



Committee and Date

Council

26th September 2013

Item

10

Public

**COUNCILLOR STEVE CHARMLEY
PORTFOLIO HOLDER: ECONOMIC GROWTH AND PROSPERITY**

1.0 Recommendations

That Council approves the Portfolio Holder Statement.

2.0 The specific portfolio purpose is:

- To create the best possible conditions in order to foster business growth in Shropshire, creating new private sector jobs, improved average wages and increased competitiveness.
- To use our public protection powers and capacity to redesign and maintain a fair, legal and highly responsive trading environment for business, always striving to maximise the economic potential from wealth generating businesses in the county.
- To lead redesign of how the council commissions outcomes in the North of Shropshire, based on customer demand, working with partner organisations resulting in action that is better, quicker and cheaper.
- To lead on the Council's relationship with the voluntary and community sector through the Shropshire VCS Assembly working with the other portfolio holders with commissioning responsibilities, both area and thematic, to identify opportunities the sector can play in effective commissioning.

3.0 Marches Local Economic Partnership (LEP)

- 3.1 The Marches Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) includes the Council areas of Shropshire, Herefordshire and Telford and Wrekin. It was launched in 2010 to create the conditions for economic vitality and sustainable employment across the sub-region. The LEP is led by an executive board with 70/30 private/public sector representatives and is chaired by a leading business figure, Graham Wynn OBE.

- 3.2 The national role of LEP's is growing with an increased lead in driving economic growth including a remit to co-ordinate housing, infrastructure and skills.
- 3.3 The Government has placed LEPs at the centre of its vision for economic growth requiring them to develop EU Investment Strategies and Strategic Economic Plans. These key documents will need to be concluded by March 2014. Major funding will be allocated alongside these strategies including the allocation of approximately £98 M of EU funds (2014-2020) for the Marches LEP.
- 3.4 Shropshire Council continues to take a lead role in co-ordinating the LEP and has also taken accountable body roles. The key accountable body role is for the delivery of the £8.1M Marches Development Fund (Growing Places Fund). A number of major development projects have been supported including a Precision Engineering Centre at Harper Adams University. £2M has also been secured for Rural Redundant Buildings Grants to aid renovation in rural areas.
- 3.5 It is clear that LEP's will be the route for funding economic growth and Shropshire needs to sustain a dynamic role in the crucial partnership. Shropshire's influence is guided by the Shropshire Economic Growth Strategy 2012-2026.

4.0 Shropshire Economic Growth Strategy 2012 – 2026

- 4.1 Shropshire Council in partnership with Shropshire Business Board has co-produced the Shropshire Economic Growth Strategy 2012- 2026 which is aligned with the Shropshire Local Development Framework. It ensures that all parts of the Council are working in harmony to drive Economic Growth. The delivery of this Strategy is private sector led; with Champions from the Business Board owning each action under the priorities below. There are 4 priorities within the Growth Strategy and these are:
- i. Accelerating Business Growth;
 - ii. Infrastructure for Growth;
 - iii. Stimulating our Growth Sectors;
 - iv. Our skilled and loyal workforce.
- 4.2 The updates contained within this report are presented under these 4 priority areas and contribute in part to the Economic Growth Strategy.

5.0 Accelerating Business Growth

- 5.1 The procurement sub-group of the Business Board (COGS) has expanded to cover Telford and has simplified our procurement process to allow more local SMEs to benefit from contracts. Changes to contract rules approved by Council mean that all quotes must include a local company. Local economic leverage in contracts has been made a reality with scoring introduced on this

basis. Even in a very difficult economic climate the Council has now achieved 65% of total spend is local i.e. with a Shropshire post code this is up from 62% last year and one of highest figures for all Local Authorities.

- 5.2 The outreach business support work provided to Shropshire Businesses has supported over 2000 businesses over the last 12 months. This free service provides hands on support to small businesses across the market towns and rural areas. This is accompanied by regular communications and information bulletins, signposting, grants, loans, training and growth opportunities delivering to businesses when and where they need it. For companies that have suffered large scale redundancies, there is a redundancy and recruitment action support scheme. One example is Uniq Dairy in Minsterley, where we helped to support 250 employees and already approximately 80% of these have found new jobs and 3 have set up their own business with grant help. Further work has been undertaken with HM Prison Shrewsbury and Shrewsbury Royal Mail Sorting Office.
- 5.3 We have re-profiled the business support offer to provide more online information and booking facilities to access funding, events & business mentoring. Businesses receive a monthly e-newsletter and information is transmitted more widely across social media channels.
- 5.4 The offer of free business clinics is now enhanced through ERDF funding to also provide 2 day workshops for potential new businesses. These are available across the market towns with excellent attendance by 212 businesses who obtain free business advice. Businesses can also request home visits or access online webinars or meetings via Skype, to ensure access to all businesses across our rural County. Overall customer satisfaction levels with this service are 89%. Building on this, the business support model is now delivered across the Marches; extending from Shropshire into Herefordshire & Telford & Wrekin and is part funded by European Regional Development Fund.
- 5.5 Shropshire continues to be promoted to inward investors and expanding companies within Shropshire. Examples of recent successes are Muller Dairies with the £17M investment in a new butter plant due to open this month. Mukasse Foods an SME producing African food sauces and ready meals, who were attracted to Shrewsbury and provided with a starter unit at Harlescott Barns. The Business Support Team continues to work closely with UK Trade & Industry's Investment team and with Shropshire Chamber of Commerce & Enterprise Ltd who support the current contract for exporting in the County.
- 5.6 The progress on securing the funding for the Flax Mill Maltings has been a major achievement. This year external funding exceeding £16 million has been obtained from the Heritage Lottery Fund, English Heritage and Homes and Communities Agency.
- 5.7 Bids were submitted to the European Regional Development Fund totalling over £7.5million in value. These have included projects for businesses to help them to innovate, to optimise business benefits from superfast broadband and

to also help with the costs of appointing graduates. All three business projects were approved and will operate up to June 2015.

- 5.8 The Business and Enterprise Fund (ERDF) continues to be a significant resource for businesses within Shropshire. In 2013/14, 56 businesses in Shropshire were assisted to improve performance and 42 businesses were assisted to help them start-up. The grant awarded to these businesses totalled over £300,000. Due to its success the project is requesting additional funding to extend the project up to June 2015 and to extend its geography to include Telford and Wrekin and Staffordshire.
- 5.9 Further financial assistance has been provided to companies unable to gain bank finance with Shropshire's own £1M loan fund. Shropshire is now partnering with Worcestershire to draw down European Regional Development Fund to further match this money. Already 15 companies have been provided with essential financial help totalling £275,000.
- 5.10 The new EU Programme (2014 – 2020) is offering the Marches LEP exciting opportunities to access funding that will support business growth and employment and skills in the future. £98million has been notionally allocated for the LEP. The Team has been heavily involved in successfully lobbying for Transition status that will bring benefits for Shropshire in terms of the designated funding and a higher rate of intervention.

6.0 Infrastructure for Growth

- 6.1 The Business and Enterprise Service is responsible for roads and associated infrastructure on a number of business parks and industrial estates until they are adopted by the Highway Authority. A programme of adoptions has been underway to reduce liabilities to the service. These include Shrewsbury Business Park, part of the Battlefield Enterprise Park at Knights Way, Civic Park Whitchurch, Ludlow Business Park and Craven Arms Business Park.
- 6.2 Following approval of the Master Plan, the Council agreed capital funding of £1.5m for the next phase of the Shrewsbury Business Park for the provision of roads and services in December 2012. The scheme will open up over 6 acres with the capacity to accommodate 100,000 sq ft of office space together with a 10,000 sq ft local centre generating around 600 jobs. The contract for the works is expected to be let in October 2013. Completion is due in early 2014.
- 6.3 Council investment in Phase II of Tern Valley Business II at Market Drayton has provided 13 acres of serviced employment land in 2011. The Council this year has secured an agreement with Redstart Construction Ltd to construct up to 14,000 sq ft of serviced office space for small offices and 9000 sq ft of workshops within three years of the grant of planning permission; hence speculative development in a difficult economic climate.
- 6.4 As part of our enabling role, a site at Much Wenlock (Stretton Rd) was purchased and laid out as an overflow car park to cater for tourists visiting the town arising from its Olympic connections. The land will subsequently be marketed as an employment site. In addition the Council is working in

conjunction with Enterprise South West on marketing Bishops Castle Business Park to secure future business expansion and investment.

- 6.5 The Council manages a number of properties to stimulate economic growth. The Shropshire Food Enterprise Centre is now operating at 75% (Aug 2013) occupancy with a further 3 businesses interested in taking on units there. The Council have 209 units across the county and an occupancy rate of 89%; these support more than 150 companies and 400 jobs. Maintaining income levels from our business units during the recession continues to be a challenge. The condition of some of the Council owned units is also a problematic. An independent assessment of our commercial premises in Shropshire has been undertaken to understand better supply and demand for start-up premises with a view to informing the Council on future policy. Emerging recommendations are that in some towns in very rural locations there will still be a need for the Council to act in its enabling role providing units whilst in other towns disposal of some assets may be appropriate.
- 6.6 The Market Towns Revitalisation Programme (MTRP) Phase 1 is now nearing completion with £3.5M worth of economic development investment in capital schemes. Recent approved projects include the Butter-Market scheme in Ludlow to draw together the cultural and museum offer and the funding of a Saturday market in Market Drayton.

Broadband

- 6.7 In terms of Broadband infrastructure, Connecting Shropshire (CS) completed its procurement phase in March 2013 with an announcement that a contract had been signed with British Telecommunications PLC (BT). BT is contributing £8.6m towards the deployment in “non-commercial” areas, while Shropshire Council is contributing £8.2m, with £7.84m coming from the Government’s Broadband Delivery UK (BDUK) funds. The CS programme is well placed to take advantage of learning from early ‘call off projects’. Out of 44 national projects, Shropshire is No 9.
- 6.8 The programme, when added to existing providers (BT and Virgin Media) commercial plans, aims to deliver fibre broadband access to upto 93% of premises across Shropshire. 87% of premises in Shropshire are projected to have access to broadband speeds in excess of 24Mbps. The contract includes a commitment to deliver, as a minimum, a speed of 2Mbps to all premises in the project area.
- 6.9 The CS programme will run over 9 phases, finishing in spring 2016. Each phase follows a six month period of intensive planning and surveying work. This enables refinement of deployment plans. Whilst the programme is still in its early stages, an indicative map has been created to help local people understand the plans for rolling out fibre broadband across Shropshire. The ‘high level’ map is not accurate to a premise or post code level, and will be subject to change as the programme moves forward. Updates of the map will be shared as surveys and deployment details are refined.

- 6.10 The first communities to benefit from the CS programme will be announced in autumn 2013. In total the roll-out will have nine phases which are due to be completed by the end of Spring 2016. A new phase commences every 3 months, with Phase 1 due to complete in summer 2016.
- 6.11 The CS partnership is committed to effective communication and has built a network of key stakeholders. We currently use parish and town councils to ensure all communities are briefed on the programme. In addition we are working with the Shropshire Rural Community Council who has a network of volunteers who support people to 'get on line'. This aims to compliment a dedicated team that CS are looking to recruit, who will work within all communities as the network is built. The aim of the team is to build up awareness of the programme and promote benefits that will support the Council with meeting its key objectives.
- 6.12 In order to meet Shropshire Council's aspirations for providing as much superfast broadband as possible, additional funds will need to be secured. The CS team is currently working with DEFRA to seek potential funding from the Rural Community Broadband Fund (RCBF). The RCBF is jointly funded by Defra and BDUK and provides grants to communities to establish superfast broadband in hard-to-reach areas. Although this is a relatively small fund (£20m nationally), the scheme could support some communities who are currently not projected to get fibre broadband as part of the existing contract.
- 6.13 In June 2013 the Treasury announced a further round of funding that would be made available to reach the Government's ambition to provide 95% of the UK with access to superfast broadband. CS are awaiting further details of how funding will be made available. This information is expected by autumn 2013.
- 6.14 CS is currently working with LEP partners on an ICT and Broadband task and finish group. The objective is to submit an outline strategy which will reflect digital by design in terms of service migration to digital delivery & encouraging changes in consumer patterns in accessing on-line services. Other key themes will be the desire to overcome any continuing digital barriers, and seek an aspiration across the Marches to provide fibre broadband to all business communities.

7.0 Stimulating our Growth Sectors

- 7.1 Business growth and the increase in the number of high value jobs will occur in our opportunity sectors. These are identified as follows:-
- Food and Drink manufacturing
 - Land based industries and agri-technology
 - Green economy/environmental technology
 - The Visitor Economy
 - Creative and cultural industries
- 7.2 We provide support for Environmental Technology businesses through the Marches Environmental Technologies Network and we have obtained new

- ERDF funding to extend this programme. We are now working on Green Deal and will deliver new contracts for local companies and employment and training opportunities.
- 7.3 All sectors have private sector Business Champions who are driving forward action plans to create new jobs in each sector an example of the Visitor Economy is provided below.
- 7.4 Tourism continues to be recognised as an important economic driver for Shropshire. Both the private and public sectors continue to invest at an impressive rate with over £40 million worth of projects identified within the last two years.
- 7.5 The Destination Development Partnerships continue to implement their strategies and will shortly be joined by a new Tourism Action Group in the Bridgnorth area. Visitor surveys are being carried out across the county. These provide evidence and information to assist business planning, development and marketing and to support funding bids. In The Shropshire Hills AONB a new visitor shuttle bus service called Castle Connect linked Ludlow, Knighton and Bishop's Castle and the Holiday Property Bond was successful in gaining planning permission for a major extension to its holiday base near Craven Arms.
- 7.6 In the North town tourism plans for Wem, Ellesmere and Market Drayton are in final draft form. Training for prospective bed and breakfast providers has been held in response to gaps in provision in some parts of the county. In Shrewsbury the team has worked with Destination Shrewsbury partners Shrewsbury Tourism Association and Shropshire Tourism to apply the One-Off branding to 2013 tourism publications and main destination websites. The Team worked with the Tourism Association to achieve the Confederation of Passenger Transport Coach Friendly Award in February 2013 and has supported businesses to undertake coach and group promotions to capitalise on the award. Support was provided to the organisers of the new Shrewsbury Food Festival in late June 2013 which attracted an attendance of over 10,000. The team also supports the Shrewsbury Business Improvement Steering Group.
- 7.7 Following on from the successful publicity campaign to promote Shropshire's links with the history of the Olympics, the Council was awarded a grant of £100,000 from the Arts Council Renaissance Strategic Support Fund for museums to run a campaign to attract visitors to Shropshire and The Marches. This has seen national and international journalists visiting the area and providing excellent coverage in many journals.
- 7.8 In Shrewsbury the project to convert the Music Hall and associated historic buildings into the new Shrewsbury Museum and Art Gallery has made remarkable progress in spite of the structural challenges. Inevitably the delays caused by these have attracted close scrutiny by the media but we have been proactive in explaining the reasons through regular updates, a 'behind-the-scenes' video and a new website at www.shrewsburymuseum.org.uk. This autumn sees the delicate task of

moving the collections out of Rowley's House and installation in the new galleries and spaces in the refurbished buildings. The art gallery will be capable of mounting exhibitions of national importance. The museum will act as launch point for visitors to discover the rest of Shropshire's heritage.

- 7.9 The Shropshire Hills Discovery Centre at Craven Arms has been the subject of a review of its various operations to find a more cost-effective way of providing them to visitors and local residents. This process is drawing to a conclusion and future proposals for the building will be announced shortly.
- 7.10 Shropshire Archives is also a key resource. The archives are supported by a band of volunteers who participate in the 'Volunteering for Heritage' project funded by the Heritage Lottery. To date 340 volunteers have given over 3,200 days worth of their time to catalogue more than 64,500 items, digitise over 24,700 and conserve 7,600. In financial terms they have contributed over £482,000 worth of resource to the Council. Further Arts Council funding has been secured to enable the volunteering offer to be extended to those who are unable to visit museums and archives. The new 'virtual volunteers' will be able to provide us with help from anywhere in the World using the latest technology and social media tools. The project will also provide innovative training to staff in museums in Shropshire and the region to cross sell their facilities to visitors.
- 7.11 Capital funding has been secured to establish a new store to meet the future needs of the service sharing the facility with Electoral Services. This means that current contracts for storage will cease, providing an important saving in cost for the Council, of £44,000. In addition, we have formed a partnership with a commercial operation to provide digital access to the county's parish records and other records of interest to family historians. This new facility not only provides people with much better access to the material via a subscription service but also produces a new income stream to the Council.

8.0 Our Skilled and Loyal Workforce

- 8.1 The Employment and Skills sub-group of the Business Board has produced its Strategy and Action Plan to deliver on improving skills provision and the skill levels of employees to ensure Shropshire comes out of the recession faster and is more able to take advantage of opportunities in new high growth sectors.
- 8.2 Substantial work has taken place over the year under this priority in the Growth Strategy. Initially work has concentrated on boosting the numbers of apprentices and apprenticeships offered in Shropshire and exploring the potential to establish a new Higher Education establishment.
- 8.3 A major marketing campaign has been run "One in a Million" to generate interest among employers for apprenticeships building in the 100 in a 100 days campaign last year. Secondly we ran two employer breakfast events when employers took the floor to explain how they have benefited from taking on apprentices.

- 8.4 All of which has proved very successful with Shropshire recording 764 apprentice starts compared to a target of 646 last year.
- 8.5 Chester University has completed a study in partnership with the Council and the Shropshire Business Board into the education and business need for new Higher Education/University provision in Shropshire including the likely economic impact of such a new University College.

9.0 Public Protection Service Strategy 2012/15 – Year 1 Priorities

Deliver Improved Outcomes for Local Communities

- 9.1 The focus for Public Protection in the past 12 months has been to embed the new approach and service structure and deliver an achievement and customer-focused culture. The new culture was intended to put service users at the heart of services and to deliver a programme of real and sustainable improvement in satisfaction levels.
- 9.2 The Service has faced a number of challenges during this programme. A critical one was to maintain the provision of high quality, responsive services whilst delivering major transformation and reducing costs. The need to deliver 'business as usual' whilst introducing significant change has become part of a radical approach to re-design.

Operational Priorities Year 1

- 9.3 The priorities for 2012/13 were as follows:
- Implement a new service structure to achieve savings of £660k (an increase of £160k in year from the original savings target) by reducing management costs, protecting front-line services and improving service processes to ensure services are 'fit for purpose and resilient'.
 - Plan and deliver a number of operational improvement projects and respond to service demands e.g. improve licensing services.
 - Complete a number of service and functional reviews in the following areas:
 - a. Pest Control – deliver a self-funded and sustainable service;
 - b. CCTV and Monitoring Centre services ;
 - c. Car Parking Payments; and
 - d. Road Safety and Bikeability
 - Develop and implement a cultural change model to support the delivery of a 3 Year Service Strategy, incorporating programme and project management approaches to ensure a robust and effective approach to transformation.
 - In anticipation of further financial savings explore new delivery models.

10.0 Public Protection Year 1 Priorities – Achievements/Service and Operational Priorities

- 10.1 The structure was fully implemented in November 2012 following formal consultation with managers and operational teams. This delivered the original savings target of £500k plus an additional £160k in-year savings target making a total of £660k.
- 10.2 The service delivered a number of innovative projects in addition to responding to significant demands on service areas. For example, the development of a mobile working solution for pest control services which will lead to greater efficiency, reduced operating costs and higher quality services.
- 10.3 The service review projects have been largely completed. A number of innovative solutions have been proposed which will help to reduce operating costs without compromising service quality.
- 10.4 A series of multi-disciplinary projects are underway and a leadership programme for the newly appointed management team began in September 2012. The projects, some of which are described below, are aimed at ensuring individual services are fit for purpose and resilient and thereby better able to provide the highest quality and customer value at lowest cost and optimal efficiency. We have involved a broad range of our operational officers in successfully delivering these projects in the past 12 months. Projects have been completed on Client Management, Communications and SERVQUAL.
- 10.5 A new and radical delivery model has been developed and this has resulted in the work to complete a comprehensive and detailed Options Appraisal. The options include the development of a strategic partnership/joint venture with a private sector partner; exploration of a social enterprise model, for example a staff mutual; and consideration of a regional/sub-regional collaboration or shared service.
- 10.6 In addition to the work on delivering change through projects and new priorities the service delivered against key statutory and organisation outcomes. There were many key activities during the year but the following highlights the range and complexity of some of the high profile issues that were managed in-year:-
- In response to the national horsemeat scandal in February 2013, Public Protection Officers carried out full traceability audits at 16 premises in Shropshire which process or make beef products for distribution. Some products were held until sampling proved there was no horse DNA present. Each inspection was reported back to the Food Standards Agency to contribute to their review of the issue.
 - Our Animal Health Team dealt with a number of suspected cases of anthrax in cattle on a farm (although testing after the incident revealed that it was a viral infection and not anthrax) as well as assisting several

local livestock markets in establishing special TB sales in order to provide farmers under TB restriction with a welcome opportunity to sell.

- A number of community safety initiatives have been delivered including the introduction of an operational co-located multi-agency team dealing with anti-social behaviour and a major conference on domestic violence with a number of internationally-renowned guest speakers.
- The Council successfully defended a number of court appeals against refusal of taxi licences in contravention of the adopted policy on operating out-of-area. The court upheld the Council policy and rejected the appeals resulting in improved public safety and a significant reduction in applications for taxi licences for vehicles intending to operate outside Shropshire.
- A number of contaminated land sites were investigated and remediated with support funding from Defra due to the presence of contaminants posing a risk to health including organic compounds and asbestos. These sites included a site affected by asbestos from former military use and properties in the Ludlow area that were effectively built on a former gas works where the majority of the gas works infrastructure was still intact below ground.
- Design and delivery of a new out-of-hours service to carry out inspections, surveillance, patrols and responding to urgent service requests outside core hours. This small team will respond to service demand across the whole public protection spectrum with a particular focus on noise, taxi enforcement and the night-time economy.

Organisational Development and Service Improvement

- 10.7 The review of the Public Protection Service in Shropshire has resulted in the development of a new approach and service structure to support this approach. However, further work has also been undertaken in a number of areas to help create a Service that is innovative, outcome and customer focused.
- 10.8 A programme of organisational development/service improvement projects is now underway. These projects will promote the culture change that is necessary to support innovation and help to ensure services are fit for purpose and resilient in the face of further financial savings.
- 10.9 The year 1 priorities were :
- Agile Working – ensuring a more flexible approach to service delivery based on a clearer assessment of needs and expectations – optimising the potential benefits from improved ICT. A truly innovative project with a fledgling local software company has been developed with implementation on a pilot basis in 2013. The project has wider applications and will help to make services more flexible, adaptable, accessible and responsive over the

next 12 months in addition to delivering real and sustainable improvement in cost control and efficiency.

- Process Improvement Work – focusing on quality critical processes including client management, criminal investigation, legal process and enforcement policy and practice. All processes which have an interface with customers have been mapped. This was an intensive piece of work which will help set the foundations for service re-design with the introduction of lean and efficient processes for delivering customer-focused services capable of achieving high levels of customer satisfaction
- Career Development and Succession Planning – to ensure we build for the future by retaining high quality people – this project has been transferred to become a year 2 priority.
- Learning and Development – individual learning and development plans which help to provide all staff with the necessary, skills, knowledge and experience to help deliver improved service outcomes and objectives. An interim approach to Learning and Development has been developed, but this project will be informed by completion of the work on new delivery models when an assessment of core skill sets will be made to support whichever delivery model is chosen.
- Culture Change – to create a shared vision and values for the service which focus on excellent customer, service, value for money, personal and professional development, empowerment and clear and consistent leadership and to encourage innovation. This will become a year 2 priority as it was thought too early to assess specific characteristics of the new culture which was described in the Change Strategy, given the significant structural change which took place in 2012.
- Consultation and Engagement – identifying the needs and expectations of key client groups, determining baseline satisfaction levels and seeking views on service policies and priorities. Some excellent work was done in the early part of 2012 with local residents through focus groups. Much of the feedback from these sessions was used to inform and challenge thinking around the Service Strategy which was eventually published. Further work with stakeholders and the wider business community is planned for 2013/14.
- Client Management – ensuring effective management of customer demand in order to provide accessible, responsive and high quality services for residents and businesses. This project was completed in 2012 and provided a really useful understanding of client demand across key service areas and has informed the priorities for process improvement work which began in 2012 and will continue into Year 2.
- Improving Communication – ensuring effective communication channels are in place including: Management Team Updates, Team Briefings, Awareness Days, 1:1 Meetings and Personal Development Interviews. A project team made a number of recommendations for improving

communication. Work is now underway to develop a wider external communication strategy to raise awareness of the service among local residents and businesses.

11.0 Customers

11.1 The Service engaged with key client groups in the latter of 2011 into early 2012 through a range of techniques to better understand client expectations. The approach included the use of the five core SERVQUAL Dimensions of Service Quality and provided baseline information on current levels of customer satisfaction and identified critical areas for improvement.

11.2 Customer Satisfaction has been measured using the SERVQUAL Model and will be informed by the baseline consultation exercise and the identification of customer expectations and customer value.

Baseline Expectation Levels: 2011/12

11.3 The initial pilot exercise was completed in early 2012, but further work will be undertaken in year to include a more comprehensive assessment of all service areas in order to accurately measure the baseline satisfaction levels. However, the pilot results are promising with high levels of satisfaction levels being recorded for the services areas which were sampled in the pilot project.

11.4 This work will be further developed in Year 2 as part of a wider marketing strategy for services and following the completion of new service processes which will be in during the April to September 2013. A baseline survey using SERVQUAL will then be completed in October/November 2013.

List of Background Papers (This MUST be completed for all reports, but does not include items containing exempt or confidential information)
Cabinet Member (Portfolio Holder)
Steve Charmley
Local Member
Appendices
None.