7,244.04	£0.00	£499.00	£7,743.04
Cllr. A M Toon	£778.93	£0.00	£0.00	£778.93
Cllr. N L Vaughan	£778.93	£0.00	£0.00	£778.93
Cllr. W J Walling	£778.93	£0.00	£0.00	£778.93
Cllr. P J Watts	£7,244.04	£2,493.31	£1,773.91	£11,511.26
Cllr. D B Wilcox	£7,244.04	£11,382.96	£1,116.18	£19,743.18
Cllr. J B Williams	£778.93	£166.88	£67.60	£1,013.41
Cllr. J D Woodward	£7,244.04	£0.00	£0.00	£7,244.04
	£420,582.66	£195,859.39	£62,913.98	£679,356.03
R Rogers	£2,199.00	£0.00	£0.00	£2,199.00

Notes

- 1 The Special Responsibility Column includes allowances for the Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the Council, Leader, Deputy Leader, Cabinet Members, Cabinet Support Team, Group Leaders, Chairmen of other Committees, and Scrutiny Task and Finish Group Chairmen.

- 2 The Members' Allowances Scheme was adopted by the Council having regard to the recommendations of an Independent Remuneration Panel consisting of representatives of local businesses, the voluntary sector and the press and trade unions in accordance with the Local Authorities (Members' Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003.
- 3 Receipts are required for travelling and subsistence allowance with the exception of mileage claims (see column 4). All allowances are subject to annual audit.
- 4 Members' Allowances published since the financial year 2007/2008 are available to view on the Council's website at [www.herefordshire.gov.uk/Your Councillors](http://www.herefordshire.gov.uk/Your_Councillors)
- 5 The Allowances paid for the financial year 2011/2012 cover an election year
- 6 R Rogers, the Independent Chairman of the Standards Committee resigned in 2011. His successor has not claimed any Allowance for the financial year 2011/2012.

MEETING:	COUNCIL
DATE:	23 NOVEMBER 2012
TITLE OF REPORT:	BREACH OF THE MEMBERS' CODE OF CONDUCT BY COUNCILLOR MARK HUBBARD
REPORT BY:	ASSISTANT DIRECTOR - LAW, GOVERNANCE AND RESILIENCE

1. Classification

1.1 Open.

2. Key Decision

2.1 This is not a key decision.

3. Wards Affected

3.1 County-wide

4. Purpose

To advise Council of the findings of the Audit and Governance Committee in relation to breaches of the Members' Code of Conduct by Councillor Mark Hubbard.

5. Recommendation

THAT: Council notes the breaches of the Members' Code of Conduct by Councillor Mark Hubbard, as detailed below.

6. Key Points Summary

- The Standards Panel considered both complaints and agreed what sanctions would be appropriate to recommend to the Monitoring Officer, for decision by the Audit & Governance Committee.
- The complaints, and the Standards Panel's recommendations on them, were summarised as follows:

Complaint 1208:

- (a) On 29 March 2012, the Subject Member removed confidential documents from the office of an officer of Herefordshire Council without permission.
- (b) The Subject Member did not dispute the facts. In mitigation, the Subject Member stated that he had acted on impulse in a heightened emotional state, having felt frustrated at being denied access to a document. The Subject Member stated that he realised immediately that he had done the wrong thing, did not look at the contents of the envelope marked 'Private & Confidential', and immediately took steps to acknowledge his error and return the envelope to the officer. The Subject Member stated that he deeply regretted his action and acknowledged that it was likely to affect the trust between members and Council officers.
- (c) The Panel accepted the Subject Member's statement that he had not looked at the contents of the envelope and had taken immediate steps to correct his actions. Nevertheless, the Panel took the view that his conduct could have had serious consequences for the Council. The Panel considered the Ten General Principles of Public Life that define the standards that members should uphold, which serve as a reminder of the purpose of the Code of Conduct and which form part of the code. The second principle states: "**Honesty and integrity** – members should not place themselves in situations where their honesty and integrity may be questioned, should not behave improperly, and should on all occasions avoid the appearance of such behaviour."
- (d) The Panel agreed that the Subject Member had failed to comply with this general principle of public life in that he had removed from a Council office a document marked 'Private & Confidential' to which he was not entitled.**

Complaint 1209

- (a) On 28 March 2012, the Subject Member attended a local member briefing meeting with the Council's Director for Places and Communities (DfPC), at which the DfPC briefed members on a forthcoming report to Cabinet, emphasising that certain elements of the report were exempt from publication for reasons of commercial confidentiality. The DfPC had reminded the members of the requirement to maintain confidentiality. On 5 April, the Hereford Times published a front page picture of the Subject Member holding the confidential report to Cabinet.
- (b) The Subject Member did not dispute the facts. In mitigation, the Subject Member stated that he felt that he was acting in the public interest in disclosing the confidential report, and that he had acted according to his own principles of open and honest government. The Subject Member stated that he had not sought advice from Council officers or discussed his intention to disclose the report with them before doing so. He stated that the press deadline required swift action so that the report would become public before the Cabinet meeting, and encourage members of the public to attend the Cabinet meeting. The Subject Member said that he had acted in his capacity as ward member for the ward affected by the report, and not in his capacity as leader of the 'It's Our County' group. The Panel asked if, while the Subject Member may have thought he was acting in the public interest, he was also motivated by a wish to bring political pressure on the Council by encouraging the public to attend the Cabinet meeting. The Subject Member acknowledged this.
- (c) The Panel considered that the Subject Member had failed to comply with paragraph 4(a)(iv) of the Code of Conduct. They accepted that the Subject Member believed that his disclosure of the exempt document would be in the public interest. However, the Panel considered that the Subject Member had had sufficient time to follow established procedures for consulting fellow**

members and officers before disclosing the report, and that he had failed to do so. The subject of the report had been available to him via the Council's Rolling Programme for some months. He had therefore failed to follow due process in order to comply with the reasonable requirements of the Council.

- The Standards Panel, and the Audit and Governance Committee, have both considered the position under the Code of Conduct in force at the time of the complaint. The new Code of Conduct currently in force has similar requirements, specifically in paragraph 10: "Members shall at all times conduct themselves in a manner which will tend to maintain and strengthen the public's trust and confidence in the integrity of the Authority..."; and in paragraph 11 (h)(iv) in relation to disclosure of information in the public interest. Both the Panel and the Committee therefore consider that very similar conclusions would have been reached had the conduct been considered against the new code.
- The Standards Panel made the following recommendations, which were approved by the Audit and Governance Committee on 12 November 2012:
 - **the Audit and Governance Committee be asked to present a report on the consideration of the investigation of the complaints to the next full Council meeting; and**
 - **training should be arranged for the Subject Member to ensure he is fully apprised of the established processes for seeking advice.**

7. Alternative Options

- 7.1 The report is brought before Council for formal noting only, and therefore there are no alternative options:

8. Reasons for Recommendations

- 8.1 The Audit and Governance Committee agreed with the findings of the Standards Panel, that the subject member had failed to comply with one of the Ten General Principles of Public Life that define the standards that members should uphold, which serve as a reminder of the purpose of the Code of Conduct and which form part of the code.
- 8.2 The Committee considered that the subject member had also failed to comply with paragraph 4(a)(iv) of the Code of Conduct.
- 8.3 One option open to the Audit and Governance Committee, in dealing with the breaches of the Code, is to report them formally to Council.

9. Introduction and Background

- 9.1 The Standards Panel, comprising Mr Jake Bharier (Appointed Independent Person), Councillor Chris Chappell (Local Authority Advisor) and Mr Richard Gething (Parish and Town Council Advisor), met on 02 November 2012 to consider two complaints about Councillor Mark Hubbard of Herefordshire Council, which had been made by the Chief Executive of Herefordshire Council.

- 9.2 The complaints had been investigated independently by Ms Olwen Dutton of Bevan Brittan, under the former Standards system for resolving complaints against Councillors. Under this system, the complaint had been referred for a final determination hearing. A few days after the decision to refer was made, the former system was abolished (on 30 July 2012). A new process for dealing with complaints came into effect on 01 July 2012, in accordance with the Localism Act 2011.
- 9.3 Under the new process, complaints which were otherwise ready for final determination under the old regime, but which had not been concluded by the Standards Committee, fell to be considered by a newly constituted Standards Panel who would consider the facts and/or previous findings and make an appropriate report to the Audit and Governance Committee.

10. Key Considerations

- 10.1 The Audit and Governance Committee agreed that the subject member had failed to comply with one of the Ten Principles of Public Life and with Paragraph 4(a)(iv) of the members' Code of Conduct. The Panel considered that such conduct could have seriously affected the reputation of the Council and that the subject member had failed to follow due process in order to comply with the reasonable requirements of the Council.

11. Community Impact

- 11.1 None identified arising directly from this report.

12. Equality and Human Rights

- 12.1 No impact on public sector equality identified.

13. Financial Implications

- 13.1 None arising directly from this report.

14. Legal Implications

- 14.1 The Council's Standards Committee and the previous regime for resolving complaints about the conduct of elected members were abolished on 1st July 2012 by the Localism Act 2011. Complaints unresolved at that date fall to be concluded in accordance with the new scheme to ensure a clear transition from the previous standards regime to the new local complaints system. The content of this report complies with the requirements of the Localism Act.

15. Risk Management

- 15.1 If complaints are not handled expeditiously then public confidence may be undermined and the Council's ethical credibility may also be undermined.

16. Consultees

- 16.1 None.

17. Appendices

17.1 None.

18. Background Papers

18.1 Report of Mr Jake Bharier, Appointed Independent Person and Chair of the Standards Panel, dated 03 November 2012.

MEETING:	COUNCIL
DATE:	23 NOVEMBER 2012
TITLE OF REPORT:	COUNCIL MEETING DATES
REPORT BY:	HEAD OF GOVERNANCE SERVICES

1 Classification

Open

2 Wards Affected

County-wide

3 Purpose

To consider variations to the schedule of Council meetings.

4 Recommendation(s)

THAT:

- (a) an Extraordinary meeting of Council be held on Friday 4 January 2013; and
- (b) it be noted the Council meeting scheduled for 31 May 2013 be rearranged and held instead at 10.30 am on Friday 24 May 2013.

5 Key Points Summary

- The Local Government Boundary Commission (LGBC) has announced its draft recommendations on the electoral review of Herefordshire and the third stage of formal public consultations will take place during November, December and January. The last date to make representations is 7 January 2013. The Council and other interested parties will be able to formulate any further views and make submissions on the draft recommendations during this period.
- A Member Working Group will consider the Commission's proposals and formulate a recommendation to Council.
- Council is invited to consider holding an Extraordinary meeting on 4 January to consider the Boundary Commission's proposals and decide if it wishes to respond.

Further information on the subject of this report is available from
John Jones, Head of Governance on Tel: (01432) 260222

6 Alternative Options

- 6.1 Council could decide not to respond to the proposals.

7 Reasons for Recommendations

- 7.1 The Council will need to decide if it supports the proposals of the Boundary Commission.

8 Introduction and Background

- 8.1 The Local Government Boundary Commission's consultation period runs from 13 November to 7 January and there is no programmed meeting of Council planned within this period and therefore if Council wishes to submit a formal response to the consultation it will need to hold an Extraordinary Meeting of the Council. This matter is a matter that is reserved to Council for decision.
- 8.2 Council is also asked to note the rearrangement of the meeting scheduled for 31 May 2013 to Friday 24 May 2013.

9 Key Considerations

- 9.1 The deadline for the submission of the Council's views on the LGBC recommendations is 7 January 2013. It is proposed that an Extraordinary meeting of Council is held on 4 January. This would allow a little time to finalise the submission after the Council meeting.
- 9.2 Practical difficulties have arisen in holding the Council meeting on 31 May as this falls within the school half term week, therefore, members of the public wishing to attend the meeting may find it more difficult to do so during the holiday. A meeting on Friday 24 May is proposed as a suitable alternative.

10 Community Impact

- 10.1 Holding an Extraordinary meeting to consider the boundary commission consultation would allow more time to consider the issues and the views of the local community.

11 Equality and Human Rights

- 11.1 The proposals contained in this report support the principals of equality and human rights.

12 Financial Implications

- 12.1 The cost associated with holding an additional Council meeting will be met from within existing budgets. By holding the meeting at Brockington rather than the Shire Hall, costs will be reduced.

13 Legal Implications

- 13.1 The Council's Constitution allows for Extraordinary meetings of Council to be held.

14 Risk Management

14.1 There are no significant risks associated with these proposals.

15 Consultees

15.1 Not applicable

16 Appendices

16.1 None

17 Background Papers

17.1 None identified.

HEREFORDSHIRE COUNCIL

NOVEMBER 2012

ANNUAL REPORT OF THE HEREFORD AND WORCESTERT FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY**Authority Appointments 2012/13**

Councillor Derek Prodger, MBE, from Worcestershire County Council was elected as Chairman of the Authority and Brigadier Peter Jones, CBE from Herefordshire Council was elected as Vice-Chairman. In addition the following Members have been appointed to the following positions:

- Councillor Derek Prodger, MBE – Appointments Committee Chairman
- Brigadier Peter Jones, CBE – Appointments Committee Vice-Chairman
- Councillor Lynne Duffy – Audit Committee Chairman
- Councillor Lucy Hodgson – Audit Committee Vice-Chairman
- Councillor Kit Taylor – Policy and Resources Committee Chairman
- Councillor Gordon Yarranton – Policy and Resources Committee Vice-Chairman
- Councillor Terry Spencer – Standards Committee Chairman
- Councillor Gay Hopkins – Standards Committee Vice-Chairman
- Councillor Liz Eyre – Asset Management Champion
- Councillor Richard Udall – Equality and Diversity Champion
- Councillor Peter Watts – Risk Management Champion
- Councillor Lucy Hodgson, Councillor David Taylor and Councillor Clive Smith – Member Development Champions

Introduction

The Authority has an annual budget of £33.8 million and governs the work of the Service through a variety of committees and scrutiny bodies. Our core purpose is to provide our communities with sustainable, high quality firefighting, rescue and preventative services.

Hereford and Worcester Fire and Rescue Service covers a geographic area of almost 400,000 hectares (over 1,500 square miles). It has some of the most sparsely populated rural areas in the country and around 740,000 people reside in the two counties, predominantly in Worcestershire.

The Service employs over 860 people, most of whom are highly trained firefighters, working at more than 30 locations across the two counties, including 27 Fire Stations, a Service Headquarters in Worcester, three District Headquarters, Workshops and Stores in Malvern and a Training and Development Centre and Urban Search and Rescue facility in Droitwich Spa.

Performance 2011/12

The Service's Fire Control received 14,411 calls in total throughout 2011-12. This represents a 2.6% increase in calls received from 2010-11 in Herefordshire and Worcestershire. Of these calls, we attended 7857 incidents in 2011-12, compared with 8136 incidents in 2010-11. This is due to fires being more visible hence more calls regarding single incidents than for special services.

Overall number of fires attended was up 13.5% in 2011-12 compared with 2010-11. The main reason for this was due to a large year on year increase in grassland, woodland and crop fires associated with unseasonably dry weather. The Service is not unique in this regard, with all Fire Services seeing substantial increases in these types of fires. Significant reductions were seen in chimney fires, supported by extensive prevention and education campaigns directed in this area.

Fire Control Update

The new control room is up and running at Service Headquarters and is proving to be a tremendous success. The go live process was completed on 27 September 2012 and has put this Service in the position of having the most up-to-date end-to-end fire control and mobilising system in the country. New Mobile Data Terminals across the fleet will improve the information available to firefighters on fire appliances at incidents with a full mapping system. Overall it will provide a far more efficient, faster and user-friendly command and control system. An Automatic Vehicle Locations System is fitted to all frontline firefighting appliances which enables Control to know their exact locations. This enables the command and control system to automatically select the quickest asset for any particular incident.

Organisational Change

We have continued to review, refocus and restructure our Departments to ensure that they deliver their services effectively and efficiently, with major changes in our human resources, performance management, media and communications and finance and budgetary departments.

Review of Members' Allowances

At its meeting on 20 June 2012 the Authority reviewed its Members' Allowances Scheme in accordance with the provisions of the Local Authorities (Members' Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003 (the regulations). It was resolved that the level of Members' Allowances applicable from 1 April 2010 be retained for the period 1 April 2012 to 31 March 2013.

Vehicle Fleet Update

During 2012-13 we will complete a number of vehicle projects including:

Incident Support Vehicle

Following a review of the usage of our Incident Support Unit (ISU) currently based at Droitwich, it will be replaced by a new, smaller Incident Support Vehicle (ISV). The ISU is a large specialist appliance which carried additional heavy equipment which may be required to assist at a variety of incidents. This new strategy will also initially upgrade the equipment on two fire appliances, one in each county, to compensate for the reduced capacity of the new ISV. All other support equipment currently carried by the ISU will be carried by the new ISV. This is a cost-effective way of ensuring that overall resilience is enhanced, as well as improving our efficiency and effectiveness at incidents.

Line Rescue Vehicle

We have a dedicated vehicle for carrying specialist equipment for incidents requiring rope rescue, such as rescues from height or from underground. Due to its highly technical nature, the equipment needs to be kept secure and apart from general firefighting kit. Having a dedicated vehicle will achieve this and it will be quicker to mobilise to incidents with the equipment already on board. A vehicle currently available in our fleet will be adapted for the purpose.

Rural Fire Appliances

Following an extensive review of our fire appliances in our rural fire stations we expect to have new rural fire appliances operating at two rural fire stations during 2012-13.

Combined Police and Fire Stations

We have worked in partnership with West Mercia Police to provide a shared building in Bromsgrove. Work has commenced with completion provisionally due in winter 2013/14. Working together is not only more effective and efficient for both organisations, but has also helped to reduce delays and costs. The benefits of the joint approach are such that we intend to repeat the model on similar schemes (a joint scheme is already being planned for Redditch) and to also explore further joint work on a number of smaller rural stations during 2012-13.

New Fire Stations

Last year we developed plans to replace fire stations which have reached the end of their serviceable life or are in need of substantial refurbishment. In the context of the difficult financial situation, during 2012-13 we will review how we manage our facilities, ensuring that maintenance work at our premises is targeted to deliver the best value.

Strategic Training Facilities (STF's)

We are progressing the development of our new Strategic Training Facilities in North and South Herefordshire and North and South Worcestershire. These facilities will provide this Service with some of the best training facilities in the UK. In addition to

hot fire training these facilities will have many additional features to assist with training across the Service and will mean that no fire appliance has to travel more than approximately 30 minutes to reach a dedicated training venue.

Brigadier Peter Jones, CBE

Vice-Chairman – Hereford & Worcester Fire and Rescue Authority

FURTHER INFORMATION

Any person wishing to seek further information on this report should contact Corporate Support on 01905 368209/241. Further information on the Fire and Rescue Authority and the Fire and Rescue Service can also be found on the Internet at (www.hwfire.org.uk)