

AGENDA

Audit and Governance Committee

Date: **Tuesday 9 September 2014**

Time: **2.00 pm**

Place: **Town Hall Chamber, Town Hall, 10 St Owen Street,
Hereford. HR1 2SP**

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

For any further information please contact:

Governance Services

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Agenda for the Meeting of the Audit and Governance Committee

Chairman
Vice-Chairman

Councillor JG Jarvis
Councillor EMK Chave

Councillor CNH Attwood
Councillor WLS Bowen
Councillor PGH Cutter
Councillor MAF Hubbard
Councillor Brig P Jones CBE
Councillor PJ McCaull
Councillor NP Nenadich
Councillor J Stone

AGENDA**PUBLIC INFORMATION AND FIRE INFO****Pages****1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

To receive apologies for absence.

2. NAMED SUBSTITUTES (IF ANY)

To receive details of Members nominated to attend the meeting in place of a Member of the Committee.

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 23 June 2014.

9 - 12

5. HEREFORDSHIRE COUNCIL PIDA INVESTIGATION: REVIEW OF CUSTOMER RELATIONSHIP MANAGER IMPLEMENTATION

To note the findings of a recent Public Interest Disclosure Act (PIDA) investigation completed by external audit and to note the management actions arising.

13 - 34

6. COMMUNITY GOVERNANCE REVIEW, ROSS-ON-WYE

To make recommendations following the Ross-on-Wye Community Governance Review.

35 - 76

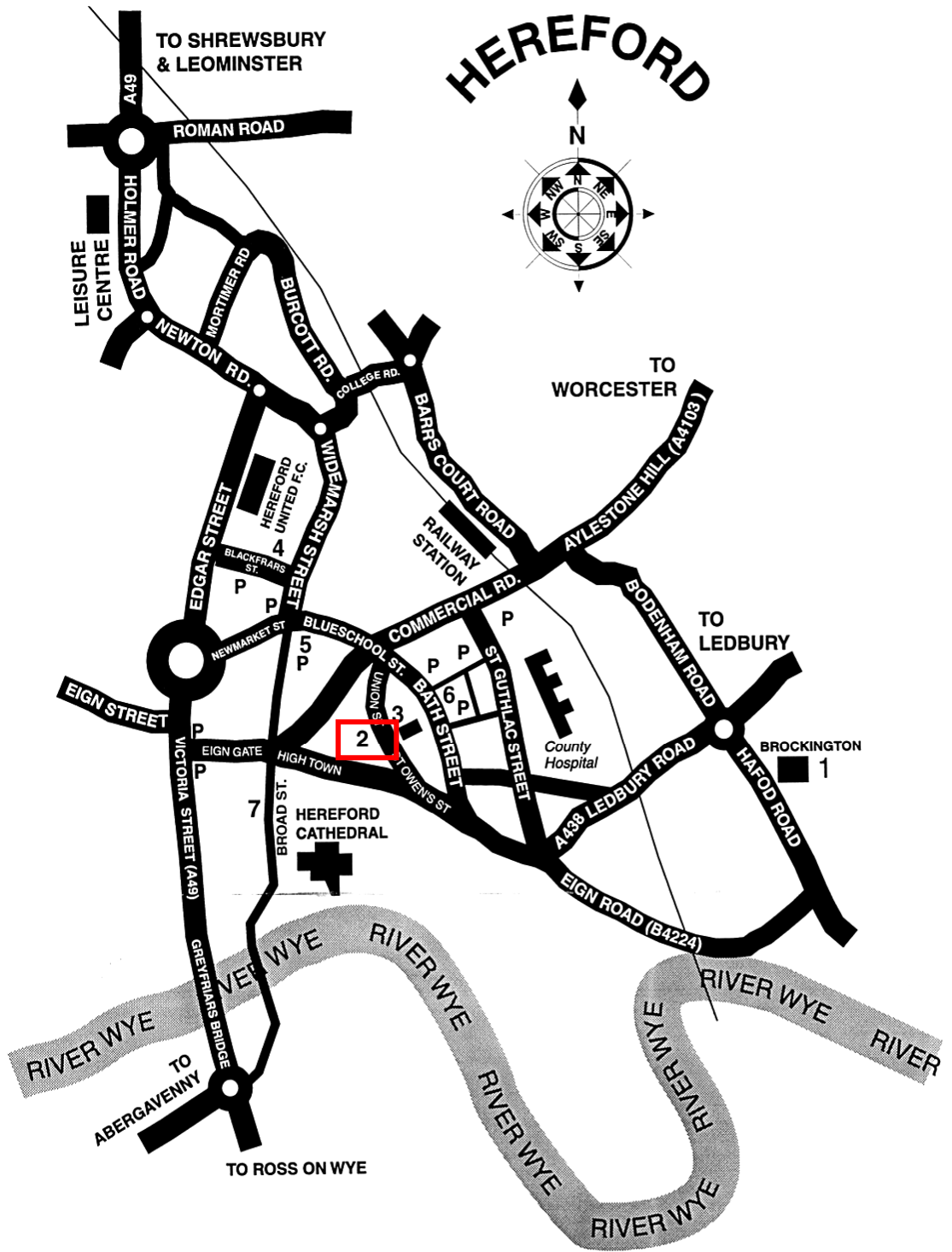
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HEREFORDSHIRE COUNCIL

Town Hall Chamber, Town Hall, Hereford

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HEREFORDSHIRE COUNCIL

MINUTES of the meeting of Audit and Governance Committee held at The Council Chamber, Brockington, 35 Hafod Road, Hereford, HR1 1SH on Monday 23 June 2014 at 2.00 pm

Present: Councillor JG Jarvis (Chairman)
Councillor EMK Chave (Vice Chairman)

Councillors: CNH Attwood, Brig P Jones CBE, PJ McCaull, NP Nenadich and AJW Powers

In attendance: Councillor EPJ Harvey

43. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor P Cutter, Councillor MAF Hubbard and Councillor J Stone.

44. NAMED SUBSTITUTES (IF ANY)

In accordance with paragraph 4.1.23 of the Council's Constitution, Councillor AJW Powers attended the meeting as a substitute Member for Councillor MAF Hubbard.

45. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

46. MINUTES

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting held on 9 May 2014 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman, subject to Minute no 39 being amended to include:

A Member referred to a document which he understood to have been circulated to Group Leaders proposing additional terms of reference for the Committee in relation to the waste contract. He questioned why this had not been submitted to the Committee for consideration and sought clarification. In response it was confirmed that there was no proposal in the report before the Committee to add to its terms of reference. If such a proposal were to be brought forward this would require approval by the Council.

47. PRESENTATION FROM NEW INTERNAL AUDIT PROVIDERS - SOUTH WEST AUDIT PARTNERSHIP (SWAP)

A presentation by representatives from the South West Audit Partnership (SWAP) was received. The presentation explained that:

- SWAP is a not for profit organisation and the board comprises mainly Section 151 officers from the twelve partner local authorities, including the council's Chief Financial Officer;
- In terms of performance, it was reported that 95% of audit plans were achieved and the customer satisfaction rate was 85%;
- It is expected that SWAP will be able to deliver savings and better value achieved by an increase in audit activity and by sharing best practice between the partner authorities; and

- SWAP will be facilitating a Members' Day on audit and governance which they will be communicating shortly.

The Chief Financial Officer added that a value for money service would be provided by SWAP, enhanced by an increased local presence.

In answer to a question regarding the on-going stability of fees, it was explained that fees would be protected for the next year.

In answer to a question regarding the 85% customer satisfaction rate, it was clarified that this reflected customer responses to honest feedback in audit reports.

A question was raised about fraud detection schemes and it was confirmed that SWAP were looking to provide this service if partners wished it. Audit programmes are determined by the Section 151 Officer and the Audit & Governance Committee.

SWAP confirmed that a year's notice would normally be required to withdraw from the partnership, and added that consideration would need to be given to employment responsibilities in relation to staff dedicated to the council's audit programme.

48. INTERNAL AUDIT CHARTER

A representative from the South West Audit Partnership presented the Internal Audit Charter, setting out the role of internal audit.

The Charter's key points are:

- The role of audit is to be objective and independent;
- The Audit and Governance Committee will receive four reports per year plus an annual report on the council's risk environment; and
- There is a members' meeting every six months at which the accounts will be approved and future work will be agreed. The Committee agreed that Councillor Jarvis would attend this meeting the council's representative member.

RESOLVED THAT: the Internal Audit Charter be approved.

49. INTERNAL AUDIT PLAN 2014-15

The Internal Audit Plan for 2014-15 was introduced by SWAP.

The Plan identified the council's risk areas and key audit controls, with a plan for addressing the same for the year ahead. SWAP will work with external auditors, Grant Thornton, to co-ordinate audit activity and to maximise resources. Where common themes are found, best practice will be shared amongst partner authorities in order to make improvements.

Specific IT and operational audits for directorates are planned.

In answer to a question in relation to the number of days allocated to certain audit activities, it was confirmed that there would be some flexibility in this. The Charter allows SWAP to communicate directly with the Audit and Governance Committee although it was emphasised that work should be commissioned through the Section 151 Officer.

RESOLVED THAT: the Internal Audit Plan 2014-15 be approved.

50. GRANT THORNTON AUDIT AND GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE UPDATE

The Committee received an update from external auditors Grant Thornton UK LLP.

The Committee was advised that the interim audit has been completed as planned and that the accounts were to be audited once published.

Attention was drawn to Member Guidance for producing accounts which is available. The guidance explains terms and provides examples of questions for Members to ask when inspecting accounts. A further online resource was available to Members in order to assist with making comparisons with other local authorities regarding waste costs.

Grant Thornton will be holding a Local Government Audit Committee Network Event on 30 July 2014 (not 2 July as previously advertised). This event will focus on the role of Audit Committees in relation to financial reporting. Councillor Brigadier P Jones was nominated to attend.

A seminar for officers on Alternative Delivery Models is to take place on 16 July 2014.

In response to a question relating to waste, it was confirmed that there has been an increase in performance in this area, supported by a new Energy From Waste facility. It was noted, however, that education is key in reducing the amount of waste going to landfill. It was further noted that the report is a year behind and so the impact of the EFW plant was not yet seen here.

RESOLVED THAT: the update report be noted.

51. 2014/15 ANNUAL AUDIT FEE

External auditors, Grant Thornton UK LLP, explained that they have been appointed by the Audit Commission to undertake external audit activity for the council.

The Audit Commission determines the annual audit fee charged to the council for external audit services as set out in the Planned Audit Fee 2014-15 letter.

It was confirmed that there was a charge for additional work last year in response to an objection from a member of the public. All other activity was completed within budget.

RESOLVED THAT: the Audit Fee 2014-15 letter be noted.

52. WASTE CONTRACT

The Assistant Director, Governance gave a verbal update.

He confirmed that work to vary the contract between Mercia Waste Management Ltd and Herefordshire Council and Worcestershire County Council was completed on 21 May 2014. The Joint Working Agreement ('the JWA') between the councils had also been revised to ensure that Herefordshire's investment of over £40 million in the Energy From Waste plant at Hartlebury in Worcestershire was now protected and the share secured in such a manner to ensure the council's participation in decision making.

A full report will be presented to the next meeting on 29 September.

RESOLVED THAT: the update be noted.

53. ANNUAL GOVERNANCE STATEMENT

A verbal update was received from the Chief Financial Officer on the review of the statement. It was identified that an action plan was required in order to address points set out in the statement.

A joint review between the Section 151 Officer and the Monitoring Officer was planned, which is to be reported to the Committee in September. This timescale would ensure good practice and support the production of a useful resource for Members.

This approach was welcomed by the Committee.

RESOLVED THAT: the update be noted.

Guests from South West Audit Partnership and Grant Thornton were thanked for their contribution to the meeting.

The meeting ended at 3.25 pm

CHAIRMAN



MEETING:	AUDIT & GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE
MEETING DATE:	9 SEPTEMBER 2014
TITLE OF REPORT:	Outcome of Public Interest Disclosure Act Investigation
REPORT BY:	ASSISTANT DIRECTOR GOVERNANCE

Classification

Open

Key Decision

This is not an executive decision.

Wards Affected

County-wide

Purpose

To note the findings of a recent Public Interest Disclosure Act (PIDA) investigation completed by external audit and to note the management actions arising.

Recommendation

THAT:

- (a) The external audit report, including agreed management action plan, at Appendix 1 be noted.

Alternative options

- 1 The committee may recommend that additional or alternative actions be considered.

Reasons for recommendations

- 2 To ensure transparency regarding concerns raised, and provide assurance that any areas identified for improvement are being responded to appropriately.

Key considerations

- 3 In January 2014 Grant Thornton received a disclosure under the Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998 (PIDA) from a member of staff of the council. The disclosure

Further information on the subject of this report is available from
Annie Brookes, Governance Manager on Tel (01432) 260605

concerned the implementation of the council's IT-based customer relationship management (CRM) system implemented in 2011. Grant Thornton undertook an investigation of the areas of concern raised in the disclosure and produced a report attached at Appendix 1.

- 4 In summary, the investigation found no evidence of impropriety in the procurement process, but did find some areas where lessons could be learned for future major project implementation; these are set out at appendix A of the investigation report together with the management response.

Community impact

- 5 The council's corporate plan includes clear commitments both to maintaining openness and accountability for decision-making, service delivery and impact and to making the best use of resources available in order to meet the council's priorities. The areas for improvement identified in the report and the actions agreed in response support achievement of those.

Equality and human rights

- 6 None identified.

Financial implications

- 7 There are no financial implications arising from the action plan. Herefordshire Council must bear the costs of the PIDA investigation undertaken by Grant Thornton which is not included in the external audit fee. The nine days' work costing £11k will be funded from existing 2014/15 budgets.

Legal implications

- 8 The Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998 makes provision for protection of whistle-blowers. The role of the auditor in conducting investigations once a disclosure has been made is set out in the report at Appendix 1.

Risk management

- 9 Areas for improvement identified within the report have mitigating responding actions agreed.

Consultees

- 10 None identified.

Appendices

- 11 Appendix 1: Herefordshire Council PIDA Investigation: Review of Customer Relationship Manager Implementation.

Background papers

- None identified.

Further information on the subject of this report is available from
Annie Brookes, Governance Manager on Tel (01432) 260605



Herefordshire Council PIDA Investigation: Review of Customer Relationship Manager Implementation

Year ended 31 March 2014

5 June 2014

Phil Jones

Director

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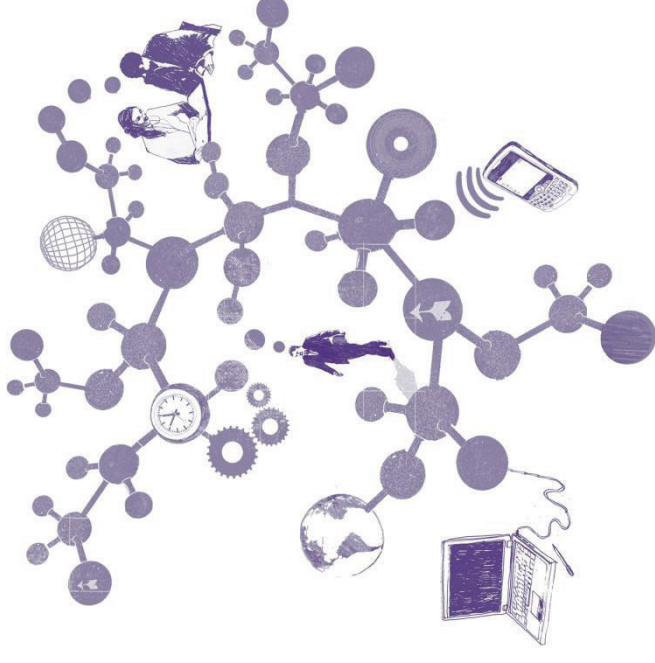
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Section 1: Executive summary

01. Executive Summary & Introduction and Background

02. Detailed Findings

03. Appendices – Action Plan

Executive summary

Grant Thornton received a disclosure under the Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998 (PIDA) from a member of staff of the Council in January 2014. The disclosure concerned the implementation of the Council's IT-based Customer Relationship Management (CRM) system which went live in December 2011. The Council has spent around £1.1m on the implementation of the system to date.

We have carried out an investigation of the matters covered by the disclosure focussing principally on (a) the procurement arrangements for the contract and (b) the implementation of the CRM system and future strategy.

Our investigation suggested that the Business Case for the project was very ambitious and not fully owned by all parts of the Council. The estimated cashable savings of £1.6m identified in the Business Case were not supported by robust analysis and were premised on centralising services and therefore reducing back-office costs in departments. In reality the project did not subsequently extend to all of the services envisaged within the Business Case, so it is unlikely that key elements of the cashable savings were realised.

Our review of the procurement of CRM suggests that the Council appears to have carried out an appropriate tendering process with sufficient safeguards built in to ensure fairness and transparency. We also found no evidence to suggest that the tendering process was not carried out properly.

Following this, the Council implemented a shared front office and this is still in operation and working reasonably effectively, but the project did not, as envisaged by the Business Case: extend to all council services and partners; provide complete visibility of all customer information or allow proactive or 'intelligent' action in response to customer data which were all key planks of the original plan.

The project has delivered benefits but the Council's own post-implementation review concluded that it has only been partially successful and that momentum has stalled for a number of reasons:

- the world changed: the PCT was abolished and other services were divested and key providers no longer contract with the Council
- the impact of Austerity meant that the Council could no longer fund the full implementation of the project and the back-office savings which were supposed to be delivered by CRM were probably delivered by other means
- the Council's model (on which CRM was based) of seeking to provide services to meet all customer demand has changed to one of seeking to constrain demand and enable self-service where practicable
- there was insufficient corporate and departmental support to extending the project further

It is difficult to gauge whether the £1m spent on the project provided value for money. The Council needed to replace SAP system and the budget of £1.5m appeared commensurate with the scale of the project. The budget was subsequently underspent by £0.5m due to not fully implementing the original Business Case. It is unlikely that CRM delivered all of the costs savings on which the Business Case was premised and the system is possibly over-engineered for its current use.

Perhaps the more important question is where the Council goes next. Going forward the Council needs to be clearer about the scope and ambition of its customer vision and what this means for the way it engages with all customers in future and the digital and other channels it needs to deploy to support that vision.

Introduction & Background

Introduction

Grant Thornton received a disclosure under the Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998 (PIDA) from a member of staff of the Council in January 2014. The disclosure concerned the implementation of the Council's IT-based Customer Relationship Management (CRM) system which went live in December 2011. The Council has spent around £1m on the implementation of the system to date

- PIDA does not confer a responsibility upon the auditor to protect the identity of the discloser but the general principle guiding auditors in relation to information received from members of the public is that they should not reveal the identity of a discloser without their express permission

The Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998 and the Auditor's Responsibilities

The Audit Commission's 'Whistleblowing and the Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998: Internal Policy and Procedures' (updated August 2013) document sets out the role of the Audit Commission and its appointed auditors in relation to the handling of disclosures made under the PIDA Act. In short the key principles are:

- the appointed auditor is a prescribed person for disclosures relating to 'the proper conduct of public business, value for money, fraud and corruption in local government and health service bodies'
- the obligation of the auditor is confined to the receipt of disclosures
- PIDA neither requires nor empowers an auditor to carry out an investigation into the subject matter of any disclosure or to report the results of any investigation undertaken, but the appointed auditor should consider any information received as a result of a disclosure and determine what action, if any, to take in the context of their existing statutory professional powers and duties
- neither the Commission nor its appointed auditors have powers to discipline local authority officers; disciplinary action, where relevant, can only be taken by management and/or any professional bodies. Allegations of criminality are usually investigated by the Police.

Main Areas of Concern raised by the PIDA Disclosure

The main areas of concern raised in the disclosure related, in summary, to:

- the effectiveness of the procurement
- relationships with the Company contracted to deliver CRM
- the implementation of the CRM system
- the cost and other benefits delivered by CRM
- the extent to which the Council has been able to use and exploit the full functionality offered by the system
- the future of CRM

Auditor Response and Scope of the Work Undertaken

Having considered the concerns raised by the PIDA disclosure, Grant Thornton concluded that it was appropriate to carry out further work to:

- establish the facts relating to the matters raised by the discloser; and
- determine if there were any weaknesses in the governance and oversight of the CRM implementation which should be reported to the Council, pursuant to the auditor's powers and duties.

Introduction & Background

The investigation focused principally on

- the procurement arrangements for the contract
- the implementation of the CRM system and future strategy

Our investigation has involved a document review and an interview of key staff who had knowledge and understanding of the project. The Council has afforded us every assistance in carrying out the investigation. A number of key players who were involved in the procurement and delivery of the project no longer work for the Council. Accordingly, we have shared this report, with the agreement of the Council, with Ciber Ltd (UK) and the former assistant director for customer services, and have taken of their comments where appropriate.

This report sets out the finding from our work. The scope of our work was not confined to the matters raised by the discloser. In addition, the report does not comment on all of the matters covered by the disclosure; in particular we have not referred to those matters which we consider on balance not to have merit or relevance to the governance or effectiveness of the implementation.

An Action Plan is appended at the back of this report.

Section 2: Detailed Findings

01. Executive summary

02. Detailed Findings

03. Appendices-Action plan

Detailed Findings

Objectives and Scope of the Project

Customer Service Transformation was at the heart of the Council's corporate strategy from 2000 onwards. In 2001 a programme of change was instigated through the creation of a Customer services function, which included establishing 'Info Shops' and the 'Info by Phone' Service. In 2005, following the introduction of the SAP Back Office project, a new Customer Relationship Management (CRM) was implemented-SAP CRM- which was intended to be at the centre of an enterprise resource planning (ERP) model, which was not subsequently pursued.

Following the adoption of the HPS Customer Strategy, a review of the SAP CRM system was undertaken as it was perceived to be expensive in terms of the licensing model, support and infrastructure costs. as a result, an options paper was presented to the HPS Transformation Board ('the Board') in November 2009. Following this an outline business case was presented to 'the Board' in February 2010 which was accepted. The Joint Management Team approved the Customer Strategy in May 2010 and the business case was approved with a benefits model in October 2010.

A key change was that the coverage of services expanded beyond the council services already covered by the extant CRM system to all appropriate council services in addition to any NHS Herefordshire Service which would be applicable.

The objectives of the project as originally conceived in the 'System Specification' document at that stage were as follows:

- integrating front office service functions from all areas within scope into a single function
- making front office service delivery as efficient, convenient and accessible as possible
- demonstrating VFM and delivering efficiencies
- improving customer and citizen satisfaction

The scope as defined in the 'System Specification' covered three phases:

- **Phase 1:** *broad service area coverage with 'shallow' integration* based around existing customer service processes; strategic housing and revenues and benefits. There was to be system integration with the Local Gazetteer, Civica APP, Capita Academy, Morse Wisdom, Email and an Integration Platform was to be established to allow web self service. The system was to be populated with data from revenues and benefits, the Gazetteer and Electoral Register
- **Phase 2:** *targeted service area coverage with 'deep' integration and front-to-back business process re-engineering* to deliver further efficiencies. This would involve extending service coverage to: benefit and exchequer; children's services; provider services; legal & democratic; public health; NHS switch. A further acceleration of web based self service was envisaged along with enhanced customer profiling.

Detailed Findings

- **Phase 3:** *further transformation and re-engineering of services*, extending service coverage to environmental and cultural services; environmental health and trading standards; highways and sustainability; economic and community services and planning and transportation.

Business Case and Benefits Appraisal

The preparation of the business case was overseen by the then assistant director for customer services and communications, who acted as Project Executive for the project, supported by a Senior Supplier and day-to-day Project Manager who prepared the detailed Project Initiation Document (PID). The document re-iterated the scope of the project set out in the 'System Specification', based around a three phase implementation.

The PID argued that through integrated channel management and innovative service re-design, savings of around 10%-20% per service area could be conservatively achieved. A 'Net Benefit Model' ('NBM') was included in the PID as a table (see table opposite), which set out the estimated net cost savings which the project would deliver. It is unclear from whence the cashable and non cashable benefits were derived, although the PID defines the nature of the benefits as follows:

- **Cashable:** actual baseline revenue reductions in the cost of service of in the cost of project work already planned
- **Non Cashable:** savings that can be made through avoidance of future costs or those quality or productivity gains that cannot be equated to a direct revenue reduction

NET	BENEFIT	MODEL	TABLE	Total
To Be Projection	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14
Costs	£	£	£	£
Set Up Costs	165,060	983,783	-	1,148,843
Annual Costs	260,868	123,949	143,362	1,820,383
<i>Total Costs</i>	425,928	1,107,732	143,362	1,820,383
Benefits				
Cashable	-	321,311	448,878	1,219,067
Non Cashable	-	35,106	17,106	68,424
<i>Total Benefits</i>	-	356,417	465,984	1,287,491
Net Benefits	425,928	751,315	322,622	531,988

Detailed Findings

On the face of it, the Net Benefit Table showed a cumulative Net Cost to the Council of £0.531m by Year 4 of the Project; but this was on the assumption that cost reductions of £1.2m would be delivered by Year 4.

The 'Business Case (Creating a Customer Organisation) sheds a little more light on the financial drivers for the project. The 'financial case' is projected over 5 years from 2010/11-2014/15 in similar format to the NBM included in the PID, but instead of projecting a cumulative net cost of £0.53m by 2013/14, it shows a net deficit of £0.122m and a cumulative surplus of £0.12m by 2014/15. The authors of this document appear to be the same as for the PID so it is unclear why Business Case presented a more optimistic view than the PID.

The Business Case has more detail to support the anticipated cashable benefits; so for instance the largest items (making up nearly £1.2m of the anticipated cumulative benefits of £1.614m by 2014/15) include:

- Termination of SAP software licenses £0.291m
- System Support FTE reduction £0.513m
- Cost reduction for integration £0.113m
- Reduction in service costs as result of BPR £0.195m
- Council Tax telephone payments into front office £0.195m
- 5 FTE saving from transfer of services to self-serve/web £0.325m

It is therefore clear that the bulk of the cashable benefits were seen to arise from reducing head count by centralising services and therefore deriving savings in back-office costs in departments; a switch to self-service and a

a reduction in system support costs. It does not appear that the relevant service departments, where the reductions in staff costs would arise, were properly consulted on the efficacy of the proposals or the robustness of the calculated savings, according to the staff we interviewed.

Certainly the figures were premised on delivery of all 3 Phases of the Project and therefore extending to services such as Children's Safeguarding and Children's Improvement and Inclusion. In reality the project subsequently did not progress much beyond Phase 1 and therefore key elements of the cashable benefits to be derived from reduction in staff costs due to the implementation of CRM (as opposed to changes which were subsequently delivered as a result of other drivers and initiatives) would not have been delivered, or at least not in the way envisaged.

The extent to which the project delivered cashable benefits will be considered later in this report, but certainly such benefits could only have been delivered in full had the Council secured buy-in from all service departments at the outset. This does not appear to have been the case.

In addition there does not seem to have been any independent report or cost-benefit evaluation of the project carried out by the Finance department, although there was Finance input into preparation of the financial information. The project was IT-led and therefore the robustness of the business case was lessened. Clearly the project promised non-cashable benefits but those benefits needed to be weighed against the costs and savings arising from the project. This was not possible as the financial analysis was neither transparent, owned by all parts of the Council, nor fully realistic.

Detailed Findings

Procurement Process

The Council carried out the procurement process using the Open OJEU (Official Journal of the European Union) procedure for amounts over approximately £156k (at 2011 values). This route was chosen to seek to ensure maximum choice and best value. A detailed specification was prepared which set out a programme for the ITT to be issued 28.2.11; closing date for tenders 15.4.11 and contract award 16.5.11. The original anticipated budget for the project was £1.5m

Tenders were received and opened in the presence of Legal Services representatives. From an initial 60 expressions of interest, 56 suppliers dropped out due to failure to meet the mandatory requirements. The Scoring Panel were given the Tenders to review individually and they entered their responses on a pre-formatted score sheet to aid the group scoring session. The process was overseen by the Customer Organisation Programme Manager. Scores were awarded over a range of categories:

Area	Weighting
• Financial	50%
• Qualitative:	
-Capability	24%
-Innovation	15%
-Quality	10%
• Demonstration	1%
Total	100%

Individual scores were agreed by the Group as a whole. The financial assessment was based on awarding the maximum marks for lowest price or best discount in each area in the score set (eg Firm fixed price; Weighted Average Daily Rate) with the other suppliers awarded a percentage of those marks based on their pricing submission.

Four suppliers submitted compliant tenders. Following the completion, it was recommended that Ciber Ltd (UK) be awarded the contract with a score of 73,292 points (the next best score was 71,235 points).

The financial audit of the previous two years accounts was deemed acceptable for all companies. However a query was raised by the Council about the cash-flow of Ciber Ltd (UK) and its relationship to its parent multinational company. The audit found that the UK company's balance sheet was weak and that whilst the company was profitable, all profits passed to the parent company. A guarantee however existed between the parent multinational and Ciber Ltd (UK) to provide support around cash flow. Following discussions with the Ciber Ltd (UK) Finance Director; Ciber indicated by an email statement, that this guarantee would remain in existence for the duration of the contract with the Council and options were given for a break/escape clause, in the event it were withdrawn.

To what extent the results of the financial audit was appropriately taken into account as part of the overall tender scoring is difficult to judge, but in reality, the financial standing of the company did not prove to be an issue in the subsequent delivery of the contract.

Detailed Findings

Our review of the tender assessment process has been largely confined to a review of documentation and discussion with Council staff who had some knowledge of that process. Many of the key players involved in the tender specification and award have now left the Council. However, based on the review carried out:

- the Council appears to have carried out an appropriate tendering process with sufficient safeguards built in to ensure fairness and transparency
- we have found no evidence to suggest that the tendering process was not carried out properly

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Implementation and Post Implementation Review

Following the award of the contract, the Council and Ciber embarked on an 'aggressive' (Ciber's expression) implementation plan, with a view to a 'go live' date of December 2011, which was achieved. This was overseen by a Project Executive, which had overall responsibility for delivery of the project, reporting to a Project Board. The Council was quoted in Ciber's contemporary press release of 17 May 2012 as stating:

'We had an opportunity to make significant savings by switching off our existing system and moving onto the new platform by end of 2011. Our implementation plan was aggressive but we were determined to achieve that goal and the fact that we went live on schedule is testimony to good planning, combined with the close working partnership and commitment from the joint Herefordshire and Ciber team'

Did the CRM deliver all that it was originally intended to deliver? It appears to be the case that the project partly delivered the Business Plan's key objectives. Again in the press statement of 17 May 2012 already referred to, the Council was quoted as stating:

'We wanted to create a customer organisation that offered a shared front office, for all council service and partner, and to establish a single point of contact where shared intelligence and complete visibility of customer information would enable our customer service personnel to provide and informed and proactive engagement for any interaction.

In practice whilst the Council implemented the shared front office implementation, and this is still in operation and working reasonably effectively, the project did not move much beyond Phase 1 of the original 'Systems Specification'. In relation to the preceding quote of 17 May 2012, the CRM has not extended to all council services and partners and does not provide complete visibility of all customer information or allow proactive or 'intelligent' action in response to customer data.

This is in part due to the fact that the project momentum stalled. From the outset the project deliverables were split into Products but mixed or little progress was made against a number of the Products, in part due to the ongoing funding of the Project being constrained. Of the original £1.5m budget, the Council's project spend to date is £1.01m, due largely to a number of Products not being taken up by the Council.

Detailed Findings

The Council's own overview of progress against Product delivery in its 'End Project Report' (effectively a post implementation review) at March 2013 assessed progress as follows:

Product	Overview of Progress
Product 2: CRM Replacement & Integration Foundation	Generally successfully achieved in Dec 2011
Product 3: Single Citizen View foundation	Intended to use demographic data to predict & respond to needs, developing single view of Citizen. Not fully used for technical reasons & lack of clarity over which data systems would be integrated
Product 4: Digital Channel Service	Roll-out has been constrained by need execute a governance go-live plan & creating work-arounds for mapping discrepancies between Council & Amey.
Product 5: Citizen Account	Not fully used. The functionality was created to provide a Citizen log-on, but not fully used.
Products 6 & 7: Further Services (Integrations)	Took a year to develop interface between CRM and Civica. Amey no longer Council's Highways contractor.
Product 8: Business & Change Management	Optional service: assistance provided by Ciber to support Privacy Impact Assessment (PIA) creation, but decided not see through to fruition
Product 9: Systems Hosting Provision	Optional service was not exercised.
Product 10- Maintenance & Support	Annual support contract in place.

The Council's own view of the implementation is one of only partial success. However as was noted earlier in this report, the efficacy of the original Business Plan was premised on delivering all of the Products and all 3 Phases of the Project. CRM has not to date extended to most of the services included within the original business proposition (i.e. those included in Phases 2 and 3) and therefore key elements of the cashable benefits to be derived from reduction in staff costs due to the implementation of CRM would not have been delivered. Cashable savings were delivered in Libraries.

In addition, one of the original objectives of the Council in replacing the SAP system, was not only to realise savings on licensing and other costs, but also to develop intelligent systems which could link up corporate data systems. At the outset of the project, the Council estimated that it had 1,500 activities that it needed to capture, so that customers could navigate through any transactional service requirement. But in reality services subsequently changed or were divested so it is likely that the cost and time invested in configuring systems in this complex way, exceeded what would have been required to deliver a system working as it currently does.

Similarly, the acquisition of DataHub, under Product 3, was intended to enable the Council to take personal details and meld into a single view of the citizen, to enable services not only to respond to need but also to predict need. For instance, if a person is making repeated calls for a particular service, it may indicate a wider need and a different response. This has not been used to any degree, partially because of technical issues, but also due to a lack of clarity about which data systems would be integrated. Other IT projects, such as GIS, needed to be completed to enable the full functionality to be exploited. This did not happen.

Detailed Findings

At a more detailed level, the Council produced a 'Dynamics-Lessons Learned' document which identified a number of other areas where benefits had not been fully realised or where lessons had been learned:

- difficulties were experienced in deploying the call centre technology in relation to 2 staff with visual impairments
- the Council realised late in the day that Amey had developed an in-house solution around the Infor system which resulted in an integration requirement not previously known
- there was late commitment to procure Ciber support which impacted on the implementation team having to provide support whilst also being tasked with new streams such as CIU, Reporting, Infor development
- communications needed to be improved as teams were now working on sub projects and communications were more ad hoc than the previous formal governance arrangements

There is also evidence to suggest that the aggressive implementation may have impacted on staff working particularly in the Contact Centre and that this resulted in tension between management and staff. This did not assist the implementation. These issues were eventually resolved. Some staff also expressed concerns about system functionality and effectiveness although views of staff varied on this. Some staff reported the system freezing and other technical problems but this concern was not universally shared by all staff.

Why was the project not fully implemented?

There are number of reasons why the Project was not fully delivered, some within the Council's control, some not. We asked officers the reasons for this; their views were:

- *the world changed*: the original business plan envisaged that CRM would be extended to a range of services including for instance the PCT, but PCTs were abolished on April 1 2013, and the successor CCG did not wish to be included within the joint arrangements. A number of services were also divested and other providers (eg Amey) no longer contract with the Council
- when the project was first conceived in 2008/9 *the full impact of Austerity* on local government had not either impacted or been envisaged. This meant that the ability of the Council to fund the full implementation of the project became more constrained, and the back-office savings which had been envisaged would be delivered by CRM, were implemented as a result of other drivers, such as the need to deliver efficiencies to balance the budget
- Austerity has also driven a *change in philosophy* from one where the Council provides services to satisfy all customer needs to one where the Council seeks to enable customers' needs to be met by a portfolio of options including self-service
- officers also stated that they thought *the implementation had been achieved in a tight timeline* but as a result many of the service departments which needed to be bought into the vision of the project (as they would effectively be ceding budget and staff to a central customer department) did not fully share the vision. This meant that any further development of the project, without corporate pressure being applied, would be unlikely. Given the budget situation and the other changes happening in the internal and external environment, such corporate drive was not forthcoming.

Detailed Findings

In short the Business Plan was very ambitious at the outset and the wider Council was not bought into it. When Austerity arrived, and 'the world changed' any commitment to deliver the original plan dissipated. The Council has a functioning system which delivers a unified call management system, but there does not appear much appetite to extend the system further. Elsewhere, Ciber has stated that similar systems have been delivered successfully to the full specification.

Has CRM provided value for money?

This is difficult to gauge. The Council needed to replace SAP but the system envisaged by the Business Plan was far more ambitious than the system currently in operation. However, the budget was underspent by £0.5m (£1m v £1.5m) and it is the view of the IT professionals that a £1m+ was a not unreasonable provision for the scale of IT project envisaged.

It is however inherently difficult to judge the cost effectiveness of this type of project, where the bulk of the spend represents the provision of expert advice and assistance (i.e. staff time) rather than tangible hardware or software. Payments under the contract were tightly controlled and monitored.

It is unlikely that CRM delivered all of the costs savings on which the Business Plan was premised and the system is possibly over-engineered for its current use. Perhaps the more important question is where the Council goes next.

What are the Council's plans going forward?

The Council is at a crossroads in a number of respects, not only in relation to its approach to customer services, but also more broadly in relation to corporate strategy in light of significant budget challenges.

A report entitled 'Root and Branch reviews- Phasel' was presented to cabinet in October 2012 which set out proposals to carry out fundamental reviews of a number of service areas including Customer Services. The Root and Branch programme formed an essential element of the Council's medium term financial planning in order to establish future direction and address the financial challenge ahead.

In relation to Customer Services, the review recognised that the extant model, designed to provide accessible and timely response to customer queries had served the Council well to date, but a step change was required 'to dynamic management of a locally based network of contact' that also manages demand and prevents the need for services'. A companion paper on the future of Customer Services noted that a completely new perspective was required; recognising:

- the limit to the level of savings to be achieved through the extant customer services model
- the need to root a new approach in demand management and self-service
- the limited scope for large-scale council-specific telephone based services
- the need for end-to-end process change

Cabinet subsequently received a report in April 2013 entitled 'Digital Strategy' which, *inter alia*, outlined a fundamentally different vision of digital engagement with customers by achieving channel shift, such as a gradual conversion from for instance, phone communication to on-line engagement. One aim would be to 'achieve less dependence of physical technical infrastructure.' This was seen as an evolutionary rather than revolutionary process.

Detailed Findings

Subsequently a formal consultation document 'Customer Services and Libraries: Redesigning Services' was issued in October 2013 which established a new set of principles; to:

- continue to integrate customer services and libraries as the front facing delivery of local authority and partner services
- design face to face services around citizens with the greatest need
- improve the interface between front and back office services
- extend the role of centres as community hubs
- involve communities in designing services
- deliver efficiency through the application of these principles

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It has taken some time to integrate customer services and libraries. The Council will also need to determine going forward where CRM sits within the changed landscape of its new approach to dealing with customers and revised digital strategy. In part this may need some wider thought about where Customer Services, as it is currently defined within the Council, fits within the wider vision that the Council has for all of its customers and citizens, for instance social care and children's services largely sit outside Customer Services as currently defined, yet those services deal with key Council customers.

Going forward the Council needs to be clearer about the scope and ambition of its customer vision and what this means for the way it engages with all customers in future and the digital and other channels it needs to deploy to support that vision.

Did the Council deal with the complainant's concerns effectively?

We have received every assistance from the Council in conducting this investigation. The Council has also, from our perspective, treated the complaint with considerable seriousness.

The complainant, who we cannot name, raised a number of concerns informally about the procurement and implementation of the project with senior officers and members of the Council over a period of time. It is alleged that these concerns were not followed up in all instances by senior members and officers. The complainant was reluctant to share the relevant email and other evidence relating to the raising of their concerns, as this would have compromised their anonymity. It has therefore been difficult to verify the validity of the concerns expressed. Nonetheless, going forward, the Council may wish to ensure that its own internal procedures to deal with informal complaints raised internally are well understood and remain robust.

An Action Plan is attached at the back of this report which we will discuss with the Council's officers.

Section 3: Appendices: Action Plan

01. Executive summary

02. Audit of the accounts

03. Appendices: Action Plan

Appendix A: Action plan

Priority

High - Significant effect on control system

Medium - Effect on control system

Low - Best practice

Rec No.	Recommendation	Priority	Management response	Implementation date & responsibility
1	The Council should ensure that any future major project has detailed input from the Finance department around the projected costs and benefits of the Business case.	H	Accepted. The Finance Team are responsible for completion of this element in any business case.	Ongoing. Chief Finance Officer
2	The Council should seek as far as possible to future proof major projects or contracts and be clear about the external circumstances which could change during the life of the project or contract.	H	Accepted. The lessons learned exercise completed by the Council in relation to this (and other major change programmes) are used to inform future programme development and implementation, and future commissioning.	Ongoing. Chief Finance Officer/Head of Commercial Services
3	The Council should ensure that any Council-wide initiative has full buy-in from all parts of the Council as part of preparing the Business Case.	H	Accepted.	Ongoing. Management Board
4	The Council should develop a clear view about the scope and ambition of its customer vision and what this means for the way it engages with all customers in future and the digital and other channels it needs to deploy to support that vision.	H	Accepted. Recent cabinet reports relating to customer services and digital strategy outline the clear direction of travel. These will be supported by additional communications to ensure this direction of travel is consistently communicated to customers, members and employees.	Ongoing. Head of Community and Customer Services
5	The Council should ensure that its internal processes to deal with complaints raised informally are well understood and applied consistently.	M	Accepted. Information on the processes to be followed for both formal complaints and informal concerns raised by staff will be provided to all members regularly and included in new member induction. All managers are periodically reminded to the processes to be followed when concerns or complaints are raised by members of staff or members of the public. All staff are reminded periodically of the appropriate processes to be followed when raising concerns whether informally with managers or formally through the grievance or whistleblowing processes.	Ongoing. Assistant Director, Governance



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MEETING:	AUDIT & GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE
MEETING DATE:	9 September 2014
TITLE OF REPORT:	THE ROSS-ON-WYE COMMUNITY GOVERNANCE REVIEW
REPORT BY:	ASSISTANT DIRECTOR, GOVERNANCE

Classification

Open

Key Decision

This is not an Executive Decision

Wards Affected

Ross-on-Wye East and Ross-on-Wye West

Purpose

To make recommendations following the Ross-on-Wye Community Governance Review.

Recommendations

THAT:

Audit and Governance Committee recommends to Council that with effect from 1st April 2015 ('the effective date'):

- a) The existing parishes of Ross-on-Wye Rural and Ross-on-Wye Town shall be amalgamated to constitute a new parish;
- b) The new parish shall be known as 'Ross-on-Wye';
- c) The existing parishes of Ross-on-Wye Rural and Ross-on-Wye Town shall cease to exist;
- d) The parish councils for the parishes of Ross-on-Wye Rural and Ross-on-Wye Town shall be dissolved;
- e) There shall be a parish council for the new parish of Ross-on-Wye;
- f) The name of that new council shall be 'Ross-on-Wye Parish Council';
- g) The first election of all parish councillors for the new parish of Ross-on-Wye shall be held on the ordinary day of election of councillors in 2015;
- h) The term of office of every parish councillor elected on the ordinary day of election of councillors in 2015 for the new parish of Ross-on-Wye shall be four years;
- i) The existing Ross Rural East and Ross Rural West wards of the parish of Ross-on-Wye Rural; and the existing Ross-on-Wye East and Ross-on-Wye West

- wards of the parish of Ross-on-Wye Town, shall all be abolished;
- j) The number of parish councillors to be elected for the new parish of Ross-on-Wye shall be eighteen;
 - k) The new parish of Ross-on-Wye shall be divided into three wards which shall be named: Ross-on-Wye East, Ross-on-Wye North, and Ross-on-Wye West; and shall comprise the respective areas of the district wards bearing the same names;
 - l) The number of parish councillors to be elected for each ward in the new parish of Ross-on-Wye shall be six;
- m) All the land, property, rights and liabilities of Ross-on Wye Rural Parish Council and Ross-on-Wye Town Council shall transfer from those councils to the new Ross-on-Wye Parish Council;
- n) From the effective date until the councillors to be elected to the new parish council come into office, the new parish shall be represented by the elected district councillors for the district wards of Ross-on-Wye East and Ross-on-Wye West (as existing at 26th September 2014);
- o) That no recommendations be made to the Electoral Commission to request consequential alterations be made to any electoral areas of the County of Herefordshire District Council;
- p) The Assistant Director, Governance be given delegated authority to execute The County of Herefordshire District Council (Reorganisation of Community Governance) (Ross-on-Wye) Order 2014 ('the Reorganisation Order') (to be substantially in the form set out in Annex 5 to this report, subject to any necessary typographical and/or technical amendments) and publicise the outcome of the community governance review in accordance with section 96 of the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007; and
- q) The Electoral Registration Officer be requested to commence preparatory electoral administrative work from 15th October 2014 as a consequence of the above changes; and that the Reorganisation Order shall have effect from that date for those purposes.

Alternative Option

- 1 Retain both Ross-on-Wye Town Council and Ross-on-Wye Rural Parish Council as two separate authorities. The advantage of this option is that governance would continue unchanged. However, this option is not recommended as the Ross-on-Wye Community Governance Working Group accepted the view of Ross-on-Wye Town Council that the current arrangements were inappropriate. This was particularly in view of the proposed expansion of the Ross-on-Wye area outlined in the Herefordshire Local Development Framework. The total population is approximately 10,600, with about 9,600 living in the town and 1,000 living in the rural area. There are nearly 8,000 electors in the combined area. The rural parish area currently has one councillor for every 105 electors, while the town council has one councillor for every 591. Because the Ross-on-Wye Rural area is geographically spread around the town, it does not form one community and is, in effect, the outer edges of the town.

Reasons for Recommendations

(a) One local council to represent the whole Ross-on-Wye area

1. The Ross-on-Wye Community Governance Review Group ('the review group') considered that it would be beneficial to all residents in Ross-on-Wye Rural and Ross-on-Wye Town to have one council representing the whole area. The town council asked Herefordshire Council to undertake the Community Governance Review because the proposed expansion of the conurbation meant that it was timely to review the existing parish boundaries. The reference to expansion referred to the consultation on the Herefordshire Local Development Framework, which could potentially mean an additional 1,000 dwellings being built in Ross in the period up to 2026. It seemed an appropriate time to carry out a Community Governance Review alongside a planning document which would be in force for the next 15 years.
2. The recommended option would create a unified structure, better able to respond to the potential growth in housing an industry, most of which would take place in the Ross-on-Wye rural area.
3. To effect the preferred changes it is recommended that the existing parishes of Ross-on-Wye Rural and Ross-on-Wye Town cease to exist and their respective parish and town councils be abolished. It is further recommended that a new parish be created covering the combined areas of the two abolished parishes and that the new parish has a new parish council. This last recommendation is mandatory as the combined electorate of the new parish will exceed 1000.

(b) Name for the new council

4. The name most frequently suggested in response to the consultation was Ross-on-Wye Council, suggested by 38% of respondents. Although the town council wished to retain the title 'Ross-on-Wye Town Council', the working group felt that naming a newly-created council 'Ross-on-Wye Council' would reflect the fact that there was a new council that represented the Ross rural area as well as the town. This raises a legal issue because section 14(2) of the Local Government Act 1972 ('the 1972 Act') provides that:

'(2) The parish council shall be a body corporate by the name "The Parish Council" with the addition of the name of the particular parish.'

5. Accordingly, it is recommended that the name of the new parish council is 'Ross-on-Wye Parish Council.' Section 245 of the 1972 Act allows a parish council to resolve that the parish shall have the status of a town; whereupon the council will bear the name of the council of the town. In addition, the Chairman and Vice-Chairman of a town council are entitled to the style of 'town mayor' and 'deputy town mayor' respectively.

(c) Electoral arrangements

6. Ross-on-Wye Town Council currently has a higher proportion of voters to councillors than either Ledbury or Leominster town councils. The comparisons are shown in the following table:

Council	Number of councillors	Population (2011)	Electorate (2014)	Electors per councillor (2014)
Ledbury Town	18	9,600	6994	388
Leominster Town	16	11,700	8327	520
Ross-on-Wye Town	12	9,600	7098	591
Ross Rural Parish	8	1000	840	105

7. The working group suggested that 15 councillors might be an appropriate number in any newly created council. However, in the consultation exercise (See annexes), 50% of those who responded thought that 15 councillors would be too few; and a number of respondents suggested that 18 would be an appropriate number. Taking account of the likely increase in council committees resulting from the transfer of assets from Herefordshire Council, and future population growth, the working group recommends that 18 councillors would be appropriate, which would be comparable with arrangements at Ledbury. Councillor numbers would be as in the following table:

Number of councillors	Estimated Electorate (2026)	Electors per councillor
15	9,300	620
17	9,300	547
18	9,300	516
19	9,300	489
21	9,300	443

8. It is therefore recommended that the number of councillors to be elected for the parish of Ross-on-Wye be eighteen.
9. The working group was strongly of the view that the new community governance arrangements should come into force in time for the elections in 2015. It is therefore recommended that the election of all parish councillors for the parish of Ross-on-Wye be held on the ordinary day of election of councillors in 2015; and that the term of office of every parish councillor elected on that date for the parish of Ross-on-Wye be four years.
10. From the table in paragraph 7 above it is clear that there is a wide disparity between the number of electors per councillor in the rural parish (105 electors per councillor) and in the town (591 electors per councillor). Following the review of electoral arrangements for Herefordshire Council, the area subject to this community governance review will be divided into three district wards: Ross-on-Wye East, Ross-on-Wye North, and Ross-on-Wye West. The working group was strongly of the opinion that it would be logical and appropriate for the new parish of Ross-on-Wye to be warded in like manner, and that the individual wards should have the same names and comprise the same area of the district wards. This suggestion was notified to the existing councils of the Rural Parish and Town in mid July. At the date of writing this report (4th August 2014) only one parish councillor had responded on the matter and that representation was strongly in favour. The committee will be notified of any further responses when it meets to consider this report.

(d) Procedural matters

11. The working group did not identify the need for any consequential changes to Herefordshire Council's electoral arrangements as a result of the recommendations concerning the Ross-on-Wye Community Governance Review. Accordingly, this report proposes that no recommendations be made to the Electoral Commission to request consequential alterations be made to any electoral areas of the County of Herefordshire District Council.
12. The Audit and Governance Committee will consider whether to accept the recommendations of the review group, with or without the additional recommendations contained within this report and any other modifications, before making recommendations to Herefordshire Council.
13. The Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 devolved the power to take decisions about matters such as the creation of parishes and their electoral arrangements to local government and local communities. The Local Government Boundary Commission for England's involvement is limited to giving effect to consequential recommendations for related alterations to the electoral areas of 'principal councils' (such as Herefordshire).
14. Because this report proposes that no recommendations be made to the Electoral Commission to request consequential alterations be made to any electoral areas of the County of Herefordshire District Council, if the council accepts the recommendations to change the current two council arrangements in Ross-on-Wye, that will be the final decision on the matter. Accordingly, it is recommended that Council be requested to give delegated authority to the Assistant Director, Governance to execute The County of Herefordshire District Council (Reorganisation of Community Governance) (Ross-on-Wye) Order 2014 (to be substantially in the form set out in Annex 3, subject to any necessary typographical and technical amendments) ('the Reorganisation Order').
15. If the council decides to give effect to the recommendations made in a community governance review it must publicise the decision, and its reasons for that decision. It is therefore recommended that Council be requested to give delegated authority to the Assistant Director, Governance to publicise the outcome of the community governance review in accordance with section 96 of the 2007 Act.
16. If council approves the recommendations, the changes will take effect before the next local elections in May 2015. It is recommended that the effective date for the Reorganisation Order is 1st April 2015. This is because a precept can only be set for a whole year from 1st April to 31st March the following year. As preparatory work for the election of councillors to the new parish council in May 2015 will need to commence well before 1st April 2015, it is further recommended that the Reorganisation Order take effect for such electoral preparatory purposes on 15th October 2014 to enable the Electoral Registration Officer to implement the electoral administrative changes required.
17. As a consequence of the effective date being 1st April 2015, the existing rural parish and town councils will be abolished on that date, but the new councillors for the new council will not be elected until the first Thursday in May 2015. To ensure that Ross-on-Wye has democratically elected representation at parish level during this short period (under six weeks), it is recommended that from 1st April 2015 until the councillors to be elected to the new parish council come into office, the new parish be

represented by the elected district councillors for the district wards of Ross-on-Wye East and Ross-on-Wye West.

18. Lastly, it is recommended that all the land, property, rights and liabilities of Ross-on-Wye Rural Parish Council and Ross-on-Wye Town Council transfer from those councils to the new Ross-on-Wye Parish Council on 1st April 2015.

Key Considerations

19. A Community Governance Review considers whether the electoral arrangements for particular areas are appropriate and if there should be any changes in the areas covered by town and parish councils to make sure communities are represented fairly and appropriately. The review looks at the number of councillors and the parish boundaries and takes into account expected changes in the area, such as a growing population.
20. The review was undertaken by the review group, a working party of Herefordshire councillors, including councillors representing the Ross area. The review was conducted in accordance with the Local Government Boundary Commission guidance on community governance reviews. The review considered whether the town and parish councils should become one council, and looked at how such a change might affect residents. The review also considered the number of councillors needed in any new merged council to best serve the residents in both the town and rural areas. The review was conducted in an open and inclusive way so that the whole community could be involved and make their views known.
21. The Ross-on-Wye area is currently governed by Ross-on-Wye Town Council and Ross Rural Parish Council. However, the physical area that is currently divided between the town and rural parish councils appears increasingly linked as a single whole in terms of economic and recreational activity and planning.
22. Residents of the Ross rural area use and enjoy facilities provided within the town, such as Dean Hill Park, St Mary's Churchyard, the weather station, skatepark, bandstand and allotments. The town council also purchased the Larruperz Centre, which is now run by a community association for the local community. The town council is in negotiation with Herefordshire Council for the possible transfer of other buildings and land under the community asset transfer scheme. Council tax payers living within the town council boundary currently pay approximately £1.50 a week for these facilities, whilst council tax payers in the rural area, who also benefit from these facilities, pay the parish council around £0.15 a week.
23. However, residents in the rural area have no opportunity to express their views about either the current facilities provided by the town council or the proposed asset transfers, which will affect them. Similarly, the views of residents in the town area are not represented in considering developments in the rural area which, nevertheless, impact on the town.
24. To ensure that the review was conducted in an open and inclusive way, and that the whole community had an opportunity to be involved and make their views known, the council conducted a public consultation. The results of the consultation are in Annex 2 to this report.
25. The consultation ran from 5th March to 16th April 2014, and there were 98 responses in total. 64% of respondents (63), lived in the town, and 30% (29), lived in the rural area. This represents less than 1% of town residents and 3% of rural residents. The

Further information on the subject of this report is available from Bill Norman, Assistant Director, Governance (tel: (01432) 260200).

response rate was therefore higher from the residents of Ross Rural area. 78% of those who responded to the question agreed with the proposal to merge Ross-on-Wye Town Council and Ross-on-Wye Rural Parish Council to form one council representing the whole area. However, only 50% of those living in the Ross Rural area agreed, while 92% of respondents living in the town area agreed with the proposal. Both the Town Council and the Rural Parish Council sent a collective response.

26. Some of the residents of the Ross Rural area felt that Ross Rural residents would be paying more council tax, but would see no benefits. They felt that they should expect to see improvements in, for example, street lighting, car parks and bus services in the rural area, if they were asked to pay more. Some residents were concerned that they might not be properly represented on a newly created council, because it would focus on the needs of the town and its residents. Residents also expressed the view that people living just outside the Ross area, in Bridstow, for example, used the town facilities in the same way as they did, but without being asked to pay an increase in council tax. These views were taken into account by the working group in considering their recommendations. However, they felt that, on balance, the advantages of change, particularly in view of the projected growth in the area, would benefit all residents.

Community Impact

27. The impact of the recommended option would be felt mainly by residents of the Ross-on-Wye Rural area, who would see an increase in their council tax contribution. However, they would also be better represented on the council.

Equality and Human Rights

28. The recommendation pays due regard to the council's public sector equality duty as set out below, having due regard to the need to:
- "eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct ... prohibited by or under this Act;
 - advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it;
 - foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it."

Financial Implications

29. No financial implications arise for Herefordshire Council from this report.

Legal Implications

30. The Ross-on-Wye Community Governance Review has been conducted in accordance with the requirements of Chapter 2 to Part 4 of the Local Government and Involvement in Health Act 2007; and the Guidance on Community Governance Reviews published by the Local Government Boundary Commission for England in March 2010.

Risk Management

31. No risk management implications arise for Herefordshire Council from this report.

Consultees

32. Both Ross-on-Wye Town Council and Ross-on-Wye Rural Parish Council were consulted, and there was a public consultation exercise. A summary of the responses received are at annex 2 to this report. Further consultation with the two local councils has been undertaken regarding warding of the proposed new local council. The results of this further consultation will be reported to the committee.
33. Ward Members for Ross-on-Wye East and Ross-on-Wye West were consulted.

Appendices

Annex 1: Background information

Annex 2: Summary of consultation responses

Annex 3: Draft: The County of Herefordshire District Council (Reorganisation of Community Governance) Order 2014

Background Papers

None identified

Annex 1

Background information

The Ross-on-Wye area is currently governed by Ross-on-Wye Town Council and Ross Rural Parish Council. However, the physical area that is currently divided between the town and rural parish councils appears increasingly linked as a single whole in terms of economic and recreational activity and planning.

Residents of the Ross rural area also use and enjoy facilities provided within the town, such as Dean Hill Park, St Mary's Churchyard, the weather station, skatepark, bandstand and allotments. The town council also purchased the Larruperz Centre, which is now run by a community association for the local community. The town council is also in negotiation with Herefordshire Council for the possible transfer of the following buildings and land under the community asset transfer scheme:

- The Old Chapel, Cantilupe Road: This is the former registrars' accommodation and a social care locality team, located next to the library.
- The Market House: This is a scheduled ancient monument and was used up until January this year as a heritage / visitor centre. It also hosts an open market beneath the house.
- Homs Road car park: This is for cars and coaches and has flood alleviation infrastructure beneath it.
- Wilton Road car park: This is a free site on the outskirts of the town close to the River Wye.
- Crossfields car park: This is a small pay and display site which serves visitors to the church, bowling club and tennis courts.
- Wye Street public conveniences: These are located near the riverside open space to support tourists, canoeists and events at the bandstand.
- Red Meadow car park public conveniences: These are located in the town centre next to the new Aldi development and serve shoppers and swimming pool users.
- Rope Walk Meadow and playground: This is a large open space which borders the River Wye and is used for summer events, although the area is liable to flooding.
- Blake Memorial Garden: This formal tiered garden is planted with flowers and shrubs and leads from the town centre to the riverside.
- Long Acre: This is a large open space between Wye Street and the River Wye.
- Caroline Symonds Gardens: This is a large open linear space on the opposite side of Wye Street to Long Acre and contains the bandstand and public conveniences.

Those council taxpayers living within the town council boundary currently pay approximately £1.50 a week for these facilities, whilst council tax payers in the rural area, who also benefit from these facilities, only pay the parish council in the region of £0.15 a week.

Annex 1

However, residents in the rural area have no opportunity to express their views about either the current facilities provided by the town council or the proposed asset transfers. Similarly, the views of residents in the town area are not represented in considering developments in the rural area which, nevertheless, impact on the town.

Councillor numbers

There are currently 12 councillors representing Ross-on-Wye Town Council and eight which represent Ross Rural Parish Council. The review group has also considered the number of councillors representing the market towns of Ledbury and Leominster.

The below table shows the populations and representations for other areas in Herefordshire:

Council	Number of councillors	Population (2011)	Electorate (2014)	Electors per councillor (2014)
Ledbury Town	18	9,600	6,994	388
Leominster Town	16	11,700	8,327	520
Ross-on-Wye Town	12	9,600	7,098	591
Ross Rural Parish	8	1,000	840	105

Voluntary positions

It must be highlighted that town and parish councillors are volunteers who are not paid for the work they do, so the number of councillors will not impact on local government costs to council tax payers.

Currently, on Ross-on-Wye Town Council there is one councillor for approximately every 800 residents. If 1,000 new homes raised the population by approximately 2,000, this would probably mean around an additional 1,400 electors (based on the current proportion of electors to residents in Ross Town), giving a total electorate of around 9,300 for a combined Town and Rural area. The Table below sets out the number of electors represented per councillor for various sizes of combined parish council.

Number of councillors	Electorate	Electors per councillor
13	9,300	715
15	9,300	620
17	9,300	547
19	9,300	489
21	9,300	443
23	9,300	404
25	9,300	372

On balance, if the current town and rural parish councils were to be merged, the review group considers that 15 councillors would be an appropriate number to represent the entire Ross-on-Wye area and ensure adequate representation for all residents. The review group considers that having an odd rather than even number should assist decision-making with fewer occasions for matters to be determined by the chairperson's casting vote; and that 15 is an effective size for the new council.

Annex 1

Council costs

The cost of the town council to council tax payers is currently about £1.50 a week, while the cost of the rural parish council is about £0.15 a week.

Parish precepts				
	2014-15		2013-14	
Parish council	Amount Required*	Band D	Amount Required*	Band D
	£	£	£	£
Bromyard and Winslow Town Council	186,955	122.10	171,000	111.20
Hereford City Council	815,715	47.32	724,960	41.39
Kington Town Council	70,000	68.81	64,000	64.11
Ledbury Town Council	271,912	74.32	266,596	73.61
Leominster Town Council	290,228	72.65	241,098	59.84
Ross-on-Wye Town Council	264,635	75.58	196,500	54.79
Ross Rural Parish Council	3,000	6.77	3,000	6.80
* The amount required is met partly through a government grant with the balance being a precept on council tax payers in the parish				

Annexe 2

Ross-on-Wye Community Governance Review

Summary of Consultation Responses

The Ross-on-Wye Community Governance Review considered whether the town and parish councils should become one council. It set out how such a change might affect residents, and also considered the number of councillors needed in any newly merged council. The consultation ran from 5 March to 16 April 2014.

1. There were 98 responses
2. 64% of respondents lived in the town, and 30% lived in the rural area. 6% lived in Herefordshire but outside the Ross-on-Wye area.
3. Of the 63 respondents who lived in the town, 60 (95%) said they would like to be represented by councillors who were able to express views on possible housing and employment developments in the Ross rural area. This represents 66% of all those who responded to the question about representation.
4. Of the 29 respondents who lived in the rural area, 15 (57%), said they would like to be represented by councillors considering matters relating to current and future facilities and assets in the town. 10 said they would not, and four did not know. The 10 who replied No to this question represent 11% of the total responses to the question.
5. A total of 92 people responded to the question 'Do you agree with the proposal to merge Ross-on-Wye Town Council and Ross-on-Wye Rural Parish Council; to form one council representing the whole area?' Of these, 78% said Yes, and 15% said No.
6. Of the 63 responses from people living in the town, 92% answered Yes to the question, while 48.5% of those living in the rural area said Yes.
7. The reasons given for agreeing with the proposal are attached at Annex A.
8. 68% of a total of 95 respondents thought that the proposals reflected the interests and identities of their local community. 60 respondents lived in the town area, and 82% of these answered Yes. 29 respondents lived in the rural area, and 48% of these answered Yes.
9. 18% (17), of the total number of respondents said they did not reflect the interests and identities of their community. Of these, three (3%), lived in the town and 11 (12%), lived in the rural area.
10. Nearly all respondents suggested a name for any newly formed council. The list of suggestions is at Annex B. The most frequently suggested name was 'Ross-on-Wye Council, with 27 respondents suggesting it. The next most frequently suggested name was Ross-on-Wye Town Council, suggested by nine respondents.

11. Just 18% of respondents thought that 15 would be the appropriate number of councillors. 50% of respondents thought 15 would be too few, while 12% thought it would be too many.
12. The majority of both town and rural residents thought 15 would be too few, with 57% of town residents and 41% of rural residents saying it would be too few. 10% of town residents and 14% of rural residents thought 15 would be too many.
13. The reasons given for disagreeing with the proposal are set out in Annex C.
14. Suggestions for improving the proposals are set out in Annex D.
15. Question 8 asked how respondents' own proposals reflected the interests and identifies of their community. Most respondents seem to have misunderstood this question, but the responses are set out in Annex E for completeness.
16. 80% of respondents agreed that it would be fairer for all residents to make the same contribution to the cost of the local council and to be equally represented. 92% of the town residents agreed, while 56% of the rural residents agreed. 37% of rural residents disagreed, while only 1% of town residents disagreed.
17. Other relevant views or comments are set out in Annex F.
18. 52% of respondents were male, and 48% were female. 91% of respondents were in the over 45 age group. 43% were 45-64; 26% were 65 – 74; and 22% were age 75 or over. 75% had no disability, long-term illness or health problems, while 25% were limited to some degree by health issues. These proportions are similar in both town and rural areas.
19. 99% of respondents were white British, while one respondent was Asian.
20. 91% of respondents did not think the proposed changes would affect any particular group of people more than any other. These proportions are similar in both town and rural areas.

Annex A – Reasons given for agreeing with proposals

Annex B – Suggestions given for name

Annex C – Reasons given for disagreeing with proposals

Annex D – Suggestions given for improving the proposals

Annex E – Residents own proposals

Annex F – Other views and comments

Annex G – Other information

Annex H – Tables with answer percentage breakdowns

Annex A: Question 4a: If you agree with the proposal to merge Ross-on-Wye Town Council and Ross-on-Wye Rural Parish Council to form one council representing the whole area, please tell us why you agree:

It is an unfair and undemocratic situation where Ross Town Council funds and manages facilities used by non-residents of the town.
I have been a parish councillor in Hereford, not far from Ross and it was one of the most frustrating experiences of my life. Parish Councils are too small and parochial to get anything done and too many people are just there for the kudos of being on the council.
It is better to have one body looking after the interests of Ross
residents in Hildersley & Greytree will be able to engage in decisions on facilities for the area as a whole, it will also be an advantage to be able to have an holistic approach to developing industrial and housing across the whole area
The facilities in Ross-on-Wye town benefit both parishes, and merge would enable more joined up thinking and enable Ross to fund more of its own services in face of county council cuts
This must be an opportunity to reduce any duplication in running to councils and do would be looking for some efficiency savings
Ross Rural is a part of Ross town and should be making a bigger contribution to the running of the town.
Both use same facilities. All residents then able to express views via Cllrs. Falling residents in rural area mean more balanced view overall by combining.
I have no other "centre" to use and therefore I do not mind paying extra if it improves the facilities in the town for residents of both the town and rural. I rely on the town for all my health centres, shopping, church, library and many others and therefore I think I should contribute towards the costs of the benefits.
The two areas roll seamlessly into one on the ground - so why have two public bodies - so sensible on the ground, will save and should give a chance of more democratic and competitive elections to be a Cllr.
The town of Ross would benefit from having more councillors to man committees and would represent the whole town as opposed to the current arrangement.
I agree but only if the other neighbouring parish councils are considered for combining with Ross Town
I think it's obviously much easier to have the area controlled by one council
We will be involved in decisions taken in the Town
Most of the decisions to be made affect all
Most of the decisions to be made affect all
Ross needs more councillors to carry out all the work it needs to do. One council representing the whole town's interests including Hildersley and Greytree makes much more sense. Everyone who lives in Ross and enjoys the same facilities should pay the same precept.
I believe that it will be much more efficient.
It seems superfluous to have two councils to look after such a comparatively small area.
councillors should think of ROSS AS A WHOLE not just the town
It would share the cost of running town services more fairly across the whole of the users.
It is far better to have one body of councillors to look out for the whole Ross area.
More efficient and sensible to look at the whole area together
This will ensure a greater equality of representation between the 2 councils and people that use the facilities of the town that currently live within the rural council will contribute equally.
will improve governance for whole area
I have relatives and friends who live in Ross rural and we all consider ourselves to live in the same town
I believe the interest of town and rural communities are linked. Most parts of Ross Rural council are so close to the Town geographically the problems are just the same for both areas.
Logically, this would result in more 'joined-up' decisions, and expand knowledge to all councillors of the area, its householders and their concerns.
It should reduce the overhead associated with having 2 separate entities doing the same job
As Ross is getting ever bigger, it seems sensible to have one Council with an overall view of the whole Town.
Ross on Wye Rural housing is expanding. More Councillors are needed to support the area. More facilities

will be needed in the Town.
Because it does not make any sense to have two Parish Councils representing one market town.
The rural areas should have more say on what happens in the town and locality (more rural councillors).
cost effective, stronger and more informed
The people in Ross Rural use the same facilities in Ross as I do. I live 1 mile out of centre of Ross
Ross rural just seems pointless its residents use the Towns assets without contributing to them.
Things the town council do, often impact on the rural area and vice versa. Fewer area councils should have more democratic power with Herefordshire Council who tries their best to ignore them
it's silly that it's a different council because I'm the other side of a roundabout
It's time we all came together for the good of the town, and to take it forward.
Comprehensive coverage of a geographical area which forms a viable local authority unit.
Because I consider Ross on Wye to be one community. The residents of Greytrees have a stronger relationship with Ross itself than Hildersley.
because we are all part of Ross
The concept of Ross town distinct from Ross rural is arbitrary and the combined area can plan and develop the combined interests much more efficiently.
Ross Rural does not do anything or own anything - all facilities are owned and run by Ross Town.
Equitable distribution of workload for councillors to handle the considerable number of tasks, notably, asset transfers and those generated by the extensive house building programme. A larger Council can accommodate problems easier, especially when needing to form sub-committees at short notice. No "price tag" is required for the cash-strapped Authority, as. Members are unpaid. Personal employment commitments limit available time for local politics. An equal council tax precept for all properties.
Ross needs effective parish governance and the present arrangements are nonsensical. One Council has the Council Tax base and responsibility for most of the assets; the other has most of the potential growth areas in terms of new housing and industry. We need a strong and unified council able to speak on behalf of the whole community and where everyone pays the same precept and has the same say.
Residents of Ross Rural use Ross facilities. The rural and town are becoming more as one. Would benefit everyone's interests and develop a sensible area as a whole
As a new-comer to the town, this seems common sense. I worked for local government in Surrey and remember the difficulties of the forced local areas in the 1970s which resolved themselves by the 1980s.
Wider provision of facilities to all residents
It makes economic sense
More comprehensive picture of area
More cohesive approach
Less waste of public money on bureaucracy. Less chance of domination by minority interests.
With the asset transfer, those who live in town and rural will be affected - the town will need as many councillors as possible to make it all work.
One council representing the whole area will be able to take integrated decisions on matters which concern both town and rural residents.
Town should not be split in two parts. One town, one council
Ridiculous 2 councils for one small town.
With the very close proximity of the Rural and Town areas, all services and facilities within the town are accessible and used by the Ross Rural Parishioners on a regular routine, who in turn should financially support the Town Council. Based on this reasoning, the merger of the two councils would enhance the above situation.
Rural development impacts upon the town and extended town development will affect the surrounding area.
Rural development impacts upon the town and extended town development will affect the surrounding area.
We all share the same facilities. Combining would mean a better balance in terms of representation and a better balance of parish precept on the council tax
Most of rural precept used to pay clerk, RRPC is not good value for money. With new electoral boundaries for Ross, makes sense to make town/parish council more cohesive. Need combined approach to retail and

employment, e.g. Over Ross and town businesses. Model farm would benefit from same councillors representing all Council Tax increase for rural residents would be less than £1 a week Hildersley development: rural CIL better spent to benefit whole area.
Pooling all resources is a more efficient way of administering matters related to the total area.
Because it is fairer that people in Ross rural benefitting from initiatives paid for by Ross town taxpayers should pay for them too. They would also get more of a say in what happens within the town, especially important now with the asset transfers. Ross rural is generally pointless as an organisation since its budget is so small, and they often have to co-opt councillors due to lack of interest/candidates.
Present situation is unfair and doesn't serve needs of the community.
The current split between town and rural seems rather illogical. It would make more sense to have a single, larger council for the two areas combined.
Ross town needs the merger to meet the district needs and challenges ahead.
Economies of scale i.e. one clerk etc.
Ross Rural do not get a chance to comment on aspects of the town which can affect us greatly.
I feel that if as a local resident I use the facilities of ross town and as I live so close it would make sense to combine the 2 councils
Because it make sense to have just one parish council to cover Ross
Ross needs a united plan for all of Ross
Democracy is hampered by two such weak parish councils - they need to merge in order to strengthen especially as there is a transfer of assets underway
Common Sense
Ross-on-Wye & District' makes a more cohesive body. Two councils, one with a large population and one with a relatively small population, must be less effective than one body.

Annex B: Suggestions for naming any newly formed council.

	Number	%
Total responses	71	100
Ross-on-Wye Council	27	38%
Ross-on-Wye Town Council	9	13%
Ross-on-Wye Area Council	5	7%
Ross-on-Wye and District Council	5	7%
Ross-on-Wye Community Council	3	4%
Ross-on-Wye Parish Council	3	4%
All others various	19	27%
Total	71	100%

Greater Ross-on-Wye Council	1
People for Ross-on-wye	1
Ross-on-Wye and district Council	5
Ross-on-Wye and District Council	
Ross-on-Wye and District Council	
Ross-on-Wye and District Council	
Ross-on-Wye and District Council	
Ross-on-Wye and District Local Council	1
Ross-on-Wye and District Parish Council	1
Ross-on-Wye and Rural Town Council	2
Ross-on-Wye and Rural Town council	
Ross-on-Wye Area Council	5
Ross-on-Wye Area Council	
Ross-on-Wye Area Council	
Ross-on-Wye Area Council	
Ross-on-Wye Area Council	
Ross-on-Wye Community Council	3
Ross-on-Wye Community Council	
Ross-on-Wye Community Council	
Ross-on-Wye Council	27
Ross-on-Wye Council	
Ross-on-Wye Council	
Ross-on-Wye Council	
Ross-on-wye council	
Ross-on-Wye Council	
Ross-on-Wye Council	
Ross-on-Wye Council	
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Ross-on-Wye Council	
Ross-on-Wye Council	
Ross-on-Wye District Council	1
Ross-on-Wye Group Town Council	1
Ross-on-Wye Kyrle Council	1
Ross-on-Wye local council	2
Ross-on-Wye Local Council	
Ross-on-Wye locality council	1
Ross-on-Wye Parish Council	3
Ross-on-Wye parish council	
Ross-on-Wye Parish Council Ross-on-Wye Community Council	
Ross-on-Wye Town & District Council	1
Ross-on-Wye town & rural council	2
Ross-on-Wye Town & Rural Council	
Ross-on-Wye Town council	9
Ross-on-Wye Town council	
Ross-on-Wye Town Council	
Ross-on-Wye Town Council	
Ross-on-Wye Town Council	
Ross-on-Wye Town Council	
Ross-on-Wye Town Council	
Ross-on-Wye Town Council	
Ross-on-Wye Town Council	
Ross-on-Wye Township Council.	1
South Herefordshire District Council	2
Wye Council	1

Annex C: Question 7a: If you do not agree with any part of the proposal, please tell us why you do not agree.

Does not go far enough.
Having been a chairman I know that 15 is too big a group to manage properly and the good ones will get fed up with the slowness of the process and leave-I did.
The Town Council carries out a great deal of work with even more on the horizon with transfer of assets, the proposed number of councillors of 15 is too low, a figure of at least 18 would be needed to man the committees and outside bodies, the numbers need to be more equitable with the other market Towns
Not sure there will ever be consensus as too many councillors have their own "pet" interests which they support and show little or no interest in other parts of the community. Same old faces - nothing changes!
18 councillors would be a better number when you consider the new assets that the town council are taking on.
I would prefer 16. Most towns have an even number which helps limit political majorities in parish councils: something that should be encouraged. The number would then better reflect the same as in another town However, as stated elsewhere, I am not sure that Ross Rural should be the only one to merge as other neighbouring areas will also benefit from the town's facilities and should therefore contribute to them.
The number of Councillors should be the same as representing both councils at present
Ross should have 18 councillors the same as other market towns of a similar size. Having an odd number is irrelevant as not all councillors are always able to attend full council meetings.
I would suggest 18 councillors on the new merged council.
I think there should be at least 18 councillors based on our need and comparisons with the other market towns in Herefordshire. This would still be a reduction on the total current number of town and rural councillors
The role of councillor is expanding and this should be reflected in the number of them
18 councillors will be a more appropriate way to spread the work load
I notice that the combined councillors for the town and rural areas are 20 we need the same representation which is similar to other market towns
At least 18 Councillors will be needed to support new committees needed.
15 are not enough. There are 12 Town Councillors and this is not enough to do all the work now. With asset transfers there will be more work. Ledbury has 18 Councillors, Leominster 16, Bromyard 18 and Kington 15, Even Walford has 13. This is a once in a lifetime chance to get the numbers right, there has been no review since the Parishes were last thrown into the air in 1974. With the planned growth in population we need enough Councillors to be able to do the work in 10, 20 and 30 years' time. We need at least 18.
All local councils should be free of party politics. Depending on the area the council is going to represent, there should be a person to cover each area.
15 councillors does not offer enough opportunity to gather skills necessary in the current situation/s e.g. new housing + more residents
I believe there will need to be between 16 and 18 councillors to serve the community they will represent
Governance review was to look at 3 items, not just merger of the 2 councils. 1. Number of councillors on Town Council, 12 is not enough. 2. Number of councillors on Parish Council, 8 is too many 3. Possibility of merge of the 2 councils.
I think that Ross on Wye Town council on its own should have a similar number to Ledbury, and other towns, 15 would be a fair number.
Rural ross and town are very different and have different needs , if it is one the debates will favour which ever gets more ,
not enough councillors to do what's needed
We should have approx. 18 Councillors as has been suggested.

<p>Ross Town is failing and this suggested merger seems to be The Ross Town Council's cure for their financial problems. Why do they have assets transferred from the county and where is the cost of these assets going to come from? The Town Councillors had no mandate to do this!! There will be NO benefit in the proposed merger to Residents of Ross Rural - only a financial loss! And not just the present substantial precept difference - I fear that the future will be rather bleak. I have been expecting to hear what benefit Ross Rural residents can expect. Assets which are presently available in town to us are equally available to people from farther afield. People in Lea for example come in to Ross for school, shops swimming pool, and skate park. So what will be next - Brampton Abbots -Bridstow, Weston??? All part of Ross Town.</p>
<p>We have 20 councillors between the two councils we should try to keep the same representation particularly if it is not going to cost us any more</p>
<p>I understand that some town councillors do an incredible amount of work which should be shared more equally. The area would be bigger and if compared with other Herefordshire market towns would warrant a greater number of councillors than 15.</p>
<p>15 members are too few for the reasons already explained</p>
<p>Currently the area has 12 + 8 parish councillors. The town councillors are seriously stretched in terms of the workload. Although the administrative workload of two councils will be less, this is more than compensated for by the increased responsibilities currently being taken on by the Town Council. Ross needs at least 18 councillors. The tied vote argument is nonsense because it assumes no absences and no abstentions. If a council has a propensity to split across equally weighted sides, this will happen no matter how many the total number of councillors is, odd or even.</p>
<p>With more councillors, less likely to have the possibility of self-interests creeping in.</p>
<p>I see it as no more than a money-grabbing exercise for Ross Parish to waste on futile plans of asset transfers.</p>
<p>Additional responsibilities as a result of Hereford Councils withdrawal for numerous facilities.</p>
<p>More duties for council with assets transferred. Therefore I suggest around 18 councillors, 6 for each ward.</p>
<p>No thought has been given to the future, all the new houses for Ross are being built in rural not the town, so why do away with the rural parish council. The larger the council the less agreement there will be. Too much huffing and puffing with no outcomes.</p>
<p>Increase in council tax + WATER + any increase to support town council taking over market house etc. What will happen to the un adopted roads with no street lights. Could end up paying more than somebody in the town in same council tax band.</p>
<p>Single ward representation saves money and improves decision-making.</p>
<p>More councillors will be able to help with the increased workload.</p>
<p>The proposed 15 councillors would be insufficient to cover the workload, which in the present climate of asset takeover will be heavy. 18 councillors would be a more appropriate number.</p>
<p>15 councillors would not be enough</p>
<p>18 councillors necessary</p>
<p>I have in the recent past had occasion to question the spending of Ross Town Council in relation to the issue of grants. Having spoken to a particular Councillor, I found it necessary to use the Freedom of Information Act to drag out the facts which gave me cause for concern. I had an interview with the then Mayor in the presence of the Town Clerk, and at the end of the process I concluded that as a body, the Town Council is indiscreet, fails to follow its own rules when using tax payers money and fails to ensure value for money for its local tax payers. With possibly one exception, I consider the members of Ross Town Council to be incapable of properly caring for my and my area's needs and I certainly do not want it representing me in any way. In fact it is because of Ross-on-Wye Town Council's failure to ensure value for money for its local residents, and this history of miss-spending, that I prefer to use facilities at Monmouth where I have seen that the Council has community awareness and insists upon a community benefit for the grants it issues. Facilities in Ross-on-Wye town, whilst possibly being used by residents of Ross Rural area, mainly benefit Ross town residents. The facilities mentioned in the Ross-on-Wye Community Governance</p>

<p>Review Consultation document are in place to encourage visitors into the town, and to spend their money in the town. Whenever I go into Ross on Wye town I do so as a visitor, and if I use a car park, or attend a function in the Larruperz centre, I pay for a "service," not an "amenity." If I visit the town having walked along the Rope Walk, or passed through an open space bordering the river which is used for a summer event, or attend a recital at the band stand, I do so as a "visitor," and I then contribute to the local economy of Ross-on-Wye town by going to the local shops, pubs, restaurants and coffee shops. All the listed attributes within Ross-on-Wye are for the sole benefit of the town and if it is felt that these are unfairly benefiting those of us in Ross Rural area, then by all means take them away. I regularly go to Hereford and Monmouth to use the same type of facility highlighted but I note that their councils do not begrudge it because I am not paying my community charge to them. It has been highlighted in the document that the Town Council is in negotiation for the transfer of buildings such as The Old Chapel, and The Market House. I have had no vote as to whether these so called facilities are transferred, and neither have my current representatives. It is not acceptable that the Town Council take on responsibilities for which they are not in a position to fund, and then transfer the charges onto me. As far as I am concerned, I am happy for The Old Chapel and The Market House to be sold off. At least in private hands there would be some possibility of them being properly cared for! Where will the Ross Town Council go the next time they realise they are failing to manage their finances and need an injection of funds; Bridstow perhaps, or Brampton Abbots, Walford or any other adjoining parish? The suggestion is that this is to do with increasing the number of Councillors, thereby relieving the work load on individuals. As they are unpaid, there would be no cost implication. The reality is that this merger will cost me in excess of £75 per annum extra, and for that I will receive nothing in terms or enhancement of services. Will Hildersley get a car park for this extra tax, to accommodate the ramblers who currently park in The Glebe whilst they go off for their walks? Will the bus service be extended to the Rural areas? The Ross Run Around local bus service currently operates as a 30 minute service around the town. According to the Town Council it is exclusively restricted to the Town Council's area and not for use by those of us living in the Ross Rural area. Will this service be extended to serve Hildersley, or will it be acceptable for us to pay towards it, yet still be excluded from it? Has this even been thought about? Have our existing Rural Councillors been allowed to contribute to these proposals - or have they, as I suspect, been presented with a "take it or leave it" plan? This is not value for money and it is a clear attempt to broaden the limits of the town boundary to extract extra funding from existing neighbours and those who will be occupying the new developments within the rural area.</p>
<p>This is hardly a merger of 2 councils but a takeover of a smaller one by a larger one. There is little benefit to those living in the RRPC area; the only beneficiaries are those living in Ross Town through greater council tax receipts and S 106 and CIL payments from new developments in the rural area.</p>
<p>Rural people do not use the town facilities any more than visitors. I do not know where most of them are.</p>
<p>I am worried that with the smaller number of councillors than the current combined councils, important decisions will be made by too small a group.</p>
<p>15 councillors are too few. Ross needs as many councillors as possible in order to be able to do the increased work associated with the asset transfers. Councillors are essentially unpaid volunteers and this is a resource that Ross really needs.</p>
<p>Need more than 15 councillors to undertake work involved, especially following transfer of assets</p>
<p>15 councillors would be too few: there should be at least 18.</p>
<p>Insufficient information Hildersley is about a mile from the town centre. Why should we pay more than residents of Bridstow, Brampton Abbots etc.?</p>
<p>Ross Rural Parish Council meets the needs of the local community</p>
<p>Government, with all its layers is too expensive</p>
<p>Things work well as they are</p>
<p>Insufficient information re consequences; Hildersley residents would pay more than Bridstow, Brampton Abbots etc. despite being one mile from the town centre.</p>
<p>I think that more councillors will be needed and as they cost almost nothing I don't understand why</p>

there would be an issue to more. The town is looking at a huge amount of extra work with the transfer of the county liabilities and we will need more councillors to help make decisions and see that the work needed is carried out.

If the merger goes ahead then, yet again, the minority (Ross Rural residents) will be dictated to by the majority (Ross Town) whose interests are very different. This situation already exists on the unitary authority with Hereford views dominating and the outlying parts of the county being disadvantaged. To merge the two councils will exacerbate the already bad situation. The residents of Ross rural will be further disenfranchised.

The work of councillors has increased exponentially in recent years and is due to increase even more with the transfer of assets

Annex D. Question 7b: If you do not agree with any part of the proposal, please tell us your suggestions about how we could improve them

The proposals should also include residents of other adjacent parishes.
Half of that number (well, not exactly half!)
By merging the two councils this would allow residents in the old rural areas to actively engage in areas such as the Community Centres, Allotments, the increase in numbers of councillors would allow greater access to their local councillor and also with a greater overall budget available more facilities such as play areas could be provided.
Independent councillors who will work for the good of the whole community and not become in it for tat petty party politics. Councillors who have a track record of doing good - not just someone young or a trader in the town - they seem to serve only one small part of the community. Better communication with the people of Ross - either via local newspaper or social media - even better - both!
Care needs to be taken not to subsume the rural residents within the new council. By making it a Group Parish, certain rural aspects could still be dealt with separately in that area.
A bigger council covering all the area will be good for our area of Greytrees
The new council should look at providing services to the rural area which has been. 'neglected over the years
Increase the proposed number of councillors for Ross to 18.
18 Councillors at least for the new Parish Council.
You could hold council meetings in local community halls etc., within the Ross area, so local people in these areas can vent their views.
Use brains and look at town and work it properly for everyone. Rural people also use town and most of it is badly designed and or unusable for most of the year, New leisure pool and football ground at spur for everyone including rural people, Should have sold e pool to Aldi and built new one which bring in people. Housing and tesco on land at spur where road a in place already. One way system reversed as not worked and impossible for tourists to understand.
you need at least 18 councillors
Let matters be as they are. We already contribute to Ross Town by spending money there! One of the reasons we considered when deciding to live here was the cost of living and as a retired person I am in no mood for a sudden increase. If you seriously want to join up Ross Town with Ross Rural you must do it in a more open way. We have not, as a population, been consulted in any way until this review reared its ugly head.
Give us the same number of councillors as we have now e.g. 20
18 councillors (I appreciate it is not an even number but rarely is there a meeting with all councillors present.
20 councillors would be an ideal balance to deal with the demands of Ross
Give Ross at least 18 councillors, six per ward.
Happy with the way it is at present.
Maintain support of organisations such as ART
Leave as it is.
Effective scheme of delegation to improve accountability and waste less time, e.g. a cabinet method like Herefordshire Council.
18 councillors needed to do all the work
If the existing town councillors find that there is altogether too much work involved, then there is assistance available from the rural councillors who I am sure would be only too willing to help. Joint working parties etc., for benefit of us all are available.
Increase the number of councillors on RTC if necessary but do not absorb the rural parish.
If Ross rural is counted as 'town', then all the un adopted roads need to be adopted by them and all need re-tarmacking.
I would prefer to see 17 councillors.
At least 18 councillors seems sensible. Why not 20, replacing the number lost by merging with the

parish council? There are always plenty of candidates standing for election for Ross town council because it gets things done
There should be 18-20 councillors in the new, larger council.
Leave the rural council out of the review
One has to be closer to an area in order to make relevant suggestions
Increase the number of town councillors but leave the rural area as it is
Leave the status quo as it is
Merge the councils with all councillors intact to start with

Annex E. Question 8: How do your proposals reflect the interests and identities of your local community?

A more manageable, higher profile group that can perhaps get things done
For the majority of residents in Greytree and Hildersley the already identify with the town and consider themselves as part of the Town, by merging they will have a right to services that they currently have to pay extra for such as burial rights etc.
We have an ageing population in Ross - how is this reflected? So many charity shops - so little choice. ART promoting their own interests - what about a strategic, long-term local plan which has engaged with the local community - easier said than done.
Residents of Ross on wye refer to themselves as such regardless of whether they live in 'Ross Town' or 'Ross Rural'.
They remove the rural interests and overwhelm the needs of the Rural Parish currently existing
I live in Greytree and consider myself a Ross person
The community needs more councillors to represent it and work on its behalf.
Balance the whole area
All the people who live in the new area will be able to be involved in decisions about the whole town
Ross-on-Wye needs to be seen as a single progressing entity, thus attracting the attention of possible new dynamic Industries/Enterprises/new shops and of course, new residents to fill all the new proposed houses in our area.
Looking after such a large area needs more committees and more councillors to act on the behalf of its residents
The 18 Councillors will be better able to do this as there will be enough of them to do the work.
They don't.
would allow for greater spread of representation
2 parish councillors representing Greytree, and 1 parish councillor representing Hildersley on a combined council
Better for everyone
Combining both councils should give the new council more democratic power with the County Council so that we have more of a voice to address the imbalance that currently exists that favours the City of Hereford.
better representation
No comment. I do not represent anyone else!
My family and friends feel we are part of the town even though we live in Greytree
They would be better represented. As a community Ross Rural does not exist - there is no meeting place and is divided into two distinct geographical areas - split by the town.
Would meet the needs of a wide cross-section of tasks.
In fact, the larger the number of councillors, the less likely that the council can be dominated by a particular faction. Given the extreme non-proportionality of the first past the post system in multi-member wards, this is a very important point. Even well organised political parties are unlikely to be able to field six electable candidates in each of three wards.
Friends and neighbours look towards the support for local traders, and their facilities for our benefit and encouragement of tourist to Ross.
They don't
Cannot see it making any difference.
Single member wards to prevent in-fighting and arguing. Makes members more accountable for servicing wards.
A greater spread of councillors will provide a more efficient service for all residents.
The RRPC has been functioning well since 1974. There is no reason to change. The benefits are solely for the town council and not the rural area.
At the Larruperz meeting re the take-over of assets there was overwhelming support for the proposition.

The roads would be the same as town.
Ensures a greater spread of representation.
They ensure that voters get more of a say in the people representing them on the parish council as their preferred candidates will be more likely to get elected. There will also be a greater mix of town councillors better able to reflect the various community interests and identities.
Not sure I understand this question.
The council for the rural area works well so there is no need for the town council to take it over.
The review is primarily for the benefit of the town. The suggestion that those in the rural area use facilities in the town is spurious. Residents in all the other parishes adjoining the town also use the facilities but there is no suggestion that their parish should be taken over. We all use the facilities in Hereford city on the same basis.
It will be better to have one unifying council that looks after the whole area. Easier for residents to understand who they can seek out if they have a problem etc. Ross rural councillors are not known to many.
I believe that the majority of Ross Rural residents would hold these views.

Annex F: Question 10: Please let us have any other relevant views or comments:

<p>The current and proposed structure reflects the continuing problem of an out-of-touch Herefordshire Council being too remote from the problems and issues facing local residents in market towns and small parishes. Much more needs to be done to place local matters into the hands of local people. Bring back South Herefordshire District Council!</p>
<p>If anyone wants to know the views of local people get outside Morrisons and ask there-it is the focal point of the town-everyone has to eat!</p>
<p>It is fair that all residents in the area who enjoy the facilities in the urban area contribute to the cost and with the new Community Infrastructure Levy that will come with new developments it will be possible to provide new facilities for the benefit of the whole area. With the asset transfers that are being negotiated at the moment and the neighbourhood plan that is being developed this is a really exciting period, and merging the two councils will bring us firmly into the 21st century. If short I think that to create a new council from the two old ones will be a Win-Win situation for the whole area</p>
<p>There are many good people in Ross but most work out of the town as there are few jobs for skilled people - what would persuade them to stay here? So little choice in shopping. Scruffy town centre. Empty shops turned over to charity shops which are messy and unattractive. What on earth is "cakehol" in the former Bylaw building at the Millpond? Is this how we want to promote our town? When I read some of the councillors views about so much happening in the town I wonder am I living in the same place? Poor PR - list of events. Even cinema showings aren't published in local rag. Come on Ross - let's raise our game and aim high - honestly feel this is the last chance saloon.</p>
<p>The reason I have answered 9 as "Don't know" is because the same contributions should come from other neighbouring areas. A gradual up-lift over three years should be introduced so as not to cause a major financial up-lift Ross rural should not go-it-alone with merging.</p>
<p>I feel that because of the asset transfer from the county council more councillors will be needed to share the huge work load this will generate and hopefully mean a wider pool of expertise too</p>
<p>when we get our new combined council we will hopefully get some of the benefits that are only enjoyed by Ross Town at the moment</p>
<p>This review is a long time coming and should be carried out in a timely fashion to enable the new arrangements to be in place for next year's elections. It is nonsense that some residents of Ross pay less Council Tax than others. All major future development in the town will occur in the rural area and those living in the town should have a say over this.</p>
<p>if we are all treated the same and get the same service</p>
<p>Just that my friends and I think this is a very good idea that should have happened years ago</p>
<p>Provided views of every 'new' resident (i.e.: rural householders) are given exactly the same weight as those within the town; Facilities currently existing in rural areas do not suffer, e.g.: bus routes, road cleaning and repair remain as current.</p>
<p>In a democratic land, all residents should have equal representation. One gets a little tired of pessimistic views of the future of Ross-on-Wye. The Town is in a superb position, (probably one of the best in the whole County and Region), which should be the envy of all those who visit it.</p>
<p>18 Councillors will be a reduction on the number of Parish Councillors representing Ross at the moment. Ross Town has 12, Ross Rural 8, total 18.</p>
<p>Local councils don't have enough say on local matters. They can always be overruled by the county council, who know nothing of local conditions etc.</p>
<p>I feel that the review is being carried out by 4 members of the Town Council who are also County Councillors. Ross Rural Parish is not being represented on this review. The Town council have previously stated that they wish to take over Ross Rural Parish Council and wish to have a say on the planning gain money obtained from the proposed erection of about 280 houses in Hildersley.</p>
<p>No it's fair to pay what we can afford</p>
<p>Unfortunately Herefordshire Council spends most of its money in the City of Hereford, on things like unwanted shopping centres and ignores the wishes of people who live outside Herefordshire. I</p>

doubt that changes to rural and town councils will make a scrap of difference and wonder what the real aim of this is.
I think this should have happened years ago
With all the developments taking place like transfer of assets and proposed new housing, an amalgamation at the earliest practical opportunity seems sensible.
I cannot answer Q9 because we pay for no representation. I have never had an opportunity to vote for a parish councillor. I have voted in all elections* available to me all my life - but no election has ever taken place for parish councillor in the 15 years since we settled here. I have voted for a county councillor but no one ever bothered to show face around here. *except police commissioner because I had not had information to make a decision!
We would like improvements in facilities such as a playground for the children in Greytrees
The sooner the better
No decision on numbers must rest on covert party politics, that is, arrangements envisaged for political gain.
I believe Ross Council are well aware and capable of managing to the increase in its population and expansion of facilities for the benefit of its residents and encouragement of tourism to the town.
In the news one hears about keeping parishes, villages, pubs, shops etc. alive for its community. By taking away Ross Rural you are denying people that choice.
It would be unfair to treat certain wards as inferior in terms of contribution to corporate whole.
This has all the hallmarks of a done deal, going through the motions of a pretend consultation. I would be surprised if there has been any meaningful discussion with local rural councillors, and I am sure that there has not been sufficient regard to the enhancement of facilities available to Rural residents. The only consideration here is financial benefit to the Town Council. Every town in the country has individual attributes for which it has to pay, maintain and manage. Most towns are prepared to share those attributes, happy in the knowledge that they can, if properly managed, generate income for the town. They provide value to the larger community, and benefit from goodwill by giving the Town an air of generosity and community. If Ross Town Council doesn't want us to benefit from riverside walks, or strolls along the Rope Walk without payment, perhaps they should follow the French Riviera example and cordon the area off, making a charge for entry for non-town residents.
What is the 'Ross Area'? All residents of the adjoining parishes also use facilities in the town without the additional cost to their local precept and the town council is not proposing a merger with those. By transferring assets from the County, the town council is merely moving cost from one public body to another
Ross-on-Wye Rural Parish Council receives an income, based on the Council Tax precept, of £3000 p.a. but their only assets and liabilities are two notice boards and two public benches! The Rural Parish Council has to hire the Larruperz Community Centre for council meetings, basically paying the Town Council to hire one of their assets! The general public has very little contact with the Ross Rural Councillors and there is complete apathy regarding public attendance at the Rural Council AGMs and the bi-monthly Council meetings.
Where I live is totally different from town.
I would like it to be ensured that the new council, if approved, is clearly a separate entity from its predecessors, and not a take-over by the larger one.
Let the town council have more members if it wishes. This is not a matter for those in the rural area.
This review is merely to serve the interests of Ross town Council. Residents in the rural area will see no benefit other than an increase in their council tax.
Inadequate data Poorly designed/written questionnaire
We need a minimum of 18 Councillors - work load distribution mainly as well as fairer representation. All Councillors should never bring their political views to the council table.
We should all be working together for Ross
I think it would be fair for all constituents in new council's area to pay equally for the use of services and facilities in the town and wider district.

Annex G: Other information

What is your gender?

	Number	%
Total responses	94	100
Male	49	52%
Female	45	48%
Total	94	100%

What is your age band:

	Number	%
Total responses	98	100
0 – 15 years	0	0%
16 – 24 years	1	1%
25 – 44 years	8	8%
45 – 64 years	42	43%
65 – 74 years	26	26%
75 + years	21	22%
Total	98	100%

Do you have a disability, long-term illness or health problem (12 months or more) which limits daily activities or the work you can do?

	Number	%
Total responses	95	100
Yes – limited a little	18	19%
Yes – limited a lot	6	6%
No	71	75%
Total	95	100%

How would you describe your national identity? (Tick as many as apply)

	Number	%
Total responses	96	100
White British/English/Welsh/Scottish/Northern Irish	95	99%
Other White	0	0%
Any other ethnic group	1(Asian)	1%
Total	96	100%

We want to ensure that the changes made are fair to everyone.

To help us do this, please tell us if you think the changes suggested will particularly affect any group of people due to characteristics such as age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, or sexual orientation.

	Number	%
Total responses	86	100
Yes	8	9%
No	78	91%
Total	86	100%

If yes, please describe why.

Council meetings are seen as boring by the young and male by women. If you want to get women interested in what's happening get into the Children's Centres, particularly the Ryefield Centre and ask there!
not sure I think someone will be left out bit like government will rob Peter to pay for Paul
People in the Ross area are getting older. It would be useful if they could get to council meetings (in their local area) with transport provided if need be.
If the Town Council and residents of Ross take over the assets being sold off by the County Council, Ross residents and Ross residents only should have control of the way they are run. It is also in my humble opinion after living in Herefordshire for some thirty years, it is possibly the worst Council in the whole of the UK and has nothing in my opinion to commend it. I would like all that's south of the A40/M50 to be part of Gloucestershire, Don't be afraid to share this opinion with the full council.
Why do you try to divide people into different groups- you cannot compartmentalise people!
The extra costs of rates one for rural and one for parish will be too much of an extra cost for a lot of families and OAPs.
Town facilities are too far away.
It all depends on what changes are introduced
We have an aging population so should consider this carefully when proposing/implement changes

Annex H; Tables

Q.1 Please say where you live

	Number	%
Total responses	98	100
Ross-on-Wye Town	63	64%
Ross-on-Wye Rural	29	30%
Outside Ross area, but in Herefordshire	6	6%
Outside Herefordshire	0	0%
Total	98	100%

Q.2a If you live in the town area, would you like to be represented by councillors able to express views on possible housing and employment developments in the Ross rural area?

	Number	%
Total responses	63	100
Yes	60	95%
No	1	2%
Don't know	2	3%
Total	63	100%

Q.2b If you live in the rural area, would you like to be represented by councillors considering matters relating to current and future facilities and assets in the town, such as the parks and Christmas lights?

	Number	%
Total responses	32	100
Yes	18	57%
No	10	32%
Don't know	4	1%
Total	32	100%

Q.3 Do you agree with the proposal to merge Ross-on-Wye Town Council and Ross-on-Wye Rural Parish Council; to form one council representing the whole area?

	Number	%
Total responses	92	100
Yes	72	78%
No	14	15%
Undecided	6	7%
Total	92	100%

Q.3 Ross Town respondents only

Do you agree with the proposal to merge Ross-on-Wye Town Council and Ross-on-Wye Rural Parish Council; to form one council representing the whole area?

	Number	%
Total responses	63	100
Yes	58	92%
No	2	3%
Undecided	3	5%
Total	63	100%

Q.3 Ross Rural respondents only

Do you agree with the proposal to merge Ross-on-Wye Town Council and Ross-on-Wye Rural Parish Council; to form one council representing the whole area?

	Number	%
Total responses	29	100
Yes	14	48.5%
No	12	41.5%
Undecided	3	10%
Total	29	100%

Q.4b If you agree, do the proposals reflect the interests and identities of your local community?

	Number	%
Total responses	95	100
Yes	65	68%
No	17	18%
Undecided	13	14%
Total	95	100%

Q.4b Ross Town respondents only

If you agree, do the proposals reflect the interests and identities of your local community (Town residents only)?

	Number	%
Total responses	60	100
Yes	49	82%
No	3	5%
Undecided	8	13%
Total	60	100%

Q.4b Ross Rural residents only

If you agree, do the proposals reflect the interests and identities of your local community (Rural residents only)?

	Number	%
Total responses	29	100
Yes	14	48%
No	11	38%
Undecided	4	14%
Total	29	100%
	Number	%

Q.6 The review group considers that 15 councillors would be the appropriate number for a new, merged council. Do you think this is:

	Number	%
Total responses	98	100
The right number	18	18%
Too many	12	12%
Too few	50	50%
No view on the matter	18	18%
Total	98	100

Q.6 Ross Town respondents only

The review group considers that 15 councillors would be the appropriate number for a new, merged council. Do you think this is:

	Number	%
Total responses	63	100
The right number	12	19%
Too many	6	10%
Too few	36	57%
No view on the matter	9	14%
Total	63	100

Q.6 Ross Rural residents only

The review group considers that 15 councillors would be the appropriate number for a new, merged council. Do you think this is:

	Number	%
Total responses	29	100
The right number	4	14%
Too many	4	14%
Too few	12	41%
No view on the matter	9	31%
Total	29	100

Q.9 Would you agree that it would be fairer for all residents of the Ross area to pay the same contribution to the cost of the local council and to be equally represented?

	Number	%
Total responses	94	100
Yes	75	80%
No	12	13%
Don't know	7	7%
Total	94	100%

Q.9 Ross Town residents only

Would you agree that it would be fairer for all residents of the Ross area to pay the same contribution to the cost of the local council and to be equally represented?

	Number	%
Total responses	61	100
Yes	56	92%
No	1	2%
Don't know	4	6%
Total	61	100%

Q.9 Ross Rural residents only

Would you agree that it would be fairer for all residents of the Ross area to pay the same contribution to the cost of the local council and to be equally represented?

	Number	%
Total responses	27	100
Yes	15	56%
No	10	37%
Don't know	2	7%
Total	27	100%

LOCAL GOVERNMENT AND PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT IN HEALTH ACT 2007

The County of Herefordshire District Council (Reorganisation of Community Governance) (Ross-on-Wye) Order 2014

Made: 26th September 2014

Coming into force: in accordance with Article 1

The County of Herefordshire District Council ('the council'), in accordance with section 82 of the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 ('the 2007 Act'), has undertaken a community governance review and on 26th September 2014 made the following recommendations:

That with effect from 1st April 2015:

- a) The existing parishes of Ross-on-Wye Rural and Ross-on-Wye Town shall be amalgamated to constitute a new parish;
- b) The new parish shall be known as 'Ross-on-Wye';
- c) The existing parishes of Ross-on-Wye Rural and Ross-on-Wye Town shall cease to exist;
- d) The parish councils for the parishes of Ross-on-Wye Rural and Ross-on-Wye Town shall be dissolved;
- e) There shall be a new parish council for the new parish of Ross-on-Wye;
- f) The name of that new parish council shall be 'Ross-on-Wye Parish Council';
- g) The first election of all parish councillors for the new parish of Ross-on-Wye shall be held on the ordinary day of election of councillors in 2015;
- h) The term of office of every parish councillor elected on the ordinary day of election of councillors in 2015 for the new parish of Ross-on-Wye shall be four years;
- i) The existing Ross Rural East and Ross Rural West wards of the parish of Ross-on-Wye Rural; and the existing Ross-on-Wye East and Ross-on-Wye West wards of the parish of Ross-on-Wye Town, shall all be abolished;
- j) The number of parish councillors to be elected for the new parish of Ross-on-Wye shall be eighteen;
- k) The new parish of Ross-on-Wye shall be divided into three wards which shall be named: Ross-on-Wye East, Ross-on-Wye North, and Ross-on-Wye West; and shall comprise the respective areas of the district wards bearing the same names;
- l) The number of parish councillors to be elected for each ward in the new parish of Ross-on-Wye shall be six;
- m) All the land, property, rights and liabilities of Ross-on Wye Rural Parish Council and Ross-on-Wye Town Council shall transfer from those councils to the new Ross-on-Wye Parish Council; and
- n) From 1st April 2015, until the councillors to be elected to the new parish council come into office, the new parish of Ross-on-Wye shall be represented by the elected district councillors for the district wards of Ross-on-Wye East and Ross-on-Wye West (as existing at 26th September 2014).

The council has decided to give effect to those recommendations and, in accordance with section 93 of the 2007 Act, has consulted with the local government electors and other interested persons and has had regard to the need to secure that community governance reflects the identities and interests of the community and is effective and convenient.

The council, in accordance with section 100 of the 2007 Act, has had regard to guidance issued under that section.

The council makes the following Order in exercise of the powers conferred by sections 86, 98(3), 98(4), 98(6) and 240(10) of the 2007 Act.

Citation and commencement

- 1.—(1) This Order may be cited as ‘The County of Herefordshire District Council (Reorganisation of Community Governance) (Ross-on-Wye) Order 2014’.
- (2) Subject to paragraphs (3) and (4) below, this Order comes into force on 1st April 2015.
- (3) Article 7(2) below (which establishes the number of parish councillors for the new Ross-on-Wye Parish Council) shall come into force on the ordinary day of election of councillors in 2015.
- (4) For the purposes of proceedings preliminary or relating to the election of parish councillors for the new Ross-on-Wye Parish Council, to be held on the ordinary day of election of councillors in 2015, this Order shall come into force on 15th October 2014.

Interpretation

2. In this Order—

- ‘district’ means the district of the County of Herefordshire;
- ‘existing’ means existing on the date this Order is made;
- ‘map’ means the map marked ‘Map referred to in The County of Herefordshire District Council (Reorganisation of Community Governance) Order 2014’ and deposited in accordance with section 96(4) of the 2007 Act;
- ‘new parish’ means the parish constituted by article 4 below;
- ‘ordinary day of election of councillors’ has the meaning given by section 37 of the Representation of the People Act 1983; and
- ‘registration officer’ means an officer appointed for the purpose of, and in accordance with, section 8(c) of the Representation of the People Act 1983.

Effect of Order

3. This Order has effect subject to any agreement under section 99 of the 2007 Act (agreements about incidental matters) relevant to any provision of this Order.

Amalgamation of existing parishes of Ross-on-Wye Rural and Ross-on-Wye Town and constitution of new parish of Ross-on-Wye

- 4.—(1) The existing parishes of Ross-on-Wye Rural and Ross-on-Wye Town shall be amalgamated to constitute a new parish comprising the area outlined (as to part) in light blue and (as to the remainder) in orange on the map.
- (2) The new parish shall be known as ‘Ross-on-Wye’.
- (3) In consequence of paragraph (1), the existing parishes of Ross-on-Wye Rural and Ross-on-Wye Town shall cease to exist.

Dissolution of parish councils for the parishes of Ross-on-Wye Rural and Ross-on-Wye Town

5. The existing parish councils for the parishes of Ross-on-Wye Rural and Ross-on-Wye Town shall be dissolved.

Parish council for the parish of Ross-on-Wye

- 6.—(1) There shall be a new parish council for the new parish of Ross-on-Wye.
- (2) The name of that new council shall be ‘Ross-on-Wye Parish Council’.

Election of Parish Councillors for the parish of Ross-on-Wye

- 7.—(1) The first election of all parish councillors for the new parish of Ross-on-Wye shall be held on the ordinary day of election of councillors in 2015.
- (2) The term of office of every parish councillor elected on the ordinary day of election of councillors in 2015 for the new parish of Ross-on-Wye shall be four years.
- (3) Where any provision of an Order made before the making of this Order requires an election of parish councillors for a parish mentioned in paragraph 4(1) above to be held on a date other than that for which paragraphs 7(1) and 7(2) provide, it shall cease to have effect to that extent.

Wards of the new parish of Ross-on-Wye and number of parish councillors

- 8.—(1) The existing Ross Rural East and Ross Rural West wards of the parish of Ross-on-Wye Rural; and the existing Ross-on-Wye East and Ross-on-Wye West wards of the parish of Ross-on-Wye Town, shall all be abolished;
- (2) The number of councillors to be elected for the new parish of Ross-on-Wye shall be eighteen.
- (3) The new parish of Ross-on-Wye shall be divided into three wards which shall be named: Ross-on-Wye East, Ross-on-Wye North, and Ross-on-Wye West; and shall comprise the respective areas of the district wards bearing the same names;
- (4) The number of parish councillors to be elected for each ward in the new parish of Ross-on-Wye shall be six.

Annual meeting of the new parish council

9. The annual meeting of the new Ross-on-Wye Parish Council in 2015 shall be convened by the Assistant Director, Governance of the Council. The meeting shall take place no later than 14 days after the day on which the councillors elected to the new parish council take office.

Electoral register

10. The registration officer for the Council shall make such rearrangement of, or adaptation of, the register of local government electors as may be necessary for the purposes of, and in consequence of, this Order.

Transfer of property, rights and liabilities

11. All the land, property, rights and liabilities of Ross-on Wye Rural Parish Council and Ross-on-Wye Town Council shall transfer from those councils to the Ross-on-Wye Parish Council on the date specified in Article 1(2) above.

Transitional provision

12. Until the parish councillors elected to the new Ross-on-Wye Parish Council at the elections to be held on the ordinary day of election of councillors in 2015 come into office, the new parish shall be represented by those persons who immediately before 1st April 2015 are the elected district councillors for the existing district wards of Ross-on-Wye East and Ross-on-Wye West.

Order date

13. 1st April 2015 is the order date for the purposes of the Local Government (Parishes and Parish Councils) (England) Regulations 2008.

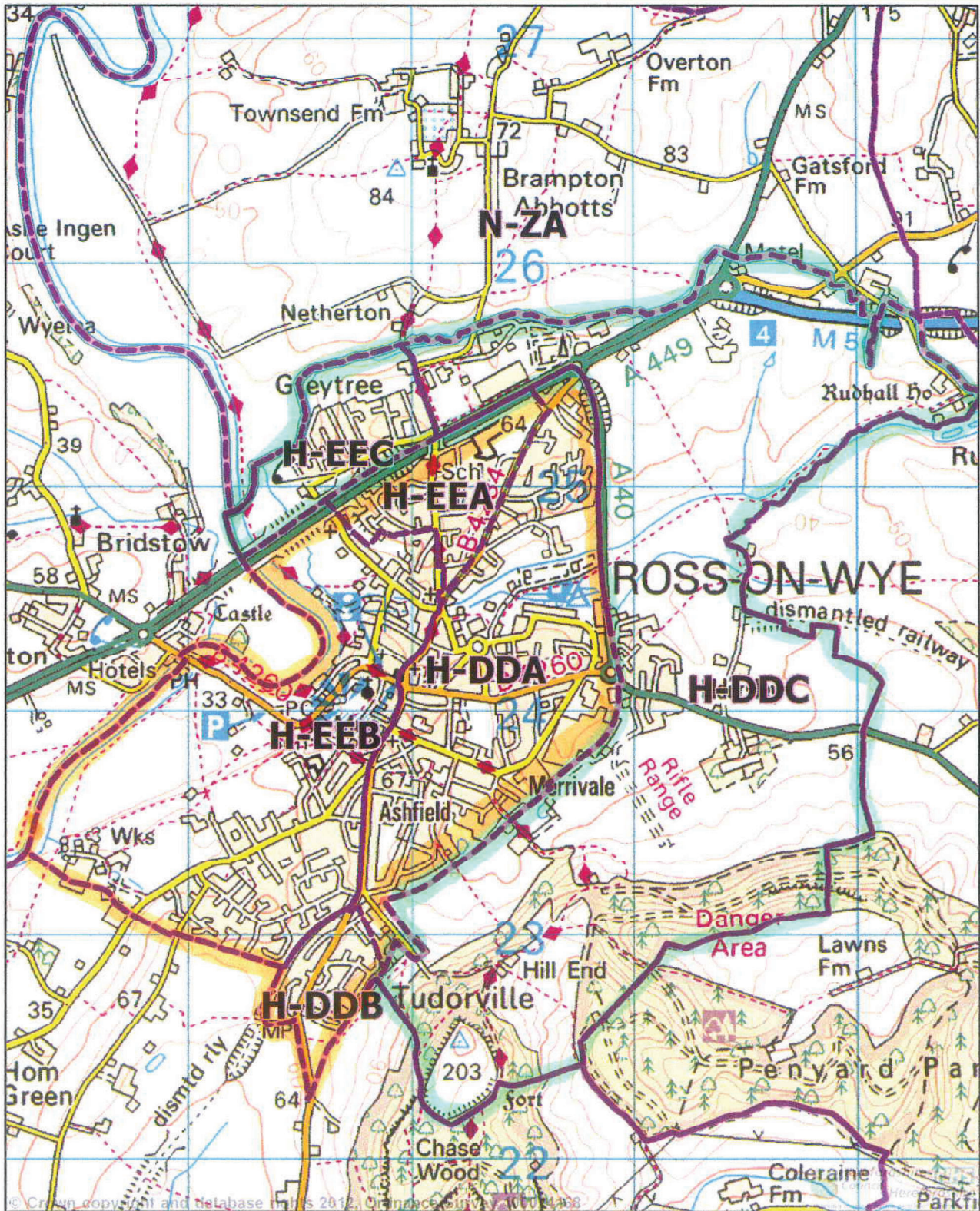
**The Common Seal of the County of Herefordshire District Council
was hereunto affixed on the 26th September 2014 in the presence of:**

Bill Norman
Assistant Director, Governance
(Authorised Officer)



County of Herefordshire District Council,
Brockington, 35 Hafod Road, Hereford. HR1 1SH.
website: www.herefordshire.gov.uk
switchboard: 01432 260000

Working in partnership for the people of Herefordshire



Location:

Description: ROSS WARDS

Map Scale 1:25,620 ; Map Centre OS Grid Reference 360,368.8537669;224,447.3958644

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No further copies may be made.

Ross Rural Boundary

Ross Town Boundary

