



Shropshire Council
Legal and Democratic Services
Shirehall
Abbey Foregate
Shrewsbury
SY2 6ND

Date: Tuesday, 19 February 2019

**Committee:
Cabinet**

Date: Wednesday, 27 February 2019

Time: 11.00 am

Venue: Council Chamber, Shirehall, Abbey Foregate, Shrewsbury, SY2 6ND

You are requested to attend the above meeting.

Please note this meeting will be held in the **COUNCIL CHAMBER**

The Agenda is attached

Claire Porter
Head of Legal and Democratic Services (Monitoring Officer)

Members of Cabinet

Peter Nutting (Leader)
Steve Charmley (Deputy Leader)
Nicholas Bardsley
Gwilym Butler
Lee Chapman
Steve Davenport
Robert Macey
David Minnery
Lezley Picton

Deputy Members of Cabinet

Dean Carroll
Rob Gittins
Simon Harris
Roger Hughes
Elliott Lynch
Alex Phillips
Ed Potter

Your Committee Officer is:

Amanda Holyoak

Tel: 01743 257714

Email: amanda.holyoak@shropshire.gov.uk

AGENDA

1 Apologies for Absence

2 Disclosable Pecuniary Interests

Members are reminded that they must not participate in the discussion or voting on any matter in which they have a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest and should leave the room prior to the commencement of the debate.

3 Minutes

To approve as a correct record and sign the Minutes of the Cabinet meeting held on 13 February 2019. **TO FOLLOW**

4 Public Question Time

To receive any questions or petitions from members of the public, notice of which has been given in accordance with Procedure Rule 14. Deadline for notification for this meeting is no later than 24 hours prior to the start of the meeting.

5 Member Question Time

To receive any questions of which members of the Council have given due notice, the deadline for notification for this meeting is 5.00pm on Friday 22 February 2019.

6 Scrutiny Items

To consider any scrutiny issues from Council or any of the Scrutiny Committees

7 Quarter 3 Performance Report (Pages 1 - 10)

Lead Member – Councillor Steve Charmley – Deputy Leader of Council and Portfolio Holder for Corporate Support

Report of the Chief Executive

Contact: Clive Wright tel 01743 258675

8 Review of Customer Services Face to Face Points (Pages 11 - 46)

Lead Member - Deputy Leader and Portfolio Holder for Corporate and Commercial Support

Report of the Director of Workforce and Transformation

Contact: Michele Leith tel 01743 258193

9 Nursing and Residential Beds Commissioning Arrangements (Pages 47 - 100)

Lead Member – Lee Chapman, Portfolio Holder for Adult Services, Health and Housing

Report of Director of Adult Services and Housing

Contact: Andy Begley, tel 01743 281376

10 Community Asset Transfer of Much Wenlock Youth Centre (Pages 101 - 112)

Lead Member – Councillor S Charmley - Deputy Leader and Portfolio Holder for Corporate and Commercial Support

Report of Director of Place

Contact: Mark Barrow, tel 01743 258916

11 Future High Street Fund (Pages 113 - 120)

Lead Member – Peter Nutting – Leader of the Council

Report of Director of Place

Contact: Mark Barrow, tel 01743 258916

12 Discretionary School & College Transport - Permission to Consult

Lead Member – Nick Bardsley – Portfolio Holder for Children and Young People

Report of Director of Children's Services **TO FOLLOW**

Contact: Karen Bradshaw, tel 01743 254201

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<u>Committee and Date</u>	<u>Item</u>
Cabinet	
27 th February 2019	<u>Public</u>

Quarter 3 Performance Report 2018/19

Responsible: Tom Dodds, Intelligence and Insight Manager

e-mail: tom.dodds@shropshire.gov.uk

01743 258518

1. Summary

- 1.1 This report presents Cabinet with the Council's Performance against its key Outcomes for Quarter 3 2018/19.
- 1.2 The refreshed Corporate Plan 2018/19 and the High Level Outcomes provide the shape and focus of the updated Performance Management Framework. The measures in the framework have been refined to reflect the updated strategic action plans for the coming 12 to 18 months.
- 1.3 The new framework is presented with four key outcome areas: Healthy People, Prosperous Economy, Resilient Communities and Commercial Council. The range of performance measures covers a broader range of service areas than previously reported.
- 1.4 The online performance portal has continued to be developed to present performance information to be used in conjunction with this report, and can be accessed here -

<https://shropshireperformance.inphase.com/>
- 1.5 This is part of improving access to performance information and that of data transparency. Member and user feedback will help to inform further developments of performance information, which will form part of the new IT system developments.
- 1.6 The new Corporate Plan 2019/20 to 2021/22 which sets out new priorities for the Council was agreed at Council at their meeting on the 13 December 2018. A revised framework of measures and milestones is being developed to demonstrate impact and progress against these new priorities.

2. Recommendations

Members are asked to:

- A. Consider the key underlying and emerging issues in the reports and appendices.
- B. Review the performance portal and identify any performance areas that they would like to consider in greater detail or refer to the appropriate Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

REPORT

3. Risk Assessment and Opportunities Appraisal

- 3.1 Poor performance could have implications for vulnerable people (including children) who are supported by Council services and economic growth in Shropshire. In turn, there may be significant financial, legal and reputational risk to the Council, Schools (and Academies), and partners from across the public and voluntary and independent care sectors.
- 3.2 Effective monitoring and follow-up against key measures of success provides the opportunity to manage risks and ensure that Children and Young People and vulnerable adults in Shropshire remain safe and achieve the desired outcomes. Increasingly, performance reporting will reflect the impact of commissioning decisions by the Council, linking directly with the management of contracts and building on the current approach of looking at how effective the Council is at delivering its outcomes.

4. Financial Implications

- 4.1 This report does not have any direct financial implications but presents service and financial information to support decision making. Accountable officers and senior managers may use the information to inform actions or interventions for improving service performance and the prioritisation and use of resources.
- 4.2 Full financial details are presented as part of the Financial Reports.

5. Introduction

Each of the four outcome areas contains a number of sub-outcomes with a range of associated performance measures. The frequency of the availability of the data varies from monthly and quarterly updates to annual updates. All measures, regardless of frequency will be available on the performance portal to improve accessibility to information.

Quarterly reports will be used to highlight performance exceptions and changes to measures reported annually.

The refreshed Corporate Plan was approved by Council on 17th May 2018, as a result of this the online performance portal has been updated to reflect the new measures and milestones from quarter 1 2018/19. This report has also been aligned to the new Corporate Plan, focussing on the performance of the new measures and milestones.

6. **Healthy People**

The sub outcomes for Healthy People are; Improving Public Health, Providing Appropriate Care, Children are Protected for the best Possible Start in Life, Participation in Positive Activities for Health and Well-being and Keeping People Safe.

6.1 The rate of permanent admissions of adults both aged 18 – 64 and aged 65+ into residential or nursing homes is lower (better) than the profile. Admissions for those aged 18 – 64 is similar to previous years, whilst 65+ admissions are lower. The service remains committed to enabling people to remain in their homes and maintain a decent quality of life for as long as possible. The service also confirms that it assesses the needs of each person to ensure that the right service is provided at the right time ensuring that residential and nursing care is provided at the most appropriate time.

6.2 The new Delayed Transfer of Care measure was established in April 2017. National targets have been set to reduce the number of patients who are delayed in their transfer from hospital. The aim is to reduce bed blocking to less than 3.5% of all available NHS beds.

The target for the first year (2017/18) for Shropshire Adult Social Care, set by the Department of Health, was to reduce delays attributed to social care by 60%. Performance targets for 2018/19 are to further reduce delays to less than an average of 1.3 delayed patients per day, attributed to Adult Social Care.

Performance for the year to date shows that Shropshire Council is achieving this target and is one the most improved Adult Social Care departments in England, performing within the top quartile.

6.3 The overall aim of a Child Protection Plan is to ensure the child is safe and prevent further harm. Numbers of Children with a Child Protection Plan are continually monitored to ensure children have the right support to promote welfare, health and development.

The rate of Child Protection Plans per 10,000 children aged under 18 increased between quarter 2 (40.0) and quarter 3 (47.9) – Shropshire's rate is now higher than both the Statistical Neighbour rate and England Average. (As at March 2018).

The service reports that demand has increased across all areas of the service, including demand for referrals, assessments, S47 enquires and children progressing to a child protection plan. There is a correlation between this increase and the increase in numbers of looked after children as child protection planning is often the start of a child's journey into the care of the local authority. We are currently focused on what more we can do to mitigate against and address risk so

that cases do not escalate into court proceedings and the child becoming looked after.

- 6.4 The rate of Looked After Children per 10,000 children aged under 18 has risen during quarter 3 to 61.6 from 59.8 at the end of quarter 2 2018/19. This is also a year-on-year increase against December 2017 (54.9). This places Shropshire higher than Statistical Neighbours (57.4), but remaining lower than the national average (62).

We have seen an increase in children becoming looked after over last year. Children in need of accommodation due to safeguarding concerns has continued. Those concerns range from overall neglect, physical abuse, domestic abuse within the household, substance misuse and parental mental ill health.

As such there has been an increase in the number of care proceedings being initiated during 2018/19. The majority of children entering the care system do so subject to court proceedings. All children entering care are subject to senior management approval and the relevant services closely monitor and track all children who can leave the care system.

- 6.5 Participation in positive activities is beneficial for both physical and mental well-being. Participation rates have been mainly positive with increased visitors to leisure centres, outdoor recreation sites, visitor attractions, Theatre Severn and the Old Market Hall.

There has been a continued long-term reduction in visits to libraries; when comparing the same period last year there has been a reduction in visitor numbers 912,719 for 2018/19 compared to 917,501 in 2017/18.

The annual number of visitors to visitor attractions in Ludlow, Much Wenlock, Acton Scott and Shrewsbury has increased to 189,502 at quarter 3 2018/19 compared to 172,330 at quarter 3 2017/18. Shrewsbury Museum continues to see an increase in visitor numbers. The introduction of a people counter at the Ludlow Museum and Resource Centre has also revealed a higher number of visitors than previously reported.

- 6.6 The annual number of visitors to the Theatre Severn has increased when comparing to the same period last year, quarter 3 2018/19 (189,503) compared to quarter 3 2017/18 (184,756). This increase can be attributed to a number of sell out productions. The Theatre is also making a positive contribution to the visitor economy of Shropshire with 32% of visitors continuing to come from outside of the county.
- 6.7 Keeping safe measures show that retail food and drink premises in Shropshire continue to maintain high food safety standards. Based on nationally published information, 99% of premises are rated as generally satisfactory or higher
- 6.8 As identified and detailed in previous Corporate Performance reports the number of people reported as Killed or Seriously Injured (KSI) on the roads in Shropshire has continued to increase. Whilst accident rates have remained similar the annual average over the past 3 years has increased to 170 people to be seriously or fatally injured.

A new approach to the determining of the severity of casualties was introduced in December 2015 and now relies less on the judgement of Police Officers. This has seen a national increase in the rate of reported severity. The 3-year cycle of the new reporting methodology is now complete. It is expected that the reported number of KSI will now stabilise.

It should be noted that the number of casualties does not reflect the number of accidents which have remained at similar levels throughout the period.

Performance Management Scrutiny Committee considered at detailed report on road traffic casualties at their meeting in July 2018 and recommended that a Task and Finish group be formed to review the topic. This group has now been formed and work is underway.

7. Prosperous Economy

The sub outcomes for Prosperous Economy are; Educational Achievement, Employment and Training, Employment and Income, Transports, Physical and Digital Infrastructure, Housing is provided to meet the Needs of Shropshire Residents and Developing a Prosperous Economy.

- 7.1 The provisional attainment results for 2018 are now available for reporting. Results of teacher assessments for pupils at the Early Years and Foundation stage show that 69.9% of children are achieving a good level of development. This has reduced slightly from 71.2% when compared to 2017. This compares to the West Midlands average of 69.80%, matches the statistical neighbours average of 71.2%, and is broadly in line with the level of 71.5% for England.

The percentage of eligible two-year-old children benefiting from funded education has also fallen from 77% in 2017 to 72% in 2018. This is above West Midlands average of 69%, below the statistical neighbours 80.5% and matches the England average of 72%.

The percentage of pupils achieving the expected standard at Key Stage 2 has slightly increased from 62% in 2017 to 63% in 2018; being in line with the West Midlands 63%, slightly above the statistical neighbours average of 62.2% and just below the England average of 64%.

The Average attainment 8 score measures the average achievement of pupils in up to 8 GCSE qualifications. Results for Shropshire have decreased slightly from 46.40 in 2017 to 45.80 in 2018. Results are similar to those for other areas; West Midland average of 45.20, England average of 44.50 and statistical neighbours average of 46.41.

Being young and unemployed can lead to an increase in the risk of poverty, de-skilling and social exclusion as well as cause loss of motivation and mental health problems. Current rate of claimants for Job Seekers Allowance or Universal Credit actively seeking work in Shropshire is below the regional and national averages. The claimant count for young people (aged 18 – 24) saw a continued reduction from the peak in February 2013 when there were 1,370 claimants. Since June 2015 the number of claimants has remained constant to September 2018. During the latest

quarter the number of young claimants as at December 2018 has increased by 14% (80 people) to 630. Whilst rates remain below national and regional levels, reports by business groups indicate nervousness to invest whilst there are uncertainties over Brexit along with wider global economic instability.

7.2 Satisfaction results from the National Highways and Transport public satisfaction survey were published during December 2018. Overall public satisfaction with highways and transport has decreased slightly from 53% in 2017 to 52% in 2018.

Satisfaction in many service areas showed an improvement:

- Access to services and facilities improved from 67% to 70%. This compares to the national result also at 70%.
- Public Transport satisfaction improved from 54% to 57%. However, this is lower than the national result also of 61%.
- Walking and Cycling facilities and infrastructure improved from 54% to 55%. This is similar to the national result of 54%.
- Tackling Congestion improved from 49% to 50%. This is higher than the national result of 47%.
- Road Safety improved from 52% to 54%, which is similar to the national result of 55%.
- However, satisfaction with Highway conditions reduced from 50% to 44%, this is also lower than the national result of 49%.

7.3 Highway conditions were severely affected during the winter period of 2017/18 resulting in a high number of potholes. Specialist Roadmaster machines were used to tackle the backlog. Clearance of these repairs coincided with a period of the survey and may have resulted in an understandable decline in satisfaction rates. Whilst some £6 million has been spent on the summer 2018 re-surfacing programme to help maintain and prevent future defects forming the budgetary pressures and large rural highway network present ongoing challenges to maintain standards. In addition, the Council received £7.3 million in additional funding from the Department for Transport in November 2018.

7.4 The Council's performance measures for broadband only cover premises in the Shropshire Council area where State Aid approval has been granted to invest. This is known as the Intervention Area. The area accounts for approximately half of the premises (circa 72,000) in the Shropshire Council area, and includes 3 contracts, with 2 partners, BT and Airband. All remaining areas, and new premises are the responsibility of the commercial market to deliver to, not the Local Authority. Commercial providers in Shropshire include Virgin Media, BT, and Secure Web Services.

The following contracts are in the Council's control:

- Contract 1 - (BT) deployment completed in spring 2017 and resulted in an extra 52,453 premises getting access to superfast broadband;
- Contract 2 - (BT) commenced in autumn 2016, approximately 4,000 premises are expected to benefit from this contract by 2019;
- Contract 3 - (Airband) commenced in spring 2017, and will connect 14,000 premises with superfast broadband by 2020.

At the end of all of the Council's contracts, assuming that all other commercial broadband is delivered as expected and all new premises are connected, the Council anticipates that 98% of Shropshire premises will have access to superfast broadband.

Shropshire Council continues to be fully committed to the aspirations of connecting all our premises to superfast broadband.

8. Resilient Communities

The sub outcomes for Resilient Communities are; A Clean and Attractive Environment is Maintained, Volunteering, People are Supported to Stay in their Local Communities, Adult Social Care user feedback.

- 8.1 The projected Recycling and Composting rate for quarter 3 2018/19 is 53.7%. This shows a very slight decline compared to the 54.1% of quarter 3 in 2017/18. The fall is due to reduced compostable garden waste received during this summers' period of consistently hot and dry weather.

National results for 2017/18 are now available and show that recycling rates for Shropshire are within the top quartile for English authorities.

- 8.2 Shropshire has an active volunteer community who help to provide essential support to help make Shropshire an attractive and welcoming county. Whilst reflecting only a small part of the volunteering that takes place in Shropshire the volunteer hours reported here were given to support the Outdoor Recreation service, Libraries, Archives and Visitor Attractions in Shropshire. During quarter 3 15,839 volunteer hours were provided to support services.

Adult Social Care surveys its service users every year. Results for 2017/18 were published during quarter 3 of 2018/19. 4 key measures are reported annually in this corporate report. The results compare favourably with the West Midlands region and England. Details of the following measures are updated in the performance portal.

- % of Adult Social Care users reported that they have as much social contact as they would like – within the top quartile of English authorities
- Quality of life measurement – within the top quartile of English authorities
- % of Adult social care users who feel safe - within the second quartile of English authorities
- The proportion of people who use services who have control over their daily life - within the top quartile of English authorities

9. Commercial Council

- 9.1 Revenue spend figures for quarter 3 of 2018/19 were reported to Cabinet on 13th February 2019. The forecast outturn for the current financial year is a slight overspend of £72,000 on a gross budget of £561.95m. Full details can be viewed in the papers reported to Cabinet.

- 9.2 There has been a slight increase in the number of Full Time Equivalent employee numbers, which have increased slightly from 2,532 at quarter 2 2018/19 to 2,548 quarter 3 2018/19.
- 9.3 Quarter 3 has seen a very similar number of corporate complaints compared to quarter 2, but considering data for a number of quarters suggests this is a result of natural variations (annual figures show an overall increase). Corporate complaints are predominantly linked to complaints about highways and waste management. The number of statutory children's complaints in quarter 2 was the smallest it has been for the last 7 quarters. Numbers of statutory adult complaints have also decreased.
- 9.4 The number of compliments Shropshire Council has recorded within its customer feedback system has reduced slightly in quarter 3. Whilst complaints must be formally reported in line with the Council's procedures there are no such requirements to report compliments. As a result variations in performance could be as a result of recording practice.

10. Conclusion

- 10.1 This performance report provides an update on the results achieved and the impact on delivering the outcomes for Shropshire.
- 10.2 Performance for quarter 3 of 2018/19 has generally been positive with continued improvements or stabilisation of performance.
- Adult Social Care has managed to sustain improvement levels in the timely transfer of patients from hospital to appropriate care settings.
 - Recycling rates for household waste in Shropshire are within the top quartile of performers amongst English Authorities.
 - Social care users responding to the annual survey report high levels of satisfaction with services and their quality of life.

In addition to these improvements there are challenges to be faced, and these are being managed by the relevant service areas.

- The demand on children's social care services is increasing across all service areas. This is placing additional pressure on services and budgets.
- Road casualty numbers have increased over the past 3 years following changes to recording methods. Close scrutiny of figures needs to be maintained now that the rolling 3-year cycle has ended to ensure that rates stabilise or improve.
- Satisfaction with highway conditions reduced in 2018. Actions have been taken to enable more efficient and timely repairs of potholes. The impact of actions will be monitored through maintenance inspections and 2019 satisfaction results.

List of Background Papers (This MUST be completed for all reports, but does not include items containing exempt or confidential information)

Business Plan and Financial Strategy 2018/19 – 2022/23

Corporate Plan 2018/19

Cabinet Member (Portfolio Holder)

Cllr Steve Charmley - Portfolio Holder for Corporate Support

Local Member All

Appendices <https://shropshireperformance.inphase.com/>

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Cabinet –

27th February 2019

Item

TBC

Public

Review of Customer Services Face to Face Points

Responsible Officer Michele Leith, Director of Workforce and Transformation
e-mail: Michele.leith@shropshire.gov.uk **Tel:** (01743) 254402

1.0 Summary

- 1.1 In November 2016, Cabinet approved reduced opening hours at our Customer Service Points in Shrewsbury, Oswestry, Whitchurch, Market Drayton, Ludlow and Bridgnorth in view of a 59% fall in customer numbers between April 2012 and April 2016. Reduction continues with a further fall of 25% compared to the preceding year between April 2016 and April 2017 and a fall of 15% compared to the preceding year between April 2017 and April 2018. Against this, our offices remain open in the main for 5 days a week.
- 1.2 There are also 9 smaller Customer Service Points at Bishop's Castle, Broseley, Shifnal, Albrighton, Church Stretton Town Council and the Mayfair Centre, Wem, Cleobury Mortimer and Ellesmere where customer support is contracted out with total costs of £31,500. Monthly use of these sites is very low, at times in single figures and some sites see no recorded use at all in some months.
- 1.3 A face to face service is the most expensive way to engage with customers and since 2012, customer service strategy has been to encourage the use of more cost effective channels, via telephone and more increasingly recently, online. Every year, our Customer Service Centre (CSC) helps around 250,000 residents of all ages to access the same services as those handled at face to face points and figures show that use of our new transactional web pages has more than doubled from 764,000 online sessions in 2015 to 1.6 million in 2017.
- 1.4 Pressures on Customer Services operating budgets require a critical examination of how best to continue to provide an effective service across our dispersed rural county whilst remaining within available budget. Therefore, in view of the continuing reduction in the numbers of customers using face to face offices and the availability of alternative ways of conducting the same business, we have reviewed the continuing need for this service at its current level and consulted with the public over proposals to revise service levels. Having done so, this paper recommends further staged reduction in the number of hours we directly staff our six main face to face sites and the decommissioning of support services from small rural sites that are no longer financially viable.

2.0 Recommendations

2.1 Cabinet are requested to

- agree the proposed changes to our face to face customer Services
- delegate the implementation of these changes to the Director of Workforce and Transformation, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Corporate and Commercial Support

REPORT

3.0 Risk Assessment and Opportunities Appraisal

The following risks have been identified with the proposed changes.

Risk	Mitigation plans in place
This is seen as a loss of local services	Free-to-use telephones and computers linked to CSC and main council services will still be available at the 6 main offices to support staffed service days. Delivery partners at our smaller rural offices have been offered retention of self-serve equipment so that customers can still contact the CSC or take advantage of improving online services provided through Digital Transformation.
Increased customer contact at CSC could impact on call wait times	CSC staffing is at an appropriate level to cope with the expected increase in contacts. This will be sufficient to handle the numbers using our face to face sites but with the economies of scale of a central location.
Perceived inability to meet the needs of our customers with more complex or multiple needs who may present at face to face.	The Customer Service Centre already handles First Point of Contact calls for adults and children's safeguarding and works closely with Adult Services Duty Officers, therefore already handling complex enquiries which also include those at risk of homelessness and those requiring support through welfare reforms.
Withdrawal of Customer Service staff causes a negative effect on our working partners.	The proposed development of multi-service hubs will co-locate and mutually support services who retain a face to face service. In addition, there will still be a Customer Service presence through online services and direct telephone link.
Failure to provide a service for Housing Benefit customers or those in work.	Face to face staff are only able to provide a limited service for Housing Benefit issues and are mostly required to transit supporting paperwork. Housing Benefit and Council Tax have their own contact centre, are also contactable by E mail and have an online facility for claims and changes of circumstances. Supporting paperwork is preferred via digital upload or via post.

4.0 Financial implications

4.1 Customer Services is required to contribute to the savings attributable to the redesign of the Council's single front door approved in the Financial Strategy 2018/19 to 2022/23. Final amounts achievable are currently being worked through but the proposed reduction in the face to face service, together with the decommissioning of rural support contracts and a further restructuring and reduction of Customer Services middle management are expected to achieve a considerable saving whilst still maintaining in the interim a functional and reasonable local service capable of meeting customer's needs.

5.0 Background

5.1 The Customer Strategy 2012/2013 introduced "Channel Shift" of customer contact as the active management of customers towards more cost effective alternative channels to access the services they need.

5.2 Face to face transactions are the most expensive form of doing business with customers and have therefore been actively targeted to achieve this channel shift. Longstanding installation of free to use public computers and "warm phones" directly linked to popular council services have encouraged customers towards these alternatives and have contributed to the reduction in footfall.

5.3 Following a dramatic footfall reduction after the bulk face to face renewal of Concessionary Travel passes in 2012 and 2013 when many thousands of customers attended our offices, customer numbers have continued to decline steadily with overall annual footfall in the last 5 years reducing by just over 50% as shown below. It is significant that 2017 and 2018 were also bulk renewal years for Concessionary Travel passes however customer numbers continued to fall despite this. An automated renewal process that requires no action from the majority of our customers to renew passes has contributed to this reduction and we hold this up as an example of transformation of services to their simplest form, benefitting both the customer and the council.

Year ended	April 2014	April 2015	April 2016	April 2017	April 2018
Customer numbers	70615	70825	52025	39229	33079

Appendix 1 to this report details individual statistics at each of our main offices including daily customer numbers and a profile of footfall throughout the day as well as recorded usage of the 9 small rural offices.

Customers use our face to face sites to request specific services and these have been detailed below in their order of priority also showing the alternatives that our customers could use to receive an equivalent service.

Service request	Numbers using face to face year ended April 2018	Alternative service available
Housing Benefits	11389	Revenues and Benefits have their own telephone service independent of customer services. There is an online claim application and change reporting service, paper claim forms remain available. Scans of supporting documents can be uploaded digitally or posted to the Revenues and Benefits Service.
Concessionary Travel	4528	Most renewals are automated and those that are not can usually be handled through the CSC. There is also an online application available. Support is required for small numbers of first time and disabled concession applications
Revenues	3557	Customers wishing to make payment have a range of alternative face to face methods including via Post Office and PayPoint outlets as well as via direct debit or online payment. Revenues and Benefits run their own telephone service independent of customer services.
Parking	3027	Postal permit applications and payments are accepted
Blue Badge	2116	An online application is available as are paper forms. Forms and supporting evidence are requested by post. The Customer Service Centre can check progress and answer enquiries regarding applications.
Environmental Maintenance	1548	Online and telephone reporting is available
Waste	1262	Online and telephone reporting is available and CSC staff have direct access to Veolia systems for immediate solution.
ST&R Housing	856	Online and telephone reporting available directly from ST&R Housing. ST&R encourage their tenants to set up alternative payment methods to face to face.
Housing	710	CSC handle calls from those potentially

Options		homeless backed up by Housing Options specialists who provide direct telephone advice and specialist appointments. Online registration is available.
Registrars	555	Online and telephone service available for bookings, payments or replacement certificates.
Planning	246	Online application and viewing service available. Planning specialists provide telephone advice.
Licencing	236	Postal applications supported by online payment available.

5.4 We recognise that customers may prefer to use a face to face service but we face a pressing need to operate within reducing budgets and to effect, through ongoing, considered and reasonably staged reductions and further customer education, a transfer of all contacts to more cost-effective channels that can take full advantage of developments brought about through digital transformation and which can join up council and other services in a way not previously seen.

5.5 On the expectation that telephone contacts with the CSC will increase, appropriate resourcing there will ensure that customers using our face to face sites can still speak to an adviser able to identify a wide range of needs, resolving them wherever possible, but simply through a different medium. Attaching a priority to these contacts from face to face sites and a more strategic use of the customer service workforce as demand dictates will help to ensure that our face to face customers are not excluded.

6.0 Results of public consultation

6.1 We consulted with residents between 30 July 2018 and 24 August 2018 during which a total of 280 replies were received. This represents 12% of the 2332 customers that used our offices over the period of consultation and is a slightly higher number of replies than in previous consultations.

6.2 Customers were supplied with information to explain the reduction in customer numbers, the pressures on the service and the council's preferred option for changes to opening days and times, accompanied by a set of frequently asked questions with answers. Staff at each customer service point were asked to actively engage with all customers using the service in the consultation period, explain the proposals using this information and to encourage completion of survey forms. Opinion was also sought via the online portal with appropriate publicity including via social media. Town Councils were notified and invited to comment as were our welfare reform partner organisations (Housing Associations and voluntary sector organisations) and internal council teams.

- 6.3 Customers who use the service feel strongly about its value to them. Common themes from comments made are:
- This is their preferred way of dealing with council issues, it is convenient, less formal and is more personal, a daily service is vital
 - This is the only way to engage with council services face to face, staff are very helpful and knowledgeable and take ownership of the need, they help with the complicated
 - No internet access at home or not able to use a computer and unable to travel elsewhere for service
 - Limited access or difficult to access some council services
- 6.4 Opposition to the proposals was voiced by Broseley Town Council, Church Stretton Town Council and Oswestry Town Council, Councillor Andy Boddington, Nicola McPherson, Chief Officer Mayfair Centre, and comments were also received from Councillor David Vasmer.
- 6.5 We acknowledge the concerns raised. These have been considered when looking at the number of more vulnerable customers currently needing to do business with us and the times and days therefore that staff are available in our main offices to give direct help. In our 6 larger offices, retaining directly staffed days in response to current demand would mean that staff are helping between 4 and 6 customers per hour which is on par with requirements of staff in the Customer Service Centre. Since the public consultation we have approached the delivery partners at our smaller rural sites over the possibility of them retaining the customer service self-serve equipment for local use.
- 6.6 A statistical analysis and more detailed consultation feedback is attached at Appendix 1 of this report.

7.0 Proposals for a revised face to face service

- 7.1 Consultation replies suggested that reductions in service might adversely affect older residents who preferred to use a face to face office. Whilst there is evidence supporting use of this service by older residents we also know that far larger numbers of our older residents from across the County, both from areas that do have a nearby office and from areas that do not, use the Customer Service Centre to access the same services and with a high level of satisfaction.
- 7.2 Looking at those services that older residents are most likely to access, over the same quarter, where face to face help 1800 people with Bus Pass renewals, CSC helps 2900. Where face to face helps 590 people with Blue Badge enquiries, CSC helps 2900 and where face to face helps 700 people to report highways and environmental issues, CSC helps 5200.
- 7.3 In addition, and significantly, access to services through the CSC is more seamless, providing more holistic help for vulnerable customers through working with adult's and children's services and providing help with homelessness and issues caused by welfare reform. Digital redesign and

simplification of services will not only aid those able to go online, the services provided by CSC contact advisers and the efficiency with which they will be able to handle diverse requests will also be greatly enhanced.

- 7.4 In view of the available alternatives to face to face, the proposal is to retain a reduced service at the six main offices in Shrewsbury, Oswestry, Market Drayton, Whitchurch, Ludlow and Bridgnorth in order to meet the needs of the most vulnerable. Offices will still be open across the week, the number of days where staff are on site will reduce but self-service facilities will remain available throughout the week.
- 7.5 Opening days and times have been considered against a number of factors including the need for a smaller team of advisers able to cover different offices as well as providing for the busiest days per site where possible. **Appendix 1** of this report details on a site by site basis the customer numbers and busy days and times and the resulting recommendations for changes to opening that will deliver a more sustainable service using this optimum sized team operating across multiple sites.
- 7.6 The Equality and Social Inclusion Impact Assessment in respect of these proposals is reproduced at **Appendix 2**.
- 7.7 Having originally consulted on opening times of 9 am to 4.45 pm across all main sites, the proposal for these offices, taking into account the comments raised are as detailed below.

Office	Current opening times	Proposed recommended opening times
Bridgnorth	Monday 9.30 – 5.00 Tuesday 10.00 – 4.00 Wednesday 10.00 – 4.00 Thursday 10.00 – 4.00 Friday 9.30 – 5.00	Monday Staffed 9.30 to 5.00 Tuesday Open for self-serve Wednesday Staffed 9.30 to 5.00 Thursday Building closed Friday Open for self-serve
Ludlow	Monday 9.30 – 5.00 Tuesday 9.30 – 5.00 Wednesday 9.30 – 5.00 Thursday CLOSED Friday 9.30 – 5.00	Monday Open for self-serve Tuesday Staffed 9.30 to 5.00 Wednesday Open for self-serve Thursday Building closed Friday Staffed 9.30 to 5.00
Oswestry	Monday 9.30 – 4.30 Tuesday 9.30 – 4.30 Wednesday 9.30 – 4.30 Thursday 9.30 – 4.30 Friday 9.30 – 4.30	Monday Open for self-serve Tuesday Open for self-serve Wednesday Staffed 9.30 to 5.00 Thursday Open for self-serve Friday Staffed 9.30 to 5.00
Market Drayton	Monday 10.00 – 3.00 Tuesday 10.00 – 3.00 Wednesday 10.00 – 4.00	Monday Open for self-serve Tuesday Open for self-serve Wednesday Staffed 9.30 to 4.45 Thursday Open for self-serve

	Thursday 10.00 – 4.00 Friday 10.00 – 4.00	Friday Open for self-serve
Shrewsbury	Monday 9.00 - 5.00 Tuesday 9.00 – 4.00 Wednesday 9.00 – 4.00 Thursday 9.00 – 4.00 Friday 9.00 – 5.00	Monday Staffed 9.30 to 5.00 Tuesday Open for self-serve Wednesday Open for self-serve Thursday Staffed 9.30 to 5.00 Friday Open for self-serve
Whitchurch	Monday 10.00-4.00 Tuesday 10.00-4.00 Wednesday 10.00-4.00 Thursday 10.00-4.00 Friday 10.00-4.00	Monday Open for self-serve Tuesday Open for self-serve Wednesday Open for self-serve Thursday Staffed 9.30 to 4.45 Friday Open for self-serve

7.8 Opening times and in some cases closing days for some offices are imposed by library operating times. We will take steps to ensure that access to self-service facilities in the shape of customer freephones and public computers is maximised and will look to the developing multi-service hubs as possibilities for alternative service location.

7.9 The proposal for the 9 smaller offices at Albrighton, Bishop’s Castle, Broseley, Church Stretton Town Council, Church Stretton Health and Wellbeing Centre, Cleobury Country, Ellesmere, Shifnal and Wem is to decommission the support contracts with operating partners. All partners have been approached with the offer of retaining the free phone and public computer to be maintained at Shropshire Council’s expense in order that a means of free contact remains available locally. Negotiations regarding this are continuing.

8.0 Next steps

8.1 Should these recommendations be accepted by Cabinet we will ensure a suitable lead-in period during which arrangements will be made with our working partners to minimise impact on them. Over the same timespan we will ensure that customers are aware of the changes to opening days and that access to the alternatives of telephony and online self-service is clearly signposted with appropriate instructions on use.

8.2 HR advice has been sought over the impact of these proposals on staff and an appropriate period of staff consultation will take place prior to implementing any changes. To retain expertise, alternative positions within Customer Services will be offered to displaced staff with redundancies considered where these alternatives are not considered reasonable.

8.3 As digital transformation and redesign continues, we will continue to develop new self-service channels and equipment, making it easier for our customers to do business with us and supporting the cost effectiveness of our delivery at a time of reducing resources. A project to develop more integrated self-service

terminals through which those less confident with online applications can be supported and which brings together our different communication channels in

List of Background Papers (This MUST be completed for all reports, but does not include items containing exempt or confidential information)

Agenda item 99, Cabinet February 2015: Hubs Commissioning Model

Agenda item 7, Cabinet May 2015: Future Delivery of Customer Services In Shropshire pages 19 to 26.

Agenda item 63, Cabinet October 2015: Redesigning Shropshire Council's Library Service and Customer Service Points

Agenda item 7, Cabinet April 2016: A Partnership approach in designing the future of our Local Services

Agenda item 10, Cabinet 13th July 2016, Opening Hours Across Customer Service Points

Agenda item 10, Cabinet 27th July 2016, Review of Shropshire Library opening hours

Agenda item 122, Cabinet 10 January 2018, Financial Strategy 2018/19 to 2022/23

Cabinet Member:

Cllr Steve Charmley, Portfolio Holder for Corporate Support

Local Members:

Changes to customer service points has the potential for a County wide impact affecting all local members

Appendices:

Appendix 1 - Site by site usage and recommendations for revised opening hours

Appendix 2 – Equality and Social Inclusion Impact Assessment

one place is already well progressed.



Appendix 1 –

Statistical analysis and recommendations, main office sites:

Customer consultation feedback

We consulted with our customers between 30 July 2018 and 24 August 2018 during which a total of 280 replies were received via a range of different channels. This is a response rate of 12% of the 2332 customers seen at face to face over the period of consultation.

Customers were provided with information explaining the proposals for the office and the background reasons and all face to face staff were encouraged to actively engage with customers to get them involved in the survey. A set of frequently asked questions and information was used to ensure information given to customers was consistent. Opinion was also sought via the online portal with appropriate publicity articles including via social media. All Town Councils were formally contacted via their advertised public contact E mail addresses on 19 July to inform them of the proposed changes with an invitation to comment. Delivery partners and welfare reform partner organisations such as Housing Associations and voluntary sector organisations were likewise contacted as were internal council teams.

Staff and partners report that many customers took the paperwork away to read and did not subsequently return it however it is possible that the views of some of these customers are contained in the online replies received.

The results from the consultation are shown below on an office by office basis, giving the numbers that have responded, together with a summary of any response from the Town Council or other body. The comments made by customers all follow similar themes and these have been summarised at part 6 of the main report.

The main report also contains a list of the services that customers access through face to face together with the alternative methods currently available.

Rationale: average daily customer numbers per face to face site financial year 2017-2018

Weekday/Office	Bridgnorth	Ludlow	Market Drayton	Oswestry	Shrewsbury	Whitchurch
Mon	49	39	9	25	39	10
Tue	38	34	9	24	36	9
Wed	35	32	13	26	34	10
Thurs	32	24	9	25	32	11
Fri	38	35	10	28	37	10

The tables below for each of the main offices show that there is some variation in customer footfall over the week with some days being marginally busier than others but in view of the much lower customer numbers these variations represent a relatively small number of people.

Busy times of the day tend to follow a similar pattern everywhere with a spike mid-morning, a reduction over the lunch period followed by a smaller spike in the mid-afternoon and a much more profound tailing off later in the day.

➤ **Bridgnorth Customer Service Point**

Over the last 5 years footfall at Bridgnorth Customer Service Point has reduced as shown below

Month of April	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
Customer numbers	1456	783	785	582	626

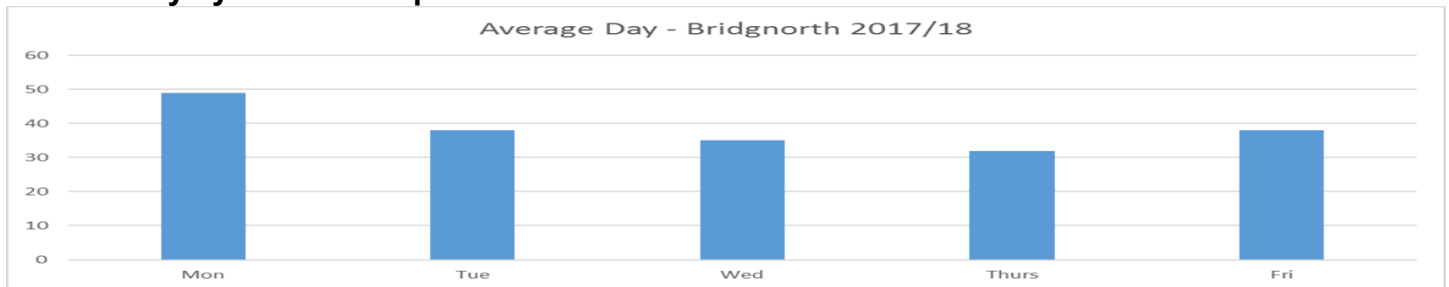
The recent introduction of bulk renewal of parking permits at year end causes an uncharacteristic spike in customer numbers during in April thereby skewing more normal footfall numbers. Therefore the yearly average of the customers attending for parking issues has been used in the April figures. The reduction in customers using Bridgnorth office has fallen by around 57% over the last 5 years.

Service requests at Bridgnorth office:

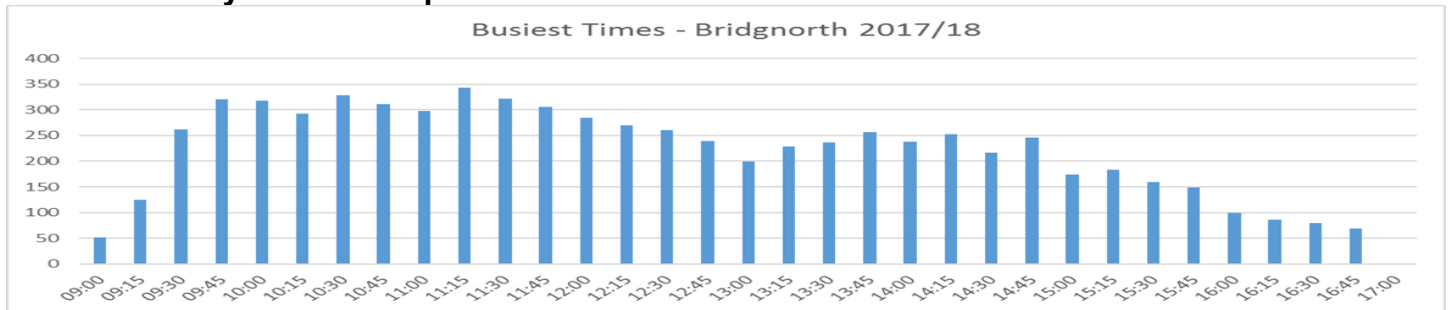
Customers use Bridgnorth office for the following reasons

Service	Average number per month	Service	Average number per month
Housing Benefits	144	Waste	18
Parking	105	Registrars	12
Concessionary Travel	90	Housing Options	8
Revenues	82	Planning	4
ST&R Housing	45	Licencing	1-2
Blue Badge	36		
Environmental maintenance	23		

Busiest days year ended April 2018



Busiest times year ended April 2018



Public consultation replies:

There were 88 replies from customers regarding the proposals for revised opening. 78 were against the proposals, 3 agreed with them and a further 7 made no comment one way or the other.

Recommendation to cabinet

Day	Current hours	Recommended new opening days and times
Mon	9.30 – 5.00	Open staffed 9.30 – 5.00
Tues	9.30 – 4.00	Open self-service – freephone and PC
Wed	9.30 – 4.00	Open staffed 9.30 – 5.00
Thurs	9.30 – 4.00	Building closed
Fri	9.30 – 5.00	Open self-service – freephone and PC
Sat	Closed	Closed
Sun	Closed	Closed
Total hours:	34.5	15 hours

➤ Ludlow Customer Service Point

Over the last 5 years footfall at Ludlow Customer Service Point has reduced as shown below

Month of April	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
Customer Numbers	736	643	609	584	602

This represents a drop of around 18% drop in customers using the face to face service.

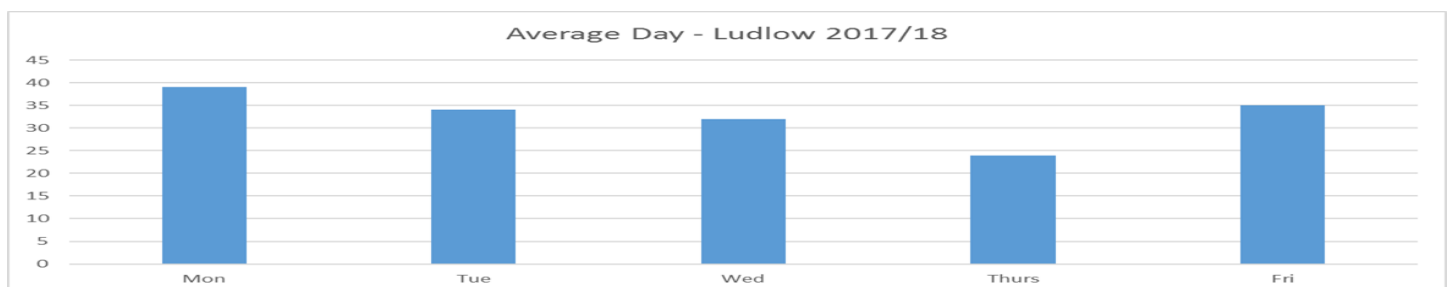
Service requests at Ludlow office:

Customers use Ludlow office for the following reasons

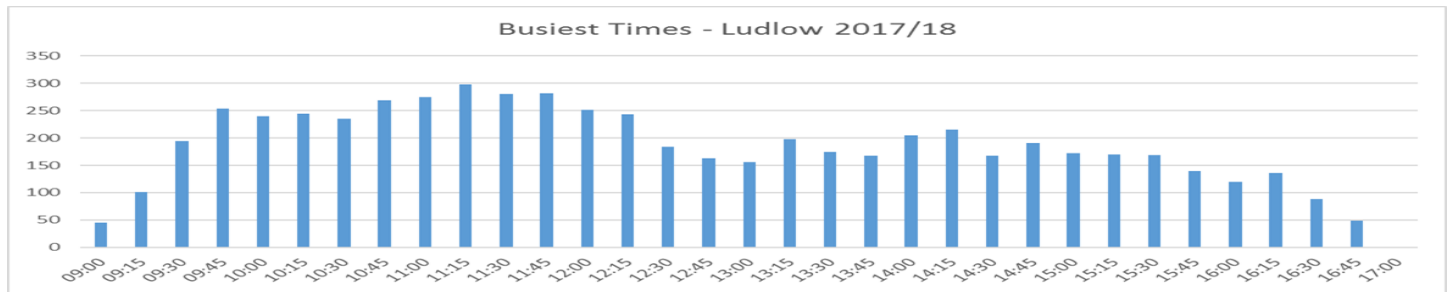
Service	Average number per month	Service	Average number per month
Housing Benefits	148	Registrars	10
Parking	90	Housing Options	7
Revenues	72	Planning	4
Concessionary Travel	66	Licencing	3
Blue Badge	27	ST&R Housing	Less than 1
Waste	27		
Environmental maintenance	27		

The busiest days of the week and the busiest times of each day are as shown below.

Busiest days year ended April 2018



Busiest times year ended April 2018



Public consultation replies:

There were 26 replies from customers regarding the proposals for revised opening, 23 were against the proposal and a further 3 made no comment one way or the other.

Councillor Andy Boddington provided a very detailed response to the consultation, arguing that Ludlow is a town with an elderly population and a significant number of vulnerable people and that whilst he was not opposed in principle to a reduction in overall hours at the Ludlow customer service point he was firmly opposed to a reduction in the number of days the customer service point is open.

Recommendation to cabinet

The recommendation for revised opening days and times is shown below, this is based partly on busy days and partly on providing optimum coverage by a more cost-effective team. In order to provide our customers sufficient access to self-service equipment we are investigating moving the service to a more appropriate venue where this can be supported.

Day	Current hours	Recommended new opening days and times
Mon	09.30 – 5.00	Open self-serve - freephone and PC
Tues	09.30 – 5.00	Open staffed 9.30 – 5.00
Wed	09.30 – 5.00	Open self-serve – freephone and PC
Thurs	Closed	Building closed
Fri	09.30 – 5.00	Open staffed 9.30 – 5.00
Sat	Closed	Closed
Sun	Closed	Closed
Total hours:	30	15 hours

➤ Oswestry Customer Service Point

Over the last 5 years footfall at Oswestry Customer Service Point has reduced as shown below

Month of April	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
Customer numbers	954	890	785	545	485

This represents a 49% drop in customers using the face to face service.

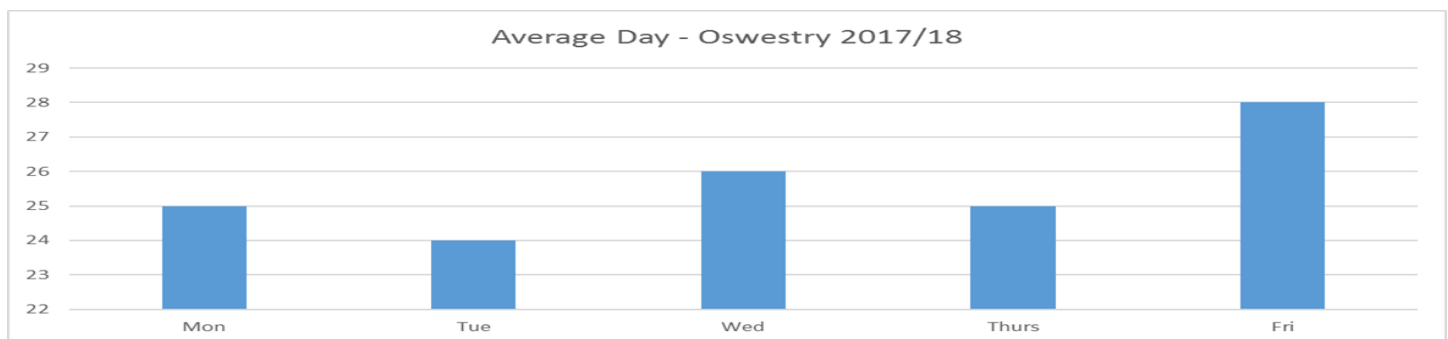
Service requests at Oswestry office:

Customers use Oswestry office for the following reasons

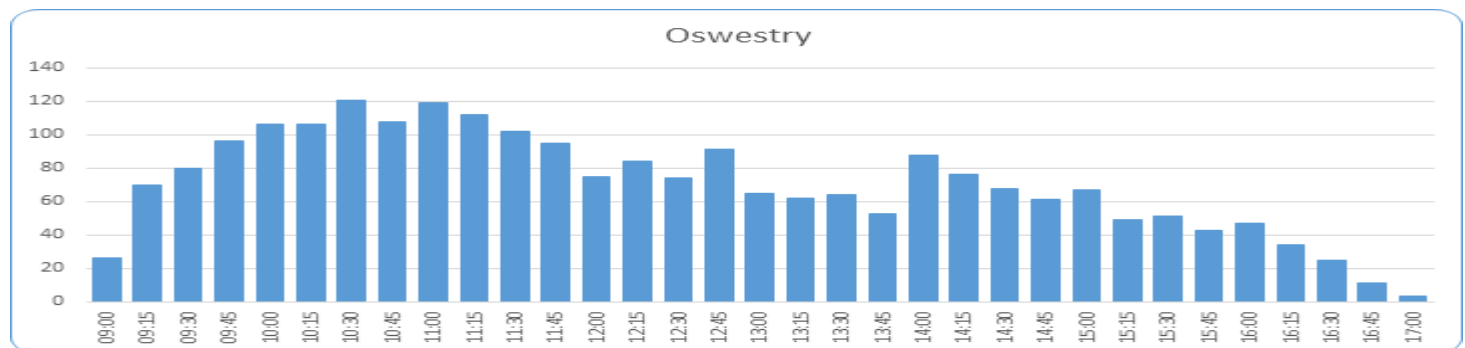
Service	Average number per month	Service	Average number per month
Housing Benefits	181	Parking	18
Concessionary Travel	67	Housing Options	14
Revenues	60	Registrars	10
Blue Badge	43	Planning	9
Environmental maintenance	39	Licencing	4
Waste	30		
ST&R Housing	26		

The busiest days of the week and the busiest times of each day are as shown below.

Busiest days year ended April 2018



Busiest times



Public consultation replies:

There were 25 replies from customers regarding the proposals for revised opening, 17 disagreed with the proposals, 2 agreed and a further 6 made no comment one way or the other.

Oswestry Town Councillors requested, and were provided with, footfall figures together with the most popular reasons for calling. In reply to the consultation Town Councillors stated that they strongly believed the service should remain as at present particularly acknowledging the information provided.

Recommendation to cabinet

The recommendation for revised opening days and times is shown below. The rationale for this is based partly on busy days and partly on providing optimum coverage by a more cost-effective team.

Day	Current hours	Recommended new opening days and times
Mon	9.30 – 4.30	Open self-serve – freephone and PC
Tues	9.30 – 4.30	Open self-serve - freephone and PC
Wed	9.30 – 4.30	Open staffed 9.30 – 5.00
Thurs	9.30 – 4.30	Open self-serve – freephone and PC
Fri	9.30 – 4.30	Open staffed 9.30 – 5.00
Sat	Closed	Closed
Sun	Closed	Closed
Total hours:	35	15 hours

➤ Shrewsbury Customer Service Point

Over the last 5 years footfall at Shrewsbury Customer Service Point has reduced as shown below

Month of April	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
Customer numbers	896	976	880	854	569

This represents a 37% drop in customers using the face to face service.

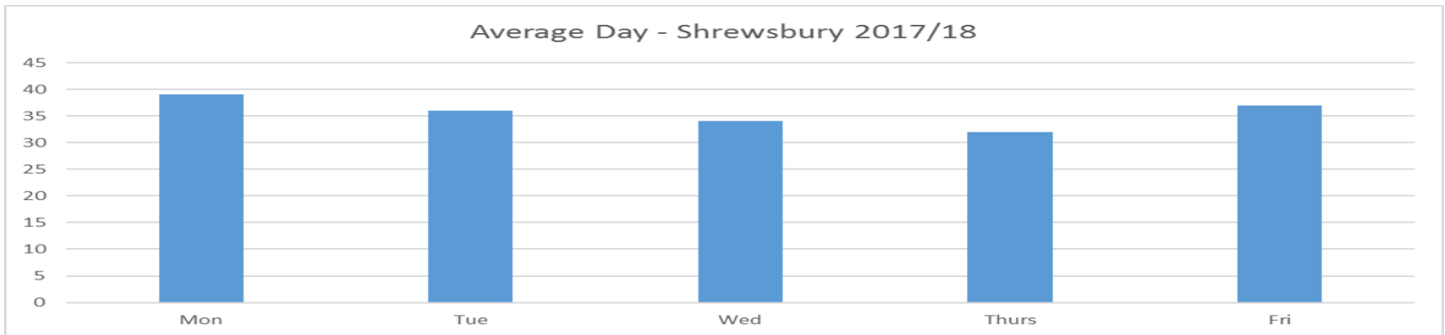
Service requests at Shrewsbury office:

Customers use Shrewsbury office for the following reasons

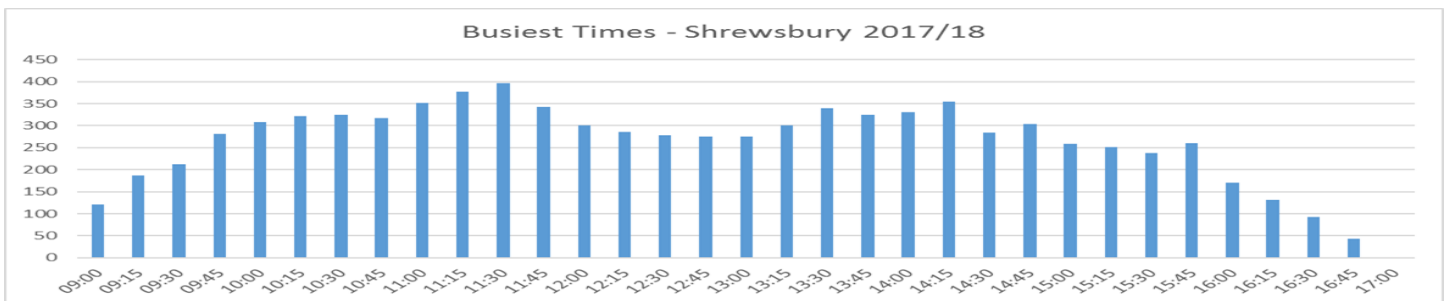
Service	Average number per month	Service	Average number per month
Housing Benefits	399	Environmental maintenance	14
Concessionary Travel	106	Licencing	11
Revenues	65	Registrars	5
Parking	31	Planning	2
Blue Badge	26	ST&R Housing	0
Housing Options	25		
Waste	16		

The busiest days of the week and the busiest times of each day are as shown below

Busiest days year ended April 2018



Busiest times year ended April 2018



Public consultation replies:

There were 37 replies from customers regarding the proposals for revised opening, 25 did not agree with the proposals, 2 agreed and a further 10 made no comment one way or the other.

Recommendation to cabinet

The recommendation for revised opening days and times is shown below. The rationale for this is based partly on busy days and partly on providing optimum coverage by a more cost-effective team. In order to provide our customers sufficient access to self-service equipment we will look to coordinate a move to an appropriate venue where this can be supported.

Day	Current hours	Recommended new opening days and hours
Mon	9.00 - 5.00	Open staffed 9.30 – 5.00
Tues	9.00 – 4.00	Open self-serve – freephone and PC
Wed	9.00 – 4.00	Open self-serve – freephone and PC
Thurs	9.00 – 4.00	Open staffed 9.30 – 5.00
Fri	9.00 – 5.00	Open self-serve – freephone and PC
Sat	Closed	Closed
Sun	Closed	Closed
Total hours:	37	15 hours

➤ **Whitchurch Customer Service Point**

Customer Service figures for Whitchurch exclude visitor information enquiries which are the responsibility of the Town Council. Note that whilst April 2018 figures show an increase in numbers using the office, the overall use of this office is below 50% of that of other main offices.

Month of April	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
Customer numbers	124	143	99	78	135

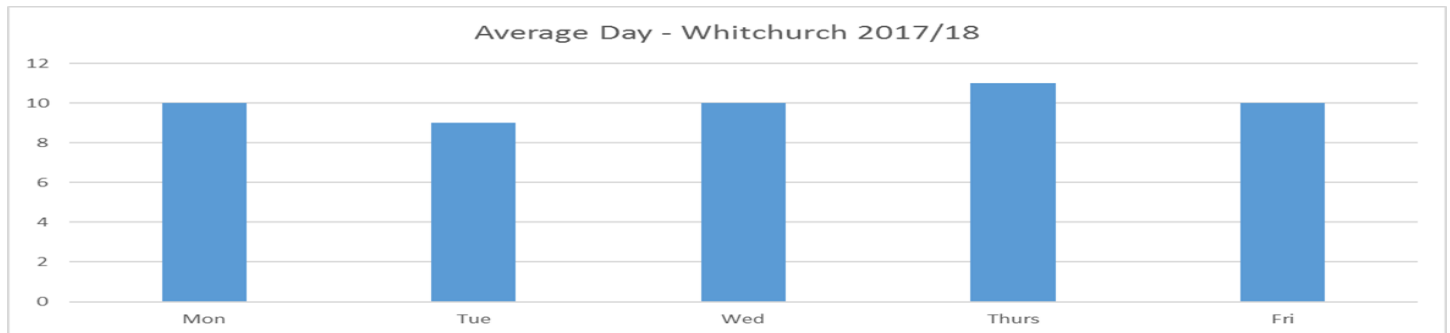
Service requests at Whitchurch office:

Aside from visitor information, by far the largest footfall, customers use Whitchurch office for the following reasons

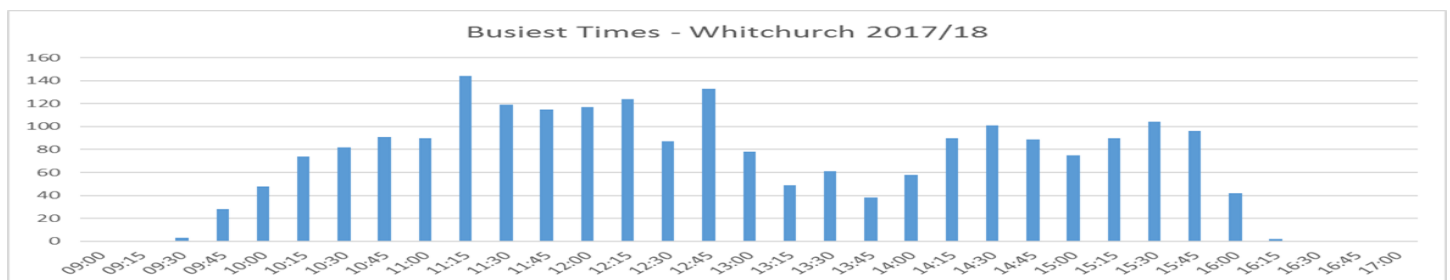
Service	Average number per month	Service	Average number per month
Housing Benefits	21	Registrars	1
Concessionary Travel	20	Licencing	Less than 1
Blue Badge	16	Housing Options	Less than 1
Environmental maintenance	13	Planning	Less than 1
Waste	6	ST&R Housing	0
Parking	5		
Revenues	3		

The busiest times of the week and the busiest days are as shown below.

Busiest days year ended April 2018



Busiest times year ended April 2018



Public consultation replies:

There were 24 replies from customers regarding the proposals for revised opening, 18 did not agree with the proposals and a further 6 made no comment one way or the other.

Recommendation to cabinet

The recommendation for revised opening days and times is shown below. The rationale for this is based partly on busy days and partly on providing optimum coverage by a more cost-effective team.

Day	Current hours	Recommended new opening days and hours
Mon	10.00-4.00	Open self-serve – phone and PC
Tues	10.00-4.00	Open self-serve – phone and PC
Wed	10.00-4.00	Open self-serve – phone and PC
Thurs	10.00-4.00	Open staffed 9.30 – 4.45 (30 minute lunch closure)
Fri	10.00-4.00	Open self-serve – phone and PC
Sat	Closed	Closed
Sun	Closed	Closed
Total hours:	33	6.45

➤ Market Drayton Customer Service Point

Over the last 5 years footfall at Market Drayton Customer Service Point has reduced as shown below

Month of	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
April					
Customer numbers	560	404	295	183	183

This represents a 67% drop in customers using the office, bringing numbers down to less than 50% of those seen at the larger offices.

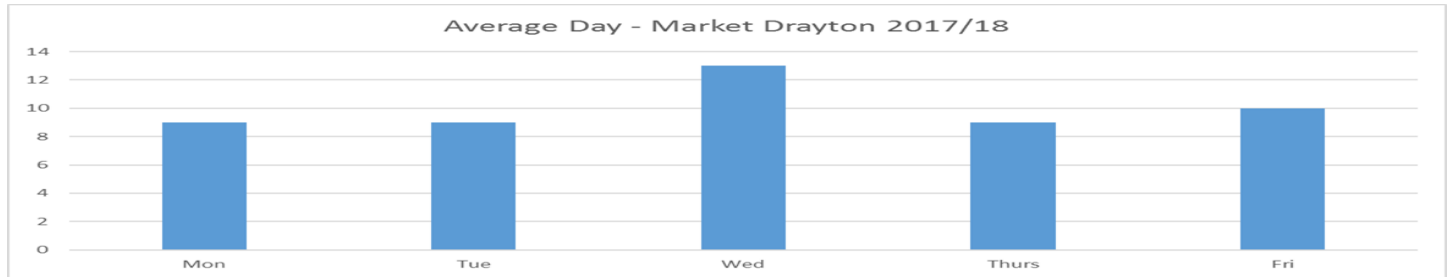
Service requests at Market Drayton office:

Customers use Market Drayton office for the following reasons

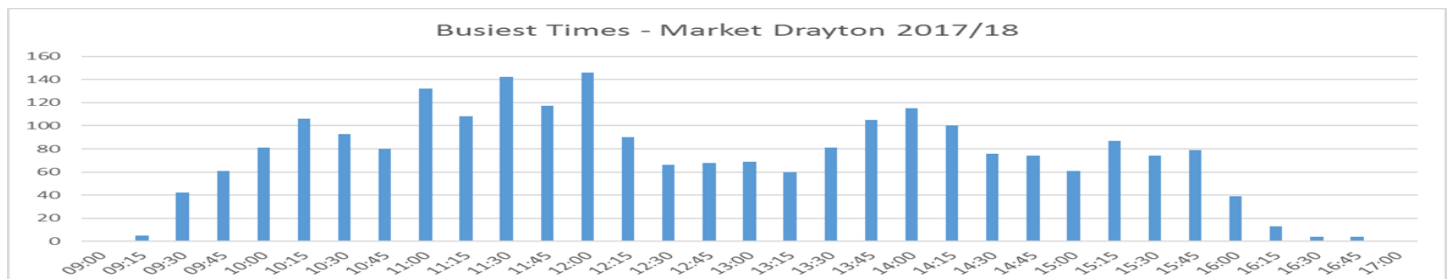
Service	Average number per month	Service	Average number per month
Housing Benefits	56	Parking	6
Concessionary Travel	28	Housing Options	5
Blue Badge	28	Licencing	Less than 1
Revenues	14	Planning	Less than 1
Environmental maintenance	13	ST&R Housing	Less than 1
Waste	8		
Registrars	7		

The busiest days of the week and the busiest times of each day are as shown below.

Busiest days year ended April 2018



Busiest times year ended April 2018



Public consultation replies:

There were 13 replies from customers regarding the proposals for revised opening, none of these supported the revision to staffed days.

The Customer Service Manager attended the Town Council meeting to present the rationale behind the proposals, the Town Council is considering the position.

Recommendation to cabinet

The recommendation for revised opening days and times is shown below.

In order to provide our customers sufficient access to self-service equipment we will relocate the customer service point from its current premises which do not support this, into Raven House where there is improved public access.

Day	Current hours	Recommended new opening days and hours
Mon	10.30 – 3.30	Open self-service – freephone and PC
Tues	10.00 – 4.00	Open self-service - freephone and PC
Wed	10.00 – 3.30	Open staffed 9.30 – 4.45 (30 minute lunch closure)
Thurs	10.30 – 3.30	Open - self-service – freephone and PC
Fri	10.30 – 3.00	Open - self-service – freephone and PC
Sat	Closed	Closed
Sun	Closed	Closed
Total hours:	26.00	6.45

Statistical analysis and recommendations, smaller offices:

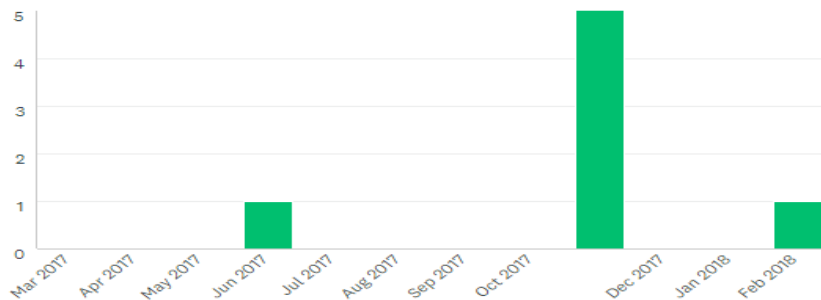
There are 9 smaller customer service points where support is no longer provided directly by Shropshire Council staff. The number of customers using these offices has always been low and as a result, they were traditionally open on a part-time basis. These offices were equipped with a free-to-

use public telephone connected to the Customer Service Centre and other popular services and also a public computer for online business and contracts were put in place for partner organisations to support customers to use these, in most cases these increased the opening hours to the public at each office.

All delivery partners were given access to a stats tool with which to record customer use. The results for the year ended 31 March 2018 have been analysed and are shown below. The system does not record nil returns if there is no recorded usage in a particular month, records therefore display only for the months that see use.

➤ **Albrighton Customer Service point:**

First: 6/13/2017 Zoom: Mar 2017 to Feb 2018

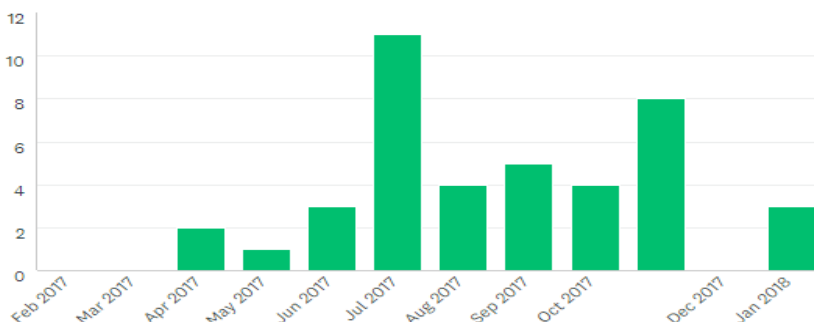


We received 6 survey replies in respect of Albrighton customer service point, 3 disagreed with the proposals to decommission the service, 2 agreed and 1 made no comment one way or the other. We are very grateful to Albrighton Parish Council who have agreed to retain the customer service equipment for use by residents.

➤ **Bishop's Castle Customer Service Point:**

The customer records for 2017/18 for Bishop's Castle office show the following use, note that there was no recorded use since February 2018 -

First: 4/5/2017 Zoom: Feb 2017 to Jan 2018



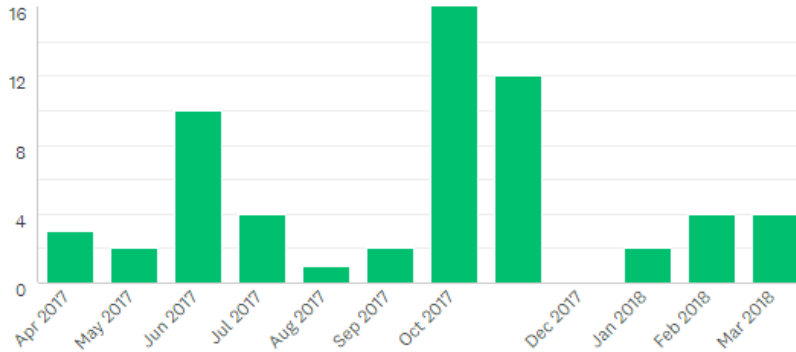
We received 4 survey replies in respect of Bishop's Castle, 2 disagreed with the proposal to decommission the service, 1 agreed and 1 made no comment one way or the other.

We are very grateful to the management of Enterprise House who have requested that the customer service equipment remain in situ for use by residents.

➤ **Broseley Customer Service Point:**

The customer records for 2017/17 for Broseley office show the following use,

First: 4/13/2017 Zoom: Apr 2017 to Mar 2018



We received 16 survey replies in respect of Broseley, 14 disagreed with the proposal to decommission the service, 1 agreed and 1 passed no opinion one way or the other. Broseley Town Council replied formally to the consultation to officially object to the proposal, stating that “consistently there is a need for staff to assist members of the public due to age restrictions and/or inability of some members of the public to use the computer understand the internet or phone options or travel to other customer service points due to disabilities or poor transport links.....With this in mind Broseley Council feel there is still a need to keep this service at Broseley library...” We are very grateful to Broseley Town Council who have agreed to keep the customer service equipment for use by local residents.

➤ **Church Stretton Health and Wellbeing Centre:**

Centre management provided their own statistics to show footfall from the beginning of 2018 as follows-

Month (2018)	Customer numbers
January	5
February	0
March	2
April	2
May	1
June	6
July	2

We received 8 survey replies in respect of the Health and Wellbeing Centre, 5 disagreed with the proposal, 1 agreed and 2 made no comment one way or the other.

We are very grateful to the centre management for their kind offer to retain the self-serve equipment for use by local residents.

➤ **Church Stretton Town Council:**

Church Stretton Town Council provided their own record of use between April and July 2018 to support the consultation information. 54 customers called in to the office for the following reasons during that time -

Service	Footfall April-June 2018	Service	Footfall April-June 2018
Environmental maintenance	18	Housing/housing Options	1
Concessionary travel	8	Blue Badge	1
Waste	7	Antisocial behaviour	1
Planning	7	Safeguarding	1
Revenues	3	Signposting	1
Parking	2	Benefits	1
Welfare Reform support	2	Other	1

We received 6 survey replies in respect of the Town Council offices, 5 disagreed with the proposal and one agreed.

Church Stretton Town Council also replied to the consultation saying that they felt state there was a compelling case for retention and that they strongly oppose the closure of this Service Point, fearing that this service cut would target the most vulnerable members of the community who rely upon face to face services. Discussions were held with the Town Mayor and Town Clerk and the Town Council considered the option of retaining the customer service equipment but subsequently declined.

➤ **Cleobury Country:**

There was no recorded customer use during 2017/2018

We are very grateful to management of Cleobury Country who have requested that the customer service equipment remain in situ for use by residents.

➤ **Ellesmere, Ourspace Ellesmere Community Centre and Library:**

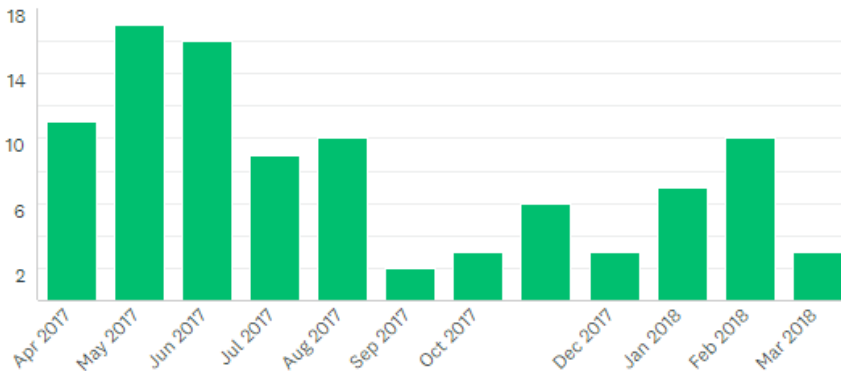
There was no recorded customer use during 2017/2018

We have approached the centre management and asked them to consider the option of retaining the customer service equipment.

➤ **Shifnal Customer Service Point:**

The customer records for 2017/18 for Shifnal office show the following use

First: 4/3/2017 Zoom: Apr 2017 to Mar 2018

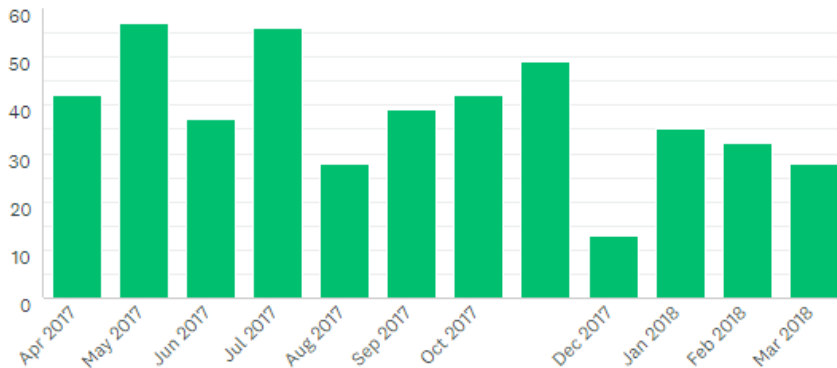


We received 2 survey replies in respect of Shifnal office, one agreed with the proposal and one made no comment one way or the other.

Discussions have been held with the Town Clerk and we have asked Shifnal Town Council to consider the option of retaining the customer service equipment for use by customers.

➤ **Wem Customer Service Point:**

First: 4/4/2017 Zoom: Apr 2017 to Mar 2018



We received 20 survey replies in respect of Wem office, 17 disagreed with the proposal, 1 agreed and two made no comment one way or the other.

Connexus Housing, who provide the support service at Wem, have declined the offer of retaining the self-serve equipment for continued use.

Recommendations to cabinet:

In order to continue some level of service at our larger offices, the recommendation to cabinet in respect of our 9 small offices is that the support services there be decommissioned.

We will continue in our efforts to encourage delivery partners to keep the customer service equipment so that customers may continue to access it.

Shropshire Equality and Social Inclusion Impact Assessment (ESIIA)

Review of Customer Services Face to Face Points

Shropshire Council Part 1 ESIIA: initial screening and assessment

Please note: prompt questions and guidance within boxes are in italics. You are welcome to type over them when completing this form. Please extend the boxes if you need more space for your commentary.

Name of service change

Review of Customer Services Face to Face Points

Aims of the service change and description

This review of our Customer Service Points looks at the impact of reducing budgets and how we can continue to operate a cost-effective service across our six main customer service points located in Shrewsbury, Oswestry, Ludlow, Bridgnorth, Market Drayton and Whitchurch. The review also considers the viability of 9 smaller rural customer service points where support for customers to use self-service facilities is contracted to partner agencies and where customer footfall is now very low and in some cases non-existent.

Face to face transactions remain the most expensive way in which we can communicate with our customers. Whilst we recognise that residents use our face to face service for particular reasons, Shropshire Council needs to operate within reducing budgets and to encourage customers to carry out the same business with us using different communication channels. This will allow those who are able to take full advantage of our digital transformation of services and the development of a personal “My Shropshire” account through which transactions with the Council can be carried out. Backing this up is the continuation of a telephone customer service capable of handling high volumes of contacts cost-effectively.

We have already seen a significant reduction in the numbers of customers accessing our face to face services as people find other ways to do business with us however we continue to staff our main sites on 5 days of the week regardless of this reduced demand. Also, with very few exceptions, all of the services requested by our face to face customers can be fulfilled by telephoning the staff at our Customer Service Centre or via online application. We are therefore seeking to reduce the number of days each week where staff are on site to directly assist customers face to face so saving on costs whilst still maintaining a staff team capable of helping people where there is genuinely no alternative at present.

The reductions in customer numbers is particularly acute at the 9 smaller rural offices located in Albrighton, Broseley, Shifnal, Church Stretton (where we have 2 outlets), Cleobury Mortimer, Bishop’s Castle, Wem and Ellesmere where the number of customers is often in single figures with no customers at all using these offices in some months. In view of the costs involved in maintaining support at these offices and the low numbers of customers using them, we would look to decommission these customer service points.

Intended audiences and target groups for the service change

- Local citizens.
- Community groups.
- Delivery partners
- Local members.

Evidence used for screening of the service change

Reduction in customer demand:

The number of residents using our face to face service has been steadily falling for some years. In the last 5 years we have seen a reduction across the six main customer service points of just over 50% as shown below. Of note is the fact that 2017 and 2018 were bulk renewal years for Bus Passes where we would normally see tens of thousands more customers calling in to see us, however by automating the renewal process for the majority of eligible residents, most did not need to do anything in order to receive their new pass. It is this kind of change to services, that simplifies things for our customers, that will become more freely available as the Council develops its digital offer.

Year ended	April 2014	April 2015	April 2016	April 2017	April 2018
Customer numbers	70615	70825	52025	39229	33079

The average number of customers using these offices over a working week is as follows:

Weekday/Office	Bridgnorth	Ludlow	Market Drayton	Oswestry	Shrewsbury	Whitchurch
Monday	49	39	9	25	39	10
Tuesday	38	34	9	24	36	9
Wednesday	35	32	13	26	34	10
Thursday	32	24	9	25	32	11
Friday	38	35	10	28	37	10

The average number of customers recorded as using our smaller offices (recorded over various periods between May 2017 and April 2018) are as shown below:

Office	Average monthly number of customers
Albrighton Library	0
Bishop's Castle Library	2
Broseley Library	2
Church Stretton Town Council	28
Church Stretton Health and Wellbeing Centre	3
Cleobury Country Library	0
Ellesmere Day Centre	No returns received
Shifnal Library	8
Wem	37

The rationale for the proposal to reduce staffed opening times at our main sites and to decommission our smaller sites is the fact that the same services are available via other channels that let us use our resources much more sustainably.

Evidence supports the fact that more people are accessing our services online and whilst we fully expect many Shropshire residents of all age groups will welcome improvements to our digital services we recognise that not everyone will be confident in or capable of carrying out transactions in this way.

Our customer service points are equipped with public computers for those able to manage online business. For those customers not able or confident enough to use online services we also provide free to use public telephones that are linked to our Customer Service Centre and to other popular services therefore giving direct contact with an adviser.

Evidence from public consultation suggests that the face to face service is used by older residents as their preferred channel of conducting business with the Council. After Housing Benefit, the most popular service requests received at face to face – Blue Badge enquiries, Environmental Maintenance reporting and Waste issues, would support this view. However there is also evidence of these same services being accessed in much greater volume by a very wide age range of residents via the Customer Service Centre (telephony centre).

The Customer Service Centre (CSC) provides help with a very wide range of services and its opening times (8am to 6pm Monday to Friday, 9am to 1pm on Saturdays and has 24 hour cover for emergency issues) exceed those of any face to face office. We still therefore provide a very good service to our customers of all age ranges, but simply via a different channel. Given the rurality of our County, many customers already choose the telephone as their preferred method of contact which is borne out by the supporting statistics. The CSC is geared to handling high levels of contact cost effectively: in under one and a half months it will handle the same number of enquiries as face to face will see in a full year.

Further, the CSC is able to provide seamless access to or direct support from Adult Social Care and safeguarding, Children's Services, homelessness and Welfare Reform Support thus anyone contacting the Council through the CSC may take additional advantage of this wider support not ordinarily available face to face.

Therefore we believe that supporting a reduced face to face service through a combination of existing (and improving) digital services backed up by efficient and effective contact centre support forms a reasonable and more sustainable offer to our customers that is unilaterally available to Shropshire residents regardless of their geographical location or isolation.

Specific consultation and engagement with intended audiences and target groups for the service change

Local consultation carried out interactively at each Customer Service Point and via the Council's online Portal. Town Councils and partner provider organisations particularly welfare reform partners invited to participate.

Potential impact on Protected Characteristic groups and on social inclusion

High Negative	Significant potential impact, risk of exposure, history of complaints, no mitigating measures in place or no evidence available: urgent need for consultation with customers, general public, workforce
Medium Negative	Some potential impact, some mitigating measures in place but no evidence available how effective they are: would be beneficial to consult with customers, general public, workforce
Low Negative	Almost bordering on non-relevance to the ESIIA process (heavily legislation led, very little discretion can be exercised, limited public facing aspect, national policy affecting degree of local impact possible)

Initial assessment for each group

Please rate the impact that you perceive the service change is likely to have on a group, through inserting a tick in the relevant column.

Protected Characteristic groups and other groups in Shropshire	High negative impact <i>Part Two ESIIA required</i>	High positive impact <i>Part One ESIIA required</i>	Medium positive or negative impact <i>Part One ESIIA required</i>	Low positive or negative impact <i>Part One ESIIA required</i>
Age (please include children, young people, people of working age, older people. Some people may belong to more than one group eg young person with disability)				✓
Disability (please include: mental health conditions and syndromes including autism; physical disabilities or impairments; learning disabilities; Multiple Sclerosis; cancer; HIV)				✓
Gender re-assignment (please include associated aspects: safety, caring responsibility, potential for bullying and harassment)				No evidence to suggest either positive or negative impact
Marriage and Civil Partnership (please include associated aspects: caring responsibility, potential for bullying and harassment)				No evidence to suggest either positive or negative impact
Pregnancy & Maternity (please include associated aspects: safety, caring responsibility, potential for bullying and harassment)				✓
Race (please include: ethnicity, nationality, culture, language, gypsy, traveller)				No evidence to suggest either positive or negative impact
Religion and belief (please include: Buddhism, Christianity, Hinduism, Islam, Judaism, Non)				No evidence to suggest either positive or negative impact

conformists; Rastafarianism; Sikhism, Shinto, Taoism, Zoroastrianism, and any others)				
Sex (please include associated aspects: safety, caring responsibility, potential for bullying and harassment)				No evidence to suggest either positive or negative impact
Sexual Orientation (please include associated aspects: safety; caring responsibility; potential for bullying and harassment)				No evidence to suggest either positive or negative impact
Other: Social Inclusion (please include families and friends with caring responsibilities; people with health inequalities; households in poverty; refugees and asylum seekers; rural communities; people you consider to be vulnerable)			✓	

Decision, review and monitoring

Decision	Yes	No
Part One ESIIA Only?	✓	
Proceed to Part Two Full Report?		✓

If Part One, please now use the boxes below and sign off at the foot of the page. If Part Two, please move on to the full report stage.

Actions to mitigate negative impact or enhance positive impact of the service change
<p>Shropshire’s rurality is an issue for consideration in this impact assessment however it can be argued that many of our outlying areas are already not immediately served by either the number or locations of our existing customer service points.</p> <p>The development of an efficient, available online and telephony service capable of fulfilling customer requests as simply as possible remains a solution that is more unilaterally available to our residents as well as being more financially sustainable.</p> <p>As stated above, our Customer Service Centre retains long opening hours and provides access to a wide range of services for customers unable to use online facilities. We are improving our online experience through the Digital Transformation Programme which aims to simplify many of the processes that customers are obliged to follow to fulfil service requests. Redesigning services to be as simple as possible will also help our telephony advisers to help customers who contact us by telephone, adding value to the call which in many cases will resolve the customer’s needs.</p> <p>The retention of some directly staffed days at the 6 main customer points has been considered in the light of the numbers of customers still using the face to face service and the feedback and comments received during consultation.</p> <p>Based upon numbers using the service across these sites (which have fallen by another 18% over the year since consultation took place), having staff on site to help on the days</p>

suggested would mean them seeing between 4 and 6 customers per hour, meaning on average between 10 and 15 minutes each to handle their enquiries.

Access to our self-service equipment in these sites will still be available across the full week's opening times. Where customers are not able to go online, keeping self-serve phones available means that anyone who needs to speak to an adviser instead can still do so.

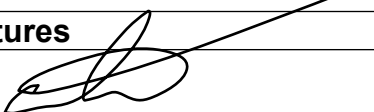
We have approached the partners who run our smaller offices for us to ask if they will keep our self-serve equipment, which we will maintain, so that there is still local access.

We are also working with our IT Department to improve how our self-service computers work so that more can be done through these and so that advisers working in our customer Service Centre can help those customers less able or less confident in using online services, by talking them through what to do or by taking over the computer remotely to help instruct customers. We will work with services to ensure that the alternative ways of doing business with them are promoted especially the Revenues and Benefits Service which forms the bulk of face to face service requests.

Actions to review and monitor the impact of the service change

Comments, compliments and complaints process will be monitored, regular service reviews scheduled

Scrutiny at Part One screening stage

People involved	Signatures	Date
<i>Lead officer carrying out the screening</i>		17 December 2018
<i>Any internal support</i>	Mrs Lois Dale, Principal Rural Policy Officer; ext 5684	
<i>Any external support</i>		
<i>Head of service</i>		

Sign off at Part One screening stage

Name	Signatures	Date
<i>Lead officer's name</i>		
<i>Head of service's name</i>		

Shropshire Council Part 2 ESIIA: full report

Guidance notes on how to carry out the full report

The decision that you are seeking to make, as a result of carrying out this full report, will take one of four routes:

1. To make changes to satisfy any concerns raised through the specific consultation and engagement process and through your further analysis of the evidence to hand;
2. To make changes that will remove or reduce the potential of the service change to adversely affect any of the Protected Characteristic groups and those who may be at risk of social exclusion;
3. To adopt the service change as it stands, with evidence to justify your decision even though it could adversely affect some groups;
4. To find alternative means to achieve the aims of the service change.

The Part Two Full Report therefore starts with a forensic scrutiny of the evidence and consultation results considered during Part One Screening, and identification of gaps in data for people in any of the nine Protected Characteristic groups and people who may be at risk of social exclusion, eg rural communities. There may also be gaps identified to you independently of this process, from sources including the intended audiences and target groups themselves.

The forensic scrutiny stage enables you to assess:

- **Which gaps need to be filled right now, to help you to make a decision about the likely impact of the proposed service change?**

This could involve methods such as: one off service area focus groups; use of customer records; examination of data held elsewhere in the organisation, such as corporate customer complaints; and reference to data held by similar authorities or at national level from which reliable comparisons might be drawn, including via the Rural Services Network. Quantitative evidence could include data from NHS Foundation Trusts, community and voluntary sector bodies, and partnerships including the Local Enterprise Partnership and the Health and Well Being Board. Qualitative evidence could include commentary from stakeholders.

- **Which gaps could be filled within a timeframe that will enable you to monitor potential barriers and any positive or negative impacts on groups and individuals further along into the process?**

This could potentially be as part of wider corporate and partnership efforts to strengthen the evidence base on equalities. Examples would be: joint information sharing protocols about victims of hate crime incidents; the collection of data that will fill gaps across a number of service areas, eg needs of young people with learning disabilities as they progress through into independent living; and publicity awareness campaigns that encourage open feedback and suggestions from a variety of audiences.

Once you have identified your evidence gaps, and decided on the actions you will take right now and further into the process, please record your activity in the following boxes. Please extend the boxes as needed.

Evidence used for assessment of the service change: activity record

How did you carry out further research into the nine Protected Characteristic groups and those who may be at risk of social exclusion, about their current needs and aspirations and about the likely impacts and barriers that they face in day to day living?

And what did it tell you?

Specific consultation and engagement with intended audiences and target groups for the service change: activity record

How did you carry out further specific consultation and engagement activity with the intended audiences and with other stakeholders who may be affected by the service change?

And what did it tell you?

Further and ongoing research and consultation with intended audiences and target groups for the service change: activity record

What further research, consultation and engagement activity do you think is required to help fill gaps in our understanding about the potential or known affect that this proposed service change may have on any of the ten groupings and on the intended audiences and target groups? This could be by your service area and/or at corporate and partnership level.

Full report assessment for each group

Please rate the impact as you now perceive it, by inserting a tick. Please give brief comments for each group, to give context to your decision, including what barriers these groups or individual may face.

Protected Characteristic groups and other groups in Shropshire	High negative impact	High positive impact	Medium positive or negative impact	Low positive or negative impact
Age (please include children, young people, people of working age, older people. Some people may belong to more than one group eg young person with disability)				
Disability (please include: mental health conditions and syndromes including autism; physical disabilities or impairments; learning disabilities; Multiple Sclerosis; cancer; HIV)				
Gender re-assignment (please include associated aspects: safety, caring responsibility, potential for bullying and harassment)				
Marriage and Civil Partnership (please include associated aspects: caring responsibility, potential for bullying and harassment)				
Pregnancy & Maternity (please include associated aspects: safety, caring responsibility, potential for bullying and harassment)				
Race (please include: ethnicity, nationality, culture, language, gypsy, traveller)				
Religion and belief (please include: Buddhism, Christianity, Hinduism, Islam, Judaism, Non conformists; Rastafarianism; Sikhism, Shinto, Taoism, Zoroastrianism, and any others)				
Sex (please include associated aspects: safety, caring responsibility, potential for bullying and harassment)				
Sexual Orientation (please include associated aspects: safety; caring responsibility; potential for bullying and harassment)				
Other: Social Inclusion (please include families and friends with caring responsibilities; people with health inequalities; households in poverty; refugees and asylum seekers; rural communities; people you consider to be vulnerable)				

Summary of findings and analysis - ESIIA decision

You should now be in a position to record your decision. Please highlight in bold the route that you have decided to take.

1. To make changes to satisfy any concerns raised through the specific consultation and engagement process and through your further analysis of the evidence to hand;
2. To make changes that will remove or reduce the potential of the service change to adversely affect any of the Protected Characteristic groups and those who may be at risk of social exclusion;
3. To adopt the service change as it stands, with evidence to justify your decision even though it could adversely affect some groups;
4. To find alternative means to achieve the aims of the service change.

Please add any brief overall comments to explain your choice.

You will then need to create an action plan and attach it to this report, to set out what further activity is taking place or is programmed that will:

- *mitigate negative impact or enhance positive impact of the service change,*
- AND*
- *review and monitor the impact of the service change*

Please try to ensure that:

- *Your decision is based on the aims of the service change, the evidence collected, consultation and engagement results, relative merits of alternative approaches and compliance with legislation, and that records are kept;*
- *The action plan shows clear links to corporate actions the Council is taking to meet the general equality duty placed on us by the Equality Act 2010, to have due regard to the three equality aims in our decision making processes.*

Scrutiny at Part Two full report stage

People involved	Signatures	Date
<i>Lead officer</i>		
<i>Any internal support</i>		
<i>Any external support</i>		
<i>Head of service</i>		

Sign off at Part Two full report stage

Signature (Lead Officer)	Signature (Head of Service)
Date:	Date:

Appendix: ESIIA Part Two Full Report: Guidance Notes on Action Plan

Please base your action plan on the evidence you find to support your decisions, and the challenges and opportunities you have identified. It could include arrangements for:

- continuing engagement and involvement with intended audiences, target groups and stakeholders;
- monitoring and evaluating the service change for its impact on different groups throughout the process and as the service change is carried out;
- ensuring that any pilot projects are evaluated and take account of issues described in the assessment, and that they are assessed to make sure they are having intended impact;
- ensuring that relevant colleagues are made aware of the assessment;
- disseminating information about the assessment to all relevant stakeholders who will be implementing the service change;
- strengthening the evidence base on equalities.

Please also consider:

- resource implications for in-house and external delivery of the service;
- arrangements for ensuring that external providers of the service are monitored for compliance with the Council's commitments to equality, diversity and social inclusion, and legal requirements including duties under the Equality Act 2010.

And finally, please also ensure that the action plan shows clear links to corporate actions the Council is taking to meet the general equality duty placed on us by the Equality Act 2010, to have due regard to the three equality aims in our decision making processes.

These are:

- Eliminating discrimination, harassment and victimisation
- Advancing equality of opportunity
- Fostering good relations

Note for 2014 refresh of our corporate equality impact assessment approach: Shropshire Council has referred to good practice elsewhere in refreshing the EINA material and replacing it with this ESIIA material. The Council is grateful in particular to Leicestershire County Council, for graciously allowing use to be made of their Equality and Human Rights Impact Assessments (EHRIAs) material and associated documentation.

For further information on the use of ESIIAs: please contact your head of service or contact Mrs Lois Dale, Principal Rural Policy Officer and internal policy support on equality, via telephone 01743 255667, or email lois.dale@shropshire.gov.uk.

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Committee and Date

Cabinet
27 February 2019

Item

Public

Residential and Nursing Beds - Commissioning Arrangements

Responsible Officer Andy Begley

e-mail: andy.begley@shropshire.gov.uk

Tel: 01743 258911

1. Summary

- 1.1 This report makes recommendations for a public consultation to review and update the rates the Council currently publishes and pays for nursing and residential beds. Cabinet's approval is sought to consult on revising the currently published rates for such beds.
- 1.2 This consultation is requested as part of the review of arrangements for the commissioning of residential and nursing beds. This is the first stage of the review.
- 1.3 The overall expenditure for Adult Social Care in Shropshire is continuing to increase. There is an ongoing need to balance additional pressures due to growing demand, delivery of statutory services and demographic changes with sustainability and development of the care provider market.
- 1.4 This growth in expenditure is recognised within the Council Financial Strategy for 2018/19 - 22/23. Savings have been identified to be delivered by this review as part of the Council's 2019 budget proposals which are subject to a separate consultation. The budget consultation period runs from 07 January 2019 - 18 February 2019.
- 1.5 Expenditure for residential and nursing provision in Shropshire is the single biggest area for Shropshire Council Adult Social Care and spends just over £50 million per year. Expenditure for individual beds is categorised by 'Primary Support Reason' and this expenditure includes all categories including Adult Learning Disabilities (ALD) and Mental Health (MH).
- 1.6 This consultation proposal does not include the rates for people categorised with Learning Disabilities and Mental Health needs. These rates will be explored separately at a later stage in the review.
- 1.7 The expenditure for beds for 17-18 was £33.3m (Nursing care £17.7m, Residential Care £15.6m). This excludes ALD and MH categories.
- 1.8 Shropshire Council currently reviews and publishes rates on an annual basis and these are set out as an Appendix to the Personal Budget Contributions Policy 2018-19. Please see Appendix A/Schedule 6.
- 1.9 Although the Council have increased rates annually, with a 2% increase in 17-18 and a 2.5% increase for 18-19, analysis of rates for 17-18 indicates

that there is a wide variance in rates being paid. It is recognised however that the level of the rates the council currently offers have not been fundamentally reviewed for some years and consequently do not reflect current market pressures.

- 1.10 We want to ensure future rates published and paid accurately reflect the costs of delivery of care, are transparent in the market place and deemed to be equitable by providers. Therefore, consultation is required to fully understand the factors associated with the delivery of care by providers.
- 1.11 Initial engagement was undertaken with the market place in June 2018 and it was noted that providers would broadly agree to the principle of reviewing the rates and stated that rates should be considered 'fair'. Please see Appendix B.
- 1.12 It is considered that further public consultation and provider engagement is essential to fully understand provider's definition of 'fair' and assess the implications associated with implementation.
- 1.13 It is proposed to build on the initial provider engagement and provide an opportunity for all interested parties to participate. This is intended to include service users and their families, voluntary organisations and practitioners so they can contribute to the development of revised arrangements. A period of engagement and consultation of 6 weeks is proposed with effect from the 1st March 2019 and will include a range of activities including a questionnaires, events and meetings.
- 1.14 It is intended that a model and pricing rates are identified for the purposes of consultation. The model identified is based on the industry recognised 'LangBuisson' model. This model reflects the costs associated with delivery of care. The pricing rates calculated for consultation purposes are based on the average of the current prices being paid and are not intended to be the final rates that the council uses. More detail will be outlined in the consultation documentation.

2. Recommendations

It is recommended that Members:

- A. Agree to consult formally on the review of the published rates pricing structure for commissioning of residential and nursing beds for older people.
- B. Receive a further paper following the consultation exercise.

REPORT

3. Risk Assessment and Opportunities Appraisal

- 3.1 Effective commissioning arrangements minimise escalation of cost and create sustainable market conditions. Reducing financial impact on the public sector by creating transparency and consistency in the market place it is intended that we will ensure that residents and their families receive the care needed to meet their needs consistently across the county.
- 3.2 The use of published rates is intended to ensure transparency for providers and ensure cost effectiveness in expenditure. The aim is to continue to develop a vibrant and sustainable market place whilst ensuring that the future residential and nursing care needs of citizens of Shropshire will be met.
- 3.3 It is intended that the engagement and consultation will ensure that the Council fully identifies the risks associated with revising the current published rates. It will enable us to ensure we can consider the implications and identify mitigating actions to inform decisions about introducing revised arrangements.
- 3.4 An Equality and Social Inclusion Impact Assessment (ESIIA) is attached. Please see Appendix C. It is anticipated that the planned changes will have a low positive or negative impact on protected characteristic groups and all other groups of people.
- 3.5 The consultation is intended to further explore the risks and ensure that enough people's views are gathered to fully assess the impact.
- 3.6 The ESIIA will be updated following analysis of the consultation findings.

4. Financial Implications

- 4.1. The focus of this proposal is to achieve a balance between managing expenditure and meeting demand whilst creating sustainability for the providers, choice for the individuals in the market place and maintaining standard of care.
- 4.2. Shropshire council spend just over £50 million per year all Nursing and Residential Care in total. The expenditure excluding Adult Learning Disabilities (ALD) and Mental Health (MH) was £33.3m (Nursing care £17.7m, Residential Care £15.6m).
- 4.3. Analysis of current expenditure (2018-19 Period 4) illustrates that there is a wide variance in the rates being paid.

4.4. These variance in prices creates difficulties for the Council in relation to planning for future demand and creates inequities for providers. Please see tables 1,2,3 and 4.

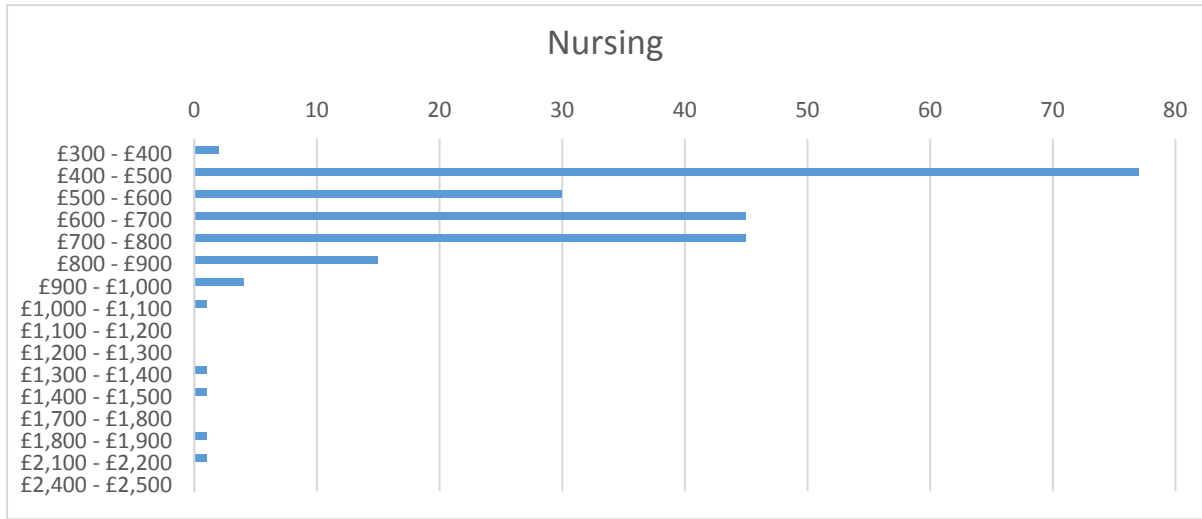


Table 1

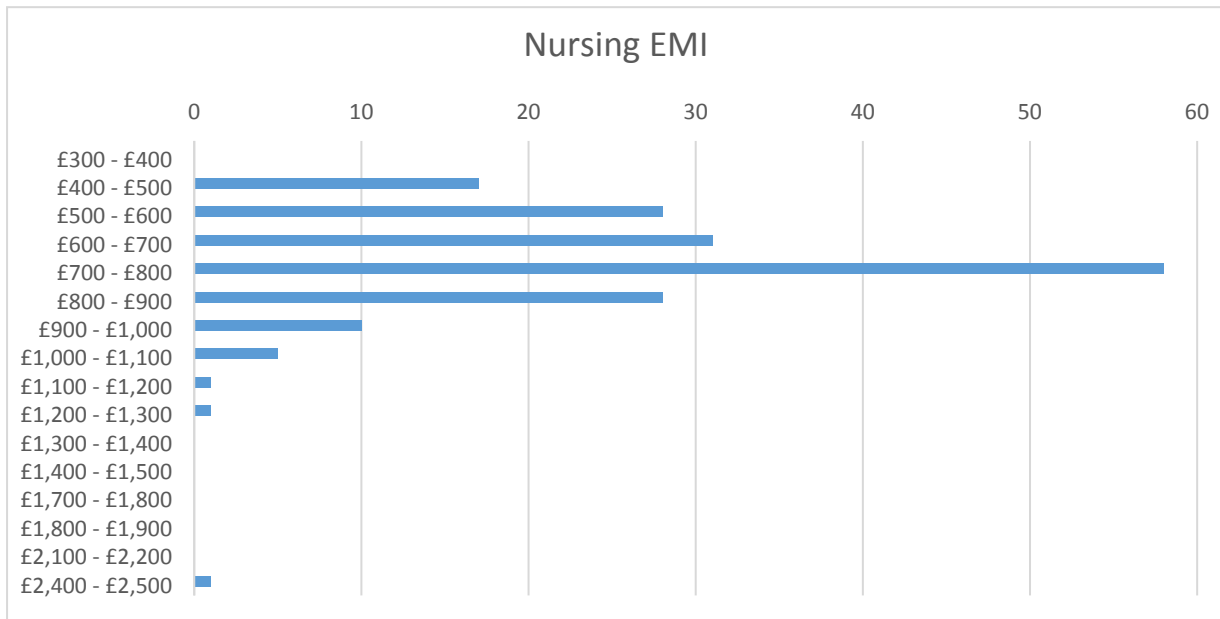


Table 2

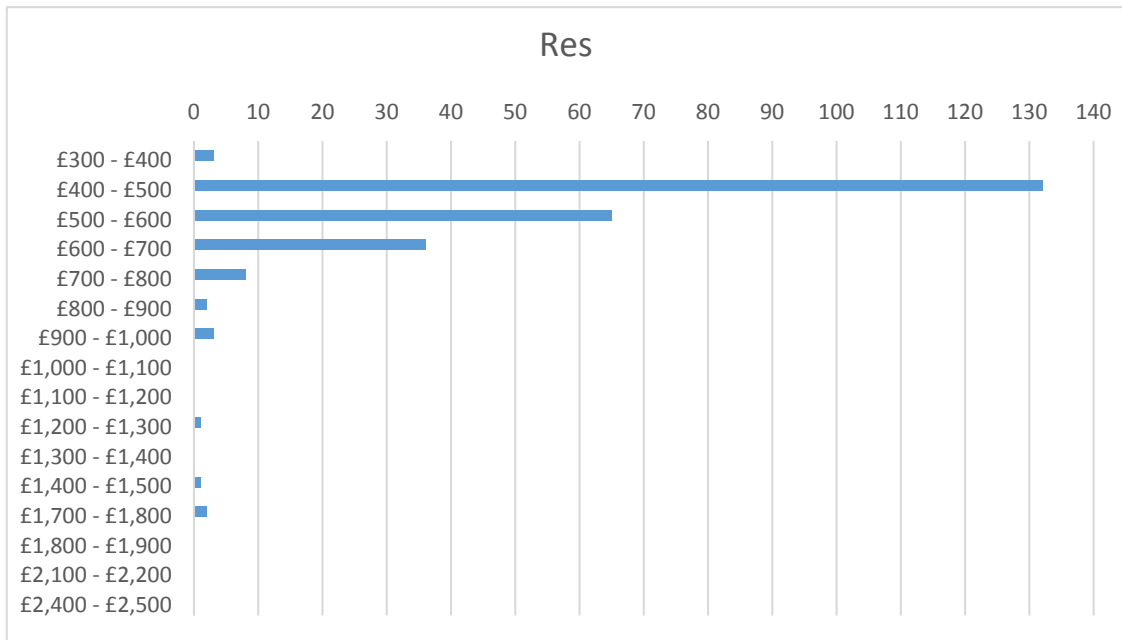


Table 3

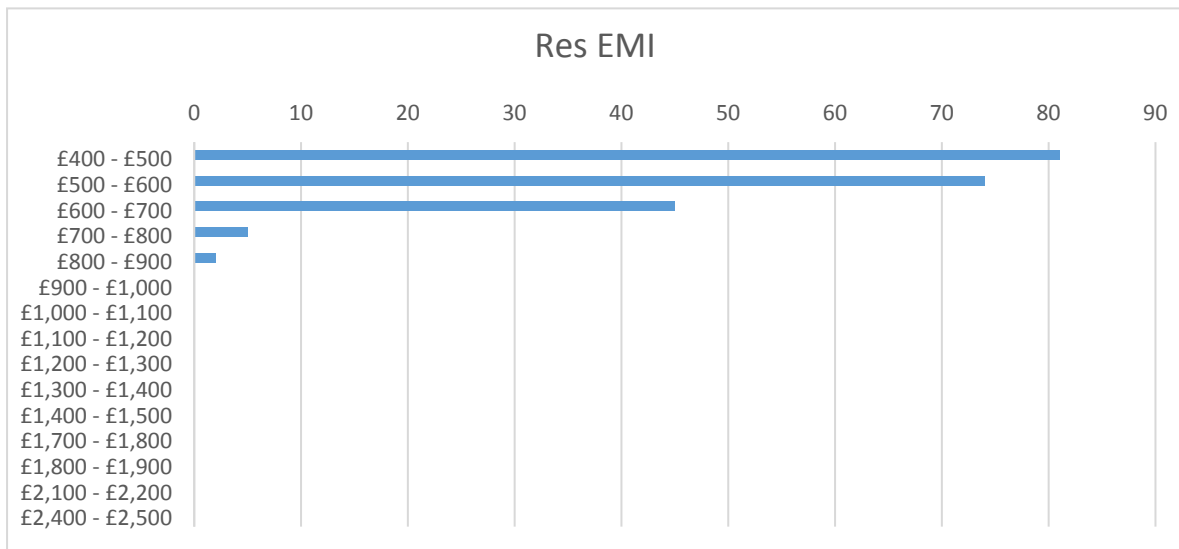


Table 4

5. Background

5.1. The Local Authority is required by the Care Act 2014 to ensure it has a sustainable and vibrant market place. It is also required to commission services which will meet the current and future residential and nursing care needs for the citizens of Shropshire.

- 5.2. The Care Act 2014 (“the Act”) places a new duty on the Council to promote an efficient and effective market “with a view to ensuring that any person in our area wishing to access social care has access to a variety of high-quality services to choose from.” The Act goes on to provide a range of provisions such as the “market oversight” arrangements involving CQC and a temporary duty on the Council to intervene if a particular provider “fails”. The Council must ensure that it properly takes into account the actual cost of care when setting the rates, we are prepared to pay providers.
- 5.3. The guidance goes on to say that when we commission services we must assure ourselves that our fee levels do not (among other things) compromise the service provider’s ability to pay at least minimum wages and provide effective training and development of staff.
- 5.4. Although the Council reviews and publishes rates on an annual basis, the financial analysis illustrates that rates being paid are often higher and varied. It is considered that this is because the current published rates do not accurately reflect the costs associated with providing care. Although, there have been increases during the last few years, the environment within which care providers operate is complex, variable and subject to regulation. It is recognised that agreement of prices with providers needs to reflect the providers’ operating environment. This review provides the opportunity to ensure the rates are reflective of the delivery of care.
- 5.5. Where a Shropshire resident is placed in a bed outside of Shropshire, we intend to continue to agree to pay the rates published by that Local Authority.
- 5.6. The statutory guidance that supports the Act stipulates that the Council’s commissioning procedures “must encourage a variety of different providers and types of services. Whilst the guidance envisages that the Council may have approved lists and frameworks it directs that we “must consider how to ensure that there is still a reasonable choice for people who need care and support”.
- 5.7. The current purchasing of residential and nursing beds for older people is undertaken on an individual basis following a care assessment by a Social Worker which determines whether a person needs care and support to help them live their day to day life. Additionally, a financial assessment will be undertaken to determine how the care needed will be paid for. Following these assessments which determine needs and the type of provision required, placements will be sourced which can meet the care needs identified. The current commissioning arrangements are resulting in individual rates are being proposed by providers. The result of these individual negotiations is a wide variance in the rates the Council is paying to the care providers. It is assumed that the currently published rates are not reflective of the actual costs of delivery of care.
- 5.8. The Council currently does not currently have an approved list or framework for residential and nursing provision. The identification of a placement is based on the assessment of the individual’s needs which identifies the type of

provision required to meet those identified needs. In addition, there is consideration given to the individual and families choice of placement. In some circumstances, this can lead to placements being commissioned out of county where identified as appropriate.

- 5.9. A recent trial of brokerage arrangements like the arrangements currently operating for domiciliary care reaffirmed the need to have a clear, equitable and transparent pricing structure for payment of beds. Revised rates are also important for the Council to ensure that it's commissioning arrangements are as efficient as possible in the longer term, support market development and create positive outcomes for service users in need of care. Additionally, this would provide a clear and transparent pricing structure for providers and facilitate equity and parity amongst providers for the payment of care.
- 5.10. Following this consultation exercise, the next stage of this review is to explore how a framework will be developed using a brokerage system. This proposed consultation will enable the Council to explore this further. It is intended that the brokerage system will enable a range of providers to be involved and mean that the Council can fulfil its responsibilities in offering choice to the individual.
- 5.11. The council currently commission a mixture of block purchased beds and spot contract beds for both residential and nursing care. Block purchased beds are contracts with providers for an agreed number of beds over a contract period. These contracts are awarded following a tendering process.
- 5.12. Spot commissioning of residential and nursing care are individual beds commissioned on a single basis and this practice has historically been built up according to need and addressed on a gradual basis. Whilst this has been an effective response to individual need it has led to a significant number of short-term commissioning solutions and increases in price. The prices that the Council commission beds at is currently not reflective of the prices published by the Council. The marketplace currently sets prices offered to the Council. The Council has not updated or enforced the price structure for some years and want to work with the market place to understand how a revised price structure could be agreed and implemented to ensure that commissioning spot purchased beds are realistic and sustainable for the Council, the provider and those in receipt of the care provided.

6. Initial Engagement Feedback

- 6.1 Initial engagement with the market place, supported by SPIC (Shropshire Partners in Care) was undertaken in the Summer of 2018. 124 providers were invited to take part in the engagement meeting, 7 people representing 5 care providers attended a meeting. 16 providers responded and completed the online questionnaire.
- 6.3 As a result of the discussions, the providers expressed broad agreement to the principle of fixed fees but were clear that could only work for them if the

fees were 'fair'. The minutes of the engagement event are available at Appendix B.

- 6.4 However, it is recognised that this is too small a representation from the market place and the Council believes it needs to ensure a wider and broader representation of views are sought. A consultation plan will be published outlining the planned consultation activities.

7. Additional Information

- 7.1. The Council's focus is to be innovative and resourceful; being as efficient as we can be. We will operate in a way that promotes the best use of local resource. Shropshire Council market position statement 2018-2019 informs providers about existing and future demand for care services.

8. Key Issues Identified

- 8.1 Initial engagement with the market place and analysis of the intelligence and feedback indicates the following:
- There are a range of care providers (many assessed as providing good quality care) who offer residential and nursing provision across the county. However, the majority charge different prices for beds.
 - Modelling has been undertaken to explore possible pricing structures and this has led to identification of the industry recognised 'LangBuisson' model which illustrates the breakdown of costs in residential and nursing care. The model and pricing structure need further exploration with the market place via engagement and consultation.
 - Agreement and consensus with the marketplace would need to be reached about what is considered a 'fair' price for beds.
 - Transition to a revised pricing structure requires further exploration to understand the impact of any proposals.
 - Neighbouring Local Authorities have a range of different approaches
 - Approaches to commissioning of beds e.g., brokerage and block commissioning arrangements have potential to be reviewed and further explored to support stabilisation of the market place during transition to any new arrangements.

9 Consultation

- 9.1 It is proposed that the Council now consult on revising the pricing structure to obtain views from the market place. This will include:
- The principles and concept of updating the current pricing structure
 - The possible model and rates (rates will be identified for the purposes of consultation)
 - The risks and issues associated with implementation of a revised pricing structure

- Identification of strategies to implement and transition to a new pricing structure

9.2 Consultation will include on-line questionnaires, focus groups and individual meetings with providers. Analysis of the feedback will be undertaken and published. The activities are set out in Appendix D.

9.3 The results of this consultation along with financial analysis and feedback about a revised pricing structure will be presented to Cabinet on 22 May 2019.

List of Background Papers (This MUST be completed for all reports, but does not include items containing exempt or confidential information)

Project Initiation Document: March 2017

Working with care providers to understand costs: A guide for adult social care commissioners

https://www.careprovideralliance.org.uk/uploads/1/0/8/0/108055907/1701-working-with-providers-to-understand-and-agree-costs_8.pdf

Cabinet Member (Portfolio Holder)

Cllr Lee Chapman

Local Member

All members

Appendices

Appendix A – Personal Budget Contributions Policy 2018-2019

Appendix B – Minutes of Provider Engagement Event in June 2018

Appendix C – Equality and Social Inclusion Impact Assessment (ESIIA)

Appendix D – Consultation activity timetable

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Document Title:	Personal Budget Contributions Policy 2018-19		
Date Policy Reviewed + compliant with Mental Capacity Act :	April 2012		
EINA completed	YES	Version No.:	V3.2
Index Number	AC008		
Designation of Author/Owner:	Financial Assessments Group Leader		
Document Overseeing Group:	Policies & Procedures Working Group		
Review Dates:	Annually in April		
<i>Amendment Dates (from 2017/18 policy):</i>	<i>Page/s</i>	<i>Brief Description</i>	
	11 15-16 25-26	Nursing & residential home fees table	

1. Policy Statement

This policy replaces 'Charging for Residential Accommodation Guide' and the Council's Fairer Charging Policy. This policy will be reviewed annually.

This charging policy applies to:

- Services provided under a Personal Budget
- Services in a Residential Care or Nursing Home
- Extra care.

2. Source

The statutory and regulatory powers for this policy are contained within:

- [The Care Act 2014](#)
- [The Care and Support \(Charging and Assessment of Resources\) Regulations 2014](#)
- [Local Authority Circular 1 2018](#)

Statutory Guidance for the above

- [Care and Support Statutory Guidance](#)

Shropshire Council Cabinet

- [Cabinet papers 6 September 2017, item 57](#)

3. Definitions

The following terms are used throughout this document:

The Council	Shropshire Council of Shirehall, Abbey Foregate, Shrewsbury SY2 6ND
Service User	The recipient of any service provided by or on behalf of the Council
The Act	The Care Act 2014
Applicable Amount	The weekly amount of Income Support, Universal Credit, Pension Credit, Jobseeker's Allowance or Employment and Support Allowance a Service User is entitled to under relevant legislation
Appointed Representative	a person legally appointed or otherwise authorised to act on behalf of the Service User for example, a person having Lasting or Enduring Power of Attorney, or a Court appointed Deputy or Appointee
Assessment Officer	An officer appointed by the Council to assess the financial eligibility and contributions a Service User should make to any care and support arranged on behalf of Shropshire Council
Assessment Period	The period over which any contributions are applicable. This is normally a year.
Benefit Check	A check to evaluate the Service User's entitlement to any additional benefits, based on their financial situation and health

Capital	Any financial resource the Service User owns that is not income.
Care Audit	An audit of a Service User's use of his/her Council funding for care. This is performed by Shropshire Council's Care Audit team
Contribution	The amount a Service User is assessed to contribute to their Support Plan or care package, expressed as a weekly amount.
Couple	a married or an unmarried couple, or a civil partnership
Data Protection Policy	The Council's policy, which is compliant with the Data Protection Act 1998
Day care	A service managed by the Council, NHS, voluntary or private body, where Service Users can attend to meet other people and take part in activities
Direct Payment	Payment made by the Council direct to the Service User for them to purchase items or services identified to meet their needs.
Disability Related Expenditure	Any expenses incurred as a direct result of a disability or illness as income. These could include things as extra heating, special diets; special clothing requirements or disability related equipment. See appendix 3 and table 4
Extra Care	'On site' care provided or available for a specified period within designated accommodation
Financial Assessment	An assessment of the Service User's financial resources for the purpose of determining their financial contribution to their Support Plan
Financial Assessment Team	The Council's team responsible for performing financial assessments and maximizing Service Users' benefits. Referred to as 'The Team' in the remainder of this document
Financial Declaration	The form used to obtain financial information about the Service User
Full cost	The point at which the Service User's income equals the weekly equivalent cost of the Support Plan.
Home	The dwelling together with any garage, garden and outbuildings, normally occupied by the Service User as his or her home including any premises not so occupied which it is impracticable or unreasonable to sell separately.
Home Care	Home support to individuals who need help due to age or impairment. Home Care can include help with personal care tasks, getting in and out of bed and dressing
Housing costs	Mortgage repayments, rent liability, council tax and service charges, other than those service charges ineligible under the Housing Benefit Regulations 2006, Schedule 1 for the Service User's only or main home

Income	Any regular payment a Service user receives, or which is received on their behalf by another person
Means-tested benefits	Any benefit awarded on the basis of a person's (or couple's) own resources being below a set minimum for their circumstances. These are specifically: Income-based Employment and Support Allowance, income based Jobseekers Allowance, Universal Credit, Income Support, Housing Benefit, Council Tax Support and Pension Credit
Minimum Income Guarantee	The level of income which a Service User must have available for everyday expenditure after a contribution has been calculated, determined by Shropshire Council or Department of Health Local Authority Circular, whichever is more favourable to the Service User.
Non-householder	A person who is not liable or responsible for the payment of the household bills, who resides in accommodation owned or rented by someone else and is not legally liable for the rent, mortgage or Council Tax.
Permanent Resident	Means a Resident who is not a Temporary Resident or a Short Term Resident in a Nursing or Care home.
Personal Budget	An agreed allocation of funds to enable the outcomes in a Support Plan to be realized.
Provisional Assessment	An initial assessment of the Service User's maximum contribution to any support package they may subsequently agree to. This will be subject to revision following any Support Plan being put in place
The Regulations	The Care and Support (Charging and Assessment of Resources) Regulations 2014
Relevant change	A change in circumstances which materially affects a financial assessment. These are listed at Appendix 5.
Resident	A Service User who is provided with accommodation in a care or nursing home under the Act
Self-funding	A Service User who has capital available of over £23,250 and being deemed to have sufficient resources to pay for any care they require
Short term residential care	Residential care for Service User who is provided with accommodation in a care home as defined by the Act for a period not exceeding 8 weeks
Support Plan	The plan which identifies both the agreed care and support that the Service User will receive, and the cost of such care and support.
Temporary Resident	A Service User whose stay in a care home as defined by the Act, or residential college is unlikely to exceed 52 weeks, unless exceptional circumstances apply.
Year	For financial assessment purposes, this is 52.143 weeks. This is used in

	calculating a Service User's weekly contribution to their annual Support Plan.
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4. Introduction

4.1 In accordance with the Guidance, the objectives of this policy are to:

- Ensure that people are not charged more than it is reasonably practicable for them to pay;
- Be comprehensive, to reduce variation in the way people are assessed and charged;
- Be clear and transparent, so people know what they will be charged;
- Promote wellbeing, social inclusion, and support the vision of personalisation, independence, choice and control;
- Support carers to look after their own health and wellbeing and to care effectively and safely;
- Be person-focused, reflecting the variety of care and caring journeys and the variety of options available to meet the Service User's needs;
- Apply the charging rules equally so those with similar needs or services are treated the same and to minimise anomalies between different care settings;
- Encourage and enable those who wish to stay in or take up employment, education or training or plan for the future costs of meeting their needs to do so;
- Be sustainable for Shropshire Council in the long-term.

5. Eligibility for free services

5.1 The following will be exempt from any charges under this policy:

- Intermediate care including reablement for up to the first six weeks of a specified period of a programme of care and support to assist a person to maintain or regain the ability needed to live independently in their own home.
- Community equipment (which includes aids and minor adaptations to property, for the purpose of assisting with nursing at home or aiding daily living). Aids must be provided free of charge whether provided to meet or prevent/delay needs. A minor adaptation is one costing £1,000 or less.
- Services provided directly to a carer to meet that carer's identified needs
- Care and support provided to people with Creutzfeldt-Jacob Disease.

- After-care services and support provided under section 117 of the Mental Health Act 1983. Any care and support the Service User elects to receive that exceeds their assessed need, will not be exempted from a charge.
- Any other service or part of service that the NHS is under a duty to provide. This includes Continuing Health Care and the NHS contribution to Registered Nursing Care.
- More broadly, any services which a local authority is under a duty to provide through other legislation may not be charged for under the Care Act 2014.

6. Requirement for Financial Assessments

6.1 When a Service User, or their Appointed Representative, has contacted the Council or its agents to request an assessment for care, a financial assessment must be carried out. An officer from the Financial Assessment Team (“the Team”) will contact the Service User or their representative to arrange the completion of a Financial Declaration. Completion of this form is required to determine the financial contribution a Service User should make to any care they receive.

6.2 Where the Team has

a) made three attempts to contact the Service User or Appointed Representative or anyone acting in their best interests, but has not been able to obtain the relevant financial information, and

b) Paragraph 6.3 (b) or (c) does not apply,

it will be assumed that the Service User has the means to pay for his/her identified needs out of his/her capital or income. The Service User will therefore be assessed as being able to pay for the full cost of their care and support from the date that it started. The situation will be reviewed if the Service User or his/her Appointed Representative or anyone acting in his/her best interests, can show good cause for any delay in providing the necessary information. If good cause cannot be demonstrated but the necessary information is subsequently provided, a Financial Assessment will apply from the relevant day after the necessary information has been provided. Prior to that date, the Service User will incur the full cost of any care and support provided.

6.3 The Council will consider a financial assessment has been carried out where the following circumstances apply:

a) The Service User or representative refuses or does not wish to supply any financial information or fails to supply sufficient financial information, or;

b) The Service User is deemed to lack capacity to act in such financial matters and there is no one appointed to act on their behalf, and;

c) There is additional information available to the Council that indicates that their resources are within or outside the financial limits at paragraph 7.

7. Capital - Financial Limits

7.1 If a Service User has more than £23,250 in capital, he/she will be deemed to have sufficient resources to purchase his/her own care, and (unless exceptional circumstances apply) will not qualify for funded support from the Council.

7.2 If a Service User is resident in a care or nursing home, at the point when their capital is at or below £35,000 they may approach the Council in order to put in place arrangements for financial assistance towards their care costs after their capital reduces to £23,250.

7.3 In circumstances other than in paragraph 7.2, when a Service User's capital falls to, or below, £23,250, he/she may approach the Council to seek financial assistance.

7.4 If the Service User has capital of over £14,250, but less than £23,250, this will be taken account in the assessment as shown in Appendix 2. The resultant amount will be referred to as tariff income.

7.5 For the avoidance of doubt, the expression "capital" does not include the value of the Service User's home or his/her share of the beneficial interest in the value of his/her home if they continue to live in it or its value is disregarded – see Appendix 4 for further information.

7.6 The calculation and treatment of capital is as determined in paragraphs 18 to 25 of the Regulations.

8. Principles of Financial Assessment

8.1. Unless the circumstances in 6.3 apply, a Service User will be required to provide a financial declaration of their circumstances, which they, or a legally Appointed Representative must sign.

8.2 The Financial Assessment will be assessed as follows:

- a) The income of a Service User will be calculated on a weekly basis.
- b) Any tariff income under paragraph 7.4 will be added to the amount calculated at 'a'.
- c) Any disregards will be applied to income, as per Schedule 5
- d) Where the Service User has deprived themselves of an income, or failed to apply for an available income, including any means-tested benefits or allowances, he/she will be treated as being in receipt of it for the purposes of the calculation.
- e) Capital will be calculated as per Schedule 4.

8.3 If the Service User lacks the capability to give the required information for the Financial Assessment to be completed, and does not have an Appointed Representative, then, if the Financial Assessment Officer deems that it is in the best interest of the Service User, a third party, such as a relative, may supply that information.

8.4 If the Service User or Appointed Representative or anyone acting in their best interests does not have English as their first language, they may use the translation service available through the Council.

8.5 The purpose of the Financial Assessment is to:

- Correctly identify how much the Service User should contribute towards his/her Support Plan.
- Establish if the Service User has entitlement to welfare benefits
- Assist the Service User in claiming any such welfare benefits or signpost to 3rd party organisations who would assist
- Identify any permissible additional expenditure which the Service User may have because of their disability

8.6 The Council considers that its financial contribution to a Support Plan is supplementary to that of the Service User, as implied in section 26 of the Act.

9. Charging for support in setting other than a residential or nursing home

9.1 The Regulations require financial assessments for non-residential settings to ensure that the Service User has a set amount of income from which to meet basic living costs. This is defined as the Minimum Income Guarantee.

9.2 Part 7 of the Regulations defines the Minimum Income Guarantee specified according to age, relationship status, and entitlement to welfare benefits. These rates are set out in Schedule 1.

9.3 The Financial Assessment will also take into account:

- a) Disability Related Expenditure, and;
- b) Housing costs for which the Service User is liable for their main or only home, but which are not met by Department for Work and Pensions- or local authority- administered allowances, benefits or credits. These are specifically:
 - i) Mortgage repayment costs
 - ii) Rent or ground rent
 - iii) Council tax
 - iv) Service charges other than those ineligible under Schedule 1 of Housing Benefit Regulation 2006, and;
- c) Any tariff income from capital held as in Schedule 2.

9.4 Paragraph 9.3 a) will only apply if the Service User has a current award of:

- a) Attendance Allowance,
- b) Disability Living Allowance, or
- c) Personal Independence Payments

9.5. All income that the Service User receives, or is entitled to on application, will be taken into account, other than that disregarded in Part 4 and Schedule 1 of the Regulations. Any deductions

from benefits or allowances, such as overpayment recoveries or Social Fund deductions will be disregarded in the calculations.

9.6 If the Service User has a partner, and one of the couple receives a means tested benefit, half of any means-tested income received for them as a couple will also be taken into account. This applies specifically to:

- Income-based Employment and Support Allowance
- Income Support
- Income-based Jobseekers Allowance
- Universal Credit
- Guaranteed Pension Credit

9.7 All calculations will be based on weekly income. All payments received at any other frequency will be converted to a weekly equivalent. It is assumed that one-half of any capital and savings held in joint names is available to the Service User, unless the contrary is demonstrated by or on behalf of the Service User.

9.8 If both individuals living in a household are Service Users receiving a home care service, a Financial Assessment will be carried out on each Service User and a separate Financial Declaration completed for each of them. As well as the disregarded income, half of any housing costs and individual Disability Related Expenditure will be deducted from any assessable income. When assessing allowances for Disability Related Expenditure relating to the home, these will be divided by two if both partners are receiving Council-arranged support. This applies specifically to care alarms, domestic services, gardening, wear and tear in the home, telephone, energy, laundry and metered water.

9.9 The financial assessment for a Service User's contribution to their Support Plan will be calculated according to the following formula:

The total assessable income	This is the weekly equivalent amount of all the Service User's income, less any disregarded income, as per Schedule 3
Less the Minimum Income Guarantee	As stipulated in Schedule 1
Less Disability Related Expenditure	As in Schedule 2
Less Housing Related Expenses	As in Paragraph 9.2 (b) above
Equals the Contribution	The weekly amount the Service User is liable to pay towards their Support Plan, subject to paragraph 9.11

9.10 If the Service User is a 'non-householder', no housing costs will be taken into account.

9.11 The contribution shall be applied for the duration of any Support Plan, and will be set against the annual cost of that Support Plan. If the annual total cost of the Support Plan is less than the equivalent annual contribution that the Service User can contribute, then his/her contribution shall be adjusted to match the annual value of the Support Plan. The Service User will be charged from the date that his or her support starts.

9.12 If the Service User' contributions in the year exceed the total cost of support supplied, then the Service User will be refunded the excess contribution.

9.13 Where the Council identifies and informs the Service User of any benefit available upon application, it will take that income into account:

- a) From the date the award is effective, when it is awarded
- b) From the date that it would have been awardable if the Service User or their representative fails to apply for it

Where the Service User experiences delays of over 4 weeks from the awarding authority, the available income will not be taken into account until it has been awarded, but will be taken into account in the assessment from the start date of the award.

9.14 If the Council considers that the Service User has deprived himself or herself of income or capital in order to decrease their contribution, they will be treated as still possessing that income or capital, and their contribution calculated accordingly.

10. Charging for support in residential or nursing homes.

10.1 Subject to the conditions in Section 7 above and 10.2, a Service User will be assessed on his/her income.

10.2 An exception is made for a resident who has approached the Council for financial assistance and who owns a property that was his/her main or only home prior to admittance to residential care. The Council must disregard the value of a Service User's main or only home when the value of their non-housing assets is below the upper capital limit for a period of 12 weeks, which will run either from when the Service User first enters a care home as a permanent resident or when a property disregard other than the 12 week property disregard ends because a qualifying relative has died or moved into a care home themselves. For the avoidance of doubt, "permanent resident" in this context means a person who is provided with care home accommodation by the Council under the Care Act. The 12 week disregard period applies from the point that the Council begins to fund the care, even if the Resident has previously been in a care home as a self-funder.

10.3 In all other cases, the first twelve weeks in residential or care accommodation shall be treated as if temporary. From the 13th week the resident shall be treated as in permanent accommodation unless his/her placement is for a fixed period, such as in a residential college for the period of a term.

10.4 For the first 12 weeks of admission, the Financial Assessment will take into account the following costs of maintaining the Service User's main or only home:

- a) utility bills
- b) security alarm
- c) gas maintenance

- d) rent, net of Housing Benefit
- e) Mortgage payments
- f) TV licence
- g) Council Tax, net of Council Tax Support
- h) house, contents, car and life insurance policy premiums
- i) telephone line rental and calls

10.5 If the home is shared with a partner, spouse, or son or daughter, half of any such costs shall be taken into account.

10.6 None of the costs listed at 10.4 will be taken into account if the Service User is a non-householder.

10.7 All calculations will be based on weekly income. All payments received at any other frequency will be converted to a weekly equivalent. It is assumed that one-half of any capital and savings held in joint names is available to the Service User, unless the contrary is demonstrated by or on behalf of the Service User.

10.8 From the 13th week of admission, the Service User will have his/her contribution assessed by aggregating:

- a) The weekly equivalent of all income with the exception of that disregarded in Schedule 1 of the Regulation;
 - b) Any tariff income applicable (see Schedule 5 below);
- Less:
- c) The Personal Allowance, and, if applicable,
 - d) Any non-residential contribution in the relevant week.

10.9. For 2018-19 the Personal Allowance is £24.90 a week.

10.10 In cases where additional costs apply, as under paragraph 30 of the Act ('Cases where adult expresses preference for particular accommodation'), the contribution calculated at 10.8 remains payable. For the avoidance of doubt, this means that:

- a) that an assessed contribution is payable to the Council as part of the weekly care contribution, based on Council weekly fees, as at Schedule 6, and;
- b) there is an additional contribution, the '3rd party top-up', to be paid by the 3rd party, to be paid to the home in addition to agreed Council weekly fee. This is the difference between the actual care or residential home fees and the fees applicable in Schedule 6.

11. Reviews of Financial Assessments

11.1 The Service User's contribution will be re-assessed whenever any of the following apply:

- Annually, following any changes in standard benefit rates, with effect from the Monday following 6 April, unless 6 April is a Monday, in which case it will be from that day
- Following any relevant changes in the Service User's circumstances or changes in the Service User's income
- When the Service User's Support Plan has been reviewed within a year of its inception

11.2 It is the Service User's responsibility, or that of their financial representative, to inform the Team of any changes in their circumstances that will affect the amount that they contribute to their Support Plan, specifically:

- Changes in income
- Changes to their capital
- Changes in membership of the household
- Moving to other accommodation

11.3 Changes are required to be reported to the Team within a month of the date of change. Changes reported later than a month after the actual change will be implemented as follows:

- Any change causing a reduction in a contribution will be effective on the Monday of the week in which it was notified
- Any change causing an increase in contribution will be effective from the Monday of the week in which the change occurred.

If a Service User or his/her financial representative claim hardship will result from this, the Financial Assessment Team Leader can use his or her discretion, based on the circumstances of individual cases

12. Collection of Contributions

12.1 The Service User will be informed in writing of the weekly assessed contribution. He/she will be required to contribute this amount, or the monthly equivalent to their Support Plan on an ongoing basis subject to any changes notified to the Financial Assessment Team as identified in Section 11.

12.2 Where a Service User receives his/her financial support through a Direct Payment, the assessed contribution will be deducted from the amount Shropshire Council would otherwise pay into the Service User's care account. The Service User is required to pay the assessed contribution into the same account.

12.3 Failure to pay the assessed contribution into the Direct Payment account may lead to the full amount owed being invoiced, subject to a care audit.

12.4 Service Users not receiving Direct Payments will normally be invoiced every 4 weeks in arrears for their contribution.

12.5 Exceptions to 12.4 will apply:

- a) for administrative reasons the first invoice is delayed, or
- b) when a payment period is adjusted to comply with financial year-end accounting.

12.6 Contributions remain payable for each week that a Summary Support Plan is open, irrespective of whether the Service User receives care and support in that week.

12.7 Any debt accrued through non-payment of assessed contributions may be recoverable as a civil debt in line with the Council's debt recovery policy.

13. Discretionary Powers and Waivers

13.1 Charging policies for home care services are discretionary but there is an expectation from central government that the Council will make reasonable charges.

13.2 The Council's Group Manager, Assessment and Eligibility has the discretion to reduce or waive the assessed financial contribution in exceptional circumstances, where the Service User satisfies the Council that their means are insufficient for it to be reasonably practical for them to pay the charge. The Council has delegated this role to the People2People Financial Advice Manager, or their deputy.

13.3 The very nature of the term 'exceptional circumstances' makes it difficult and undesirable to be over-prescriptive in defining the criteria that would qualify someone for a reduced or waived contribution. However, decisions should be consistent between Service Users in similar circumstances.

13.4 The following are examples of circumstances which may qualify for a reduction or waiver dependant on the particular circumstances of each case:

- Where the Service User has a low income and dependent children
- Where the Service User is about to incur major expenditure (e.g. house repair/improvement) that will reduce their capital to below £23,250
- Where the Service User or their partner is subject to a legally enforceable debt that would reduce their Minimum Income Guarantee to an unacceptable level. In such cases the Money Advice Trust's Common Financial Statement will be used to evaluate the Service User's ability to contribute to their Support Plan
- If the Service User would be at risk under the Council's safeguarding policy if the full contribution were to be implemented

The list is not exhaustive, and each case would be examined on its own merits.

14. Data Protection & Fraud Prevention

14.1 All data gathered a part of the Financial Assessment process will be kept in accordance with the Council's Data Protection Policy. The Council is also under a duty to protect the public funds that it administers and, to this end, may also use the information that a Service User has provided within the Council:

- For the prevention & detection of fraud

- To support national fraud initiatives; this may include Service Users' information being used in data matching exercises

14.2 The Council may also share this information with other bodies administering or in receipt of public funds solely for this purpose.

List of Schedules

1 – Minimum Income Guarantees

2 – Disability Related Expenditure

3 – Treatment of Income

4 – Treatment of Capital

5 – Tariff Income

6 – Residential and Nursing Home Fees

Schedule 1

Minimum Income Guarantees (MIG)

The following MIGs apply in regard to Section 9 above, as stated in section 7 of the Regulations:

Single People		
Age of Service User	Disability Benefits or other benefit components he/she receives, or would be considered to receive, if entitled to Income Support or Pension Credit	Minimum Income Guarantee
Under 25	None	£72.40
	Disability Premium	£112.75
	Disability & Enhanced disability premiums	£132.45
	Carer's Premium	£115.65
	Disability Premium & Carer's Premium	£156.00
	Disability, Enhanced disability & carer's premiums	£175.70
25 or over, under State Retirement Age*	None	£91.40
	Disability Premium	£131.75
	Disability & Enhanced disability premiums	£151.45
	Carer's Premium	£134.65
	Disability Premium & Carer's Premium	£175.00
	Disability, Enhanced disability & carer's premiums	£194.70
State Retirement Pension Age*	None	£189.00
	Carer's Premium	£232.25
One of a couple		
Under State retirement age	None	£71.80
	Disability Premium	£100.55
	Disability & Enhanced disability premiums	£114.70
	Carer's Premium	£115.05
	Disability Premium & Carer's Premium	£143.80
	Disability, Enhanced disability & carer's premiums	£157.95

State Retirement Pension Age*	None	£144.30
	Carer's Premium	£187.55

* This is the age at which a person becomes eligible for Pension Credit. It is subject to amendment from central government and is based on a person's date of birth rather than their age. The Government's State Pension age can be checked [here](#).

All figures are derived from Local Authority Circular LAC(DHSC)(2018)1

SCHEDULE 2

DISABILITY RELATED EXPENDITURE

The allowances and thresholds for specific Disability Related Expenditure for non-residential care are as follows:

Unless otherwise indicated, thresholds and allowable weekly rates have not changed in line with the Consumer Price Index as of September 2017 i.e. an increase of 3.0%.

DRE item	Basis of disregard	Evidence Required	Maximum or standard allowable weekly rate
Care Alarm	Necessary housing cost if living in supported/sheltered housing. Cost if not included in Housing Benefit or Supporting People Grant.	Last two payments or invoices	Actual cost
Privately bought personal care	Actual cost if social care practitioner confirms this as a requirement to meet the SU's eligible care needs and the Shropshire Council support is reduced accordingly. No disregard for payments made to any carer who is a close relative of the Service User. If payments made to carer receiving Carer's Allowance or Carer's Premium, any such payments will not be accepted as expenditure, as carer is receiving state funding.	Signed receipts or invoices covering at least 4 weeks.	Actual cost
Domestic services	Actual cost if Care Manager confirms as a reasonable addition to the Care Plan and no one else in household can carry out task. Max allowance based on 2 hours of support per week at the National Living Wage of £7.83 an hour	Signed receipts or invoices covering at least 4 weeks.	£15.66
Gardening	Actual cost if Service User unable to care for garden due to disability and no one else in household is able to do so. Essential work only. <i>The expense is presumed to occur over the growing seasons of 39 weeks (9 months) only, but is averaged over the year. It is based on 2 hours a week at the National Living Wage of £7.83 per hour</i>	Signed receipts for at least 4 weeks using a proper Receipt Book or a Shropshire Council Form.	£11.72

Dietary Requirements (food and non-alcoholic beverages)	Discretionary as special dietary needs may not be more expensive than normal. Identify average spend per week and any additional costs due to disability rather than personal preference. Guide amount for weekly food bill = £27.30 for an individual ^(Note 1) and £53.50 for a couple ^(Note 2) .	4 weeks till receipts We may seek permission to approach GP. Details of special purchases.	£6.87
Clothing and Footwear	Evidence required for additional spend – large items such as special shoes/boots will be averaged out over year. We do not allow for personal preferences for more expensive items. Guide amount for weekly spend on clothing & footwear= £5.40 per person per week ^(note 1) . A clothing allowance is available with the War Disablement Pension, which recognises extra wear and tear caused through incontinence and the use of an artificial limb. If this is received, it is netted off against identified extra costs.	2 months receipts Last receipt for large items – may be annual Reference within the Care Plan to abnormal wear and tear of clothing.	£2.80
Wear and Tear in Home	Any extra costs resulting from a disability such as wheelchair wear on carpet or behavioural difficulties, high level of breakages	12 months previous payments pro rata to weekly amount	£2.80
Prescription Costs	If not eligible for free prescriptions, then the weekly equivalent of the cost of annual prepayment certificate, currently £104 for 2018/19. Note patients over 60 are exempt from these charges.	Latest prescription information/prepayment card	£2.06
Land line or mobile phone	A contribution to the usage, as most of the time phones are not used for emergencies	Ownership of a phone	£1.40
Wheelchair maintenance	The cost of maintaining a privately owned wheelchair, including insurance. No allowance is made if the equipment is provided free, e.g. by	Manual Electric	£3.91 £9.49

	NHS or charity. ^(Note 4)		
Energy (electricity, gas, oil etc. – heating, lighting and cooking)	<p>Additional costs because of disability - e.g. need to regulate body temperature. The additional cost must be related to a medical need – no allowance is made for high heating costs without this.</p> <p>Single in flat/terraced house/bungalow Couple in flat/terraced house/bungalow Single in semi detached Couple in semi Single in detached Couple in detached</p> <p>Additional allowance if no mains gas and using fuel oil. Allowance decreased by 18% due to commensurate decrease in price ^(Note 5)</p>	<p>Monthly standing order or direct debit to utility company, or last two bills</p> <p>Threshold^(Note 4) £28.01 £36.91 £29.75 £39.18 £36.22 £47.70</p> <p>This allowance only applies if total energy costs exceed the above thresholds</p>	<p>The amount by which fuel costs exceed energy costs in column opposite up to a maximum of:</p> <p>£3.02</p> <p>£2.67</p>
Metered Water	<p>Costs over and above these that can be identified as disability related expenditure, with reasons.^(Note 6)</p> <p>Flat/ terraced House Semi-detached Detached</p>	<p>Last 2, 6 monthly bills required or evidence of direct debit</p> <p>Threshold £6.51 pw Threshold £7.41 pw Threshold £8.70 pw</p>	£1.53
Laundry	<p>Evidence of excess washing – additional washing machines, known continence problems, obsessive compulsive disorders. The numbers of extra loads over 4 per week per person in household. Reasonableness to be checked with Care Manager. ^(Note 6)</p>	<p>5 or more loads</p> <p>Transitional protection for Service Users first assessed before 9 April 2012</p> <p>9-12 loads 13 or more loads</p>	<p>£3.84</p> <p>£6.15 £9.25</p>
Bedding	<p>This should be covered by NHS provision if for continence/night time sweat issues. Actual spend over last 12 months including mattress protectors, new bedding. Protected mattress expected to last 8 years– Guide figure per year £97. Confirmation of whether extra costs</p>		£3.24

	<p>of incontinence should be provided by Health to be checked with care manager.</p> <p>To include mattress and bedding</p>		
Transport	<p>This will apply to costs not included in any Support Plan. Only costs incurred as a result of disability – over and above the amount of DLA mobility allowance will be considered.</p> <p>If mobility allowance received a presumption is made that there are no additional transport costs unless evidenced and with suitable reason agreed with care manager.</p> <p>If no mobility, then all to be evidenced with both receipt and reason for transport. Ordinary day-to-day transport costs e.g. for shopping are not taken into account unless specialist transport is required. Allowable expense is net of the cost of the same journey by the cheapest available public transport.</p> <p>Day centre transport charges are to be allowed as DRE if over and above any DLA or PIP mobility component and not included in a Support Plan.</p>		£13.05
Equipment	<p>The life span for most items is considerable. The Council will take into account annual maintenance costs.</p> <p>Purchases will be looked at on an individual basis. The Council will take into account any contributions to purchase, e.g. grants, charitable payments.</p> <p>Items provided free of charge will not be considered.</p> <p>Items over 5 years old will not be taken into account.</p>	<p>Date of purchase</p> <p>Cost of item</p>	<p>The cost of the item or items, divided by 250. This figure is based on the treatment of capital under Income Support regulations.</p>

Source information: Notes

⁽¹⁾ ONS publication: Family Spending 2017: Table A24 Expenditure of one person retired households mainly dependent on state pensions by gross income quintile group 2014-2016

⁽²⁾ ONS publication: Family Spending 2016: Table A30 Expenditure of two adult retired households mainly dependent on state pensions by gross income quintile group 2014-2016

⁽⁴⁾ www.statistics.gov.uk from the download "Consumer Price Inflation Detailed Briefing note November 2015'. The figures are found in Table 41 detailed reference tables - % change over 12 months. The general RPI increase is for "All Items" while the fuel increase comes from a weighted average of fuel and light increases (line 97).

⁽⁵⁾ Boilerjuice.com/Heating-Oil-England.php

⁽⁶⁾ Severn Trent Water Scheme of Charges Households 2019/18, C4, Table C7: Property type and assessed volume charges (page 41), Table 5: Metered household surface water drainage charges – Zones 1-8 , Table 5 (b) drainage charges.

Note about ONS statistics: In July 2016 ONS announced that it was changing the period it measured statistics from calendar year to financial year. At the time of preparing this policy update, no new release date has been announced for any of these statistics.

Schedule 3

THE TREATMENT OF INCOME

The level of charge will be determined by the amount of income being received by the Service User, and if applicable, any received by a partner on their behalf. If the Service User has capital above £14,250, any tariff income calculated in accordance with Schedule 5 below, shall be added to that income.

Disregarded Income

Any income described in Part 1 of Schedule 1 of the Regulations shall be disregarded

These amounts include the following

INCOME WHICH ATTRACTS AN EXEMPTION AMOUNT
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Payments to victims of National Socialist persecution (paid under German or Austrian law) (£10.00)• Civilian war injury pension (£10.00)• War Disablement Pension (£10.00)• War Widow's Supplementary Pension (£104.05)
INCOME WHICH WILL NOT BE CHARGED AGAINST
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• All earnings from employment• Any partner's earnings• Armed Forces Guaranteed Payments• Savings Pension Credit up to £5.75 for a single qualifying Service User and up to £8.60 for one of a couple• Any dependent children's income received for them, such as Maintenance Payments• The difference between high rate and low rate Attendance Allowance or between high and middle rate Disability Living Allowance (unless the Council provides care at night).• Disability Living Allowance or Personal Independence Payment – Mobility component (any amount) UNLESS transport costs are included in the Support Plan.• Independent Living Fund• Payments made by the Local Authority under Child Care legislation• Payments from the Social Fund and Local Support and Prevention Fund• War Widow's special payments• Child Tax Credit

Schedule 4

CAPITAL

Disregarded Capital

Any capital as listed in Schedule 2 of the Regulations will be disregarded in the assessment. In addition, any compensation payments made under [The Armed Forces and Reserve Forces Compensation Scheme Order 2011](#) will also be disregarded. All other capital will be taken into account in the Financial Assessment.

Where the Council believes that there is sufficient evidence to the effect that a person has disposed on any capital to a third party to avoid payment of charges, he/she will be assessed as retaining that capital. In such cases it will be for the Council to demonstrate that a significant reason for the disposal of such capital was to obtain financial assistance from the Council.

Any monies received as income becomes capital at the end of the period to which the income relates e.g. where a Service User is paid monthly, any money he/she has left at the start of the next month, becomes capital.

Where there are reasonable grounds for believing that a Service User has capital or savings that have not been disclosed at the time of the Financial Assessment, the Financial Assessment Team Leader will investigate further and will reach a decision based on the available details. Where the Team Leader concludes that a Service User is deliberately withholding financial information which would affect the level of his/her contribution, the Council will charge the appropriate 'full cost' charges for all incurred charges and treat the Service User as being fully able to fund his/her Support Plan from his/her own resources. In these circumstances, Council funding will be withdrawn.

If, subsequently, the Service User either provides the missing information or can demonstrate that the Team's decision is incorrect, then the charge will be returned to the appropriate amount and a refund given.

A 'tariff income' from capital will be assumed at the rate of £1 per week for every £250 of capital between the minimum and maximum capital limits determined each year in accordance with the Regulations.

The tariff income is meant to represent an amount that a Service User with capital over a certain limit should be able to contribute towards his service cost and should be not regarded as the interest earning capacity of that capital. These tariffs are shown below.

Schedule 5

Tariff income

The weekly tariff income will be calculated on the following total capital amount a Service User holds at the point of the financial assessment.

Amount of Capital		Tariff Income	Amount of Capital		Tariff Income
From	To		From	To	
£14,250.00	£14,500.00	£1.00	£18,750.00	£19,000.00	£19.00
£14,500.01	£14,750.00	£2.00	£19,000.01	£19,250.00	£20.00
£14,750.01	£15,000.00	£3.00	£19,250.01	£19,500.00	£21.00
£15,000.01	£15,250.00	£4.00	£19,500.01	£19,750.00	£22.00
£15,250.01	£15,500.00	£5.00	£19,750.01	£20,000.00	£23.00
£15,500.01	£15,750.00	£6.00	£20,000.01	£20,250.00	£24.00
£15,750.01	£16,000.00	£7.00	£20,250.01	£20,500.00	£25.00
£16,000.01	£16,250.00	£8.00	£20,500.01	£20,750.00	£26.00
£16,250.01	£16,500.00	£9.00	£20,750.01	£21,000.00	£27.00
£16,500.01	£16,750.00	£10.00	£21,000.01	£21,250.00	£28.00
£16,750.01	£17,000.00	£11.00	£21,250.01	£21,500.00	£29.00
£17,000.01	£17,250.00	£12.00	£21,500.01	£21,750.00	£30.00
£17,250.01	£17,500.00	£13.00	£21,750.01	£22,000.00	£31.00
£17,500.01	£17,750.00	£14.00	£22,000.01	£22,250.00	£32.00
£17,750.01	£18,000.00	£15.00	£22,250.01	£22,500.00	£33.00
£18,000.01	£18,250.00	£16.00	£22,500.01	£22,750.00	£34.00
£18,250.01	£18,500.00	£17.00	£22,750.01	£23,000.00	£35.00
£18,500.01	£18,750.00	£18.00	£23,000.01	£23,250.00	£36.00
			£23,250.01	Self-funding	

Schedule 6

Fee Levels

The financial assessment will determine a Service User's contribution towards the cost of the care. If a Service User is assessed as meeting the criteria for NHS Continuing Health Care (CHC) he or she will have their placement costs met in full by the Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG). For care in a private or voluntary sector Residential or Nursing Home there is a maximum level per week that will be funded by the Council. The current rates are shown in the following table. Backdated awards of CHC costs will be refunded to the Service User upon receipt of written confirmation from the CCG

Nursing and Residential Homes Weekly Rate of Payments

'Points' referred to below relate to the Quality Care Commission quality rating. The points awarded to a nursing or residential care will determine the weekly payments to that home.

OTHER CLIENT GROUPS

Please note that other client groups do not have standard rates as they are all dealt with on an individual basis.

The Council will pay the difference between the Service User's assessed contribution and the appropriate rate as set out in the tables below or an individual rate if in another client group or if he or she is placed outside of Shropshire.

	18/19 Rate
Nursing	
Nursing Care (Single Room)	£377.63
Nursing Care (Non Single Room)	£346.43
Nursing Care EMI (Single Room)	£395.18
Nursing Care EMI (Non Single Room)	£363.90
Residential	
Residential Care (Low Dependency)	£297.78
Residential Care (High Dependency)	£347.55
Residential Care EMI	£376.38

	18/19 Rate
Nursing	
Nursing Care (Single Room) - Point 0	£377.63
Nursing Care (Single Room) - Point 1	£410.88
Nursing Care (Single Room) - Point 2	£436.27
Nursing Care (Single Room) - Point 3	£455.38
Nursing Care (Non Single Room) - Point 0	£346.43
Nursing Care (Non Single Room) - Point 1	£377.88
Nursing Care (Non Single Room) - Point 2	£402.35
Nursing Care (Non Single Room) - Point 3	£420.90

Nursing Care EMI (Single Room) - Point 0	£395.18
Nursing Care EMI (Single Room) - Point 1	£429.47
Nursing Care EMI (Single Room) - Point 2	£459.70
Nursing Care EMI (Single Room) - Point 3	£481.53
Nursing Care EMI (Non Single Room) - Point 0	£363.90
Nursing Care EMI (Non Single Room) - Point 1	£396.37
Nursing Care EMI (Non Single Room) - Point 2	£425.38
Nursing Care EMI (Non Single Room) - Point 3	£446.47
Residential	
Residential Care (Low Dependency) - Point 0	£297.78
Residential Care (Low Dependency) - Point 1	£326.58
Residential Care (Low Dependency) - Point 2	£347.22
Residential Care (Low Dependency) - Point 3	£362.15
Residential Care (High Dependency) - Point 0	£347.55
Residential Care (High Dependency) - Point 1	£379.08
Residential Care (High Dependency) - Point 2	£400.66
Residential Care (High Dependency) - Point 3	£416.10
Residential Care EMI - Point 0	£376.38
Residential Care EMI - Point 1	£404.88
Residential Care EMI - Point 2	£429.72
Residential Care EMI - Point 3	£445.37

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Commissioning Review Project (Res/Nursing)

Provider Engagement Report

Aims

- Discuss and understand issues around current provision, commissioning practice, any identified gaps and proposed new pricing approach with:
 - Providers
 - Shropshire Partners in Care (SPIC)
- Discuss and understand the current cost structures for placements

Approach

A mixed approach to meeting these aims was taken:

- An initial meeting was held with Nicky Jacques, Chief Officer of Shropshire Partners in Care (SPIC) to inform her about the project and how we planned to engage with care home providers.
- A general invitation to a meeting to discuss the project and to discuss the issues set out above was sent to all 124 care home providers.
- Individual meetings were held with a self-selected number of care home providers. All 124 providers were invited to take part. We aimed to ensure we met with different provider types – national, local large providers and small, single care home providers.
- An online survey was issued to all 124 care home providers with a follow-up email to all asking them to take part. The survey was also advertised via the SPIC newsletter.

Responses / Activity

Of the 124 care home providers invited, 12 said they would attend a general provider meeting in June where the project would be introduced and discussed. Of these 12 providers the meeting was actually attended by 7 people representing 5 care home providers.

Individual meetings were held with 7 providers as follows:

- Derwen College
- Coverage Care
- Morris Care
- Barchester (The Mount NH)
- Landona House
- Sabrina House
- Vicarage NH

The online survey was responded to by 16 providers although not all fully completed the survey.

Findings

1. Being Commissioned by Shropshire Council

Feedback was generally positive from providers in terms of their working relationship with the council. Reasons for positive and negative feedback tended to be both ends of the same reason – a number of providers who felt the relationship was good cited good communication, helpful council staff, responsiveness and clarity whereas those who felt the relationship was not so good cited poor communication, not knowing who to contact, slowness in setting up contracts and payments. The strength of the professional relationship and regular communication / contact seem to be the key factors for providers.

2. Factors Placing a Strain on Individual Providers and the Care Home Sector

We asked providers what factors are placing a strain on their individual business and what factors they felt are placing a strain on the care home sector as a whole. Answers to both were fairly consistent with each other.

Issues around staff recruitment and retention are common to many providers with the knock-on effect on recruitment costs and agency staff costs. From the small sample of care home providers we met, the recruitment issues tend to be more acute in the larger provider organisations than in the smaller organisations which identify with a particular locality – these smaller organisations seem to have a sense of their position in the local community as an important employer and local people seem to want to work for them. Other staffing factors identified by providers include the cost of training staff and low pay levels in the sector.

We also explored factors in relation to service users which are placing a strain on care homes. Many providers observed that residents are coming to them much later which means that their care needs are high and resident turnover is high.

A few providers identified low demand for beds as being an issue for them and around one-third of survey respondents identified that the aim to help keep people at home for longer was placing a strain on the sector.

Most providers identified Shropshire Council fee rates, other council fee rates and inflationary pressures as being an issue.

3. Block v Spot Purchasing

We asked providers whether they had a preference for block or spot purchasing and reasons for their answer. Fewer than half of the online survey respondents expressed any preference and were split fairly evenly between a preference for block or spot contracting with some preferring a mix of both.

Provider meetings found that nearly all providers would welcome some block contracting as it would give a degree of cash-flow certainty and would facilitate quicker placements, although some who currently hold block contracts made the point that social worker / OT capacity can be stretched at

times which impacts on the ability to fill the block beds quickly. In addition, the point was made that, in the case of time-limited block placements, it should be made very clear to service users and their families at the outset around expectations of length of stay and what happens at the end of that period.

Most providers identified that small block contracts would be most effective in giving a balance between certainty and flexibility.

With regard to spot contracting providers recognised that this gives service users more choice. Also, if referral processes are strong and efficient, then spot contracting should enable swift and appropriate placements.

4. Fixing Rates

Most providers were in favour of the principle of fixing placement rates with the caveat that they should be set at a sustainable level, based on strong evidence. Some providers told us that they apply fixed rates for different care types; a small number have parity between council-funded and private rates. There was some discussion around fixing a core part of the fee and then having an adjustable element dependent on needs – this would be more appropriate at the higher end of needs.

5. Current Approach to Setting Fees

There is a wide range of fees being charged by providers. Fee setting is dependent on a number of factors including staffing ratios and property-related costs such as rent or borrowing costs.

The amount of detail shared by providers varied. Most adopted a model of determining total costs across the home and then averaging these across beds to arrive at a target weekly fee. A small number of providers do similar for some core costs but add on increments for additional needs or treatments for individual service users.

Some providers will set a weekly fee and apply that across all placements; others will quote rates based on 'supply v demand' and achieving a satisfactory balance between contributions from self-funded and commissioned places.

One provider builds weekly bespoke fees per service based on a fixed accommodation costs (including utilities, laundry, catering) and fixed Head Office costs plus variable care and nursing costs based on number of staff and time required.

Another provider shared the Laing Buisson benchmark figures for Shropshire care homes for 2017/18 – it is important to note that this has been built from provider returns and averaged based on those returns and reflects costs to the provider and not a breakdown of the weekly fees paid by the Council for example.

One provider discussed the role of lenders in determining the target levels of return related to loan covenants, eg Earnings Before Interest, Tax, Depreciation and Amortization (EBITDA) should be 3 x annual debt interest charges. This has an impact on the setting of fees.

Conclusions

Providers were broadly open to the principle of fixed fees but were clear that this could only work for them if the fees were 'fair'. Care will need to be taken to ensure that current lower fees aren't inflated too quickly without any real need from the providers, whilst at the same time not excluding providers who currently charge higher fees, therefore reducing supply.

Providers can see the benefits of some block contracting, although spreading this out across the market as a larger number of small blocks.

Neil Evans
Commissioning Development Manager
neil.evans@shropshire.gov.uk

Sarah Nelsey
Commissioning Information Officer
sarah.nelsey@shropshire.gov.uk

Shropshire Council Equality and Social Inclusion Impact Assessment (ESIIA)**Part One Screening Record****A. Summary Sheet on Accountability and Actions****Name of proposed service change**

Please use this box for the full formal name of the proposed service change, whether it is a policy, a procedure, a function, a project, an update of a strategy, etc. The term "service change" is used in this form as shorthand for whatever form the changes may take.

Residential and Nursing Care beds Commissioning Review project

Name of lead officer carrying out the screening

Rebecca Knight, Project Co-ordinator

Decision, review and monitoring

Decision	Yes	No
Part One ESIIA Only?	Yes	
Proceed to Part Two Full Report?		

If completion of a Part One assessment is an appropriate and proportionate action at this stage, please use the boxes below and sign off as indicated. If a Part Two report is required, please move on to separate full report stage.

Actions to mitigate negative impact or enhance positive impact of the service change in terms of equality and social inclusion considerations

This Residential and Nursing Care bed commissioning review project is likely to have a neutral effect on all groups of service users in society.

However, there some transition issues to be managed for providers and other practitioners involved in the delivery of the services.

- The project is intended:
 - To ensure that we commission services which will meet our current and future residential and nursing care needs for the citizens of Shropshire.
 - To ensure that we commission quality services that support people well in a value led and outcome focused manner.
 - To ensure that we commission services which represent value for money for the Council and deliver efficiencies.
 - To ensure that we commission services in a way which supports a vibrant and sustainable market
 - To ensure that we meet the duties on Local Authorities that the Care Act 2014 created relating to market shaping and commissioning and also in regards individual choice.

An initial engagement activity has been undertaken with the provider market place to ascertain views about the review. However, the numbers involved represent a small section of the market place (12 providers out of 200+) .

The LA needs to ensure that wider views are collected and considered including other groups particularly those service users and their families in receipt of the services.

There are a range of engagement and consultative activities being planned to engage the following groups in the analysis, planning and development and implementation of the recommendations from the review project.

These include:

- Care providers in the market place
- Service users and their families
- Key Partner Agencies
- Relevant Practitioners, Team Managers and Service Managers
- Local Councillors (Cabinet and Portfolio Holder)
- Local Members of Parliament as community leaders
- VCS Assembly

Officers will work with these audiences in a range of different ways (including engagement events, questionnaires and informal discussions and social media) to understand the impact on all affected individuals and groups including people in protected characteristic groupings.

<http://www.shropshiretogether.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2013/03/HWB-Comm-Strategy-2017-18.pdf>

Where groupings are under-represented groups are identified additional measures will be identified to continue to engage and involve those groupings in the process.

Any feedback and/or concerns raised will be considered and actions will be identified to mitigate any negative impact.

Actions to review and monitor the impact of the service change in terms of equality and social inclusion considerations

This ESIIA will be updated following the engagement and consultation with the stakeholders detailed in the project plan prior to implementation.

The project plan will be monitored and reviewed on a monthly basis via the Project Group and Director's Management Team for Innovation and Commissioning (DMT).

Ongoing review and consultation will also continue via the Quarterly ASC Provider Forum and Shropshire Partners in Care (SPIC).

Shropshire Council will continue to monitor the impact of the changes in national policy and implications for meeting the statutory duties of the Care Act.

Shropshire Council is an active contributor to national policy consultations on national policy proposals which may have a differential or adverse impact on the county.

Associated ESIIAs

Residential and Nursing Care beds Commissioning Review project (PID) Approved by DMT – February 2018.

This is the initial ESIIA and will be reviewed and updated following engagement and consultation activities in the Spring of 2019.

Actions to mitigate negative impact, enhance positive impact, and review and monitor overall impacts in terms of any other considerations

Additional Review and Monitoring of overall impacts:

- Council's Corporate Plan

<https://staff.shropshire.gov.uk/media/708264/corporate-plan-2016-2017.pdf>

- Council's financial strategy

<https://staff.shropshire.gov.uk/media/708265/corporate-financial-strategy-201819-202223.pdf>

Scrutiny at Part One screening stage

People involved	Signatures	Date
<i>Lead officer carrying out the screening</i> Rebecca Knight, Project Co-ordinator		
<i>Any internal support*</i> N/A		
<i>Any external support**</i> Lois Dale, Rurality and Equalities Specialist		

**This refers to other officers within the service area*

***This refers either to support external to the service but within the Council, eg from the Rurality and Equalities Specialist, or support external to the Council, eg from a peer authority*

Sign off at Part One screening stage

Name	Signatures	Date
<i>Lead officer's name</i> Rebecca Knight Project Co-ordinator		
<i>Accountable officer's name*</i> Deborah Webster Service Manager Commissioning and Governance		

**This may either be the Head of Service or the lead officer*

B. Detailed Screening Assessment

Aims of the service change and description

Shropshire council spend just over £50 million per year on residential and nursing care beds (Nursing care £17.3m & Residential Care £33.3m). This makes this area of service commissioning the single biggest area of spend for adult social care.

Commissioning of residential and nursing care has historically been built up according to need and addressed on a gradual basis. Whilst this has been an effective response to individual need it has led to a significant number of short-term commissioning solutions and increases in price.

In the last 12 months we have commissioned over 3000 beds (short and long term) This includes all service user groups (Older people, Adult learning disabilities, Mental Health).

The prices that the Council commission beds at is currently not controlled by a set structure. Prices were set in 2015 for the following 3 Financial years but these did not reflect levels required for market sustainability and consequently they have not been complied with; current rates being paid are far in excess of the set rates. (See *Appendix 1- Previously published nursing and residential care rates 2015-2019*)

To support the longer term purchasing of beds to meet both current and future needs this project will ascertain the commissioning requirements for residential and nursing care beds for the future and find solutions for the commissioning of longer-term solutions to support market development and stewardship, create positive outcomes for service users in need of nursing or residential care and gain control of prices.

Initially, this project will not include Adult Learning Disability and Mental Health prices. These will be explored in a later phase of the project, timescales to be confirmed.

This project intends to:

- Create a fixed price structure across all contracts (not including LD and MH- which need to be done differently and will be addressed in a later phase of the project)
- Explore introduction of a balance of block/ spot purchasing for specific cohorts to maximise choice/ management of voids etc.
- All spot placements to be commissioned through brokerage and if block purchasing is required a Dynamic Purchasing System is proposed.

Intended audiences and target groups for the service change

All residents in Shropshire who would need to access LA funded care home placements.

However, all service users and families should expect not to see a difference to the service they receive and the outcomes of their involvement with the revised arrangements. These changes should lead to transparency and equity and improve the speed of arrangements. Service users and their families should not be adversely affected by the proposed changes.

In order that we will be able to transition to a new standard price for bed types, we will need to manage a difficult transition period for some groups of people.

- Market response: The market is likely to respond differently depending on whether their current prices are under or over the new standard fixed rates. Full engagement is recommended and a two year transition should be considered to minimise market impact.
- Shropshire Council Internal response: The current culture and practice does not involve adherence to a fixed price structure. Whilst it is anticipated that a clear pricing structure will be welcomed in general it is also likely when workers are under pressure to find beds quickly there will be a temptation to increase prices to secure placements.

In order that we can manage a difficult transition period we may need to undertake some short term over commissioning of beds on a block basis in order that delayed transfers of care are not affected and urgent community cases are catered for. However, with over half of the market currently being paid under the recommended fixed rates it is anticipated much of the market will respond positively to the change.

Evidence used for screening of the service change

Project documentation:

Project Initiation Document (PID) - Residential and Nursing Care beds Commissioning Review project – February 2018

DMT report – December 2018 (includes Shropshire financial analysis and price comparison research with other Local Authorities)

- Appendix 1 - Previously published nursing and residential care rates 2015-2019)
- Appendix 2 - Review of Residential & Nursing Care commissioning practice 2017-18 are intended to inform DMT of the current issues and set out a proposal to control prices, ensure market sustainability and commission beds in a centrally managed way.
- Appendix 3 – Engagement with providers report

Background research and reports to inform project plans:

Shropshire Partners in Care, Shropshire Council, Telford and Wrekin Council, November 2016 – Fair Cost of Care analysis.

Older People Profile Shropshire 2018 – Information, Intelligence and Insight Team, Shropshire Council. <https://shropshire.gov.uk/media/10220/older-people-in-shropshire-profile-and-forecast-to-2036.pdf>

Shropshire Council Key Facts and Figures Shropshire Data 2017/18

<https://shropshire.gov.uk/media/11592/shropshire-council-key-facts-and-figures-ammendments-oct-2018-v2.pdf>

Competition & Markets Authority, Care homes market study

<https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/5a1fdf30e5274a750b82533a/care-homes-market-study-final-report.pdf>

Working with care providers to understand costs – A guide for adult social care commissioners

https://www.careprovideralliance.org.uk/uploads/1/0/8/0/108055907/1701-working-with-providers-to-understand-and-agree-costs_8.pdf

Specific consultation and engagement with intended audiences and target groups for the service change

An initial engagement provider engagement event was undertaken in June 2018.

Further consultation is planned with the following stakeholders as detailed below:

Stakeholder group	Channel
Cabinet Member for Adult Services and Director of Adult's Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Face to face briefings from senior team • Papers tabled at Cabinet and scrutiny • Direct email (Gov Delivery newsletter)
Directors Management Team	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attendance at meetings and involvement in design • Direct email (Gov Delivery newsletter)
Providers in the marketplace	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Direct email (Gov Delivery newsletter) • SPIC newsletters • SPIC/LA Facebook group • Formal consultation via Shropshire Council Consultation Portal • Face to face meetings/discussions • Workshops and focus groups
Residents and Families	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Workshops and focus groups
Community Agencies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Direct email (Gov Delivery newsletter)
CCGs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Direct email (Gov Delivery newsletter) • HWBB • Workshops and focus groups
Shropshire Council Social Work and brokerage Teams	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Direct email (Gov Delivery newsletter) • Workshops and focus groups

The following consultation is planned:

Date	Activity
1 st March 2019 to 12 th April 2019	Consultation Launch: Proposals and supporting document published on the Consultation on: Shropshire Council website, SPIC website and social media Press release issued to promote consultation
7 th March 2019	ASC Provider Forum Workshop to discuss proposals and capture feedback
During Consultation period	Focus group meetings: Agree any residents/families meeting or groups to attend to capture any feedback
During Consultation period	Individual provider meetings: Identify any providers who would like individual meetings to discuss the impact of proposals
During Consultation period	Identify other interest parties Identify other stakeholders who want to express their views
Consultation close date 12 th April 2019	Review of responses – prepare analysis of feedback and findings and produce report for publication

Initial assessment for each group

Please rate the impact that you perceive the service change is likely to have on a group, through inserting a tick in the relevant column. Please add any extra notes that you think might be helpful for readers.

Protected Characteristic groups and other groups in Shropshire	High negative impact <i>Part Two ESIIA required</i>	High positive impact <i>Part One ESIIA required</i>	Medium positive or negative impact <i>Part One ESIIA required</i>	Low positive or negative impact <i>Part One ESIIA required</i>
Age (please include children, young people, people of working age, older people. Some people may belong to more than one group eg child for whom there are safeguarding concerns eg older person with disability)				
Disability (please include: mental health conditions and syndromes including autism; physical disabilities or impairments; learning disabilities; Multiple Sclerosis; cancer; HIV)				
Gender re-assignment (please include associated aspects: safety, caring responsibility, potential for bullying and harassment)				
Marriage and Civil Partnership (please include associated aspects: caring responsibility, potential for bullying and harassment)				
Pregnancy & Maternity (please include associated aspects: safety, caring responsibility, potential for bullying and harassment)				
Race (please include: ethnicity, nationality, culture, language, gypsy, traveller)				
Religion and belief (please include: Buddhism, Christianity, Hinduism, Islam, Judaism, Non conformists; Rastafarianism; Sikhism, Shinto, Taoism, Zoroastrianism, and any others)				
Sex (please include associated aspects: safety, caring responsibility, potential for bullying and harassment)				
Sexual Orientation (please include associated aspects: safety; caring responsibility; potential for bullying and harassment)				
Other: Social Inclusion (please include families and friends with caring responsibilities; people with health inequalities; households in poverty; refugees and asylum seekers; rural communities; people for whom there are safeguarding concerns; people you consider to be vulnerable)				

Identification of likely impact of the service change in terms of other considerations

Sustainability of the care homes market place:

Block purchasing supports market sustainability through enabling forward business planning for providers, and gives ready bed availability for ASC, however high levels of block purchasing limit choice for individuals.

Both sustainable market management and individual choice are LA responsibilities under the Care Act so careful consideration of block purchasing requirements and required block/ spot split are required to maintain a balance and meet all responsibilities.

In order to help stabilise both prices and the market it could be beneficial to block purchase more of our longer term spot beds at a set rate if a favourable price could be secured. This also has the advantage of ensuring bed availability. However void management (monitoring of unused beds) is an essential part of block purchasing which requires resources and a single central web based system for booking block beds would be required to ensure that we are minimising voids and using block bed provision before considering spot purchasing.

Local Authorities have market shaping duties which mean that they must encourage and facilitate the whole market in their area for care, support and related services. In doing so, they must be aware of current and likely future demand for such services and have regard to the need to ensure that sufficient services are available for meeting the needs for care. Sustainability of the market place will enable the Local Authority to ensure that the future projected care needs.

It is not anticipated that these changes will adversely impact the human rights of individuals or groups.

It is also not anticipated that these changes will have a negative impact on fostering good relations or on social inclusion.

It is intended that ongoing consultation and engagement will ensure that the Local Authority is able to take into account the views of the residents of Shropshire to inform the service redesigns and to identify mitigating actions where necessary.

Additional opportunities for income generation:

- CCG - The recommendations for price control and system development also create additional commercial opportunities for the council. As the single biggest purchaser in the care market the Council have significant influence over prices once they are set. However, if we partnered with the CCG and purchased on their behalf for a fee the influence on the market would be broader and will also save the CCG money as well as making income for ASC.
- Further commercial opportunities – With a significant influence over prices in the market there is a long-term opportunity to purchase on behalf of private customers for a charge.

Fixed Rate Consultation Activity Timeline

Date	Activity
1 st March 2019 to 12 th April 2019	Consultation Launch: Proposals and supporting document published on the Consultation on: Shropshire Council website, SPIC website and social media Press release issued to promote consultation
7 th March 2019	ASC Provider Forum Workshop to discuss proposals and capture feedback
During Consultation period	Focus group meetings: Agree any residents/families meeting or groups to attend to capture any feedback
During Consultation period	Individual provider meetings: Identify any providers who would like individual meetings to discuss the impact of proposals
During Consultation period	Identify other interest parties Identify other stakeholders who want to express their views
Consultation close date 12 th April 2019	Review of responses – prepare analysis of feedback and findings and produce report for publication
May 2019	Cabinet to review results of the consultation and final proposed rates for approval
1 st June 2019	Publish agreed proposals and implementation timeline
1 st June 2019	Arrange individual discussions/meetings with providers to agree transition arrangements

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<u>Committee and Date</u>	<u>Item</u>
Cabinet	
27 February 2019	<u>Public</u>

COMMUNITY ASSET TRANSFER: MUCH WENLOCK YOUTH CENTRE

Responsible Officer: Mark Barrow, Director of Place

Email: mark.barrow@shropshire.gov.uk

Tel: 01743 258916

1.0 Summary

- 1.1 As part of the Council's core objective to strengthen our local towns and villages, the Strategic Asset Management team are working with town and parish councils, as well as the voluntary sector, to enable the transfer of suitable land and buildings to community groups and organisations. The Community Asset Transfer (CAT) policy provides a framework and guidance to assess which transfers are viable and implement their transfer.
- 1.2 The policy contributes to the Council's objectives as set out in the Asset Management Strategy Section 5: *Commission and work in partnership to empower communities*. The policy is to release where appropriate non-core assets, through freehold transfer or leasehold transfer, to communities reducing revenue or maintenance burdens.
- 1.3 A report summarising the assessment of an application made by 1st Much Wenlock Scout Group ("the Organisation") in respect of the Much Wenlock Youth Centre has been considered by the Director of Place, and the recommendation is to transfer the Much Wenlock Youth Centre by way of an appropriate transfer which, in accordance with the CAT policy, is subject to Cabinet approval.

2.0 Recommendations

- 2.1 That, in principle, the Organisation is granted a 99 year lease as a Community Asset Transfer with delegated authority to the Strategic Asset Manager to agree the terms of disposal and complete the lease to ensure compliance with State Aid Rules and the Council's legislative obligations.

REPORT

3.0 Risk Assessment and Opportunities Appraisal

- 3.1 The Organisation is already operating in the building under a tenancy at will, has public support, and has demonstrated ongoing demand for local scout membership.

- 3.2 The asset transfer will reduce the maintenance burden for Shropshire Council, which currently has full repairing and insuring liabilities.
- 3.3 The asset transfer will enable the Organisation to increase capacity and enable more local residents to attend.
- 3.4 The asset transfer will allow the Organisation to secure funding to refurbish and upgrade the facility, to further improve capacity and quality of provision.
- 3.5 The Scouting movement was founded in 1908 and has a proven record of helping young people develop and improve key life skills. The Organisation has been providing Scouting in the Much Wenlock area for over 40 years.
- 3.6 The Organisation has a clear management structure and a range of experiences and professions are represented on the management team. The Organisation has managed their current HQ for 32 years. They have the skills and experience to manage the asset having funded and overseen £85K worth of improvement works at their current leased location.
- 3.7 A leasehold transfer will ensure that Shropshire Council retains the asset for long-term use, and that there is continued community use.

4.0 Equalities and Diversity Issues

- 4.1 Keeping the building in operation and making it available for local groups will mean its accessibility is secured in the future for the community.
- 4.2 Membership of the Organisation is available to all children and young adults aged between 6 and 18, as well as adults therefore the Organisation is fully inclusive and open to the community to contribute to its future success

5.0 Financial Implications

- 5.1 Shropshire Council currently spends around £2,600 p.a. on the asset. Transfer of the asset would result in a comparable annual saving.
- 5.2 The Organisation may be able to access funds unavailable to Shropshire Council to improve the asset.

6.0 Background

- 6.1 The building was used until a youth centre until 2011. Since then it has been vacant, until the Scouts commenced occupation via a tenancy at will in November 2018.
- 6.2 The property was advertised on the CAT register from 05 January 2018 to 03 April 2018.

7.0 Additional Information

- 7.1 The Organisation is currently occupying the property via a tenancy at will.
- 7.2 The proposed transfer will be structured so it complies with State Aid rules under an appropriate exemption as a sport and multi-functional recreational development.
- 7.3 The proposed grant of the lease for a peppercorn is a sum that is less than market value for a lease of the building. The disposal by way of the grant of the lease at a peppercorn rent is covered by the Circular 6/03 Local Government Act 1972 General Disposal Consent 2003. This consent allows for the disposal of a property at less than best consideration where the disposal contributes to the promotion or improvement of one or more of economic, social and environmental wellbeing in the Council's area and where the difference in value is less than £2 million.
- 7.4 The Organisation's activities contribute to meeting the following Council's priorities:
- Resilient Communities: The range of opportunities for leisure, culture and community participation has increased, with low or no funding.
 - Operation of the Council: Corporate support and reduce overheads.

List of Background Papers (This MUST be completed for all reports, but does not include items containing exempt or confidential information)

Shropshire Council Community Asset Transfer Policy

CAT Director Approval Report

Cabinet Member (Portfolio Holder)

Cllr Steve Charmley – Portfolio Holder for Corporate and Commercial Support

Local Member

Cllr David Turner

Appendices

Appendix A – Indicative location plan of site

Appendix B – Director Report

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COMMUNITY ASSET TRANSFER: RECOMMENDATION TO DIRECTORS

SHROPHIRE COUNCIL - Commercial Services - Strategic Asset Management

Asset:	Much Wenlock Youth Centre
Applying organisation:	1st Much Wenlock Scout Group
Proposed use:	Scout and Guide Hut
Proposed transfer duration:	99 year lease
Estimated annual saving to Council:	£2600
Report author and date:	Leela Cottey, 27.11.18
Reporting to:	Mark Barrow, Director of Place

Panel

Chair	Leela Cottey	Senior Property Commissioning Officer
Assets and Estates	Keith Parry	Senior Estates Surveyor
Service Representative	n/a	n/a
Community Action Administration	Kerry Rogers	Community Action Officer
	Carol Mills	Property Commissioning Support Officer

1.0 Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 As part of the Council's core objective to strengthen our local towns and villages, the Strategic Asset Management team are working with town and parish councils, as well as the voluntary sector, to enable the transfer of suitable land and buildings to community groups and organisations. The Community Asset Transfer (CAT) policy provides a framework and guidance to assess which transfers are viable and implement their transfer.
- 1.2 The Community Asset Transfer (CAT) policy provides a framework and guidance to assess which transfers are viable and implement their transfer. The policy contributes to the Council's objectives as set out in the Asset Management Strategy Section 5: *Commission and work in partnership to empower communities. Release where appropriate through freehold transfer or leasehold transfer, properties to communities reducing revenue or maintenance burdens for non-core assets.*
- 1.3 This report summarises the assessment of the application made by 1st Much Wenlock Scout Group in respect of the Much Wenlock Youth Centre. Following consideration of the report and the supporting information it is requested that the responsible officer determines whether the CAT is approved to go the appropriate formal decision making.
- 1.4 Whilst the facility is not on the Council's Community Asset Transfer list, it was determined that the appropriate route for progression was via the CAT policy.
- 1.5 This report represents an internal briefing for the Director of Place in order for the transfer to be approved to move to the final decision making. Due to the potential transfer being longer than 10 years, the formal decision making will be taken to formal cabinet, subject to the approval of this report.

2.0 Qualifying Organisation

2.1 The panel assessed if the organisation meets the qualifying criteria as set out in the Policy:

Criteria	Panel Assessment	Related Documents
A qualifying organisation	The organisation is a registered charity.	Formal Expression of Interest, Business Plan
Aims to deliver social, economic or environmental benefits	The organisation meets the requirements. The Scouting movement was founded in 1908 and has a proven record of helping young people develop and improve key life skills. The organisation has been providing Scouting in the Much Wenlock area for over 40 years.	Formal Expression of Interest, Business Plan
Directly benefits the people of Shropshire	The organisation meets the requirements. Membership is available to all children aged between 6 and 18, as well as adults.	Formal Expression of Interest, Business Plan
Benefits as wide a range of local people as possible within the community in which the asset is located	The organisation meets the requirements. The asset transfer will enable the organisation to increase capacity and enable more local residents to attend. The transfer will allow the organisation to secure funding to refurbish and upgrade the facility, to further improve capacity and quality of provision.	Formal Expression of Interest, Business Plan
The proposed use of the asset will not adversely impact on activities of facilities already provided in the community	The organisation already operates in the local area (from a nearby rented building). There would be no overall change to the local situation. There is a shortage of places for groups that the increased capacity will address.	

3.0 Assessment against CAT criteria

3.1 The panel assessed the organisation's business plan against the criteria set out in the Policy:

Criteria	Panel Assessment	Related Documents
A clear community/social demand for the proposed CAT	<p>The organisation has operated in the area for over 40 years. There are waiting lists for many of their groups, and they currently need to send children of Cub's age to local groups' waiting lists.</p> <p>The property that they currently use needs several thousand pounds to bring it up to a minimum standard, but with 3 years left on this lease this is not considered cost effective. A move to MWYC will enable the organisation to increase their capacity to meet local demand.</p>	Business Plan
The capacity to manage the asset and have directors or management	The organisation has a clear management structure. A range of experiences and professions are represented on the management team. The organisation has managed their current HQ for 32 years. They have funded and overseen £85K worth of improvement works including an extension comprising of a kitchen and disabled toilet, upgrades to lighting, heating and insulation.	Formal Expression of Interest, Business Plan

Good governance arrangements, robust financial systems	The organisation has a management committee, with a named chairperson, secretary and treasurer. Monthly meetings are held with signed copies of minutes available. The organisation has policies on equal opportunities, health and safety, and volunteers. The organisation is governed by the Scout Association, who endorse the CAT application. The organisation has a financial management policy in place with audited accounts; the accounts are independently audited.	Formal Expression of Interest, Business Plan
The ability of the VCO to contribute towards the Council's objectives	In accordance with the Council's Asset Management Strategy Section 5: The Council's Principles and Priorities: Commission and work in partnership to empower communities. To release where appropriate through freehold transfer or leasehold transfer, properties to communities reducing revenue or maintenance burdens for non-core assets.	Asset Management Strategy

3.2 The panel identified the following issues which required further discussion and resolution:

Issue	Resolution
The Scout's current location is becoming increasingly unsuitable for use. There are concerns that in the winter period younger members in particular will struggle and activities/attendance may be limited.	A tenancy at will has been agreed with the group to enable them to make use the youth club in advance of a formal CAT transfer.

4.0 Proposed Lease Agreement

4.1 Proposed lease agreement is as follows:

Item	Detail	Reason
Lease type/duration	99 year lease	To enable the organisation to secure funding and realise long-term plans for the building and its use.
£ per annum	£1	The organisation does not run on a commercial basis. Any profit is invested back into the building and for the development of Scout activities in/from it.
Repairs, maintenance and insurance responsibilities transferred to organisation	Yes	
Associated Service Agreement	No	

4.2 Rent is proposed below market value, because the organisation does not run on a commercial basis. Any profit is invested back into the building and Scouting activities. The proposed transfer complies with State Aid rules.

4.3 There are special terms proposed in this lease as follows:

Clause	Reason for inclusion
The premises shall be used for the provision of a base for the 1st Much Wenlock Scouting Group. The premises can also be hired out to other not for profit organisations (which for the avoidance of doubt includes local councils) offering other activities that benefit the local community at hiring charges that cover but do not exceed the tenant's commensurate costs in running the building and providing the permitted services.	To ensure that the facility continues to benefit the local community, whilst enabling the organisation to work with other local groups and obtain an income to aid ongoing building maintenance.

The lease can be terminated by Shropshire Council by six months written notice at any time if at least 75% the premises are no longer mostly or entirely used on a regular and frequent basis for some or all of the following - a base for the 1st Much Wenlock Scouting Group or other not for profit activities that benefit the local community.	To ensure that the facility continues to benefit the local community
The lease is subject to the continuation of any existing rights of way over the shared access ... in favour of The William Brookes academy and the Olympians and also the right of way over the land ... in favour of The William Brookes Academy.	To ensure rights of way are maintained for adjacent users/owners
The tenant will be responsible for maintaining the access way ... The tenant will be entitled to reclaim 50% of the cost of any necessary repairs from the William Brookes Academy.	To ensure the access is maintained at no cost to the Council.
The landlord reserves the right to use the access ... for whatever purposes it requires in connection with the retained land ... subject to the landlord making good any damage caused by the landlord in exercising that right.	To ensure that the Council can continue to access/maintain the retained land.
The lease is subject to the continuation of all existing rights in connection with the occupation of the garage ... by the Olympians and their associated rights over the access ... In the event that the Olympians decide to vacate the garage, it will then be available for use by the 1st Much Wenlock Scouting Group throughout the remainder of the lease on a rent free basis with a requirement for it to be maintained by the tenant in no worse condition than that existing at the date of vacation by the Olympians.	The Much Wenlock Olympian group use the garage to store equipment in. This clause will ensure that the Olympians can continue to use the garage for as long as they require it.

5.0 Service Agreement

5.1 A Service Agreement is not required.

6.0 Monitoring

6.1 The Panel have considered the monitoring requirements of the asset transfer to ensure that the organisation meets its obligations and that the community benefit is realised. The following monitoring is recommended:

Item	Monitoring Method	Owner	Monitoring Schedule/Frequency	Output / Reporting / Recording Method
Ensure stated community benefit is being realised	Contact with organisation and local community	Community Enablement Officer	Annually	Report issued to CAT panel and Strategic Asset Manager
Check rent level is appropriate to organisation's (non)commercial standing	Review yearly financial accounts	Community Enablement Officer in consultation with Estates	Annually	Community Enablement Officer writes to panel to confirm assessment; adjustment of rent levels as required.
Ensure building is being satisfactorily maintained	Inspection by Council Building Surveyor	Strategic Asset Manager	5-yearly	Report issued to Strategic Asset Manager

7.0 Recommendations and Further Action

- 7.1 It is recommended that the authorising officer approves the CAT transfer to proceed to Cabinet approval, as the proposal meets the requirements of the Council's CAT policy.
- 7.2 If approved it is requested that the Director of Place instructs the relevant officers to undertake the monitoring as specified in section 6. Consideration will need to be given to the activities currently allocated to the Community Enablement Team.

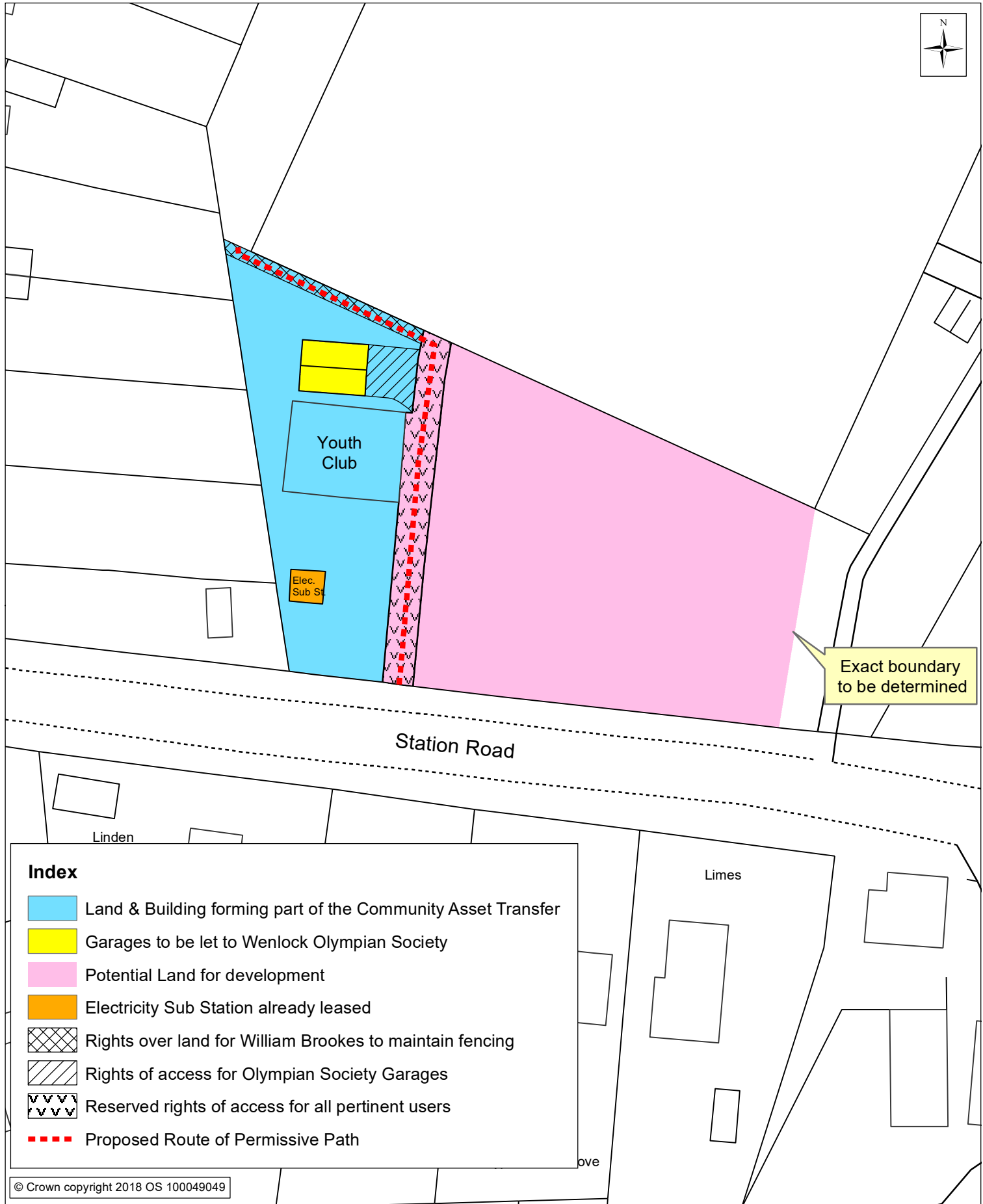
8.0 Appendices

Ref.	Document Name
8.1	Community Asset Transfer Policy and Guidance for Applicants
8.2	Initial Expression of Interest: 8.2.1 Application
8.3	Formal Expression of Interest with Outline Business Plan 8.3.1 Application 8.3.2 Evaluation
8.4	Detailed Business Plan 8.4.1 Application 8.4.2 Evaluation
8.5	Heads of Terms
8.6	Site plan

9.0 Director Response

- 9.1 [response]

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- Land & Building forming part of the Community Asset Transfer
- Garages to be let to Wenlock Olympian Society
- Potential Land for development
- Electricity Sub Station already leased
- Rights over land for William Brookes to maintain fencing
- Rights of access for Olympian Society Garages
- Reserved rights of access for all pertinent users
- Proposed Route of Permissive Path

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Business Enterprise and Commercial Services

Shirehall, Abbey Foregate
SHREWSBURY
SY2 6ND

Title: Former Much Wenlock Youth Club Site, Station Road, Much Wenlock.

- 0.302 acre
- 0.131 acre

Drawing No:	038-002-V04b
Scale:	1:500
Date:	January 2018
Drawn by:	Property Strategy and Review

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Committee and Date

Cabinet
27th February 2019

Item

Public

FUTURE HIGH STREETS FUND

Responsible Officer Mark Barrow - Executive Director of Place
e-mail: mark.barrow@shropshire.gov.uk Tel:(01743) 258919

1. Summary

- 1.1 As part of the Autumn Statement, Government announced 'Our plan for the High Street'. Following this on 26th December 2018 the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) announced the Future High Streets Fund, a £675 million fund to support high streets to adapt, transform and meet the changing expectations and functions of high streets; not just to survive, but to thrive.
- 1.2 The Government has issued a prospectus and supplementary guidance to support this fund which involves a first round (due by 22nd March 2019) and a future second round expected to be opened in 2020. MHCLG are expecting the fund to be highly subscribed to and due to a high volume of enquiries and interest including from Shropshire Council, Government have issued further guidance on the number of bids that Local Authorities are able to submit. Shropshire is eligible to submit two bids into this first round of funding. The prospectus sets out that there is likely to be a further call for proposals in 2020, the details of which will follow.
- 1.3 The objective of the Fund is to **renew and reshape town centres and high streets in a way that improves experience, drives growth and ensures future sustainability.**
- 1.4 The Government's aim is to co-fund projects and places that have already started to formulate a vision for the future of their town centres. They are expecting bids to be in the region of £5 -10 million and not exceeding £25 million and be co-funded by either public or private sector investment.
- 1.5 In order to consider the number of towns across the County which expressed initial interest in being put forward, a short proposal form was produced based on the criteria set out in the prospectus for the High Streets fund and a process to objectively consider these was put in place. Officers asked for proposals to be returned to the Council for consideration by a majority independent panel. The panel consisted of the Executive Director of Place for Shropshire Council, Director of the Marches Local Enterprise Partnership and the Chair of Shropshire Business Board.

- 1.6 Three of Shropshire's Towns submitted proposals; Oswestry, Shrewsbury and Whitchurch. Oswestry and Shrewsbury have shown a preference to be considered for the first round of funding and Whitchurch for the second.
- 1.7 The Panel met on 15th February 2019, reviewed and scored the proposals that were submitted and concluded that both the Shrewsbury and Oswestry bids should proceed as first round bids and be worked up in collaboration with the Town Councils, Local Elected Members and Business Improvement Districts. Whitchurch showed a preference to be looked at for the second round of funding in 2020 and the panel supported their bid.
- 1.8 Officers will continue to work closely with MHCLG on 'Our plan for the High Street' and the emerging information and guidance; and the implications of this for Shropshire and its many market towns.

2. Recommendations

1. That Cabinet agrees to support both Shrewsbury and Oswestry's proposals to be progressed to formulate full and robust bids for the first round submission.
2. That delegated authority be given to the Executive Director of Place in consultation with the Portfolio Holders for Economic Growth to submit two bids to Government for the 22nd March 2019 deadline.

REPORT

3. Risk Assessment and Opportunities Appraisal

- 3.1 There is a significant opportunity for Shropshire Council to submit two bids to the Future High Street Fund, to access a share of the £675 million that has been allocated to support transformational projects to support towns and high streets. This is aligned with the Council's own aspirations for economic growth as outlined in the Economic Growth Strategy and equally recognising both similar and different challenges and opportunities facing Shropshire's diverse market towns and high streets within them.
- 3.2 To give the Council the greatest potential for success, it will be important to ensure that both bids meet the eligibility criteria of the fund and are truly transformational in their proposals. This will be done through the preparation of the full bids.
- 3.3 Shropshire Council could decide not to submit any bid for this funding and therefore not maximise the opportunity to lever in significant additional Government Funding which can help to deliver against the Economic Growth Strategy and local economic growth strategies. There is a reputational risk for the Council of not taking an opportunity to bid to Central Government and how this will be perceived within Shropshire by communities and stakeholders and externally with organisations and departments such as the LEP and MHCLG.

- 3.4 An alternative option would be that Shropshire Council could choose to submit only one bid which it felt meet the criteria and eligibility of the fund best and is more likely to be successful in securing the funding available. The Council would not be taking the opportunity to submit two bids for two town centres that is now open to it based on the guidance issued by Government. Again, this could lead to a reputational risk for the Council and loss of potential investment in a key market town.

4. Financial Implications

- 4.1 The prospectus states that: *projects be co-funded by public and private sector additions and this will be taken into consideration as part of the assessment of projects. We will expect an element of co-funding, either on a project basis or to deliver a local area's wider strategy for the high street. This co-funding could either be public (e.g. from local areas' own budgets) or private finance (e.g. co-financing housing infrastructure).*
- 4.2 Proposals have been asked to highlight potential match funding available to support the aspirations set out in the bid. Officers will now need to work with both Shrewsbury and Oswestry areas to understand further their ask from Government and any potential ask of Shropshire Council.
- 4.3 As part of the Shrewsbury Big Town Plan work, Shrewsbury Town Council, Shropshire Council and the Business Improvement District have each agreed to contribute £50,000 each year for the next three years, with a total budget of £450k to move the Big Town Plan from vision into delivery. There is opportunity through this proposal to explore further collaboration with the BID and Town Council on new funding and resource opportunities.
- 4.4 In Oswestry, Shropshire Council has provisionally secured up to £9.3m of Housing Infrastructure Fund to support and enable the development and delivery of housing in Oswestry. There is an opportunity now to explore collaboration with the BID and Town Council regarding match funding opportunities aligning resources across the 3 organisations as well as exploring further funding opportunities and resources.
- 4.5 At this stage there is no requirement for additional resources from Shropshire Council. Further work will be undertaken and discussed with the Section 151 officer prior to submission.

5. Background

- 5.1 The Autumn Budget set out Governments Plan for the High Street, which included:
- cutting business rates by a third for up to 90% of retail properties for two years, to provide upfront support for high streets;
 - supporting the transformation of the high street, by creating a £675 million Future High Streets Fund to help local areas make their high streets and town centres fit for the future;
 - consulting on planning reform to make it simpler to create more homes, jobs and choice in town centres, and trialling a register of empty shops;
 - setting up a High Streets Task Force which will support local leadership with expert advice on helping local high streets to adapt and thrive; and

- strengthening community assets, including the restoration of the historic buildings that make our high streets special, supporting community groups to use empty properties and providing business rates relief for public toilets and local newspapers

5.2 The Future High Streets Fund forms a central part of this Plan. It will support places by co-funding transformative, structural changes to overcome challenges in their area and encourage wider economic growth within local areas, delivering investment and growth across regions in England to support the Industrial Strategy.

5.3 It is worthy of note that £55 million of the Future High Streets Fund has been allocated by the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport to support the regeneration of heritage high streets. This has two elements: helping to restore historic high street properties through Historic England, and equipping communities with their own resources to put historic buildings back into economic use – for example as residential buildings, new work spaces or cultural venues, supported by the Architectural Heritage Fund. Further details of this will be announced in due course and officers will work closely to understand the details and opportunities that this may offer.

5.4 In the first phase of the Future High Streets Fund, local authorities are being asked to define the specific challenges faced by the chosen high streets, to set out the overarching strategic ambition for what the high street or town centre should become and what needs to be done to make this possible.

5.5 MHCLG have set out the areas where they would expect any identified need for investment to fall under:

- Investment in physical infrastructure
- Acquisition and assembly of land including to support new housing, workspaces and public realm
- Improvements to transport access, traffic flow and circulation in the area
- Supporting change of use including (where appropriate) housing delivery and densification
- Supporting adaptation of the high street in response to changing technology

5.6 The prospectus states that: *Experience has shown that local areas need support, investment and guidance to help them meet these structural changes. To date many places have not been able to keep up with the speed of change to the detriment of town centres. We know that a scattergun approach of light touch interventions is not the solution for town centres facing large structural issues. Instead effective strategic thinking and masterplanning is needed, with local areas able to work across public and private sector organisations including local businesses, driven by strong local leadership.*

Local authorities should still ensure that they are prioritising the town centres in their area where challenges are significant and where funding has the potential to have the greatest impact. Bidding authorities should note that we are expecting a high volume of Expressions of Interest into the fund and therefore we may take into account factors such as ensuring a geographical spread of impact and wider economic considerations when assessing bids.

Process and Panel outcomes

- 5.7 Town and Parish Councils were invited to submit proposals which meet the objectives of the fund. Three proposals were received from Oswestry, Shrewsbury and Whitchurch.
- 5.8 An majority independent panel comprising the Executive Director of Place for Shropshire Council, the Director of the Marches Local Enterprise Partnership and Chair of Shropshire Business Board has assessed the proposals.
- 5.9 The panel assessed Shrewsbury's proposal and it was recommended that this goes forward to the first round. A suggested area of focus was for the proposal to enhance and clarify the ambition and narrative for Shrewsbury. The panel recognises there was support from wider partners and there have been various independent successes that can be built upon.
- 5.10 The panel assessed the Oswestry proposal and recommends that this goes forward to the first round. The panel concluded that this was a well written proposal which gave an authentic picture of Oswestry. However, it will be important to expand the detail to capture and enable a focus on a bigger vision for the town. There is some good creative thinking on using new environmental technology in the town.
- 5.11 The panel recommended that both Shrewsbury and Oswestry proposals are in a position to be progressed and worked up in partnership with the Town Councils, Local Elected Members and Business Improvement Districts into robust bids to be submitted to MHCLG on the 22nd March 2019.
- 5.12 The panel also noted that Whitchurch would like to be considered for the second round of funding in 2020. The panel recommends that this should progress forward to work up a stronger proposal. The panel is very pleased that Whitchurch will be building towards a submission for the next round and recognises that developing a BID in Whitchurch would strongly help encourage the engagement of the local businesses in the development of the submission.
- 5.13 The panel also noted that other towns may be in a better position to submit a proposal in 2020 and this is an opportunity for these towns to work collectively to focus on a vision, articulate the challenges and the projects to support this in advance of a further call.
- 5.14 **Timeline**
- December 2018: Phase 1 opens and Expressions of Interest are invited
 - 22 March 2019: deadline for Expressions of Interest to be submitted to MHCLG
 - Summer 2019: announcement from MHCLG on places moving to Phase 2
 - Late 2019: first round of final business cases to be submitted
 - Spring 2020: all remaining final business cases to be submitted
 - 2020: Second round of applications opens

6. Conclusions

- 6.1 A robust and transparent process of reviewing proposals from towns across Shropshire has been undertaken. The outcome of the panel review has identified two proposals to be taken forward for submission to MHCLG at the end of March and this forms the basis of the officer recommendation in this report.
- 6.2 There is a further opportunity for Shropshire in 2020 to look at other towns, as well as Whitchurch who have already submitted a proposal for round 2, which may be eligible for the second round of Future High Streets Fund (awaiting further information from MHCLG). Shropshire will continue to work with MHCLG on emerging guidance and information in relation to the 'Our plan for the High Street' and opportunities that this might provide to support our many towns and high streets.

List of Background Papers (This MUST be completed for all reports, but does not include items containing exempt or confidential information)

Future High Street Fund Prospectus:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/767749/Future_High_Streets_Fund_prospectus.pdf

Supplementary Guidance:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/777121/FHS_Fund_Supplementary_guidance_for_bidding_authorities.pdf

Cabinet Member Cllr Peter Nutting and Cllr Steve Charmley

Local Members

Shrewsbury

Councillors Peter Adams, Dean Carroll, Nat Green, Kevin Pardy, Ioan Jones, Julian Dean, Ted Clarke, Pam Moseley, Hannah Fraser, David Vasmer, Alan Mosley, Peter Nutting, Nic Laurens, Jane McKenzie, Keith Roberts, Tony Parsons, Harry Taylor

Oswestry

Councillors Vince Hunt, Paul Milner, Clare Aspinall and John Price

Whitchurch

Councillors Peggy Mullock, Thomas Biggins and Gerald Dakin

Appendices

None

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