Herefordshire Council

AGENDA

General Overview & Scrutiny Committee

Date:	**Wednesday 10 June 2015**
Time:	**10.00 am**
Place:	**Council Chamber, Shire Hall, St. Peter's Square, Hereford, HR1 2HX**

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

For any further information please contact:

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Agenda for the Meeting of the General Overview & Scrutiny Committee

Membership

Chairman	**Councillor WLS Bowen**
Vice-Chairman	**Councillor MJK Cooper**
	Councillor JM Bartlett
	Councillor CA Gandy
	Councillor J Hardwick
	Councillor DG Harlow
	Councillor EPJ Harvey
	Councillor JF Johnson
	Councillor RL Mayo
	Councillor AJW Powers
	Councillor NE Shaw
	Councillor A Warmington
	Councillor SD Williams

Co-optees (education items)	Mr P Burbidge	Roman Catholic Church
	Mr P Sell	Church of England

Primary, secondary and special sector parent governor representatives to be confirmed

AGENDA

Pages

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

To receive apologies for absence.

2. NAMED SUBSTITUTES

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.

4. MINUTES 7 - 20

To receive the minutes of the meeting held on 10 March 2015.

5. SUGGESTIONS FROM THE PUBLIC

To consider suggestions from the public on issues the committee could scrutinise in the future.

(There will be no discussion of the issue at the time when the matter is raised. Consideration will be given to whether it should form part of the committee's work programme when compared with other competing priorities.)

6. QUESTIONS FROM THE PUBLIC

To note questions received from the public and the items to which they relate.

(Questions are welcomed for consideration at a scrutiny committee meeting subject to the question being directly relevant to an item listed on the agenda below. If you have a question you would like to ask then please submit it **no later than 10.00am on Friday 5 June 2015** to bbaugh@herefordshire.gov.uk)

7. EXECUTIVE RESPONSES TO COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS 21 - 40

To report the Executive's responses to the committee recommendations in relation to recommendations arising from the report on Lease Restructuring with Hereford United (1939) Ltd and in relation to the task and finish group report on Balfour Beatty Living Places - Public Realm Services.

8. TASK AND FINISH GROUP REPORT - DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT (PLANNING) 41 - 80

To consider the findings of the scrutiny task and finish group: development management (planning) and to recommend the report to the Executive for consideration.

9. WORK PROGRAMME AND TASK AND FINISH GROUPS 81 - 94

To consider the committee's work programme for the year and to allocate activities to task and finish groups, as deemed necessary.

10. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Tuesday 21 July 2015 at 10.00am

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- Inspect minutes of the Council and all committees and sub-committees and written statements of decisions taken by the Cabinet or individual Cabinet Members for up to six years following a meeting.
- Inspect background papers used in the preparation of public reports for a period of up to four years from the date of the meeting. (A list of the background papers to a report is given at the end of each report). A background paper is a document on which the officer has relied in writing the report and which otherwise is not available to the public.
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HEREFORDSHIRE COUNCIL

MINUTES of the meeting of General Overview & Scrutiny Committee held at Shire Hall, St. Peter's Square, Hereford, HR1 2HX on Tuesday 10 March 2015 at 10.00 am

Present: **Councillor WLS Bowen (Chairman)**
Councillor BA Durkin (Vice-Chairman)

Councillors: AM Atkinson, AJM Blackshaw, Mr P Burbidge, DW Greenow, J Hardwick, EPJ Harvey, JA Hyde, AJW Powers, A Seldon, Mr P Sell and DB Wilcox

Education Co-optees: Mr P Burbidge and Mr P Sell

In attendance: Councillors JW Millar (Cabinet Member, Young People and Children's Wellbeing) and P Rone (Cabinet Member, Transport and Roads)

Officers present: C Baird (Assistant Director Commissioning and Education), B Baugh (Democratic Services Officer), A Brookes (Governance Services Manager), L Fraser (Head of Learning and Achievement), A Hough (Head of Educational Development), G Hughes (Director for Economy, Communities and Corporate), W Welsby (Head of Commercial Services)

56. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence had been received from Councillors ACR Chappell, TM James and RL Mayo. Apologies had also been received from Miss Lowenstein, an education co-optee.

57. NAMED SUBSTITUTES

Councillor J Hardwick substituted for Councillor ACR Chappell, and Councillor JA Hyde substituted for Councillor RL Mayo.

58. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Non-pecuniary interests were made, in respect of agenda items 8 (School examination performance) and 9 (The council's approach to the development of an educational capital investment strategy for July 2015), by the following members: Councillors WLS Bowen, BA Durkin, EPJ Harvey, A Seldon and by Mr. Burbidge and Mr. Sell.

59. MINUTES

The minutes of the previous meeting were received.

In response to a comment from a committee member, who was not present at the last meeting, the Chairman confirmed that the minutes reflected accurately the committee's recommendations in relation to the item 'Review of Lease Restructuring with Hereford United (1939) Ltd'.

RESOLVED: **That the minutes of the meetings held on 18 February 2015 be approved as a correct record.**

60. SUGGESTIONS FROM THE PUBLIC

No suggestions from the public had been received.

61. QUESTIONS FROM THE PUBLIC

No questions from the public had been received.

62. TASK AND FINISH GROUP: BALFOUR BEATTY LIVING PLACES - PUBLIC REALM SERVICES

The Chairman introduced the report of the Task and Finish Group: Balfour Beatty Living Places - Public Realm Services for consideration by the committee prior to its submission to the Executive. The Chairman said that a thorough review had been undertaken and he thanked the contributors, members and officers involved, particularly the Head of Commercial Services and the Interim Procurement Manager.

The Head of Commercial Services reported that the group had held discussions with a number of stakeholders, including Balfour Beatty Living Places (BBLP), and he considered that the report recommendations supported the approach that had been taken by the authority. He added that the recommendations were already being considered, with the intention of providing committee members with the Executive response prior to the pre-election period.

A committee member noted that the group had explored issues in relation to the handover from Amey to BBLP and commented on the need to ensure that the learning points were not lost. The committee member commented on the potential for locality stewards to become overworked and overburdened, particularly with statutory inspections, and recommended the following additional wording to recommendation 8 "That the work of the locality stewards should be monitored closely for signs of slippage in programmes and, if this occurs, that BBLP and Herefordshire Council should discuss a way of reducing the pressure on locality stewards to enable programmes to proceed".

A number of members commended individual locality stewards on their personal and technical abilities.

In response to a question from a committee member, the Chairman suggested that a briefing note be provided to the committee on the uptake of the lengthsman scheme by town and parish councils. A committee member suggested that councils that had implemented the scheme could share positive experiences with others.

Referring to recommendation 9 about members' requests, a committee member noted that the locality stewards did not have the ability to authorise works, with decisions made by other BBLP teams, and he considered it essential that a transparent appeal process was introduced. He also commented that the relevant cabinet member should maintain an overview of significant dispute issues.

The Cabinet Member Transport and Roads noted the continuing need for robust contract management and for issues to be addressed as they arose.

A committee member suggested that there was a need to understand why some parish councils did not wish to take up the lengthsman scheme and to address any concerns that they might have.

Another committee member commented that:

i. parish councils should not be put at a disadvantage should they choose not to engage in the scheme and alternative arrangements should be accommodated;

ii. it was disappointing that the enhanced lengthsman scheme had not been in sync with the budgeting timetable for many parish councils, as this might have increased uptake; and

iii. referring to recommendation 7, in relation to insurance claims, it was considered that assurance was needed that inspections were being undertaken and defects were being rectified within appropriate timescales. In response, the Head of Commercial Services said that the purpose of the recommendation was to ensure that responses to claims were supported by appropriate levels of detail.

The Cabinet Member Transport and Roads advised that: 91 town and parish councils had joined the lengthsman scheme to date; there was only a single lengthsman scheme, with all local councils encouraged to move towards enhanced features; and lengthsmen were being offered appropriate training and support to enable them to take on more responsibilities over time.

A committee member suggested that it would be helpful if the various roles and responsibilities of different parties were defined within a single document, particularly to inform members at the beginning of the next council term.

Further to point ii. above, a committee member suggested that better coordination of projects and the budgeting process would enhance local councils' confidence in the authority.

In response to points made by a committee member about recommendation 3, in relation to any decommissioning / commissioning process, it was reported that: the recording and management of asset information was a dynamic situation and consideration was being given to updated software; there was a comprehensive system and capability to manage asset information; the locality stewards had tablets to record inspections; in securing monies from the National Pothole Fund, the government office had recognised the council's professional approach to asset management; and BBLP had internal arrangements for the supervision of sub-contractors.

A committee member noted that the scoping statement for the task and finish group included "To consider the approach taken to grass cutting and grounds maintenance during the first year and make recommendations for the future" but no reference was made to this in the report. The Chairman considered that the issues had been sufficiently discussed and were understood, nevertheless an additional recommendation could be added to capture learning within a formal report to the committee during the next administration.

The Cabinet Member Transport and Roads commented on the potential benefits of community ownership and responsibility for local assets.

The committee considered whether an additional recommendation should be included to require an annual report to be submitted to the committee on BBLP performance. On balance, it was considered that recommendation 5, "That the council and BBLP continues to work together to host a 'members' seminar / member briefing' every six months…", should be sufficient.

The Cabinet Member Transport and Roads welcomed the group's report and considered that it endorsed BBLP for a job well done so far. He added that there were good indications that a positive relationship could be maintained between BBLP and the council going forward.

The Chairman said that the committee would appreciate the Executive response at the earliest opportunity.

RESOLVED: That

(a) The report of the Task and Finish Group: Balfour Beatty Living Places - Public Realm Services be approved for submission to the Executive, subject to the additions:

i. The following wording be included within recommendation 8, "That the work of the locality stewards should be monitored closely for signs of slippage in programmes and, if this occurs, that BBLP and Herefordshire Council should discuss a way of reducing the pressure on locality stewards to enable programmes to proceed"; and

ii. That an additional recommendation be included as recommendation 13, "That a formal report be made to the committee during the next administration to capture learning from recent experiences in relation to grass cutting and grounds maintenance".

(b) The Executive's response to the review be reported to committee members at the earliest opportunity after the Executive has approved its response.

63. SCHOOL EXAMINATION PERFORMANCE

The Head of Learning and Achievement provided the committee with an overview of the report and associated presentation, the principal points included:

i. Slide 2 of the presentation should refer to Key Stage 1 covering years one and two in primary.

ii. Overall, it had been a positive year, improving on the previous year's results. Attainment and achievement in key measures included:

Early Years Foundation Stage [EYFS] (5 year olds): the percentage of pupils achieving a good level of development was in line with the national average.

Key Stage 1 (7 year olds) and Key Stage 2 (11 year olds): attainment in Reading, Writing and Mathematics had improved year on year but, particularly for Key Stage 1, there were improvements still to be made.

Key Stage 4 (16 year olds): performance was slightly better than the national average, with Herefordshire being one of only six local authorities with improved results in terms of 5+ A*-C GCSEs, including English and Mathematics. It was noted that seven secondary schools were performing above the national average. Pupils at St. Mary's RC High School had achieved 87% in this measure, putting it in the top percentile in the country; St. Joseph's RC Primary School had also attained excellent results.

Key Stage 5 (19 year olds): average point scores continued to be above the national average.

iii. Numerous examples were given of individual primary schools that attained consistently good and outstanding results. Nevertheless, overall attainment in Key Stage 2 was slightly below the national average.

iv. Pupils who were eligible for pupil premium (including looked after children, pupils who received free school meals, and pupils with English as an additional language) were performing below the national average.

v. The areas of focus for the current year included: testing in Key Stage 1 to ensure that pupils could read as well as possible in order to access the curriculum; reducing the gaps at all key stages for pupils who were eligible for pupil premium or who were vulnerable, this would remain a key are of focus; and raising standards above national average in EYFS and further above national average in Key Stage 4.

In response to questions from the Chairman about the use of pupil premium by schools, the Head of Learning and Achievement reported that:

- Information was being collated on which schools were using pupil premium to the best advantage, with the intention of disseminating practice to other schools; it was noted that the Minister of State for Schools had commended John Kyrle High School in relation to its use of pupil premium.

- Ofsted reports had not indicated any concerns about local schools not publishing details of pupil premium allocation and spending. The Chairman said that further assurance about this would be helpful for public understanding.

In response to questions from a committee member:

1. The Head of Learning and Achievement confirmed that all looked after children in the cohort for GCSEs in 2014 were in education, training or employment in September 2014. The Assistant Director Commissioning and Education acknowledged that the GCSE results for the cohort might appear disappointing at face value but emphasised that the approach, through the virtual head teacher role, was focused on supporting the needs of each individual and circumstances could change year on year.

2. The Assistant Director commented that the education landscape was increasingly complex and the authority was working with the relevant bodies to collectively address performance issues.

3. In response to comments about the need to provide looked after children with the appropriate environment and support to help with their studies and revision, it was suggested that a presentation previously received in respect of corporate parenting be made available to all members.

4. The Cabinet Member Young People and Children's Wellbeing noted that there had been some significant improvements but pupils eligible for free school meals and pupils with English as an additional language continued to achieve less well than the same groups nationally. He added that officers were facilitating meetings between head teachers to share experience.

5. The Assistant Director advised that the authority was retaining an element of pupil premium to enable the virtual head teacher to support looked after children and information about this could be provided to members.

In response to questions from another committee member:

- The Assistant Director acknowledged the need to address the gaps between Herefordshire and national trends in respect of EYFS, Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2, and particularly in respect of disadvantaged pupils.

- The Head of Educational Development advised that: schools meals supply arrangements were delegated to schools; with the introduction of universal infant free school meals, information had been collated on the range of suppliers, many of which were local; the School Food Trust monitored the quality of school meals; not all pupils entitled to free school meals made use of the provision; and, in terms of correlation between food and attainment, wider issues around deprivation were perhaps more significant. The committee member commented on: the potential for children to educate their parents and carers about healthy meals; the need to understand supply arrangements and to promote local food sources; and the benefits of children learning to prepare and cook meals.

Mr. Sell made the following observations:

a. The effectiveness of the school improvement framework in Herefordshire should be reflected upon, particularly given the challenges faced by the local authority in providing support to schools with diminishing resources, and there had been upward movement in a number of key indicators.

b. The Hereford Diocese and the Arch Diocese of Cardiff were involved in the Herefordshire School Improvement Partnership and had supported the work of local authority officers to help schools in difficulty.

c. The local authority role was becoming more strategic, helping with brokering and commissioning rather than undertaking activities itself.

d. Although it did not have a direct responsibility for academies, the authority was expected to oversee standards.

e. The authority needed to be mindful that it might need to have conversations with the sponsors of sponsored academies, rather than an individual governing body; it was for the sponsor to delegate powers and responsibilities and there was no requirement for a local governing body.

f. The authority also needed to be mindful of the potential for other schools to join an existing academy trust or a multi-academy trust.

Mr. Burbidge commented on:

i. Improvements were taking place in the education sector in the county, despite the removal of resources to support schools.

ii. Peer group involvement, meetings, training and the exchange of good practice could help to raise standards but teachers had to teach properly and this should be a key objective.

iii. The need to support the local agricultural economy was acknowledged but many schools employed companies to provide food and, although there might be a wish for them to source food locally if possible, ultimately they had to deliver to a price. It was questioned what could be achieved with further monitoring or inspection.

A committee member suggested that officers could work on a matrix, in conjunction with the Herefordshire Rural Hub, to identify and monitor food sources and provision in schools.

A committee member noted the importance of stability in home environments and in the support arrangements for looked after children, adding that the Executive needed to

consider relevant staffing structures carefully. The Cabinet Member Young People and Children's Wellbeing made a number of comments, including: the small size of some schools meant that children with individual needs could have a disproportionate effect on performance figures; the high turnover of social workers continued to be an issue for the county; and stable placements were not the only factor in attainment. The Assistant Director reminded the committee of the 'Pledge to those children and young people looked after by Herefordshire Council' that had been endorsed by Council (26 September 2014, minute 28 refers) and suggested that an update could be provided to members on how this was being fulfilled from an education perspective.

A committee member said that some members have received a helpful Quarterly Performance Report on education provision and related statistics and suggested that this could be circulated wider. In response to a question, the Cabinet Member acknowledged that individual high performing or under performing schools could have disproportionate impacts on overall figures but there was no evidence available on how this was reflected in the figures of other authorities. The Assistant Director added that, although Herefordshire was in a positive position comparatively in terms of the numbers of good and outstanding schools, the proportion of outstanding schools was less than might be expected.

A committee member made a number of further comments, including:

- The authority had endorsed the Herefordshire Food Strategy and this had included a number of actions in relation to the education sector. It was suggested that delivery of these actions be assessed initially.

- It was suggested that an understanding was needed about what was appropriate for Herefordshire to aim for. The Assistant Director said that some aspirations were identified in the Education Strategy and that there was sufficient information about the current position in Herefordshire to warrant the authority being more aspirational about performance going forward.

- In view of the success of particular schools, the need to share experience and best practice was emphasised and the authority could promulgate this.

- It was questioned how assurance could be provided around the authority's public sector equality duty, with particular reference made to children from traveller communities.

- Comments were made about the challenges for disadvantaged children to catch up with their peers in primary school, particularly if they had not benefitted from a nursery school setting.

- It was commented that there was a need for effective handover between primary and secondary schools to ensure that pupils did not lose momentum, progress and interest.

- It was suggested that an understanding was needed about how widely distributed pupils with English as an additional language were in the county and what pressures this might put on particular schools. The Assistant Director said that information was collated on this and that there was a support team in place to work with individual schools.

The Assistant Director said that transition was an issue that had been identified by the School Improvement Partnership and there was more work to be done on this; head teachers were particularly interested in achievement trajectories between Key Stages 2 and 4.

The Head of Educational Development commented on work that was ongoing with children's centres in relation to the scheme to provide additional nursery provision for disadvantaged two year olds and to identify children's development needs.

The Chairman adjourned the meeting to enable recommendations to be prepared. Upon recommencement of the meeting, recommendations were proposed, discussed and amended where necessary. The final recommendations agreed by the committee are reproduced below.

The Chairman commented on the need to encourage schools to share experiences and best practice, to be mindful of the issues around transition, and to enable individual pupils to realise their potential. In response to a question, the Assistant Director confirmed that School Examination Performance could continue to feature as part of the annual work programme for the committee.

RESOLVED: That the following be recommended to the Executive:

1. **That officers reprise the actions within the Herefordshire Food Strategy in the context of food provision and education in schools and that the committee be updated with the current position in terms of the delivery of those actions.**

2. **That a report be prepared on the monitoring and support provided to vulnerable groups qualifying under the public sector equality duty, particularly in relation to groups with protected characteristics.**

3. **That officers check whether schools are fulfilling their requirement to publicise the use of pupil premium on their websites.**

4. **That an update on progress be prepared on the retention of an element of pupil premium to support looked after children, particularly with regard to the delivery of improved outcomes.**

5. **That an assessment be made of the distribution of the support demand for English as an additional language across Herefordshire schools and suggestions made for the most efficient service and support delivery.**

64. THE COUNCIL'S APPROACH TO THE DEVELOPMENT OF AN EDUCATION CAPITAL INVESTMENT STRATEGY FOR JULY 2015 (Verbal Report)

The Head of Educational Development gave a presentation on the Education Capital Investment Strategy. The principal points of the presentation and related discussion are summarised under the slide headings below.

Herefordshire's Education Strategy

1. Part of the strategy was 'establishing a coherent case for capital investment from whichever funding source'.

2. A breakdown was provided of the different types of educational establishments and pupil numbers.

3. Questions within the presentation included:

    - With more autonomous schools how is renewal coordinated?
    - Are school buildings supporting improved outcomes?

- What evidence / documentation have we to support requests for more capital resources?
- Has the Local Authority (LA) got the places in the right place so parents can exercise choice?
- How does the LA show it is fulfilling the statutory duty to provide sufficient school places?
- How can 'another Colwall' be avoided?

What is the Education Capital Investment Strategy trying to achieve?

4. It was intended to be a clear strategy to set out, over the next 5-20 years and beyond, how the council:

    - Supports the delivery of the best outcomes for children and young people
    - Fulfils its duty to supply enough high quality schools places
    - Ensures its schools are fit for purpose and energy efficient
    - Offers funding models
    - Supports/suggests the approach to managing change/development

5. It was emphasised that it would not be a blueprint but it would provide a framework and set of criteria, reflecting shared understanding and respecting local situations.

Support of high quality places

6. The following points were identified:

    - Most parents/carers get their first choice
    - Population not set to change significantly
    - Need to plan for housing development and when it gets built
    - Academies can admit more than their planned admission numbers
    - Currently have surplus places overall but some schools are under pressure and others have space

Fit for purpose and energy efficient

7. Considerations included:

    - Suitability - number and size of classrooms and hall, overall plot size
    - Repair or replacement - toilets/roof/heating/windows/brickwork
    - Disability access
    - Energy efficiency
    - Location proximity to a population centre

8. It was commented that, for various reasons, the authority wanted to move towards a more modern estate.

School Education Capital Investment July 2015

9. It was noted that a range of stakeholders would be engaged to inform the strategy and to move forward collectively for the purposes of: improved outcomes; opportunities to lever in external funding; and efficient and effective use of resources.

Some tricky issues

10. These were identified as: managing change; funding; school size - quality of learning and viability; expansion of high quality popular schools; and future technology implications.

11. In response to a question from the Chairman, the Head of Educational Development advised that every LA maintained school had a school condition survey and, as part of the strategy, officers were looking closely at management information; it was noted that any change needed to be based on accurate and detailed information and there should be consensus.

12. In response to a further question from the Chairman, the circumstances in relation to the damp problem at Colwall CE Primary School were explained.

13. A committee member expressed concern that this item was not been supported by a written report and the presentation had not been made available to members before the meeting, thereby putting the committee at a disadvantage in terms of making comments and suitable recommendations. In response, the Cabinet Member Young People and Children's Wellbeing advised that the Strategic Plan for Herefordshire had been considered by Cabinet on 13 November 2014 (minute 39 refers) and this presentation sought to update the committee on progress to date in relation to the estates element. The Governance Services Manager acknowledged that officers should ensure that their items were supported by appropriate documents but noted that members would be provided with an opportunity to consider the draft strategy in the next municipal year. The Assistant Director Commissioning and Education emphasised that this was the start of the process and the presentation was also being delivered to school governors and head teachers to ensure broad involvement from an early stage.

Tricky issue 1 - Managing the change

14. The related questions included: what are the triggers?; who is best placed to influence and shape change?; and how do we support and facilitate?

15. It was recognised that managing the change was crucial, as well as managing expectations, particularly in terms of timescales and funding. It was also noted that some people would have sentimental attachments that would need to be handled appropriately. Therefore, it was important to engage with everyone that might wish to be involved in the process.

Tricky issue 2 - Funding

16. An overview was provided of the following:

    - Options for funding:
        - Use of DfE grants
        - Recycling funding (e.g. Aylestone/Broadlands)
        - Dedicated schools grant (DSG)
        - School revenue
        - Academies fund
        - CIL and Section 106
        - Business sponsorship/investment
        - Corporate borrowing

    In addition, dioceses might be another source of investment.

- A clear agreed plan provides opportunity to lever in external/additional funding
- Combined approaches

17. The Head of Educational Development said that it was likely that there would be a mixture of different funding streams and it was considered that an agreed plan would enhance opportunities to access external funding.

Tricky issue 3 - School size - quality of learning and viability

18. Questions within the presentation included:

- Curriculum offer?
- Financial viability/pupil numbers?
- Rurality/transport?
- Leadership/figurehead?
- Value for money?
- Local authority no longer runs some schools
- Does size matter?

19. It was noted that there was a wide spectrum of schools in Herefordshire, many with small roll numbers, and consideration needed to be given to curriculum implications, economies of scale, and leadership approaches.

Tricky Issues 4 - Expansion of high quality popular schools?

20. Considerations included:

- Presumption in current system
- Market forces approach?
- Better outcomes for children and young people?
- Pleases parents/carers (vs communities surrounding schools)?
- Schools affected negatively feel it's unfair?
- Fortunes/perceptions change

21. It was noted that there was a presumption that parents had a degree of choice, reflecting a market forces approach. However, this could have an impact on local provision; it was reported that, on average, only 50% of pupils in Herefordshire went to their local catchment school.

Tricky issue 5 - Technology

22. Questions within the presentation included: will school buildings be serving the same functions 10 years from now?; and will there be more home learning?

23. It was noted that the use of mobile devices within classrooms had made some dedicated IT suites redundant, reflecting the need for flexibility going forward.

Draft Principles

24. The following points were identified:

i. High quality learning environments are more likely to deliver the best outcomes for all children and young people

ii. All schools need to be:
    - in good condition with clear improvement programme
    - suitable / compliant
    - Class and hall sizes, toilets, permanent buildings, accessible for disability

iii. High quality popular schools will be supported to expand
    - Ofsted judgment is outstanding/good
    - 3 year trend of outcomes is good
    - Parental preference is in excess of published admission number over time

iv. Across Herefordshire there will be a mix of size of school but there is no specific size which would consider closure. However
    - Schools with less than 105 on roll should have a plan for sustainability into the future (shared leadership, merger, succession planning) (33 schools - 19 standalone)

v. If a community wants a school it should be prepared to support it financially.

25. The Head of Educational Development said that some principles were fundamental, whereas others were open to debate. In particular, attention was drawn to the need for smaller schools to plan for the future and for schools to be in the right places within, and properly supported by, the community.

Timeline

26. The following timeline was given:

- November/December 2014 - Set up and overview
- December/January 2015 - Data collation and consultation on principles
- February/March 2015 - Confirmation of accuracy of school data re condition, suitability, popularity etc
- March 2015 - Analysis of data and discussion about ideas for moving forward
- June 2015 - Report preparation
- July 2015 - Report to Council

27. The Head of Educational Development anticipated that by July 2015 the authority would have a more sophisticated view about the issues and how it could engage with people about certain proposals and reforms. He emphasised the need for dialogue about future options and the need to think further ahead. He added that officers would be talking to schools about the accuracy of data and about the draft principles.

28. In response to a comment by the Chairman, the Cabinet Member Young People and Children's Wellbeing noted that this presentation provided a position statement and it was important that all councillors were involved, including this overview and scrutiny committee.

29. A committee member welcomed the overview provided and the general approach being taken. However, in view of the imminent local elections, the committee member considered the proposed timing unfortunate, particularly as new councillors might not have enough time to understand the complexities or have the opportunities to engage with their communities in a meaningful way. It was suggested that, whilst officers could continue to develop the draft strategy, the schedule should be pushed back if possible. The Chairman said that he would discuss this further with the Cabinet Member and officers.

30. A committee member noted the extent of neighbourhood and parish planning processes that were being undertaken in the county and suggested that these could be valuable conduits to explore the issues raised in the presentation and to address some of the tricky issues identified.

31. In response to questions, the Head of Educational Development explained some of the demographic and trend data used in the presentation slides.

32. Referring to draft principle v. above and the relationship with the Core Strategy, a committee member commented on the need for engagement to be less top-down, as this could increase resistance within communities to housing and other development.

33. Mr. Sell made a number of points, including:

- The National Society of the Church of England had commissioned a review of small schools and, informed by this, diocese across the country were producing small schools strategies and exploring alternative models of leadership and partnership, with encouraging results
- For many people, there was inherent value in historic buildings and maintaining a continuum of education.
- It would be erroneous to identify church schools as council assets; an overview was given of different trustee arrangements and examples were provided of problems experienced in the past with the local authority incorrectly registering such assets.

34. The Assistant Director Commissioning and Education noted the complexities involved and re-iterated the need to engage with a wide range of stakeholders and achieve a collective way forward for Herefordshire.

35. Mr. Burbidge concurred that the council should not make assumptions about assets and said that it needed to avoid the mistakes of the past. He added that councillors not only had responsibilities to their constituents but also had responsibilities for education provision across the county and for the delivery of quality education for all children and young people.

36. A committee member commented that the scope of the project now appeared broader than a school estate strategy, particularly given linkages to strategic planning processes which were still evolving.

The Chairman noted the need to consider the issues during the next administration.

RESOLVED: That the presentation be noted and a further report be provided to the committee during the next municipal year.

65. WORK PROGRAMME AND TASK AND FINISH GROUPS

The committee received a report which noted progress against the work programme during the current municipal year. The Chairman noted that the work programme would need to be reviewed and updated at the start of the next administration.

The Vice-Chairman provided an overview of the work being undertaken by the Task and Finish Group on Development Management (Planning) and said that the associated report would be made available for consideration by the committee at its next meeting.

The Chairman thanked the Vice-Chairman, committee members and support officers for their input during the year. He also thanked members of the public for their attendance and for the interesting questions that had been received.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

The meeting ended at 1.12 pm **CHAIRMAN**

Herefordshire Council

MEETING:	**General Overview and Scrutiny Committee**
DATE:	**10 June 2015**
TITLE OF REPORT:	**Executive responses to General Overview and Scrutiny Committee recommendations**
REPORT BY:	**Governance services**

1. Classification

Open.

2. Key Decision

This is not a key decision.

3. Wards Affected

County-wide.

4. Purpose

To report the Executive's responses to the committee recommendations in relation to recommendations arising from the report on Lease Restructuring with Hereford United (1939) Ltd and in relation to the task and finish group report on Balfour Beatty Living Places - Public Realm Services.

5. Recommendations

THAT:

(a) the Executive's responses be noted, subject to any comments the committee wishes to make; and

(b) a briefing note on progress with the responses to the task and finish group report on Balfour Beatty Living Places - Public Realm Services be provided within six months.

6. Alternative Options

6.1 None. This is an information report to the committee in accordance with the council's Constitution.

7. Reasons for Recommendations

7.1 To ensure that the committee is aware of the Executive's responses to its recommendations and to comply with the council's Constitution (4.5.13.3).

8. Key Considerations

8.1 The committee considered an item on Review of Lease Restructuring with Hereford United (1939) Ltd at its meeting on 18 February 2015. The agenda is available here:

http://go.m-gov.eu/064M5329

8.2 The committee considered the task and finish group report on Balfour Beatty Living Places - Public Realm Services at its meeting on 10 March 2015. The agenda is available here:

http://go.m-gov.eu/064M5131

8.3 The draft responses of the Executive to the recommendations were included in a briefing notes pack for committee members, issued on 31 March 2015. The purpose of this report is to enable the committee to receive the responses formally.

8.4 It is recommended that a briefing note on progress with the responses to the task and finish group report on Balfour Beatty Living Places - Public Realm Services be provided within six months.

9. Community Impact

9.1 Any community impact implications have been set out in the appended reports.

10. Equality and Human Rights

10.1 Any equality and human rights implications have been set out in the appended reports.

11. Financial Implications

11.1 Any financial implications have been set out in the appended reports.

12. Legal Implications

12.1 Any legal implications have been set out in the appended reports.

13. Risk Management

13.1 Any risk implications have been set out in the appended reports.

14. Consultees

14.1 Any consultees have been set out in the appended reports.

15. Appendices

Appendix 1	Cabinet Member report - Executive responses to GOSC recommendations [Review of Lease Restructuring with Hereford United (1939) Ltd]
Appendix 2	Executive Responses to GOSC recommendations [Review of Lease Restructuring with Hereford United (1939) Ltd]

Appendix 3	Cabinet Member report - Executive responses to GOSC recommendations [Balfour Beatty Living Places]
Appendix 4	Executive responses to GOSC recommendations [Balfour Beatty Living Places]

16. Background Papers

16.1 None identified.

Herefordshire Council

Decision maker:	**Cabinet Member Corporate Strategy & Finance**
Decision date:	**22 April 2015**
Scrutiny committee call-in date:	**21 April 2015**
Date decision may be implemented:	**28 April 2015**
Title of report:	**Summary of Recommendations and Executive Responses [Review of Lease Restructuring with Hereford United (1939) Ltd]**
Report by:	**Head of Corporate Asset Management**

Classification

Open

Key Decision

This is not a key decision.

Wards Affected

Central Ward

Purpose

To respond to the recommendations of GOSC in respect of their review of HUFC leases.

Recommendation(s)

THAT:

(a) Responses of the executive be noted.

Alternative options

1 There are no alternative options.

Reasons for recommendations

2 The responses have been requested by GOSC.

Key considerations

3 The responses to the recommendations are contained in appendix 1. A summary of the review is contained in appendix 2.

Community impact

4 There is no community impact arising from this report.

Equality duty

5 There are no equality issues arising from this report.

Financial implications

6 No financial implications arising from this report.

Legal implications

7 There are no legal implications arising from this report.

Risk management

8 There are no risk management issues arising from this report.

Consultees

9 None

Appendices

Appendix 1 – responses to recommendations made by GOSC [see Appendix 2]

Appendix 2 – briefing report to GOSC

[see link http://councillors.herefordshire.gov.uk/documents/s50025278/Appendix%202%20-%20GOSC%20HUFC.pdf]

Background papers

None.

Summary of Recommendations and Executive Responses [Review of Lease Restructuring with Hereford United (1939) Ltd]

Recommendation No. 1	That there should be proper assessment of whether it would be beneficial, in any future leases, for the council to retain a right to exercise a break clause in the event of (1) a change of ownership / change of control; and/or (2) professional football ceases to be played at the ground. And that any lease should include appropriate safeguards in the event of a hostile takeover of a corporate tenant.
Executive Response	ACCEPTED – (1) This clause is included in the current five season lease, but such terms do not usually form part of a lease especially when it covers such a short term. It is unusual for such a term to be accepted by the tenant. (2) the lease only permits use of the ground for football with the tenant to be a member of the FA. Breach of these obligations will render the lease liable to forfeiture.

Action	**Owner**	**By When**	**Target/Success Criteria**	**Progress**
Terms incorporated into current lease	D of ECC	27/03/2015	Completion of lease	Lease completed.

Recommendation No. 2	That the primary objective when considering proposals for the football ground should be to secure the continuation of professional football.
Executive Response	ACCEPTED – In relation to existing 5 season lease, However, it is suggested that this proposal be subject to a further report to Cabinet and GOSC in Autumn 2015 as this needs to be considered by a new administration.

Action	**Owner**	**By When**	**Target/Success Criteria**	**Progress**
Further report in Autumn	D of ECC	TBC	TBC	TBC

Recommendation No. 3	That compelling and exceptional justification should be required to persuade the council to relinquish development rights and that the new lease should only extend to the football pitch with use of the stands and other facilities.
Executive Response	ACCEPTED – the new lease does not include any development rights for the tenant.

Action	**Owner**	**By When**	**Target/Success Criteria**	**Progress**
Terms incorporated into current lease	D of ECC	27/03/2015	Completion of lease	Lease completed.

Recommendation No. 4	That any profits generated by the development of the Ground (whether by the Council or another) should be invested for the benefit of the County and, in particular, to support football and sport in the County.
Executive Response	It is suggested that this proposal be subject to a further report to Cabinet and GOSC in Autumn 2015 as this needs to be considered by a new administration.

Action	**Owner**	**By When**	**Target/Success Criteria**	**Progress**
Further report in Autumn	D of ECC	TBC	TBC	TBC

Recommendation No. 5	That assurance be provided that any new long term tenant would be subject to full and proper due diligence.
Executive Response	ACCEPTED – further, although the new tenant will only take a short term lease a full due diligence exercise was undertaken.

Action	**Owner**	**By When**	**Target/Success Criteria**	**Progress**
Due diligence exercise undertaken	D of ECC	09/03/2015	Club meet criteria issued by Council	Criteria met on 09/03/2015 and lease completed on 27/03/15.

Recommendation No. 6	That the Executive ensures that any leases relating to football meet Football Association requirements.
Executive Response	ACCEPTED – the FA has not specified any requirements.

Action	**Owner**	**By When**	**Target/Success Criteria**	**Progress**
Incorporated in lease	D of ECC	27/03/2015	Completion of lease	Lease completed.

Recommendation No. 7	That the Executive look favourably on proposals that include for the provision of education and training for young people.				
Executive Response	PARTIALLY ACCEPTED – This is not a condition that would normally be contained within the provisions of a lease. However this recommendation was adopted by the inclusion of this provision into the selection criteria for a new tenant.				
Action		**Owner**	**By When**	**Target/Success Criteria**	**Progress**
Incorporate into the selection criteria of a new tenant		D of ECC	19/02/2015	Proposed tenant satisfies selection criteria	Complete

Recommendation No. 8	That if more than one lease is to be granted that consideration should be given to them all having a consistent end date.				
Executive Response	ACCEPTED – there is only one lease.				
Action		**Owner**	**By When**	**Target/Success Criteria**	**Progress**
Incorporated within existing five season lease		D of ECC	27/03/2015	Completion of lease	Lease completed.

Recommendation No. 9	That in advance of any longer term decisions, the scrutiny committee be invited to consider future arrangements as part of its work programme for 2015/16.				
Executive Response	ACCEPTED – Programmed for September 2015				
Action		**Owner**	**By When**	**Target/Success Criteria**	**Progress**
Further report		D of ECC	Sept 2015	TBC	TBC

Herefordshire Council

DECISION MAKER:	**CABINET MEMBER: TRANSPORT AND ROADS**
DECISION DATE:	**2 April 2015**
TITLE OF REPORT:	**GOSC Task and Finish Group - Balfour Beatty Living Places**
REPORT BY:	**assistant director place based commissioning**

Classification

Open

Key Decision

This is not a key decision

Wards Affected

County-wide

Purpose

To consider recommendations from the General Overview and Scrutiny Committee (GOSC) following the task and finish group report on the public realm contract with Balfour Beatty Living Places (BBLP) and provide the executive's response.

Recommendation

THAT:

(a) The Executive approves the response to the recommendations of the task and finish group report (provided in Appendix 1).

Alternative Options

1 There are no alternative options to consider

Reasons for Recommendations

2 The task and finish group report reviewed the delivery of the council's public realm contract with Balfour Beatty Living Places (BBLP) and provided a number of recommendations, this report seeks approval for the executive's response to those recommendations.

Key Considerations

3 In developing the report the task and finish group considered the progress made with the delivery of public realm services since the start of the new contract with Balfour Beatty in September 2013.

4 The public realm contract provides a range of services across Herefordshire including road maintenance, public rights of way, parks and grounds maintenance. The potential impact of this contract to the citizens of and visitors to Herefordshire is significant.

5 It is noted that many of the recommendations have already been implemented by the executive.

6 The recommendations from the report listed and the executive response is provided in Appendix 1.

Community Impact

7 The Public Realm services make a significant contribution to improving the local environment and road and community safety. The recommendations of this report seek to improve the way in which these services are managed and delivered.

Equality and Human Rights

8 No changes have been recommended that would have a negative impact to quality and human rights.

Financial Implications

9 None as a result of this report.

Legal Implications

10 None as a result of this report.

Risk Management

11 The Public Realm services contract with BBLP provides a range of high profile front line services which have the potential to directly affect the reputation of the council. The Task and Finish review carried out by General Overview and Scrutiny Committee and the review of their recommendations provides an opportunity to review current practice and improve the delivery of these important services in the future.

Consultees

12 Balfour Beatty Living Places

Background Papers

13 None

Summary of Recommendations and Executive Responses [Task and Finish Group Report: Balfour Beatty Living Places – Public Realm Services]

Recommendation No. 1	The group is encouraged by the level of active and robust contract management in place for management of the BBLP contract. It is recommended that the council maintains this in order to ensure that there is no slippage in the quality of delivery to the people of the county.
Executive Response	ACCEPTED – Ensuring effective contract management is in place is important, we will maintain and continually develop the effective capability of the client management team.

Action	**Owner**	**By When**	**Target/Success Criteria**	**Progress**
Monitor and periodically review effectiveness of the contract management team.	RB	Ongoing	Annual Plan is in place and appropriate contract mechanisms being used to manage the contract successfully.	n/a

Recommendation No. 2	It was noted that the BBLP Public Realm contract contains appropriate terms and conditions requiring them to provide applicable information in good time at the end of the contact in order to support effective TUPE transfer. The group recommends that similar terms are used for other suitable future contracts and that an effective exit strategy is embedded which includes provision for a comprehensive transition to the new contract.
Executive Response	ACCEPTED – The executive welcomes the acknowledgement that this improvement is already included in the BBLP contract and supports the inclusion of such provision in future procurements.

Action	**Owner**	**By When**	**Target/Success Criteria**	**Progress**
Develop standard terms for inclusion in future contracts.	WW	Apr 15	Model terms are in place and available for future use.	n/a

Recommendation No. 3	It is recommended that as part of any decommissioning / commissioning process the council should undertake an assessment of any key dependencies required to ensure safe and efficient transfer of responsibilities from one contractor to another. To support this requirement it is recommended that contract managers should maintain a clear asset register and business continuity plan.

Executive Response	ACCEPTED – It is important to properly plan the decommissioning and commissioning of contracts. Such plans were in place for transfer of the previous contract to BBLP. The BBLP contract includes commitments to properly plan for decommissioning and we will ensure this approach is applied to future contracts.				
Action		**Owner**	**By When**	**Target/Success Criteria**	**Progress**
Contract Management training includes guidance on maintaining an asset register and business continuity plan.		WW	April 15	Appropriate contract management training in place	Completed, programme of contract management training in place

Recommendation No. 4	That the council and BBLP continues to work together to keep citizens informed of contract changes and manage citizen's service expectations. Regular online updates on council websites, and newsletters are options to achieve this.				
Executive Response	ACCEPTED – Good communications with stakeholders is a key component of the BBLP contract requirements and this recommendation is accepted.				
Action		**Owner**	**By When**	**Target/Success Criteria**	**Progress**
Regular online updates will continue to be provided as applicable		WL/BBLP	Ongoing	Regular communications in place	Complete / ongoing

Recommendation No. 5	That the council and BBLP continues to work together to host a 'members seminar/member briefing' every six months, or earlier if circumstances dictate, to keep members up to date on contract performance and any potential service changes. These sessions to be chaired by the Chair of the General Overview and Scrutiny Committee with the Cabinet Member with responsibility for the BBLP contract present. In addition, any major issues should be reported to the chair of the GOSC immediately.				
Executive Response	ACCEPTED – Regular briefings for all members, including GOSC, is a key expectation of the BBLP contract and these will continue to be held on a regular basis.				
Action		**Owner**	**By When**	**Target/Success Criteria**	**Progress**
Continue to hold regular seminars and		WL	On going	Member seminars are delivered	Programme of seminars currently being plannedin line with

briefings at a minimum of every 6 months.			every six months.	development of annual and forward plans

Recommendation No. 6	The group notes the recent changes by the council to transfer customer contact to Balfour Beatty Living Places (BBLP) for areas of service for which they are responsible for. The group is supportive of this approach and recommends these changes are kept under review to monitor its effectiveness. In addition, it was recommended that BBLP communications were aligned with council policy, e.g. a 10 day deadline to provide a response.			
Executive Response	ACCEPTED – The proposed transfer of the contact centre has now happened and went operational 05 March. Operationally BBLP are expected to deliver in such a way to ensure they improve customer satisfaction through effective response to enquiries.			
Action		**Owner**	**By When**	**Target/Success Criteria**	**Progress**
Complete		BBLP	March 15	New customer contact arrangements in place	Completed March 15

Recommendation No. 7	That when receiving an insurance claim as a result of a potential road defect, the complainant receives an acknowledgement to the claim and be advised of the process and anticipated response times. In addition, it is recommended that a clear definition with regards to categorisation of road defects is also provided. It is noted that a number of key dependencies apply to such cases, not least that the details received include clear information of the location of the road defect, that the defect is on a council maintained road, etc.			
Executive Response	ACCEPTED – Customers should receive a clear response as suggested. The highways maintenance plan clearly sets out definitions of defects on the highway. A review of the plan is scheduled for 2015 to ensure it is up to date and consistent with industry best practice,			
Action		**Owner**	**By When**	**Target/Success Criteria**	**Progress**
The acknowledgement of claims is already in place with clear guidance on the process.		BBLP	Apr 15	Customers receiving acknowledgements	Complete

Recommendation No. 8	The group is highly supportive of the locality steward approach. The group recommends that all applicable BBLP staff have handheld tablets to support communication and maximise the effectiveness of the CONFIRM system. The work of the locality stewards should be monitored closely for signs of slippage in programmes and, if this occurs, that BBLP and Herefordshire Council should discuss a way of reducing the pressure on locality stewards to enable programmes to proceed.
Executive Response	ACCEPTED – All applicable staff have tablets and access to CONFIRM. BBLP issue appropriate ICT to staff on the basis of a clear business case.

Action	**Owner**	**By When**	**Target/Success Criteria**	**Progress**
The effectiveness of locality stewards and their ICT needs will continue to be monitored and if necessary improvements made.	BBLP	Ongoing	Continued effectiveness of Locality Stewards	n/a

Recommendation No. 9	Where member's requests are raised with locality stewards the group recommends that members are kept informed of status, particularly where schemes are not to be delivered or are to be delayed. In the event a decision is made not to undertake a particular request then the member is provided with a brief on the reasons and a transparent appeal process is introduced if necessary.
Executive Response	ACCEPTED – Locality stewards have significantly improved the process of keeping members informed. In addition, the customer services team will continue to pick up reactive requests from members and the public. The escalation of problems or explanations can be made to the Locality Manager. Where the works are not feasibility in the present year they will be considered as part of the next Annual Plan planning stage.

Action	**Owner**	**By When**	**Target/Success Criteria**	**Progress**
Processes are in place	BBLP	ongoing	process in place	Complete

Recommendation No. 10	The group is highly supportive of the council's recommendation to roll out the use of the Enhanced Lengthsman Scheme and recommends that as many parish councils as possible takes up this option.
Executive Response	ACCEPTED – The executive welcomes the support. The new lengthsman scheme has been launched to provide positive engagement to all parish councils.

Action	Owner	By When	Target/Success Criteria	Progress
Regular briefings with parish councils are organised by BBLP.	BBLP/AB	ongoing	Regular briefings in place	Programme of briefings in included in the Annual Plan

Recommendation No. 11	The council to work with BBLP to make it easier for small, local organisations to engage with BBLP and bid for sub-contractor opportunities. To support this it is recommended that the council adds a forwarding note to its eTendering portal, providing BBLP contact details for interested sub-contractor organisations.
Executive Response	ACCEPTED – The BBLP contract requires positive support for sub-contractors such as speedy payments and the provision of training.

Action	Owner	By When	Target/Success Criteria	Progress
A forwarding note has been added to the council's eTendering Portal providing contact details for any potential subcontractor interested in working with BBLP	BBLP/WW	Done	Amendments in place	Complete

Recommendation No. 12	As a general recommendation, the group also noted that typically reports detail distances in kilometres, it is recommended that BBLP include miles as well.
Executive Response	ACCEPTED – It is important for reports to be in plain English and be really

Action	Owner	By When	Target/Success Criteria	Progress
Ensure reports use miles as well as kilometres	BBLP	On going	Actioned	Complete / ongoing

Recommendation No. 13	That a formal report be made to the committee during the next administration to capture learning from recent experiences in relation to grass cutting and grounds maintenance.
Executive Response	ACCEPTED – The public realm service covers a wide range of services and it is acknowledged that it is appropriate for GOSC to receive regular updates. As in Autumn 2014, it would be appropriate for an annual update on the service to be provided in Autumn 2015.

Action	**Owner**	**By When**	**Target/Success Criteria**	**Progress**
Annual progress report on Public Realm service to GOSC.	BBLP	Autumn 2015	Report submitted to GOSC	n/a

Herefordshire Council

MEETING:	**General Overview and Scrutiny Committee**
DATE:	**10 June 2015**
TITLE OF REPORT:	**Task and finish group report: development management (planning)**
REPORT BY:	**Task and finish group**

1. Classification

Open.

2. Key Decision

This is not a key decision.

3. Wards Affected

County-wide.

4. Purpose

To consider the findings of the scrutiny task and finish group: development management (planning) and to recommend the report to the Executive for consideration.

5. Recommendations

THAT:

(a) The committee considers the report of the task and finish group: development management (planning), in particular its recommendations, and determines whether it wishes to agree the findings for submission to the Executive; and

(b) Subject to the review being approved, the Executive's response to the review be reported to the first available meeting of the committee after the Executive has approved its response.

6. Alternative Options

6.1 The committee can agree, not agree or can vary the recommendations. If the committee agree with the findings and recommendations from the review, the attached report will be submitted to the Executive for consideration. It will be for the Executive to decide whether some, all or none of the recommendations are approved.

7. Reasons for Recommendations

7.1 The committee commissioned a task and finish group to consider whether the current systems are fit for purpose to ensure that public confidence is maintained and enhanced.

The findings of the task and finish group are detailed in the attached report, along with associated recommendations, for the committee to consider.

8. Key Considerations

8.1 The task and finish group was established to consider whether the current systems in place are fit for purpose and make recommendations to the Executive regarding improvements which could be made to inform service planning and delivery going forward.

8.2 The task and finish group met six times, involving interviews with council officers, parish council clerks, planning consultants, and officers from Shropshire Council Planning Department.

8.3 The appended report identifies recommendations arising from the findings of the task and finish group.

9. Community Impact

9.1 If the committee agrees with the findings of the task and finish group, the report will need to be considered by the Executive and, depending on their decision, community impact will need to be assessed.

10. Equality and Human Rights

10.1 If the committee agrees with the findings of the task and finish group, the report will need to be considered by the Executive and, depending on their decision, equality and human rights issues will need to be assessed.

11. Financial Implications

11.1 If the committee agrees with the findings of the task and finish group, the report will need to be considered by the Executive and, depending on their decision, the financial implications of any of the recommendations will need to be assessed.

12. Legal Implications

12.1 If the committee agree with the findings of the task and finish group, the report will need to be considered by the Executive and, depending on their decision, the legal implications of implementing any of the recommendations will need to be assessed.

13. Risk Management

13.1 If the committee agrees with the findings of the task and finish group, the report will need to be considered by the Executive and, depending on their decision, the risk management implications of implementing any of the recommendations will need to be assessed.

14. Consultees

14.1 The consultees are detailed at section 4.4 of the appended report.

15. Appendices

Appendix 1 Task and finish group report: development management (planning)

16. Background Papers

16.1 None identified.

Appendix 1

Task and Finish Group Report

Development Management

(Planning)

Development Management (Planning) - Review Report

1. Chairman's Foreword

Planning and planning services are recognised as vital to the economic growth of Herefordshire. They are also key factors in supporting one of the Council's core strategic aims of securing growth of the local economy. Planning ensures that the right development happens in the right place at the right time, benefitting communities and the economy. It plays a critical role in identifying what development is needed and where, what areas need to be protected or enhanced and in assessing whether proposed development is suitable. The planning process enables sustainable development delivering the homes and jobs communities needed with decisions taken at the lowest possible level with the involvement of local people, while ensuring strong protections are in place to conserve and maintain the natural and historic environment.

In undertaking this review the task and finish study group met with local members, council officers, representatives of parish councils, planning consultants and officers from Shropshire Council planning department, all of which were knowledgeable and contributed a great deal to the review. During the review, it was clear that the planning processes in place are fit for purpose. That is to say that the required business operation(s) can be completed from start to finish using the existing processes and systems in place.

Clear processes were evident and therefore provide reassurance that the appropriate continuous improvement conditions are in place to support and deliver the planning process. A number of good ideas for improvement of the service have already been identified and the group supports the implementation of these as soon as possible.

It is however, the intention that this review will provide recommendations that will improve the future service delivery of the planning function. These recommendations are self-evident and in many cases have already been identified by the planning department as areas of improvement.

This review report should be seen as an enabling document, whereby betterment of the service should continue to be considered and if ideas are found to be capable of providing a better service, they be implemented.

Finally, I would like to thank my elected member colleagues that made up the group, for their assistance and support in the completion of this task. Thanks also go to the people interviewed in undertaking this review including officers from the council. I would particularly like to thank colleagues from the parish councils and officers from Shropshire Council Planning Department for their attendance and valued input. The candour of all these contributors to our thoughts and questions has proved to be very helpful in coming to our conclusions.

Finally, our sincerest thanks go to both Clive Lloyd Democratic Services Officer and Marc Willimont Head of Development Management and Environmental Health for their support in undertaking this task and finish review.

2. Executive Summary

2.1 It is recognised that there are talented specialist planning and enforcement officers within the Council's planning team who work extremely hard. Their abilities and the collective skills of the planning department as a whole deserve recognition for their work in what is a challenging and difficult environment.

2.2 However, as reflected in comments received during the review the administration function can be improved. This report is designed to provide a focus for this task and finish group to provide enablement.

2.3 As a result of undertaking this review the group has identified a number of recommendations contained herein to improve the delivery and performance of the planning function.

3. Composition of the Task and Finish Group

3.1 Members of the Task and Finish group were:

- Councillor BA Durkin (Vice-Chair of General Overview and Scrutiny Committee and Chair of this task and finish group)
- Councillor WLS Bowen
- Councillor ACR Chappell
- Councillor AJW Powers
- Councillor A Seldon

3.2 Lead Officer – Marc Willimont Head of Development Management and Environmental Health

3.3 Democratic Services Officer – Clive Lloyd

4. Context

Why did we set up the group?

4.1 The Development Management (Planning) and Build & Natural Environment Teams were restructured in 2013 to reflect the economic situation and income projections at that time. With the recent upturn in economic recovery, the number of planning applications has increased significantly with a consequential impact on the length of time taken to validate, register and determine applications. The upturn brings its own challenges in terms of impacts on the planning department.

4.2 As a result of the members suggestions, this task and finish group was commissioned with the following brief:

"*In view of the potential impacts on stakeholder perceptions, this task and finish group will consider whether the current system is fit for purpose to ensure that public confidence in the planning function is maintained and enhanced."*

What were we looking at?

4.3 In September 2014, a scoping statement was agreed by GOSC for the task and finish group.

The full scoping statement is attached at Appendix A.

Who did we speak to?

4.4 In undertaking this review the group spoke to the following people:

- Helen Mills – Team Leader Technical Support Planning
- Adrienne Davies – Development Manager
- Dominic Latham – I.T Commissioner
- Duncan Trumper - Business Applications Team Leader
- Susie Jones – Operational Business Systems Manager, Shropshire Council
- Graham French – Principal Planning Officer, Shropshire Council
- Councillor PGH Cutter – Chairman of Herefordshire Council Planning Committee
- Councillor JG Jarvis
- Bernard Eacock – Planning Consultant, Bernard Eacock Ltd
- James Spreckley – Planning Consultant
- Councillor Roger Page - Bromyard Town Council
- Steven Kerry – Hereford City Council Town Clerk
- Olena Barrett – Information and Administration Officer, Hereford City Council

How did we engage with people?

4.5 The task and finish group wanted to use as many different ways as possible to engage with interviewees. The methods used were:

- Face to face interviews.
- Site visits to Herefordshire Council Planning Department (Blue School House) and Shropshire Council Planning Department
- Email correspondence

What did we read?

4.6 The group was provided with background information to undertake this review. The documents that were used are appended to this report.

- Hoople, Report on Herefordshire Council Planning Services (November 2014) (Appendix B)

5. Key Themes

5.1 Through the task and finish review the following key themes were identified:

- Administration and I.T systems
- Planning Officers` workload
- Planning Enforcement
- Customer experience
- Consultation process

Administration and I.T. systems

5.2 In the provision of public services, it is recognised that there is a proportionate balance between the very highest standards of administration and sheer affordability, and the group does recognise that balanced decisions have to be taken. However, it is agreed that resource constraints should not be used as an excuse for poor service or poor administration.

5.3 Poor or inadequate administration systems can prove to be an Achilles heel in relation to the success of any service delivery. There is a recognition that the planning department must ensure that internal processes are in order if it is to provide an effective service to all stakeholders.

5.4 During the task and finish review the group heard that staff have had difficulty coping effectively with the workload and that this has had a detrimental effect on registration and validation times. The administration systems and in particular the I.T systems currently in place have been identified during the course of this study as significant contributing factors in obstructing satisfactory progress of the planning process.

5.5 The current I.T system used is primarily designed for the Environmental Health/Public Protection function and does therefore have some shortcomings in terms of the planning function. The group visited Shropshire Planning Department and was impressed with the planning specific I.T system demonstrated.

5.6 Although the processes and systems used are fit for purpose it has been identified throughout the study that the Planning Services are to some degree reliant on paper methods and with the governments digital by default programme in mind there are electronic methods that should be explored that can enhance business workflow efficiency.

5.7 The group heard that in conjunction with Hoople I.T the planning department had completed a two day review of the planning administration and processes in November 2014. From the review a number of improvements were identified.

5.8 The group has noted that recently, due to the increase in planning applications received, full day Planning Committee meetings appear to be the norm rather than the exception. The group views this development as unsustainable and could have a detrimental effect on efficient and consistent planning decisions.

5.9 Comments were received from planning consultants regarding frustrations in the inability to download or gain access to online editable application forms. The view being that this facility would reduce paper administration for both agents and the Planning Department. The introduction of a subscription service to a given planning application which would give updates to subscribers was also suggested. This facility would reduce enquiries and demands on planning staff.

5.10 The study group visited the planning offices at Blue School House in November 2014. The group noted that initial refurbishment to the building was carried out following EHTS's move from their previous location of Bath Street. Further improvements in the general facilities and décor would contribute to an improved working environment.

Recommendation 1: Since the commencement of this study Herefordshire Council has achieved 'Smarter Planning Status' and are to be commended on this, however every effort should be made to explore 'Best Practice' with neighboring authorities and to explore the implementation of a planning specific I.T administration system.

Recommendation 2: Downloadable and/or online editable applications to be developed for all planning related application forms to encourage electronic applications.

Recommendation 3: That provision of a facility for subscription service to a given planning application giving updates is developed – this would enhance the service and reduce phone calls and planning officer time.

Recommendation 4: All planning officers to be issued with tablet devices to enable updates to main files in real time. This will contribute to a smarter and more efficient way of working.

Recommendation 5: Alternative means of managing the Planning Committee work schedule be explored to ensure that efficient and consistent planning decision are made.

Recommendation 6: The group noted that improvements have been made to Blue School House; however, further improvements in terms of décor etc. would contribute to an improved working environment. External improvements including basic repairs and more prominent signage regarding corporate identity are also recommended.

Recommendation 7: The group is highly supportive of the Hoople I.T report of November 2014 and the group recommends that all findings in the report are progressed and implemented.

Planning Officers' workload

5.11 The group heard that the 2013 planning restructure resulted in a loss of 19.9 FTE staff. The subsequent upturn in economic conditions during the latter part of 2013 and early 2014 was not anticipated. This resulted in a greatly increased workload for all planning staff, not least the planning officers themselves. The consequences of the reduction in staff and the increased workload have been detrimental in terms of registration and determination periods for applications. The reduction in staff and the consequent increase in workload can result in an increase in officer stress levels and should be considered in future resource planning.

5.12 The group heard that 8.8 FTE staff have been recruited since 2013 and this has seen some improvement in performance. However, there has still been a net reduction in staff since 2013. There appeared to be the view amongst some employees that their efforts in what can be a stressful and demanding environment are not fully recognised.

5.13 During the review it was noted that a number of employees within the planning function are employed on either short term or temporary contracts. It is accepted that these contracts can enable flexibility within the department however, for employee

job security and business continuity contracts should be reviewed with a view to making posts permanent.

5.14 With the recent upturn in planning activity the planning department is seeing an increase in generated income. Where appropriate this income should be redirected back into the planning service including an investment in the department to promote smarter working practices and improved I.T. systems.

Recommendation 8: A proactive approach should be taken in terms of variations in the economy and appropriate staffing levels.

Recommendation 9: All short term employment contracts to be reviewed and consideration given to them being made permanent.

Recommendation 10: Management to review skill sets and capabilities of all officers to ensure the provision of an efficient service. All planning and planning enforcement officers should attend relevant and appropriate training courses, to maintain and continue their professional competence and development.

Recommendation 11: That employees' well-being in terms of stress management should be monitored as part of the annual appraisal process.

Planning Enforcement

5.15 The group discussed a number of issues relating to planning enforcement and noted that Herefordshire Council follows government guidance contained in Planning Policy Guidance 18 (PPG18). Some authorities interpret the guidance differently which can have a bearing on the level of resources that authorities devote to enforcement activity.

5.16 The enforcement department appears to be an undervalued and 'poor' relative of the planning function. Enforcement should be viewed as a vital part of the planning process that reinforces the activities of the planners and plays a vital part in providing a credible planning 'end to end' function and ultimately gives the public confidence that any infringements are effectively dealt with in an appropriate manner.

5.17 The group considered whether the public and Town and Parish Councils understood the enforcement processes and timescales. The group was also aware that in many instances the public perception was that enforcement action was either not undertaken or that it was exceedingly slow. The group fully appreciated that it is at times not as clear cut as the public may think. It was also agreed that while local authorities have discretion to take enforcement action it should be pursued when expedient to do so, having regard to the development plan and any other material considerations.

5.18 Ward Councillors should receive timely notification of enforcement cases in their ward, however, the group suggests that this isn't always the case and this should be specifically included in planning enforcement policy/protocol. Following the identification process there needs to be a consequence or expectation of an action e.g. that the alleged infringement should be visited within agreed time frames and any further actions identified.

Recommendation 12: A planning enforcement policy/protocol be developed and implemented with 3 levels of priority

- **high, same day assessment**
- **medium, up to five working days**
- **low, up to 15 working days**

Recommendation 13: That adequate resource should be available within the planning enforcement team in order to ensure that the team has the capacity to proactively enforce planning decisions and to publicise the message that the council will robustly enforce its planning decisions.

Recommendation 14: That the member development plan should incorporate training to ensure members understand the councils' scope for action on enforcement and to equip councillors with the information they require to advise constituents without having to refer to officers.

Recommendation 15: A comprehensive planning enforcement summary report to be provided to all members on an annual basis to include a breakdown of Planning Enforcement costs.

Recommendation 16: Planning Enforcement Officers to ensure that ward members receive notification and progress activity reports on all enforcement investigations or actions in their respective wards.

Recommendation 17: Inclusion within the corporate calendar for regular in depth training and briefing session for planning committee members relating to planning and enforcement. In addition, planning and enforcement training should be available to all members at the appropriate level.

Recommendation 18: That there should be a presumption to enforce (in accordance with the principles of fairness, proportionality and the public Interest test) for all breaches of council policy and that any enforcement action should be taken in a timely way in accordance with the Council's Joint Protocol on Enforcement.

Recommendation 19: Training should be offered to town and parish council members on planning and planning enforcement at the appropriate level.

Recommendations 20: That representatives from all of the enforcement teams across the Authority meet regularly to share knowledge and good practice between the teams and learn from their collective experience and that enforcement staff are supported with training and development opportunities to enable them to build strong cases.

Customer experience

5.19 A common theme from all interviewees was a frustration in not being able to speak directly with the planning department, whether this is to planning administration staff or to the relevant planning officers, resulting in delays and inaccurate information being received. In addition, there is a lack of timely responses to emails. Although it is accepted that the most effective form of communication is in an electronic format, the personal element must not be ignored.

5.20 Where communication is received through telephone, the group heard that all calls are received by the corporate customer service team who forward these enquiries to the planning department. This system appeared confusing and ineffective for the

public. There is a Planning Helpdesk at Franklin House but it was found that there is no direct number available for this facility and again all calls are routed via the corporate customer service team.

5.21 It was noted that the council has a 'Digital by Default' strategy to maximise communications via online systems.

5.22 The group heard that recent improvements have been made to the Planning website however; there are still further gains that can be made in this area. An example being that there is no provision for a downloadable or online editable pre-application advice form which does not support the Digital by Default Strategy.

5.23 The group also heard from Planning Agents of some concern regarding the number and availability of appropriately trained specialist planning officers e.g. ecology, landscape and particularly listed buildings officers. This element of the service has become under resourced and thus not providing a sufficiently robust service.

5.24 The group heard that there were delays in responses for pre-planning advice. It was the view of the group that delays in the provision of pre-planning advice were unacceptable particularly as this is a fee paying service. It should be recognised, not just by the planning department but for all fee charging services that customers expect and should receive the service they are paying for in an efficient and timely manner.

Recommendation 21: To improve the public facing experience a dedicated phone number and email address is made available for the Planning Desk at Franklin House.

Recommendation 22: Adequate resources are made available to ensure that pre-planning applications receive the service they are paying for in a timely manner.

Recommendation 23: The impact of staffing levels for specialist officers should be continually assessed against the planning activity in the county.

Recommendation 24: A planning duty officer system similar to the Public Protection function be considered for Planning/Planning Enforcement.

<u>Consultees process</u>

5.25 The study group heard that ward members are not routinely notified of planning applications submitted in neighbouring wards. Notification does take place but only if an application is located on a ward boundary or in instances of particularly contentious applications. The notification of adjoining ward members in matters of planning applications is to be encouraged with the view that ward members should be notified of all planning applications in neighbouring wards.

5.26 The group heard that the overall postage bill for planning is considerable however it was confirmed that from November 2014 parish councils will be consulted electronically and although a mixed response has been received from parish councils no objections have been received.

5.27 It was noted that on numerous occasions no response has been received from specialist officers and that the non-response was perceived as a tacit consent to the application. Notwithstanding, each application should receive a response from all internal consultees for the sake of clarity and avoidance of doubt.

Recommendation 25: That ward members be notified in all matters of planning applications adjacent to ward boundaries.

Recommendation 26: All officers in the consultation process should be required to provide a verifiable response so that an effective decision audit trail can be followed.

6. Summary of recommendations

Recommendation 1: Since the commencement of this study Herefordshire Council has achieved 'Smarter Planning Status' and are to be commended on this, however every effort should be made to explore 'Best Practice' with neighboring authorities and to explore the implementation of a planning specific I.T administration system.

Recommendation 2: Downloadable and/or online editable applications to be developed for all planning related application forms to encourage electronic applications.

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Recommendation 5: Alternative means of managing the Planning Committee work schedule be explored to ensure that efficient and consistent planning decision are made.

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Recommendation 7: The group is highly supportive of the Hoople I.T report of November 2014 and the group recommends that all findings in the report are progressed and implemented.

Recommendation 8: A proactive approach should be taken in terms of variations in the economy and appropriate staffing levels.

Recommendation 9: All short term employment contracts to be reviewed and consideration given to them being made permanent.

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enforcement officers should attend relevant and appropriate training courses, to maintain and continue their professional competence and development.

Recommendation 11: That employees' well-being in terms of stress management should be monitored as part of the annual appraisal process.

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7. Appendices

7.1 Appendix A - Scoping Statement

7.2 Appendix B - Hoople, Report on Herefordshire Council Planning Services (November 2014)

TITLE OF REVIEW:	Development Management (Planning)

SCOPING

Reason for enquiry

The Development Management (Planning) and Built & Natural Environment Teams were restructured in 2013 to reflect the economic situation and income projections at that time. With economic recovery, the number of planning applications has increased significantly with consequential impacts on the length of time to validate, register and determine applications.

In view of the potential impacts on stakeholder perceptions, this task and finish group will consider whether the current system is fit for purpose to ensure that public confidence is maintained and enhanced.

This document outlines the scope, areas, approach and people involved in the task and finish group.

Links to strategy

The review contributes to the following objectives contained in the Council's key plans or strategies:

Corporate Plan 2013/15:

"To create and maintain a successful economy by supporting:

- *Economic growth and connectivity and*
- *The improvement in quality of our natural and built environment"*

Summary of review and terms of reference

Objectives

- To review the Development Management (Planning) system.
- To consider the relationship with the natural environment function (Conservation and Landscape) and other teams and consultees that feed into the planning application process.
- To engage with key stakeholders to gain an understanding of their experiences and perceptions.

Actions

- To examine the current system, performance and mitigations put in place.
- To identify any concerns with the current system.
- To identify best practice from other local authorities.

What will NOT be included

- The operation of the Constitution in relation to planning matters; this was subject to a previous review, the Executive response was received by the General Overview and Scrutiny Committee at its meeting on 11 February 2013 (http://go.m-gov.eu/064M4645)
- The outcomes of specific planning applications.

Potential outcomes

- To recommend to the Executive any changes necessary or areas for development to improve services to the public.

Key questions

- What is current practice for the processing of planning applications?
- Are planning and enforcement functions operating effectively and efficiently?
- What are the current structures and are there any plans for further changes?
- What is the status of relationships with other teams and consultees that feed into the planning application process?
- Are there examples of best practice elsewhere in the UK?
- Is 'full cost recovery' working to the advantage of the service?
- Are resources being supplemented fast enough to meet demand?
- Is delivery vulnerable to annual leave and sickness? What are the mitigations?
- Do officers have the skills and qualifications needed to cover the full range of expertise required within the service?
- Does the use of external consultants provide value for money and are there consequential impacts on the time taken to process applications?
- What training and support is in place to enable certain officers to multi-task? How well are multi-task arrangements working?
- Is the casework ratio for officers at a manageable level?
- Is the working environment for officers of a sufficient standard compared with other offices?
- Does the authority have sufficient resources to deal with enforcement and appeals?
- What are the public's perceptions of their interactions with the different functions?
- What are the arrangements for 'front-facing' customer service?
- Is the service easily accessible through the Council's website and other digital channels? What 'self-service' elements are available?
- What are the views of key stakeholders, including applicants, agents and parish councils?
- What information is provided or available to applicants and interested parties about the planning process?
- Can more information be provided through the council's website, particularly about the current status of planning applications?
- What is the current position with countywide policies and guidance (e.g. polytunnels, solar panels, broilers, use of agricultural buildings, and nutrient management)?
- What mitigations are in place for pending or anticipated future changes to government policy?

Cabinet Member(s)

Councillor PD Price (Cabinet Member, Infrastructure)

Key stakeholders/consultees

- Council officers.
- Service users, including applicants and agents.
- Parish councils.
- Other local authorities.

Potential witnesses

- Herefordshire Council Development Management (Planning) Team, including management representatives and officers directly delivering functions to the public.
- The other key stakeholders identified above.
- Chairman of the Planning Committee.

Research required

- Statistics and other information relating to compliments and complaints about the service.
- Comparative data and best practice examples from across other local authorities.

Potential visits

- To view the operation of individual teams within the service.
- Other local authorities.

Report on: - Herefordshire Council Planning Services.

Created from: - 2 Day review of processes and systems.

Author	Duncan Trumper – Business Applications Team Leader Email: Duncan.Trumper@Hoopleltd.co.uk Tel: 01432 260395 Mob: 07801 843934
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VERSION HISTORY

Version	Date Issued	Brief Summary of Change	Author
0.1	17/11/2014	Initial version for review	Duncan Trumper
0.2	19/11/2014	Revision for review	Duncan Trumper
1.0	21/11/2014	version for customer review	Duncan Trumper

DOCUMENT LOCATION

Document Location	File Name
F:\GIS_Operation\GIS_Management\9_SoftwareReports\	PlanningReviewPaperCivica.doc

DOCUMENT DISTRIBUTION LIST

Name	Purpose	Department/Organisation
Nick Mather	For review/comment	Hoople Ltd
Adrienne Davies	For review/comment	Hoople Ltd
Dominic Latham	For review/comment	Herefordshire Council
Marc Willimont	For review/comment	Herefordshire Council
Helen Mills	For review/comment	Herefordshire Council
Scrutiny Committee	For review/comment	Herefordshire Council

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4 Review objectives 5
5 Scope 5
6 Review Observations 7

1 Purpose of Document

The purpose of this document is to provide details of the current processes and systems that are in use by Herefordshire Council planning services as requested by the Planning services scrutiny Committee.

The document intends to give a balanced view on the current status of systems and processes within the planning services e.g. are they working well, do they need attention or could they benefit from more detailed investigation to potentially improve the way they currently operate.

The document also attempts to illustrate estimated timescales for any effort required for each observation. However these should be taken as a guide only until further detailed analysis work can be carried should it be requested.

The document is not a development plan however if one is created the contents of this document could greatly inform the setting of key objectives.

2 Key Points Summary

- From the review of processes and systems in use by Herefordshire Council's planning services department it was clear that they are fit for purpose. The definition of fit for purpose in this context is that the required business operation(s) can be completed from start to finished using the processes and systems in place.

- Although the processes and systems are fit for purpose it was identified during the review that there could be improvements made to deliver greater business efficiency in workflow and throughput of planning applications and reduce staff effort for various stages in the application processing and determination management.

- The review identified that Planning Services are still quite dependant on manual paper methods – there are electronic methods that can be utilised to make improvements in this area. The implementation and use of 1 APP (software Connector for Civica to the planning portal), redesign of the workflow and information capturing channels would make things more effective. This would align closer to the governments digital by default program. *(Planning services have already started to investigate the implementation of this connector).*

- The review identified that Planning Services are currently in the process of ensuring all registration staff are on the same level of competency which, when completed, could potentially enable processes to be put in place to reduce certain aspect of duplication in effort.

- The review observed all aspects of the planning application process, validation and determination stages and although detailed actions were not possible to define, there was enough to suggest that further investigation was required that would be of benefit to Planning Services.

- From the observations it would be a recommendation that an improvement plan is formulated to focus on the stages in which benefit to the business can realised.

- From the review of stages certain high-priority areas of improvement were identified:
    - 5.1) Performance issues with scanning solution – this had already been identified and work on this started 18/11/2014 – results of which are looking positive however further time to monitor success is required.
    - 11.1) Viewing scanned documents through Civica – this had already been identified but the review identified further information to diagnose – this is currently being investigated – further update/fix expected shortly.
    - 12.1) Dealing with representations – this is something that needs further investigation and could be considered as a priority for an improvement plan – this is may be the biggest area for improvement.

3 Background

The creation of this Document has been at the request of the Herefordshire Council Planning Services Scrutiny Committee on 10th November 2014. The Committee's requirement was to obtain information on the current Herefordshire Planning Service's systems and processes and identify if they were fit for purpose or where improvements might be possible.

Planning Services is a statutory local authority function and requires an effective solution consisting of processes, people, software and hardware to achieve its government set targets for processing Planning applications and associated management. Over the last few years planning have struggled to process, validate and determine planning applications within required timescales, potentially due to staff numbers and some of the old processes. With the current staff numbers and some modified processes it would appear that the processing of applications is now within 4 days.

A two day review was started on the 11th and 12th of November 2014 in Blue School House. The review was carried out by the following Hoople staff:

Duncan Trumper MSc (GIS & Mgmt) MCMI. Business Application Team Leader – Hoople Ltd.	Over 17 years ICT experience ranging from problem identification, business analysis, system design, through to implementation and usage. 14 years local authority experience spanning the majority of core services areas. Extensive knowledge of planning services in Herefordshire and the software solutions being utilised.
Tracey Yarnold Senior Application Specialist – Hoople Ltd.	5 years ICT experience providing operational, technical support and development of the Civica APP system and related systems for Herefordshire Council users. Total of 13 years local authority experience, a qualified Trading Standards Officer since 2003 with specialist knowledge of Public Protection functions.

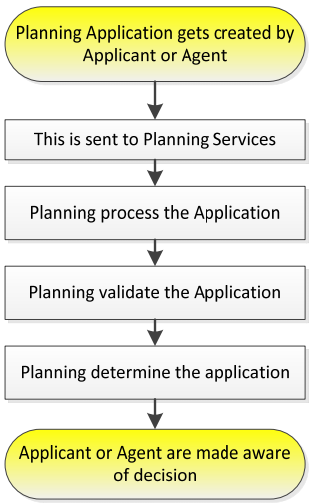
Helen Mills (Technical Support Team Leader - Building Control and Planning Services) greatly assisted the review by organising staff availability to demonstrate the processes in place and systems used. Without the support from all the Planning Services staff the review would have taken longer and not been as comprehensive.

4 Review objectives

1) Confirm Herefordshire Council planning services current planning process.
2) Identify all the IT systems being used in the planning process.
3) Identify if the current processes and systems used are fit for purpose.
4) Identify if there are areas that could be improved and classify these into small/medium/large according to business outcomes e.g. measurable improvements in throughputs, reduction in staff effort etc. Estimate effort for each identified if possible.
5) Identify areas that need further investigation for potential improvement.

5 Scope

The scope was to carry out a high level review of planning services systems and processes used in the planning application function, as identified in the following:



The review will not aim to offer solutions for all areas that could be improved but will illustrate areas for further consideration and investigation where identified.

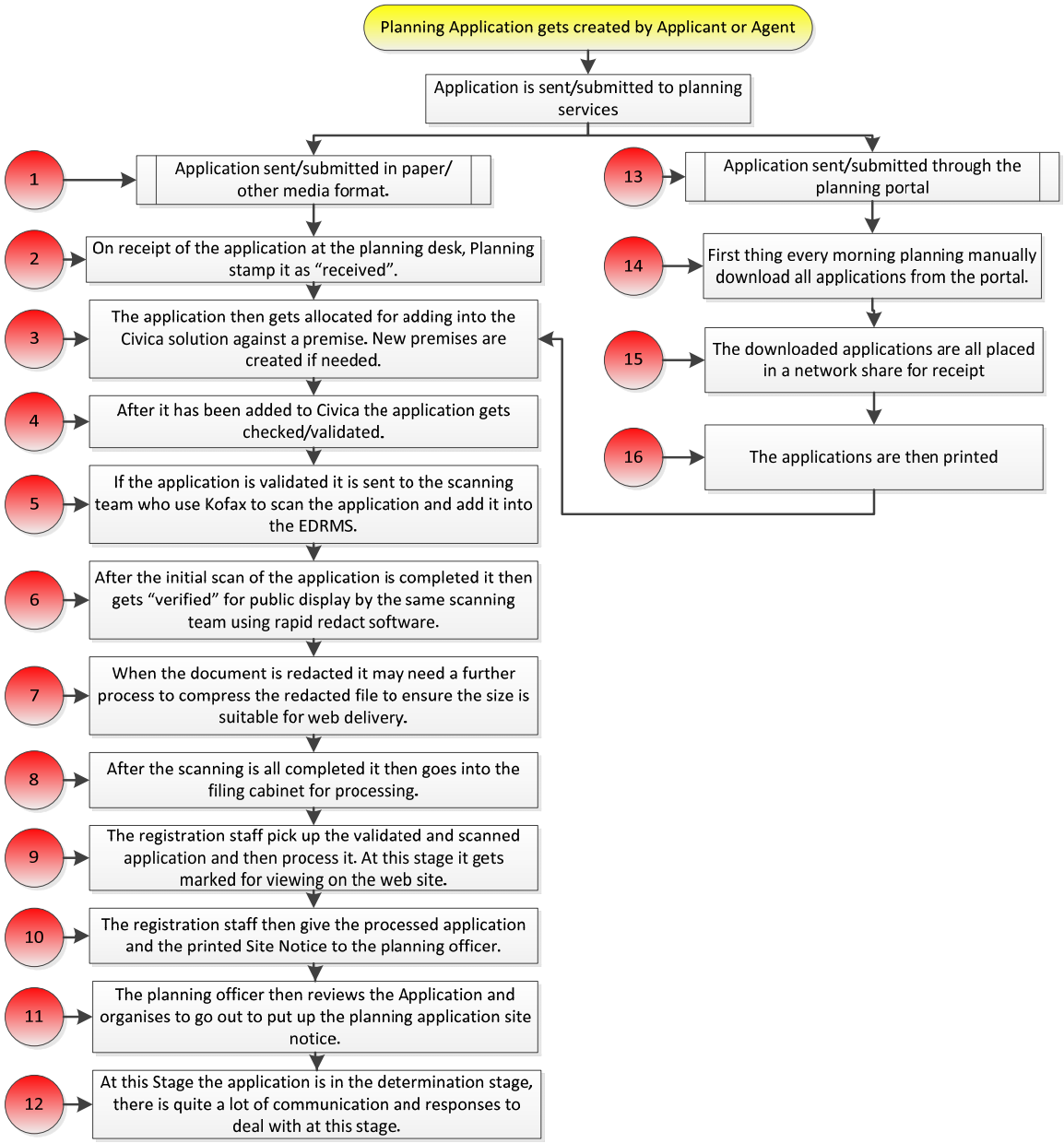
The scope included all of the following ICT related components;

System	Detail
Civica APP	The software solution that is used by planning services to manage its planning application process. It is used extensively through-out Herefordshire Council by many different business areas (waste management, Environmental Health and trading standards, conservation, transportation, housing, parks and countryside).
Civica APP plugins	These are additional elements of functionality that are outside of the standard Civica software application. They are generally purchased separately and have usually been created to address changes in government policy or direction e.g. FSSnet for environmental health / 1App for planning Applications.
EDRMS	The EDRMS or Electronic Document Record Management System is essential for storing electronic instead of paper records. It requires metadata (information about the record(s)) to be attached to records to maximise the chances of finding the right records is possible. “Wisdom” is the solution used.
Kofax	The software for the scanning solution used for the planning applications. It is able to process paper scans and electronic documents when received from the planning portal. Kofax is integrated with the ERDMS and important for getting information marked and loaded into the EDRMS.
Rapid Redact	The software used to open the full initial scanned document from EDRMS and erase specific information. It then saves a copy of this to a file share before it is again referenced in Civica and saved back to the EDRMS as a “redacted” copy for public display. This is done to ensure the councils compliance with data protection is maintained in conjunction to personal information.
Adobe Pro	The software used to open the PDF documents and compress them after using the Rapid Redact to ensure delivery over the web is possible. There is a web limit of 40mb and the rapid redact can sometimes exceed this.
Performance of solution	The review will look at the performance of the current systems used in the planning process. It will identify areas where things could aide user experience within the planning department.
FOXit	The software used to view PDF documents on the planning officer laptops. This could be useful in achieving the digital by default

System	Detail
	ideas.

6 Review Observations

The following diagram illustrates each of the stages (numbered in red circles) which were reviewed in this numeric order.



The following table specifies the stage observed (as identified in the diagram above) with the associated observations made within each. Each observation was given a status indicating if there was a potential improvement based on measurable improvements in business outcomes. The status was classified as follows; Green = Areas working well or require further investigation, Amber = small/medium potential improvements and Red = Large potential business benefit. The Action column indicates possible actions required to progress things and estimated timescales where possible.

Estimated initial timings have been included where possible, in many instances this is for initial business analysis which in turn will establish precise requirement, for which timescales can be defined.

Stage	Stage detail/observations	Status	Action
1	**Application sent/submitted in paper/other media format**		
Observations			
1.1	The current process is just receipt so not a great issue with how this is being done. There is always going to be a requirement to accommodate paper submissions. However the more paper based applications that are received the more admin requirement there is in capturing – as much as possible the applications should be channelled through the planning portal. As part of utilising electronic methods this area should see improvements.	medium	Consider utilising electronic methods and promoting their usage. Timescale not possible as consideration needs to be for end to end solution.
2	**On receipt of the application at the planning desk, planning stamp it as "received".**		
Observations			
2.1	Nothing to note in this area – it is just the receipt of files – very straight forward and works well. There is always going to be a need to mark files received either paper or electronic.		No action other than to consider how this can be automated for electronic
3	**The Application then gets allocated for adding into the Civica solution against a premise. New premises are created if needed.**		
Observations			
3.1	The process of adding new applications where addresses weren't present – appeared to require quite a lot of effort and lengthen the process. The Civica application is a premise based system meaning everything needs to be assign to a premise with a Unique Property Reference Number (UPRN)	Small/ medium	Investigation needed to analyse all aspects of the process. Initially

Stage	Stage detail/observations	Status	Action
	for linking information up.		(1 day) to undertake business analysis.
3.2	The process of adding new addresses didn't have a Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) – it was apparent from the demonstration that this could be useful due to steps involved. It would help staff with the current process and for any new method a value would be seen in staff training and business continuity.	Small	Consider creating SOP for existing. Ensure an SOP is created for any new method.
3.3	There was some scanning done at this stage which was already available in electronic format and overlapped with the later process of scanning – this was related to the site plans and sending them to the corporate address team for creation of new addresses and UPRNS.	Small	Some staff training could be required in this area – also consideration of electronic methods and processes
3.4	A spreadsheet is in existence which is being updated with the new properties – may need further analysis of process to see if this step is necessary. It is of value but it could be possible to remove this step with more efficient process design.		Included with 3.1 Further investigation needed to analyse all aspects of the process. Initially (1 day) to undertake business analysis.
4	**After it has been added to Civica the application gets checked/validated.**		
Observations			
4.1	This stage indicated a check of what was put in from previous section – some duplication of effort.		Does it need this check?
4.2	Exponare GIS was used quite extensively for looking at site information and linked information. The solution requires constraint information to be available and Ordnance Survey mapping. The ordnance survey mapping is updated regularly in line with updates and constraint information updated periodically when changes are made.		Application performs well. Consider the constraint data used and verify versions.
4.3	From demonstration it indicated that some methods of linking to Exponare involved some double entry of search elements. Exponare wasn't used through the terminal server session therefore did not automatically find the application	Small	Some training and SOP in the area could save some button clicks making

Stage	Stage detail/observations	Status	Action
	being validated.		things slightly quicker.
4.4	There seemed to be much manual overhead in this stage – printing off sheets for folders – sticking the sheets on folders – marking on these sheets with various details that were already present in the Civica application, identifying constraints and marking these on sheet.. There could be an improvement in this area – more automation could be utilised – better templates created to pull information through.	Medium	Consider current process and improve this to get quick wins – decide to fully adopt electronic methods of working and get bigger. Would need detailed discussion with planning services regarding improvement plan.
4.5	The system has an automated process to pull through consultees based on the location of the application – it is possible to include these on the applications however it would need to be reviewed to see if it would offer time savings. The value of this function is that it would bring through all possible constraints for consideration, when configured, so that none were accidentally overlooked – they could then be deleted as appropriate to application.	Small/ Medium	Further investigation necessary with vendor and planning services. Business analysis (1 day)
5	**If the application is validated it is sent to the scanning team who use Kofax to scan the application and add it into the EDRMS.**		
Observations			
5.1	There have been a number of performance issues in this area. It would appear that the original solution design and configuration was not robust enough to cope with the increase in scanning across the authority – this is currently being reviewed and re designed to add additional resource to the scanning processes and server. Although there have been manual restarts of the application this is not acceptable for an enterprise solution.	Large	Complete the improvement works on the 18/11/2014 – review to see that problem is addressed. *As at the 20th Nov – performance and reliability has significantly improved.*
5.2	Due to the hot desk process, it sometimes means you have to set up the scanner the first time you log on – not too much of an overhead	Very small	Approach Desktops for information.

Stage	Stage detail/observations	Status	Action
5.3	On adding some of the metadata for the scans it might be possible to automate some of the information in the fields as default – this is because they are generally the same each time.	Very small	Review what is technically possible to save a few clicks. Initial estimate. 1/2 day to liaise with vendor review possibilities.
5.4	The scanning solutions appeared to be quick – although it was mentioned that they were slowed down to accommodate the use of separator sheets. The separator sheets are no longer used as there was no recognised benefit. As the separator sheets are no longer used maybe the scanners can be increased in speed again through the silex boxes?	Very small	Discussion with desk.tops would be needed to see if this can be improved.
5.5	With the exception of the performance elements experienced that require restarts (5.1) – when the system is up and running it seems quite effective and easy to use.		No action
6	**After the initial scan of the application is completed it then gets "verified" for public display by the same scanning team using rapid redact software**		
Observations			
6.1	Full documents that have been scanned are then found again from Civica and the EDRMS and then redacted – this would appear to be a duplication of effort – could it be better to do the redaction at the same time as the full scan and automate some for the Civica entry into the action diary.	Medium	Review this solution and Its steps and then engage Vendors to see if redesign is possible. 1/2 day initial business analysis and liaison with vendor.
6.2	The speed of redacting the document very much depends on the length of the document – in effect this can't be automated from what has been seen – it is essential to go through the documents to remove signatures and any other personal information elements to comply with data protection and information security.		No further action.
6.3	When the original document has been redacted it sometimes appears to increase the size of the document which then needs to be compressed through another piece of software to ensure it can be delivered over the web – is there a later version of the Rapid Redact is there some solution to this with this PDF writer?	Small/ Medium	Review upgrade, escalate problem to vendor (1 day to review and escalate)
6.4	Sometimes the rapid redact doesn't operate very quickly	Small/	Review the

Stage	Stage detail/observations	Status	Action
	when it is redacting the document. Demonstration seen and acceptable however this may only occur when large scans are being processed.	Medium	system resources and the architecture with vendor. (1 day initial business analysis)
6.5	The process of getting the redacted version back into Civica is manual and would appear to have some unnecessary steps – this includes publishing it and adding the action diary entry.	Medium	Need to review the solution with vendor to see if automation could be implemented. (1 day initial business analysis)
7	**When the document is redacted it may need a further process to compress the redacted file to ensure the size is suitable for web delivery.**		
Observations			
7.1	For large pdf documents that have exceeded the 40mb size, there is a requirement to put them through Adobe to re compress them – this is to ensure they can be viewed over the web. This should not be necessary as the rapid redact creates a PDF therefore why should it need another PDF writer to compress it? Although there is no problem with this individual system, it should not be necessary to require it.	Small	Covered in 6.3
8	**After the scanning is all completed it then goes into the filing cabinet for processing.**		
Observations			
8.1	This would appear to be another pause in the process. The application then awaits being picked up for processing – having spoken to planning registration the process was designed to enable the most effective use of staff resources and competency could be made. There does seem to be a number of pauses and duplicate checks which would not be necessary if one person was doing the application from start to finish. It was high-lighted that although various people will be part of the processing there are still errors that occur in entry – this wasn't quantified but may need to be looked into should the process change.	Small/ Medium	Planning to confirm that they have considered the processes and that 1 person handling end to end validation and registration is not more efficient.
9	**The registration staff pick up the validated and scanned application and then process it. At this stage it gets marked for viewing on the web site.**		
Observations			

Stage	Stage detail/observations	Status	Action
9.1	Application is searched for in Civica for the 4th time in order to complete the application.	Small/ Medium	Included in 8.1 Planning to consider if this process is the most efficient.
9.2	Application is plotted in the MapXtreme system within Civica – reports are that it is difficult to use to plot big applications – there are some applications plotted outside of Civica and then imported back in. Although the system enables the required process – the tool is not as good as tools they have used in the past. There are options that can be considered but will need some evaluation of technical implementation and potentially costs. This could include Civica GIS, MapInfo Pro, Open source.	Small/ Medium	Review GIS technical configuration details (1 day), Approach vendor(s) for demo/and organise (1/2 day) Consider implementation path – timescales dependant on above.
9.3	Selection of consultees with the Civica system seems to be quite time consuming – could there be a more efficient method used? Could there be a selection list used to speed up and make things easier.	Very small	Consult Civica to see if the correct process is being followed or if the system can be alerted. (1/2 day to draft details and deal with Civica)
9.4	As Part of the consultation process it is necessary to advertise certain applications in the press. There is a manual task involved in cutting down the application description to ensure costs for advertising through the press is kept down. The cut down version was then entered on to press release document – Allegedly some council's don't do this. Could this be looked into by planning and potentially alternative methods/ processes used? If we are stuck with this can we automate some of the steps, could we put basic info in the press and then a link to our online news page (is this deemed press?) Nothing here may be possible due to legal requirement but worth looking at.	Small/ Medium	Planning to firstly consider Is it absolutely necessary to use the paper press? Are there smarter ways of compliance without cost. Could the work flow be changed to capture exactly what was required up front?
9.5	For some of the internal consultees e.g environmental health, conservation etc emails are being sent out which then has an email response and this then has to be captured and added to the action diary – the system could be used by the internal	Medium	Review system setup, identify training and awareness

Stage	Stage detail/observations	Status	Action
	consultees for capturing comments – this would potential speed up internal feedback and reduce some admin burden.		requirements. (Estimate 3 days configuration and training)
10	**The registration staff then give the processed application and printed Site Notice to the planning officer.**		
Observations			
10.1	There is nothing wrong with this step as it does what it needs to, however the whole process is paper based and manual – there could be more effective electronic methods used. This could be considered as part of a whole electronic methods piece of work.		Consideration of using electronic methods in conjunction with 4.4.
11	**The planning officer then reviews the application and organises to go out to put up the planning application Site Notice.**		
Observations			
11.1	The planning officer is able to search for the application in Civica without problem – if the planning officer wants to view the scanned documents they should be able to navigate to the documents from within Civica , however they are unable to due to problems with performance in the technical solution. This reduces the application review efficiency. Although there is a work around in place it is not as efficient as it should be.	Large	Need to get the technical solution evaluated to see where the problem is and fixed – Currently this is being investigated.
11.2	The planning officers have been using FOXit for reading PDF's and using the measuring tools – they have been struggling with this application. There is an update that has recently been released which may provide some improvements. If this solution is going to be utilised in the electronic methods of working it needs to be suitable. This is free to use but this may be why there are problems	Medium	Evaluate upgrade, if not suitable look at what else is on the market to satisfy requirements. (1 day to evaluate upgrade and identify alternatives). Ideally needs to be considered in conjunction with 4.4
11.3	The Planning officers take site pictures, come back in the office and down load these, then email them to admin staff to add into Civica against the application and the EDRMS	Medium	Evaluation of the processes and test feasibility of

Stage	Stage detail/observations	Status	Action
	solution. – could we not have a loader where they can load them directly and automation occurs? This would reduce admin and duplication of effort please increase throughput.		designing a loader. That works in conjunction with Civica and the EDRMS. (1 day business analysis) (Technical solution design TBC based on above)
12	**At this stage the application is in the determination Stage, there is quite a lot of communication and responses to deal with at this stage.**		
Observations			
12.1	Dealing with representations appears to take quite a bit of effort to deal with – 1 staff member spends the majority of their working week dealing with emails and other comments obtained from web feedback – this would appear to be the biggest area in which improvements could be made. This could utilise system design with the web call guides which could capture information and insert these straight into Civica. It could look at dealing with all consultees if the system was design correctly. 9.5 above touched on the internal consultees feed back.	Large	Although the process works this is a status red as it could possibly result in major savings in effort. Further detailed work is required in this area to move things forward. Again could be part of 4.4 comments for electronic methods.
12.2	If the feedback could be channelled to go directly into the Civica solution it may enable some efficiency around the redaction process – if the work flows could be design it could save some time as it will only capture the information that is essential.	Medium	Further investigation on the technicalities is required to see where and how improvement could be made. (2days initial business analysis)
12.3	Feedback from parishes seems to be inconsistent in both format and response methods – again work flows could be considered and a single method for all could be considered. The contents of 12.1 apply to this for consideration	Medium	Further investigation on the technicalities is required to see

Stage	Stage detail/observations	Status	Action
			where and how improvement could be made. (2days initial business analysis)
12.4	For some emails received there is effort required to copy and paste this in a word document to then be saved to the EDRMS – question why the planning services department have been instructed to work this way from records management. Are there tools available that would enable them to work more efficiently with emails and their storage and redaction.	Small/ Medium	Further analysis required (1day business analysis) to see if improvements to processes and systems can be made. Need to approach record management for initial feedback
13	**Application is sent/submitted through the planning portal.**		
Observations			
13.1	Applications are sent through the planning portal which is the national preferred route and they are already in electronic format. Although electronic documents are in place from the planning portal, utilisation of these appears to be very weak at present. This is the direction in which things are moving and can be used to gain efficiency in the business by reduced admin, quicker processing and reduction in some current tasks. Further effort in this area is required to implement electronic methods and promote the usage.	Medium/ Large	Consider current process and improve this to get quick wins – decide to fully adopt electronic methods of working and get bigger. Would need more detailed discussion with planning services regarding improvement plan.
14	**First thing every morning planning manually download all the applications from the portal.**		
Observations			
14.1	Manually down loading these applications takes time and this task should be replaced by the installation and configuration of the 1 APP connector – this automates the download and insert into Civica Application which in turn offers the business greater efficiency. The application would need to have a workflow to process the incoming applications but this is	Medium	Purchase Civica consultancy for installation and configure the 1 App connector,

Stage	Stage detail/observations	Status	Action
	likely to be far easier and quicker than paper copies		
14.2	It is unclear on how the 1 APP will deal with the electronic documents – it could be feasible to develop an automated process to load the applications through the action diary and the EDRMS.		Review the 1 APP process and investigate with EDRMS vendor and Civica to see if there are automation methods possible.
15	**The downloaded applications are all placed in a network share for receipt,**		
Observations			
15.1	This area only seems to be used as a holding place before the application is then printed and follows the normal paper application route – this adds to the current processes by dealing with applications in this way – there needs to be a review of what this can do as an initial load into the Civica and EDRMS could be possible.		Although the methods of working will change when the 1 APP connector is put in place, there should be greater usage of this area. Further investigation needs to take place.
16	**The applications are then printed**		
Observations			
16.1	This defeats the whole objective of digital by default – the electronic ways of work need to be focussed upon in this area. Planning are already looking at tablets, 1APP connector and this will all help to get rid of this process – resulting in greater efficiency.	Medium	Consider current process and improve this to get quick wins – decide to fully adopt electronic methods of working and get bigger. Would need more detailed discussion with planning services regarding improvement

Stage	Stage detail/observations	Status	Action
			plan.
16.2	There is quite a bit of printing which takes place in planning – again with the implementation of electronic methods this should cease.	Medium	Consider current process and improve this to get quick wins – decide to fully adopt electronic methods of working and get bigger. Would need more detailed discussion with planning services regarding improvement plan.

Herefordshire Council

MEETING:	**General Overview and Scrutiny Committee**
DATE:	**10 June 2015**
TITLE OF REPORT:	**Work programme and task and finish groups**
REPORT BY:	**Governance services**

1. Classification

Open.

2. Key Decision

This is not an executive decision.

3. Wards Affected

County-wide.

4. Purpose

To consider the committee's work programme for the year and to allocate activities to task and finish groups, as deemed necessary.

5. Recommendations

THAT:

(a) the draft work programme (Appendix 1) be noted, subject to any amendments the committee wishes to make;

(b) a task and finish group on the smallholdings estate be established to undertake the work outlined in the draft scoping statement (Appendix 3) and the membership be confirmed; and

(c) a draft scoping statement be prepared for a task and finish group on football provision for consideration by the committee at a future meeting.

6. Alternative Options

6.1 It is for the committee to determine its work programme to reflect the priorities facing Herefordshire. The committee needs to be selective and ensure that the work programme is focused, realistic and deliverable within existing resources.

7. Reasons for Recommendations

7.1 The committee needs to develop a manageable work programme to ensure that scrutiny is focused, effective and produces clear outcomes.

8. Key Considerations

Draft work programme

8.1 The work programme needs to focus on the key issues of concern and be manageable allowing for urgent items or matters that have been called-in.

8.2 An initial draft work programme is attached (Appendix 1). The draft has been informed by a preliminary discussion with the Chairman and Vice-Chairman and will remain under continuous review during the year.

8.3 In particular, members' attention is drawn to a proposed additional meeting on Tuesday 27 October 2015 to consider the Community Infrastructure Levy Draft Charging Schedule. The anticipated timetable is as follows:

- Preliminary Draft Charging Schedule (DCS) out for consultation August 2015
- Review of representations September 2015
- Produce DCS October 2015
- Finalise DCS November 2015
- Examination early January 2016

8.4 Should committee members become aware of issues please discuss the matter with the Chairman, Vice-Chairman and the Statutory Scrutiny Officer.

8.5 A criteria flowchart is used to consider the rationale for reviewing each topic (Appendix 2).

Task and finish groups

8.6 The committee can allocate tasks drawn from the work programme to a task and finish group. It is for the committee to confirm an outline scope including, as a minimum, the composition of the group, the desired outcomes and what will not be included in the work.

8.7 It is proposed that a task and finish group on the smallholdings estate be established to 'inform the executive on options / recommended actions to ensure the council is optimising its return from its smallholding estate'. A draft scoping statement is attached for consideration by the committee (Appendix 3). It is proposed that the group be chaired by Chairman of the committee and the membership include the Vice-Chairman and three other members. The committee is invited to confirm the membership.

8.8 Arising from the issues discussed by the committee at its February 2015 meeting, in relation to Review of Lease Restructuring with Hereford United (1939) Ltd (minute 53 of 2014/15 refers), it is suggested that a task and finish group on football provision be established. It is recommended that a draft scoping statement be prepared for consideration by the committee.

8.9 The Chairman has suggested the need for some scrutiny activity in relation to the Hereford racecourse be undertaken during the year. It is suggested that this be reviewed upon the completion of the other task and finish groups above.

8.10 Some work had been started to inform a task and finish group on digital strategy but progress was limited in 2014/15, due to other task and finish group activity. Therefore, it is

suggested that a seminar be arranged for committee members to understand the current position and explore whether any specific scrutiny activity is still required.

Briefing notes

8.11 It is essential that committee agenda are manageable, so briefing notes are provided to committee members on matters that are for information only. For example, further updates on progress with Executive responses to committee recommendations will be circulated in this way.

Seminars / workshops

8.12 Again to ensure that business is transacted as efficiently as possible, some topics may be dealt with through member seminars or workshops. As identified in 8.10 above, it is suggested that issues around digital strategy be explored through a seminar initially.

8.13 It is also intended that, arising from the recommendations of the task and finish group (minute 62 of 2014/15), a seminar be held on Balfour Beatty Living Places to update members on contract performance.

Forward plan

8.14 The forward plan, as at 2 June 2015, is attached for information (Appendix 4).

9. Community Impact

9.1 The topics selected for scrutiny should have regard to what matters to residents.

10. Equality and Human Rights

10.1 The topics selected need to have regard for equality and human rights issues.

11. Financial Implications

11.1 The costs of the work of the committee will have to be met within existing resources. It should be noted the costs of running scrutiny will be subject to an assessment to support appropriate processes.

12. Legal Implications

12.1 The council is required to deliver an overview and scrutiny function.

13. Risk Management

13.1 There is a reputational risk to the council if the overview and scrutiny function does not operate effectively. The arrangements for the development of the work programme should help mitigate this risk.

14. Consultees

14.1 The Chairman and Vice-Chairman meet on a regular basis to consider the work programme.

15. Appendices

Appendix 1 Draft work programme

Appendix 2 Topic selection criteria flowchart

Appendix 3 Draft scoping statement for task and finish group on smallholdings estate

Appendix 4 Forward plan (as at 2 June 2015)

16. Background Papers

16.1 None identified.

Appendix 1

General Overview and Scrutiny Committee: Draft Work Programme 2015/16

Possible agenda items

Wednesday 21 July 2015 at 10.00 am	
Responses to committee recommendations on school examination performance	To receive responses to recommendations made by the committee on 10 March 2015.
Executive responses to task and finish group report on development management (planning)	To receive the Executive responses to recommendations made by the task and finish group (subject to confirmation by the committee on 10 June 2015).
Task and finish group: football provision	To consider a draft scoping statement for a potential scrutiny task and finish group.

Tuesday 8 September 2015 at 10.00 am	
Education capital investment strategy	Further to the overview provided to the committee on 10 March 2015, to receive an update on the development of the strategy.
Home to school transport	To receive an update on home to school transport provision.
Task and finish group report on smallholdings estate	To consider the findings of the scrutiny task and finish group.

Tuesday 27 October 2015 at 10.00 am (additional meeting)	
Community infrastructure levy	To consider the Draft Charging Schedule.

Tuesday 17 November 2015 from 10.00 am (the budget presentation is received by the overview and scrutiny committees jointly, followed by formal meetings of each committee)	
Budget 2016/17	To consider the budget proposals for the next financial year.
Corporate plan	To consider the updated corporate plan.

Tuesday 19 January 2016 at 10.00 am	
School examination performance	To consider school performance for summer 2015.
Community safety update	To consider current community safety issues in Herefordshire.

Tuesday 8 March 2016 at 10.00 am
Tuesday 10 May 2016 at 10.00 am

Task and finish groups

It is suggested that the following task and finish groups be considered:	Status:
Smallholdings estate	A draft scoping statement is submitted for consideration by the committee on 10 June 2015.
Football provision	It is intended that a draft scoping statement be submitted for consideration by the committee on 21 July 2015.
Racecourse	To be considered later in the year, subject to the completion of the above task and finish groups.

Briefing notes

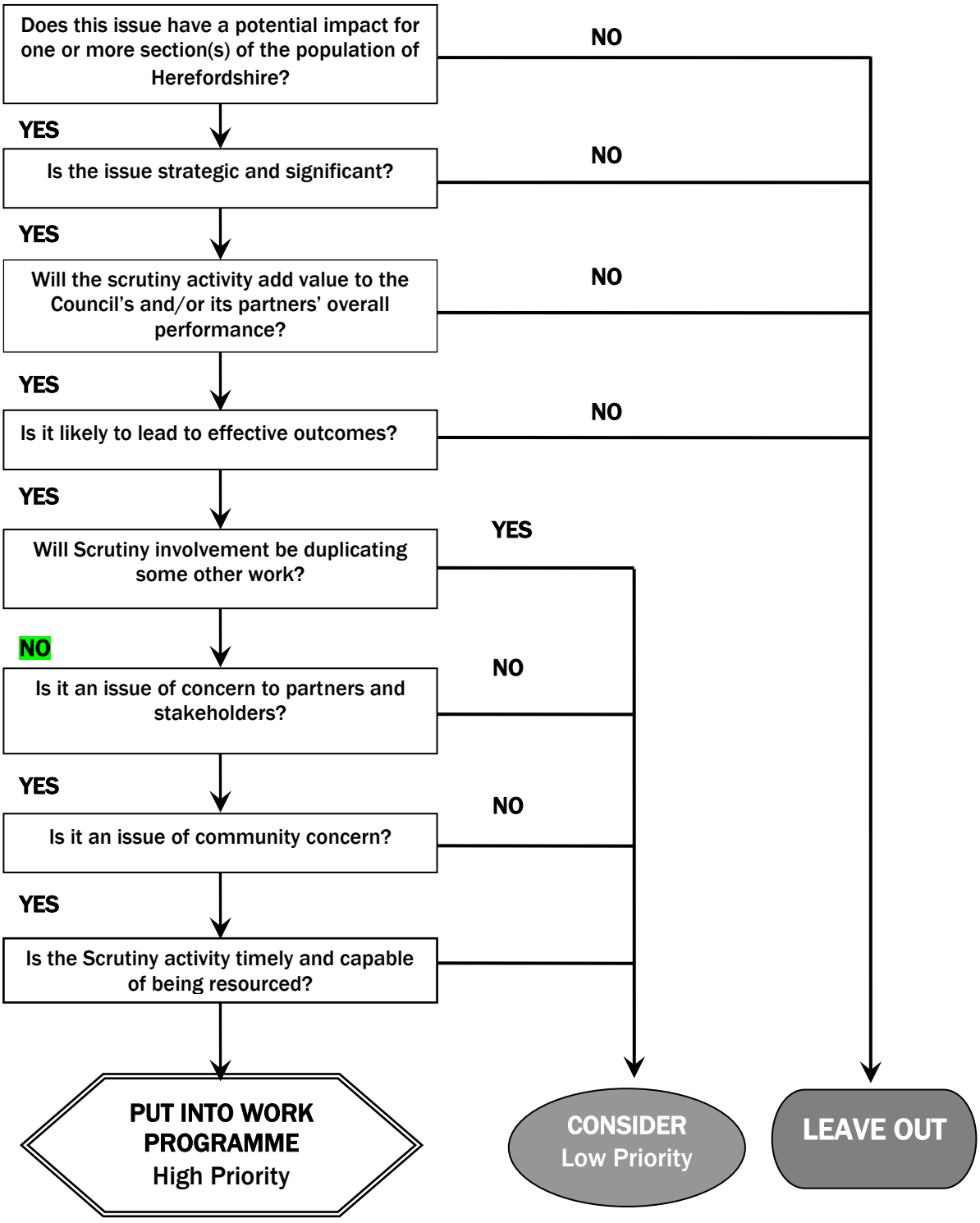
The following topics shall be dealt with via briefing notes for committee members:	Status:
Update on the Executive responses to the task and finish group report on Balfour Beatty Living Places	A briefing note to be prepared by the end of November 2015.
Update on the Executive responses to the task and finish group report on Development Management (Planning)	A briefing note to be prepared by the end of January 2016.

Seminars / workshops

It is suggested that the following be dealt with through a seminar or workshop for committee members:	Status:
Digital strategy (To understand the current position and explore whether any specific scrutiny activity is still required)	To be confirmed.
Balfour Beatty Living Places (Arising from the recommendations of the task and finish group, to update members on contract performance)	To be confirmed.

Appendix 2

Topic selection criteria flowchart



Herefordshire Council Smallholdings Review

Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Title of review	Smallholdings estate
Scope	
Reason for enquiry	To inform the executive on options/recommended actions to ensure the council is optimising its return from its smallholding estate
Links to the corporate plan	The review contributes to the following objective's contained in the Herefordshire corporate plan and other key plans and strategies: • Making best use of the resources available to us in order to meet the council's priorities (includes money, buildings, IT, information) • Being transparent about our resources • Creating and maintaining a vibrant and healthy economy
Summary of the review and terms of reference	Summary: This review is to identify options for the long term future of the council's smallholding estate and to make recommendations to the executive to increase the value delivered to the wider community of Herefordshire.
	Terms of Reference: • How does the estate contribute to the delivery of the council's statutory functions and corporate priorities • How is the estate performing in support of wider corporate objectives • How the council can maximise and sustain the delivery of its statutory functions from the smallholdings estate
What will NOT be included	• Consideration of options for individual holdings and tenancies • Development sites already identified/ disposals already under consideration
Potential outcomes	• Understanding if/how the smallholdings estate is supporting wider corporate priorities and statutory functions • Understanding the cost of holding and managing the smallholdings estate and the opportunity cost of doing so • Using the smallholdings estate to optimise outcomes for the wider community of Herefordshire
Key questions	To consider: • What does the smallholdings estate comprise • What benefits are delivered to Herefordshire residents through its smallholdings estate • What are the financial implications of retaining the smallholding estate against the capital/development opportunities realised by its disposal • What are the options to maximise the benefits from the smallholdings estate to the wider community of Herefordshire • What will be the impact of those options
Cabinet Member	Cllr H Bramer (Cabinet Member Contracts and Assets)
Key stakeholders / Consultees	• Tenant Farmers • Tenant Farmers Association • National Farmers Union • Countryside Land & Business Association

	• Herefordshire Young Farmers • Rural Hub / Holme Lacy • Ward Members • Major landowners • Herefordshire citizens • Developers (housing and/or employment)?
Potential witnesses	1. Tenant Farmers meeting 2. Key stakeholder meeting
Research Required	Best Practice in comparable shire authorities / County Farms Market analysis / marketability of estate Performance of smallholding estate
Potential Visits	Selected holdings with the agreement of the tenants
Publicity Requirements	Launch of Review and consultation During Review Publication of Review and its Recommendations

Outline Timetable (following decision by the Overview & Scrutiny Committee to commission the Review)	
Activity	*Timescale*
Confirm approach, Terms of Reference, programme of consultation/research/provisional witnesses/meeting dates	10 June 2015
Collect current data available for circulation to Group for first meeting of the Group	To 10 June 2015
Collect outstanding data	
Analysis of data	
Commence consultation process	
Final confirmation of stakeholder meetings	
Carry out stakeholder meetings	
Agree programme of site visits as appropriate	
Undertake site visits as appropriate	
Coordinate and analyse consultation returns	
Final analysis of data and stakeholder evidence	
Prepare options/recommendations	
Present final report to Overview & Scrutiny Committee	8 September 2015
Present options/recommendation to Cabinet	
Cabinet response/decision	
Monitoring of implementation of agreed recommendations	

Group Members	
Chair	Cllr WLS Bowen
Support Members	Cllr MJK Cooper
Support Officers	Helen Beale, Tony Featherstone, (Jane Lowrie)

Decision Date	Decision Month	Decision Maker	Directorate	Portfolio Holder	(SURNAME FIRST) Councillor / Officer Name	Issue Type	Report Title	Description	(SURNAME FIRST) Report Writer
01-Jun-15	June	Cabinet Member - Transport & Roads	Economy, Communities & Corporate	Economy, Communities & Corporate	Cllr Rone	Non Key	**B42134 Copse Cross Street, Ross On Wye - Review of Priority Give Way**	To review the existing unofficial priority give way system along Copse Cross Street, Ross On Wye and consider the appropriate way forward to address the highway issues at this location	Evans, Bruce
01-Jun-15	June	Officer	Economy, Communities & Corporate		Geoff Hughes	Non Key	**Disposal of plot S2 within the Enterprise Zone at South Magazine, Rotherwas**	To seek the approval of the Corporate Director ECC to the disposal of development land on the Enterprise Zone at South Magazine	Pearce, Mark
01-Jun-15	June	Officer	Economy, Communities & Corporate		Ball, Richard	Non Key	**Solar Photovoltaics - Evidencing Investment**	To authorise the Head of Environment & Waste Services to invest capital allocated for the solar photovoltaic (PV) project	Vaughan, Richard
01-Jun-15	June	Officer	Economy, Communities & Corporate		Hughes, Geoff	Non Key	**Award of enforcement officer contract**	To award a three year contract, at a statutory provision cost, to enforce the recovery of bad debts in relation to council tax, business rate and parking fines	Rushgrove, Josie
03-Jun-15	June	Cabinet Member Contracts & Assets	Economy, Communities & Corporate	Economy, Communities & Corporate	Cllr Bramer	Non key	**To consider options in relation to legal disputes with a former contractor**	Seeking authorisation to commence and defend legal proceedings arising from a previous contract.	Norman, Bill
09-Jun-15	June	Officer	Economy, Communities & Corporate		Helen Coombes	Non Key	**DraftSight Purchase**	Request for purchase of 2D drawing application	Jozsef Turza
10-Jun-15	June	Officer	Economy, Communities & Corporate		Hughes, Geoff	Non key	**ESG Procurement**	To approve procurement strategy and commence procurement of construction contract	Lane, Mairead
10-Jun-15	June	Officer	Economy, Communities & Corporate		Geoff Hughes	Non Key	**Stretton Sugwas Closed Landfill Renewable Energy**	To seek approval to appoint a delivery partner to assess the feasibility of a solar farm project on the Stretton Sugwas closed landfill site, and if feasible for the delivery partner to develop this into a community energy project delivering community, financial and environmental savings	Vaughan, Richard
11-Jun-15	June	Cabinet	Economy, Communities & Corporate	Corporate Services	Cabinet	Non Key	**Quarterly Performance Report**	To review peformance	Ball, Richard
11-Jun-15	June	Cabinet	Economy, Communities & Corporate	Corporate, Strategy & Finance	Cabinet	Non Key	**Financial Outturn 2014/15**	To report on the revenue, capital and treasury management outturn for 2014/15	Robinson, Peter
11-Jun-15	June	Cabinet Member Economy & Corporate Services	Economy, Communities & Corporate	Economy & Corporate Services	Cllr Powell	Non key	**Fastershire Broadband Delivery**	Delivery of broadband	Natalia Silver
11-Jun-15	June	Officer (TBC)	Economy, Communities & Corporate	Economy & Corporate Services		Non Key	**Changes to hire fees for Town Hall and Shire Hall**	price changes	Nikki White
12-Jun-15	June	Cabinet Member Health & Wellbeing	Adults & Wellbeing	Health & Wellbeing	Cllr Morgan	Non Key	**Herefordshire Tenancy Strategy 2012-2015**	To review and update current Strategy in accordance with the Localism Act 2011 (s.150). The Strategy sets out matters to which the registered providers of social housing for its district are to have regard in formulating policies.	Jackson, Christa
12-Jun-15	June	Cabinet Member Health & Wellbeing	Adults & Wellbeing	Cabinet Member Health & Wellbeing	Cllr Morgan	Key	**Learning Disability Community Health Service**	To approve the change in contractual arrangements for the council's funding of this service provided by 2gether NHS Foundation Trust.	Nick Griffiths

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13-Jun-15	June	Cabinet Member Contracts & Assets	Economy, Communities & Corporate	Contracts & Assets	Cllr Bramer	Non Key	**Approval of support for Courtyard Centre for the Arts Capital Development Scheme**	To give approval of Council support for Courtyard Centre of the Arts Capital Development Scheme	Ligema, Mick
17-Jun-15	June	Cabinet Member Health & Wellbeing	Adults & Wellbeing	Cabinet Member Health & Wellbeing	Cllr Morgan	Non Key	**Pharmaceutical Needs Assessment 2015-2018**	PNA is a tool to inform the HWB on current provision of pharmaceutical service, as per HWB duty stated in the Health & Social Care Act 2012). Requires sign off.	c/o Unny, Latha - North West Commissioning Support Unit (NWCSU)
17-Jun-15	June	Cabinet Member Health & Wellbeing	Adults & Wellbeing	Cabinet Member Health & Wellbeing	Cllr Morgan	Non Key	**Understanding Herefordshire**	Annual refresh of the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (2015). Requires sign off.	Latha, Unny
17-Jun-15	June	Cabinet Member Transport & Roads	Economy, Communities & Corporate	Cabinet Member Infrastructure	Cllr Price	Non key	**High Town Refurbishment Scheme**	To approve scheme for consultation	Lane, Mairead
17-Jun-15	June	Cabinet Member, Coporate Strategy & Finance	Economy. Communities & Corporate	Economy, Communities & Corporate	Cllr Johnson	Non key	**Realising the commercial potential of the Enterprise Zone's broadband network**	To seek the approval of the Cabinet Member Corporate Strategy & Finance to proposals for the commercialisation of the EZ's broadband network	Pearce, Mark
18-Jun-15	June	Cabinet Member Corporate Strategy & Finance	Economy, Communities & Corporate	Corporate, Strategy & Finance	Cllr Johnson	Non Key	**Social Value Statement**	To secure member approval for a council 'Social Value Statement'	Welsby, Wayne
23-Jun-15	June	Officer	Adults & Wellbeing		Coombes, Helen	Non key	**Herefordshire Allocation Policy for Affordable Housing Implementation Progress Report**	Progress report on the implementation of the Allocation Policy and to propose some minor amemdments associated with the implementation of the policy	Connon Trea
24-Jun-15	June	Cabinet Member Health & Wellbeing	Adults & Wellbeing	Cabinet Member Health & Wellbeing	Cllr Morgan	Key	**Rose Garden - Extra Care Future provision**	Award of the extra care contract at Rose Gardens, following the procurement of a remodeled service via a competitive tender process	Lloyd, Laura
28-Jun-15	June	Cabinet Member Contracts & Assets	Economy, Communities & Corporate	Contracts & Assets	Cllr Bramer	Key	**Disposal of land within the Enterprise Zone at the South Magazine**	To seek the approval of the Cabinet Member contracts and assets to the disposal of development land on the Enterprise Zone at the South Magazine, for the relocation and expansion of an advanced manufacturing business	Pearce, Mark
30-Jun-15	June	Cabinet Member Health & Wellbeing	Adults & Wellbeing	Cabinet Member Health & Wellbeing	Cllr Morgan	non key	**Herefordshire Market Position Statement for Adult Wellbeing 2015/16**	To get cabinet member agreement for the revised Market Position Statement	Tyler Laura
30-Jun-15	June	Officer	Adults & Wellbeing		Coombes, Helen	Non Key	**To formalise current situation with Older person Day activity providers (out of contract)**	Varying exisiting contract extension until 31 March 2016	Saveker, Graham
30-Jun-15	June	Officer	Adults & Wellbeing		Coombes, Helen	Non Key	**To formalise current situation with Learning Disability Day activity providers (out of contract)**	Varying exisiting contract extension until 31 March 2016	Saveker, Graham
30-Jun-15	June	Officer	Adults & Wellbeing		Coombes, Helen	Non Key	**To formalise current situation with Physical Disability Day activity providers (out of contract)**	Varying exisiting contract extension until 31 March 2016	Saveker, Graham
30-Jun-15	June	Officer	Adults & Wellbeing		Coombes, Helen	Non Key	**To formalise current situation with Residential Scheme Livability provider (not incontract)**	Varying exisiting contract extension until 31 March 2016	Saveker, Graham

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01-Jul-15	July	Cabinet Member Health & Wellbeing	Adults & Wellbeing	Cabinet Member Health & Wellbeing	Cllr Morgan	Key	**Re-procurement of learning disability services**	Award of the care and support contract(s) for learning disability services, following the procurement of a remodeled service via a competitive tender process	Lloyd, Laura
01-Jul-15	July	Cabinet Member Health & Wellbeing	Adults & Wellbeing	Cabinet Member Health & Wellbeing	Cllr Morgan	Key	**Care and Support contract extension for learning disability services**	Approve a waiver to the 31st Mach 2016 with the current provide Midland Heart for the care and support contract, learning disablbility services	Lloyd, Laura
01-Jul-15	July	Cabinet Member Health & Wellbeing	Adults & Wellbeing	Cabinet Member Health & Wellbeing	Cllr Morgan	Non Key	**Approval to undertake a mini-competition under the Northern Consortium's framework in respect of bathroom adaptations.**	To obtain approval to conduct a mini-completition under the lot 2 of the Northern Consortium's framework, in order to select a preferred provider in respect of bathroom adaptations which are funded via a grant from the council's Home Improvement Agency.	Christa Jackson
01-Jul-15	July	Officer	Adults & Wellbeing		Helen Coombes	Non-Key	**To vary the current contract with the Learning Disability provider Aspire Living Ltd for residential accommodation at Chatsworth Road and Markyes Close.**	To vary the current contractual arrangement with the Learning Disability provider Aspire Living Ltd, for the provision of residential accommodation for learning disability clients; to bring this into line with the choice directive and similar residential contracts.	Saveker, Graham
01-Jul-15	July	Officer	Children's Wellbeing		Hughes, Geoff	Non-Key	**Teaching Trade Union Facilities Time**	To provide a standardised approach to facilities time payments for teaching trade union representatives and to remove the historic situation of three trade union representatives being employed on council contracts to carry out this role	Baird, Chris
02-Jul-15	July	Cabinet	Adults & Wellbeing	Cabinet Member Health & Wellbeing	Cllr Morgan	Non Key	**Understanding Herefordshire' - the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment.**	To note and use the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment for Herefordshire as the overarching primary evidence base of need for organisations, the Health and Wellbeing board, and other key partnerships, to determine key local priorities. Understanding Herefordshire will be a shared resource for commissioners and other decision makers, such as the clinical commissioning group, the local authority and key players in the LA area (community organisations and service providers).	Unny, Latha
02-Jul-15	July	Cabinet	Children's Wellbeing	Young People & Children's Services	Cllr Lester	Key	**Herefordshire Integrated Early Years Strategy (0-5 yrs)**		
02-Jul-15	July	Cabinet	Children's Wellbeing	Young People & Children's Services	Cllr Lester	Key	**Commissioning and re-provisioning of children's services - children's centres**	To secure approval to commission and/or as appropriate re-provide children's centres and associated service	Granthier, Philippa
02-Jul-15	July	Cabinet Member Transport and Roads	Economy, Communities & Corporate	Cabinet Member Transport and Roads	Cllr Rone	Key	**Public realm budget contract**	To consider gain share from contract.	Rooney, Sean
02-Jul-15	July	Officer (TBC)	Economy, Communities & Corporate	Contracts & Assets	Officer	Non key	**Approval for prudential borrowing for Halo for Bromyard Capital Scheme**		Ligema, Mick
08-Jul-15	July	Cabinet Member Health & Wellbeing	Adults & Wellbeing	Cabinet Member Health & Wellbeing	Cllr Morgan	Non Key	**Rose Garden - Extra Care Interim Contract**	Approve a 10 month interim contract with the current provide Extra Care Charitable Trust (ECCT) until March 2016.	Lloyd, Laura
09-Jul-15	July	Cabinet Member - Infrastructure	Economy, Communities & Corporate	Economy, Communities & Corporate	Cllr Price	Key	**Rotherwas Rail**	To consider whether or not to progress feasibility on the Rotherwas Rail proposal and draw down up to £125k from Council reserves	Burgess, Steve
09-Jul-15	July	Cabinet Member - Infrastructure	Economy, Communities & Corporate	Economy, Communities & Corporate	Cllr Price	Key	**Introduction of On Street Parking Charge for Hereford Central Area**	To consider whether or not to progress a formal consultation on a scheme for on street parking charges in Hereford	Burgess, Steve

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13-Jul-15	July	Cabinet Member Health & Wellbeing	Adults & Wellbeing	Cabinet Member Health & Wellbeing	Cllr Morgan	Key	**Contract Award for Substance Misuse Service**	The purpose of the report is to secure approval of the contract award for the delivery of the Substance Misuse Service for Herefordshire	Hallam, Clive
15-Jul-15	July	Cabinet Member Contracts & Assets	Economy, Communities & Corporate	Contracts & Assets	Cllr Bramer	Key	**Disposal of Bath Street Offices**	To approve the disposal of the former Bath Street Offices	Featherstone Tony
15-Jul-15	July	Cabinet Member Contracts & Assets	Economy, Communities & Corporate	Contracts & Assets	Cllr Bramer	Key	**Disposal of land to the HWFRS**	To approval the disposal of land to HWFRS for the construction of a new fire station	Featherstone Tony
23-Jul-15	July	Cabinet	Economy, Communities & Corporate	Contracts & Assets	Cabinet	Key	**Review of Small Holdings**	To apprise Members of the outcome of the Smallholdings Review undertaken by Fischer German and to seek approval for the recommendations contained therein	Featherstone, Tony
23-Jul-15	July	Cabinet Member Contracts & Assets	Economy, Communities & Corporate	Economy, Communities & Corporate	Cllr Bramer	Key	**Relocation and Co-location of Hereford Customer Services**	To consider the relocation of Hereford Customer Services along with other services based at Franklin House, to co-locate with other providers	Featherstone, Tony
11-Sep-15	September	Cabinet	Adults & Wellbeing	Cabinet Member Health & Wellbeing	Cabinet	Key	**Housing Strategy 2015-2018**	To approve Housing Strategy 2015-2018	Sandie Rogers
03-Dec-15	December	Cabinet	Children's Wellbeing	Young People & Children's Services	Cabinet	Non Key	**Herefordshire Safeguarding Boards Business Plan and Annual Report**	To inform Cabinet of progress made towards the implementation of the Safeguarding Board Business Plan and Annual Report	Roughton, John
May TBC	May	Cabinet Member - Infrastructure	Economy, Communities & Corporate	Economy, Communities & Corporate	Cllr Price	Non Key	**Solar Photovoltaic Proposal for Stretton Sugwas Landfill Site**	To seek approval to appint a New Leaf to assess the feasibility of a solar farm project on the Stretton Sugwas closed landfill site	Vaughan, Richard
June TBC	June	Audit & Governance		N/A	N/A	N/A	**Progress report on 2014/15 Internal Audit Plan**		Gooding, Jacqui
July TBC	July	Cabinet Member - Infrastructure	Economy, Communities and Corporate	Transport & Roads	Cllr Price	non key	**Review of off-street car park charges and provision**	Agree a price increase to existing tariffs in council car parks and review and agree council car parking provision	Jenner, Chris
September TBC	September	Cabinet	Children's Wellbeing	Children's	Cabinet	Key	**Early Intervention Strategy and Outcomes Plan**	To approve the Early Intervention and Outcomes Plan	Granthier, Phillipa
October TBC	October	Cabinet	Adults & Wellbeing	Cabinet Member Health & Wellbeing	Cabinet	Non Key	**Local Account**	To receive a copy of the Local Account for sign off, following discussion at DLT, Leaders Briefing and HOSC	Harris, Paul
November TBC	November	Cabinet	Economy, Communities & Corporate	Cabinet Member - Contracts & Assets	Cabinet	Key	**Commissioning & Commercial Strategy 2015-18**	To approve new commissioning & mmercial strategy 2015-18	Welsby, Wayne