

Open

Cabinet

**6pm
Tuesday, 12th July 2016
Council Chamber
Wyre Forest House
Finepoint Way
Kidderminster**



Cabinet

The Cabinet Members and their responsibilities:-

Councillor M J Hart	Leader of the Council & Strategy
Councillor I Hardiman	Deputy Leader and Operational Services
Councillor T Onslow	Planning and Economic Regeneration
Councillor N J Desmond	Resources
Councillor S Chambers	Health Well-Being and Housing
Councillor S Fearn	Transformation & Change

Scrutiny of Decisions of the Cabinet

The Council has one Scrutiny Committee that has power to investigate policy issues and question members of the Cabinet who have special responsibility for a particular area of the Council's activities. The Cabinet also considers recommendations from this Committee.

In accordance with Section 10 of the Council's Constitution, Overview and Scrutiny Procedure Rules, and Standing Order 2.4 of Section 7, any item on this agenda may be scrutinised by the Scrutiny Committee if it is "called in" by the Chairman or Vice-Chairman of the Overview & Scrutiny Committee and any other three non-Cabinet members.

The deadline for "calling in" Cabinet decisions is 5pm on Friday 22nd July 2016

Councillors wishing to "call in" a decision on this agenda should contact Lynette Cadwallader, Committee Services Officer, Wyre Forest House, Finepoint Way, Kidderminster. Telephone: 01562 732729 or email lynette.cadwallader@wyreforestdc.gov.uk

Urgent Key Decisions

If the Cabinet needs to take an urgent key decision, the consent of the Scrutiny Committee Chairman must be obtained. If the Scrutiny Committee Chairman is unable to act the Chairman of the Council or in his/her absence the Vice-Chairman of the Council, must give consent. Such decisions will not be the subject to the call in procedure.

Declaration of Interests by Members – interests of members in contracts and other matters

Declarations of Interest are a standard item on every Council and Committee agenda and each Member must provide a full record of their interests in the Public Register.

In addition, alongside the Register of Interest, the Members Code of Conduct ("the Code") requires the Declaration of Interests at meetings. Members have to decide first whether or not they have a disclosable interest in the matter under discussion.

Please see the Members' Code of Conduct as set out in Section 14 of the Council's constitution for full details.

Disclosable Pecuniary Interest (DPI) / Other Disclosable Interest (ODI)

DPI's and ODI's are interests defined in the Code of Conduct that has been adopted by the District.

If you have a DPI (as defined in the Code) in a matter being considered at a meeting of the Council (as defined in the Code), the Council's Standing Orders require you to leave the room where the meeting is held, for the duration of any discussion or voting on that matter.

If you have an ODI (as defined in the Code) you will need to consider whether you need to leave the room during the consideration of the matter.

For further information

If you have any queries about this Agenda or require any details of background papers, further documents or information you should contact Lynette Cadwallader, Committee Services Officer, Wyre Forest House, Finepoint Way, Kidderminster, DY11 7WF. Telephone: 01562 732729 or email lynette.cadwallader@wyreforestdc.gov.uk

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Wyre Forest District Council

Cabinet

Tuesday, 12th July 2016

Council Chamber, Wyre Forest House, Finepoint Way, Kidderminster

Part 1

Open to the press and public

Agenda item	Subject	Page Number
1.	Apologies for Absence	
2.	Declarations of Interests by Members In accordance with the Code of Conduct, to invite Members to declare the existence and nature of any Disclosable Pecuniary Interests (DPI's) and / or Other Disclosable Interests (ODI's) in the following agenda items and indicate the action that they will be taking when the item is considered. Please see the Members' Code of Conduct as set out in Section 14 of the Council's Constitution for full details.	
3.	Minutes To confirm as a correct record the Minutes of the meeting held on the 14th June 2016.	7
4.	CALL INS a verbal update will be given on any decisions which have been "called in" since the last meeting of the Cabinet.	
5.	Items Requiring Urgent Attention To consider any item which, in the opinion of the Chairman requires consideration at the meeting as a matter of urgency.	
6.	Public Participation In accordance with the Council's Scheme for Public Speaking at Meetings of Full Council/Cabinet, to allow members of the public to present petitions, ask questions, or make statements, details of which have been received by 12 noon on 4 th July 2016 (See front cover for contact details).	

7.	Leader of the Council	
7.1	Leader's Announcements	

8.		
8.1	<p style="text-align: right;"><i>Councillor Sally Chambers</i></p> <p>Housing Assistance Policy</p> <p>To consider a report from the Strategic Housing Services Manager which asks to agree the policy that will be used to determine how the Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG) funding from central government will be spent. To also consider the recommendations from the Overview and Scrutiny Committee from its meeting on Thursday 7th July 2016 (to follow).</p>	13

9.		
9.1	<p style="text-align: right;"><i>Councillor Tracey Onslow</i></p> <p>Bewdley Medical Centre – Demolition and Redevelopment</p> <p>To consider a report from the Director of Economic Prosperity and Place which asks to agree the exchange of land of part of the Bewdley Medical Centre (BMC) currently occupied by the GP Surgery with the land currently occupied by the Library.</p>	38
9.2	<p style="text-align: right;"><i>Councillor Tracey Onslow</i></p> <p>Kidderminster Eastern Gateway Development Framework</p> <p>To consider a report from the Head of North Worcestershire Economic Development and Regeneration which seeks to report the final version of the Kidderminster Eastern Gateway Development Framework .(Please note that Appendix 2 to this report contains exempt information). To also consider the recommendations from the Overview and Scrutiny Committee from its meeting on Thursday 7th July 2016 (to follow).</p>	45

10.	To consider any other business, details of which have been communicated to the Solicitor to the Council before the commencement of the meeting, which the Chairman by reason of special circumstances considers to be of so urgent a nature that it cannot wait until the next meeting.	
11.	<p>Exclusion of the Press and Public</p> <p>To consider passing the following resolution:</p> <p>“That under Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 the press and public be excluded from the meeting during the consideration of the following item of business on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of “exempt information” as defined in paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Act”.</p>	

Part 2

Not open to the Press and Public

9.2	<i>Councillor Tracey Onslow</i> Kidderminster Eastern Gateway Development Framework Appendix 2	-
12.	To consider any other business, details of which have been communicated to the Solicitor to the Council before the commencement of the meeting, which the Chairman by reason of special circumstances considers to be of so urgent a nature that it cannot wait until the next meeting.	

**WYRE FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL
CABINET**

**COUNCIL CHAMBER, WYRE FOREST HOUSE, FINEPOINT WAY, KIDDERMINSTER
14TH JUNE 2016 (6:00 PM)**

Present:

Councillors: M J Hart (Chairman) N J Desmond, S E Fearn, I Hardiman and T L Onslow.

Observers:

Councillor H E Dyke.

CAB. 1 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor S J Chambers.

CAB. 2 Declarations of Interests by Members

No declarations of interest were made.

CAB. 3 Minutes

Decision: The minutes of the Cabinet meeting held on 8th March 2016 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

CAB. 4 Call Ins

No decisions had been called in since the last Cabinet meeting.

CAB. 5 Items Requiring Urgent Attention

There were no items requiring urgent attention.

CAB. 6 Leader's Announcements

The Leader made reference to the EU referendum on 23rd June 2016 and encouraged those viewing the meeting on webcast to use their vote.

CAB.7 Appointment of Honorary Alderman

A report was considered from the Chief Executive in respect of appointment of Councillor Mike Kelly to Honorary Alderman.

The Leader of the Council confirmed that Councillor Mike Kelly had served three spells of office on the District Council, with distinction. He has previously served on Kidderminster Borough Council and was also elected as a Member of Kidderminster Town Council at its first elections in May 2016.

Recommend to Council that:

The title of Honorary Alderman be conferred on Councillor Mike Kelly in accordance with Section 249 of the Local Government Act 1972.

CAB. 8 Temporary Accommodation Placement and Procurement Policy

A report was considered from the Strategic Housing Services Manager which asked to agree the policy that will be used for placing households who require temporary accommodation to assist with the Council's duties under the Housing Act 1996. The Cabinet also considered the recommendations from the Overview and Scrutiny Committee from its meeting on 2nd June 2016.

The Leader of the Council led the Cabinet through the report and referred to the recent homeless case of Nzolameso v Westminster 2015 which gave a clear guideline with regard to the policies Local Authorities are required to have to cover when and how they place households into emergency, interim or temporary accommodation and when such forms of accommodation are procured.

The Leader confirmed that the Policy is a clarification of how Council Officers currently work, and it is right and proper that the policy is formally approved by Cabinet for reasons of openness and transparency.

Decision:

In line with the recommendations from the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, June 2nd 2016:

The Temporary Accommodation Placement and Procurement Policy be approved.

CAB. 9 A Strategy for Enabling Business Growth and Enterprise

A report was considered from the Head of North Worcestershire Economic Development and Regeneration which considers the strategy that the Council will use to support local enterprise and business growth. The Cabinet also considered the recommendations from the Overview and Scrutiny Committee from its meeting on 2nd June 2016.

The Cabinet Member for Planning and Economic Regeneration led the Cabinet through the report and commented that it details the work of North Worcestershire Economic Development and Regeneration (NWEDR) and the

Council's involvement with the two Local Enterprise Partnerships. The Cabinet Member also drew attention to the appendix of the report which details past and ongoing projects. She commented that the report details the Council's common sense approach for the future which is very positive.

The Leader of the Council concurred that the report is very comprehensive and the District Council, together with NWEDR shared service is supporting and contributing to a successful local economy, thus meeting one of the Corporate Priorities.

Decision:

In line with the recommendations from the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, June 2nd 2016:

The Business Growth and Enterprise Strategy be adopted.

CAB.10 Recommendations from the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, 2nd June 2016

- **Wyre Forest District Local Plan Review: Revised Local Plan Development Scheme (Project Plan 2016-2019)**

The Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee commented that the proposal for the revision of the Local Development Scheme Project Plan had encouraged a lot of debate at the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, and was pleased that Members had shown so much interest in what had been a very positive meeting.

The Cabinet Member for Planning and Economic Regeneration led the Cabinet through the recommendations and commented that the recommendations were regarding two key areas: Housing Need and the Employment Land Review. She confirmed that additional information would be required on areas such as flood risk and the Infrastructure Review. She confirmed that the Plan was thoroughly debated and scrutinised at the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

Decision:

- **The programme for the preparation and review of Development Plan, as set out on page 93 of appendix 1 of the report be amended in August 2017 and 2018 to reflect the fact that the Council does not hold key decision making meetings during August.**
- **The proposed Revised Local Development Scheme 2016-19 as set out in Appendix 1 of the report to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee (as amended) be adopted.**

CAB.11 Report on Provisional Final Accounts Outturn 2015/16

A report was considered from the Chief Financial Officer, which provided the provisional outturn position in relation to the Final Accounts for 2015/16.

The Cabinet Member for Resources led the Cabinet through the report and confirmed that a total surplus of £1,511,720 had been made, including a £230,000 Business Rates in-year surplus, which was welcome news. He added that this saving had been achieved by prudent budget management and thanked the Corporate Leadership Team and Officers across the Council for their achievement in efficiency savings.

The Cabinet Member for Resources confirmed that such savings had facilitated the creation of additional risk reserves, to protect the Authority in the future challenging times ahead.

The Leader of the Council added that a surplus of £1.5 million was welcomed as there were difficult and challenging times ahead.

Decision:

The following information, as detailed in Appendix 1 of the report to Cabinet, be noted:

- 1 The most welcome news that a total surplus of £1,511,720 has been made, including a £230,000 Business Rates in-year surplus. This has been achieved by prudent budget management, particularly in relation to Pay and General Administration budgets together with a robust review and release of £271,000 earmarked reserves no longer required. This has facilitated the creation of the additional risk reserves detailed below, after which savings compared to the revised budget of £581,720 have been generated from the 2015/16 surplus.**
- 2 That £200,000 from the 2015/16 savings has been used to increase the existing earmarked reserve for the Transformation Fund to continue to meet the costs of our challenging Wyre Forest Forward Programme as detailed in paragraph 4.6.**
- 3 That £500,000 from the 2015/16 savings has been used to create a General Risks earmarked reserve.**
- 4 That £230,000 from the 2015/16 Business Rates surplus has been used to increase the Business Rates/Regeneration Risk Reserve.**

CAB.12 Write off of Amounts Outstanding

A report was considered from the Chief Financial Officer which enabled the Cabinet to give consideration to writing off the sum of £104,332.67 in respect of debts that cannot be collected.

The Cabinet Member for Resources advised the Cabinet that every effort had been made to pursue the debts, and every avenue had been explored, but unfortunately there was no option other than to write off the debts as detailed in the appendix to the report.

The Leader of the Council confirmed that it was unfortunate that the debts were unable to be recovered, but was satisfied that every effort had been made to pursue them.

A Member raised a query regarding the write offs for premises that were not occupied, in particular whether there was any evidence that potentially fraudulent activity had taken place. The Cabinet Member for Resources responded that the lease holders had a duty to pay their business rates, regardless of whether they occupied the premises, but this would be looked at by Council Officers and Members advised accordingly.

Decision:

The total of £104,332.67, as detailed in the Appendices to the report to Cabinet, be written off.

CAB.13 Alternative Vehicles for the Delivery of Development Opportunities Including Establishing a Local Authority Trading Company (LATC)

A report was considered from the Director of Economic Prosperity and Place to agree that further work continues to develop the business case(s) for development proposals that could meet need where the market is failing to address local issues and deliver a revenue stream for the Council, and to agree to the establishment of a Local Authority Trading Company (LATC) where the business case means that this is the most viable option.

The Cabinet Member for Planning and Economic Regeneration explained the advantages of considering alternative delivery models and the various methods to facilitate income generation, such as a Public Sector Plc. She confirmed the importance of seeking various delivery methods so that if a project should come to fruition it would not be held up in feasibility work.

The Leader of the Council agreed that it was right and proper that the Council should consider business cases for the establishment of Local Authority trading companies and alternative vehicles for delivery.

Decision:

- 1. To delegate to the Director of Economic Prosperity & Place authority, in consultation with the Chief Financial Officer and Solicitor to the Council, to develop the business case(s) for development opportunities set out, but not limited to those, in Appendix 2 of the report to Cabinet; and to report to Cabinet for final agreement to proceed to implement proposals**

- 2. To delegate to the Director of Economic Prosperity & Place authority, in consultation with the Chief Financial Officer, Solicitor to the Council and Cabinet Member for Planning & Economic Regeneration, to develop the business case for entering a Limited Liability Partnership (LLP) with Public Sector Plc and to proceed to enter a LLP where the business case is agreed.**
- 3. To delegate to the Director of Economic Prosperity & Place authority, in consultation with the Chief Financial Officer and Solicitor to the Council, to develop the business case for the establishment of a Local Authority Trading Company (LATC) and to report to Cabinet for final agreement to establish a LATC where any business case agreed under 1 above demonstrates that this is the most viable option.**

There being no other business, the meeting closed at 6.27 pm.

WYRE FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL**CABINET**
12 July 2016**Housing Assistance Policy**

OPEN	
CABINET MEMBER:	Councillor Sally Chambers, Cabinet Member for Health, Well-being and Housing
RESPONSIBLE OFFICER:	Strategic Housing Services Manager
CONTACT OFFICER:	Kate Bailey ext 2560 Kate.bailey@wyreforestdc.gov.uk
APPENDICES:	Appendix 1 Housing Assistance Policy Appendix 2 Better Care Fund metrics Appendix 3 Letter from the Director of the DCLG Housing Standards and Support Directorate

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To agree the policy that will be used to determine how the Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG) funding from central government will be spent. In 2016/17 the Council received £1.02m of capital funding via the Better Care Fund (BCF) to deliver its DFG service.

2. RECOMMENDATION

The Cabinet is asked to **DECIDE** that:

- 2.1 The Housing Assistance Policy be approved.
- 2.2 The split of funding between the various projects to be delegated to the Director of Economic Prosperity and Place, in consultation with the Chief Finance Officer and Cabinet Member for Housing, Health and Wellbeing.

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 Local Housing Authorities have a duty to provide DFGs under the Housing Grants (Construction and Regeneration) Act 1996. DFGs are a mechanism to provide financial assistance to applicants who require an aid or adaptation to be able to remain living independently at home where they fall below an income threshold (unless the DFG is for a child).
- 3.2 Wyre Forest District Council discharges this duty through the use of a Home Improvement Agency (Care and Repair Worcestershire (CRW)) who are commissioned jointly by all the Local Authorities in the County. The current providers, Fortis Living, commenced the most recent contract in April 2015 and the contract is for a term of 3 + 2 years. The Council currently pay CRW an annual sum for this service of £130k (please note this amount diminishes over the first three years of the

contract and is also subject to annual review). This funding is currently made up of £80k (from the application of capital grant monies) and £50k from the existing revenue budget.

- 3.3 All Local Housing Authorities are required, by the Regulatory Reform Order 2002, to have a Housing Assistance Policy (HAP) where they wish to provide discretionary grants and services in addition to the mandatory DFGs. Accordingly the Council has had its HAP in place since that date and has amended it on a number of occasions to account for changing circumstances. Discretionary grants and services are provided for a number of reasons but primarily where they would support the Better Care Fund metrics (please see Appendix Two) or support applicants requiring DFGs in other more cost effective ways. It is also possible to use the capital funding to contribute towards revenue costs e.g. staffing incurred in the provision of the service. To provide consistency to Worcestershire residents and to CRW the Housing Assistance Policy is replicated across the county where possible. The revised HAP is therefore currently being agreed with officers by the end of June before taking it through the various decision making processes. The use of the DFG funding is also currently being agreed with the County Council who are the accountable body for the BCF. It is likely that the County Council will want to see the funding focused on outcomes to support the BCF metrics. The DFG element within the BCF is ringfenced so that the upper tier authorities must passport it through to lower tier authorities for the purpose of DFGs but within that spending there is some ability to use the funding for capital grants and related services providing that the overall need for mandatory DFGs is met, the spending is in line with the BCF Plan and the Council has a Housing Assistance Policy in place.
- 3.4 The Council's allocation has increased from £557k in 2015/16 to £1.02m in 2016/17 as a result of the governments' support of DFG as a way of improving wider health objectives and is likely to remain at this level or increase further over the next three years. In previous years the allocation to the Council was not sufficient to meet estimated need and the Council topped up the funding through Right To Buy (RTB) receipts through an agreement with Community Housing Group, as well as offering non-urgent category 3 cases an alternative loan product (adaptation assistance). The increase in funding will enable the Council to better meet increasing demand and enable more creativity and flexibility to identify new, more cost effective ways of delivering grants and services without the need to use the Council's RTB receipts.
- 3.5 Proposals for spending the monies, including those outlined below, are in the process of being agreed by the six District Local Housing Authorities, the BCF manager, the interim Director of Public Health and CRW.
- 3.6 The proposed increase in the DFG budget will result in an increased workload for the administration of DFG within the team and it is anticipated therefore that an additional staffing resource will be required to ensure successful and timely project delivery. CRW are unlikely to be able to have the capacity to deliver any more DFGs in Year 2 of the contract and therefore the scaled up activity needs to remain with the Council, which means CRW can focus on their core services and embedding in new contractors. We currently capitalize 10% of the DFG staffing expenditure to fund part of CRW costs and we propose to increase this to 15% so that any increase of staffing for the Council and/or CRW will be funded from the increased capital grant. The proposed increase in capitalisation of pay costs will be subject to agreement with our

external auditors. We are hopeful that, the resultant improvements in service delivery in terms of both systems for processing and the greatly enhanced range of service delivery projects facilitated by the specific staffing resource, means this change will provide sufficient evidence for this to be agreed. Within the CRW we will explore, in conjunction with all the Local Authorities, the possibility of directly employing an Occupational Therapist (OT) or specifically trained Case Worker to increase the number of assessments for DFGs currently being undertaken by the OT service as we recognize this is a barrier to fast and efficient delivery. In the letter from the Director of the DCLG Housing Standards and Support Directorate (please see Appendix Three) it is clear that the government is encouraging Local Authorities to use the grant money to reduce waiting times and delays to the DFG process.

- 3.7 In developing these proposals we have worked with Foundations, the national body providing advice and support to Home Improvement Agencies, to ensure we are following government guidelines and best practice.
- 3.8 The newly commissioned service commenced in April 2015 and immediately suffered with staffing shortages (as staff left the organisation whilst the previous contract was coming to an end and there was uncertainty over whether they would be awarded the contract again. The new contract placed a greater emphasis on prevention services and reducing spend on DFGs due to the grant levels at the time and the fact we couldn't met the demand. The Occupational Therapist service also suffered with staff shortages throughout the year leading to delays in assessments of up to 19 weeks. Overall this meant fewer DFGs were undertaken in 2015/16. Please see table below for numbers of DFGs since 2012/13;

YEAR	DFG BUDGET	GRANT / BCF	SPEND	TB TOP UP	No CASES
2012/13	800,000	852,862	551,111	301,751	130
2013/14	731,110	669,006	448,717	133,569	148
2014/15	800,000	598,577	462,104	136,473	89
2015/16*	750,000	553,210	556,442		74

*First year of new arrangements with Fortis Housing – new processes embedding with greater emphasis on prevention and advice/signposting.

- 3.9 The new proposals for spend will also be considered by Overview and Scrutiny Committee on the 7th July.

4. PROPOSALS

- 4.1 There are a number of potential streams of funding the Council may wish to consider and it is proposed that determining the exact split of funding for each individual scheme, and for any additional proposals that might be made in our negotiations with the BCF manager and the other local authorities, is delegated to the Director of Economic Prosperity and Place in conjunction with the Chief Financial Officer and the Cabinet Member for Housing, Health and Wellbeing.

- 4.2 It is proposed that the Cabinet note the headline proposals to be explored to utilise the increased budget and provide an enhanced service to local disabled residents. All other schemes, currently included in the HAP (2013) will remain as stated with the exception of the Adaptation Assistance which is no longer required. Potential areas for funding include, but are not limited to:
- 4.2.1 Discretionary “top-up” to mandatory DFGs: The maximum DFG awarded is £30,000 but some larger schemes such as extensions now exceed the maximum grant and additional funding from other sources (e.g. charities) is either unavailable or very resource intensive to identify and obtain. Funding up to £10k above the mandatory limit is available for this purpose. This fund could also top up handy person works and minor DFGs where they exceed the cap and other funding isn't available.
 - 4.2.2 Funding for category 1 or serious category 2 hazards under the Housing Act 2004: Where a vulnerable resident, on a low income, has hazards within the home that are contributing to the unsuitability of the property. This exists in the current HAP (2013) and is known as Home Repair Assistance.
 - 4.2.3 Hospital Discharge scheme: fast tracked and non-means tested works to the home to enable earlier hospital discharge where problems in the home are identified as a possible reason for delayed discharge.
 - 4.2.4 Dementia Friendly Dwelling Grant: to offer financial assistance to make homes more dementia friendly to help people manage their surroundings, retain their independence and reduce feelings of anxiety and confusion.
 - 4.2.5 Financial assistance for adapting and improving properties: to offer financial assistance for costs associated with moving to a more suitable home and/or purchasing / building / improving properties (in conjunction with a Registered Provider).
 - 4.2.6 Capital grant: to work with partners to develop projects (where required) that are required as part of a wider capital scheme.
 - 4.2.7 Housing options: funding to facilitate the delivery of a housing options service within CRW where DFGs and care / support costs can be avoided through the move to more appropriate housing at an earlier stage.
 - 4.2.8 Independent Living Centre: funding to facilitate the development of an innovation centre, with multi-agency / disciplinary staff co-located that enable applicants for a DFG and self-funders to test out potential aids and adaptations and make effective choices.
- 4.3 Initial discussion with the BCF manager have indicated that they would seek to clawback any unallocated funding in future years so it is of vital importance that the Council have an effective plan for spending the DFG allocation. However, due to the complexity in agreeing, developing and establishing some of the proposed projects outlined above, it is anticipated that we will need to roll capital forward from the 2016/17 allocation into the following year in line with likely spending timelines.

Future spending plans will be subject to agreement with Worcestershire County Council (WCC) including if there are any underspends.

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 The increase in Government Grant for DFGs from £557k to £1.02m should enable the Council to recycle the RTB into other capital projects whilst the funding remains at the higher levels (assumed to be until 2019/20). However please note the delivery of DFGs is a mandatory service and the Council must have resources available to meet this demand even if it is beyond the government allocation.
- 5.2 Because the proposals represent a significant change in approach to achieve best value from this very welcome additional funding in terms of strategic outcomes in line with our Housing Assistance Policy, agreement of the resultant accounting treatment will be required from our external auditors. It is hoped this can be secured and we will engage in early dialogue but at this stage proposals are subject to this agreement.
- 5.3 The Worcestershire Better Care Fund Plan for 2016/17 has been agreed with Central Government including full passporting of the DCG ring-fenced element to district councils. There may be further negotiation around the allocation of funding for future years.
- 5.4 The additional resources will mean that the top-up from Right To Buy receipts will not be required.

6. LEGAL AND POLICY IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 The legal duties to provide DFGs are outlined by the Housing Grants (Construction and Regeneration) Act 1996.
- 6.2 The Council are required to have a Housing Assistance Policy if they wish to provide grants and services in addition to the provision of the mandatory DFG.

7. EQUALITY IMPACT NEEDS ASSESSMENT

- 7.1 An Equalities Impact Screening Assessment has been undertaken. The policy gives consideration to and has a positive impact for those with health needs including those with disabilities and to children and young people. There are no other implications identified for other groups with a protected characteristic.

8. RISK MANAGEMENT

- 8.1 There is a requirement to have a Housing Assistance Policy in place to avoid the risk posed by legal challenge and so this policy and its operation mitigates against that risk.
- 8.2 There is a risk the accounting changes resulting from these proposals may not be fully agreed with the external auditors although it is considered we have strong evidence to support them.

9. CONCLUSION

- 9.1 This report outlines the new allocation for DFGs and proposals for it's spend that support both the Council's legal duties and the requirements to meet the BCF metrics outlined in Appendix Two.

10. CONSULTEES

- 10.1 We have consulted with the BCF Manager, Interim Director of Public Health, the County Council, CRW, Corporate Leadership Team and all Local Housing Authorities in Worcestershire in the development of the spending plans / HAP.

11. APPENDICES

- 11.1 Housing Assistance Policy 2016

- 11.2 Better Care Fund metrics

- 11.3 Letter from the Director of the DCLG Housing Standards and Support Directorate

Wyre Forest District Council

Housing Assistance

Policy

2016

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1 Introduction

The Reform Order

In July 2002 the Government issued legislation, the Regulatory Reform (Housing Assistance) (England and Wales) Order 2002, which requires all Councils to adopt and publish a policy as to how they intend to use the powers set out in this legislation.

The purpose of this document

This Housing Assistance Policy, which will commence on 1st August 2016, sets out the basis on which Wyre Forest District Council will offer financial assistance ("Housing Assistance") for works of adaption, repair or renewal in the private housing sector.

All housing assistance approved under this policy is either discretionary and are therefore subject to the District Council having sufficient funds or mandatory Disabled Facility Grants.

The District Council will review this policy on a regular basis to take into account changing policies at national and regional level and all available information on the condition of private sector housing in the District.

The document outlines a range of financial assistance that is client and thematic based services that are particularly focused at vulnerable people.

This document sets the principles for how the Council responds to the limited flexibility to use the Government provided Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG) fund, channelled through the Better Care Fund (BCF), in order to meet the metrics of the BCF. This policy and the outcomes of measures taken to support those metrics will be reported back through the Better Care Fund to Government.

The aims of this policy

This policy has been produced following consideration of the Housing Assistance Policies of other Worcestershire authorities and is in line with those policies.

This policy supports the Council's overall aim to secure health and community well-being. It supports the Council's Housing Strategy and is set in response to both local identified needs and issues and the national context of Homes for All.

Government provide funds for Disabled Facilities Grants that are ring-fenced to the District Council and Passed via the Better Care Fund. This fund is to be used for providing mandatory DFGs, activities to support the efficient and effective provision of DFGs and other work to support the Better Care Fund Metrics. Apart from the mandatory DFG response, the remaining funding is split across schemes and activities for these purposes and deemed priority through delegated decision of the relevant Director, Head of Finance and lead Cabinet Member. This funding split is reviewed annually according to available budget.

The Housing Assistance Policy also includes discretionary financial assistance for private rented properties and homeowners. This was originally a capital fund for private sector housing improvement provided through the Regional Government but was discontinued some years ago. The remaining and recycled funding is specifically aimed at tackling poor conditions (i.e. non-decent) housing in the private sector (both owner occupied and private rented sector) where the housing is occupied by vulnerable households (e.g. recipients of benefits). This funding is split across schemes deemed priority through delegated

decision of the relevant Director, Head of Finance and lead Cabinet Member. This funding split is reviewed annually according to remaining budget and any repayment of financial assistance received.

The Council has four key Strategic Housing Priorities two of which are relevant. These are 'Improving Private Sector Housing Conditions' and 'Assisting Older and Vulnerable People to Maintain their Independence'.

Also as detailed in the Council Housing Strategy, the Council's Corporate Theme of Enabling Community Wellbeing is supported through this policy. In particular the work of the Private Sector Housing Team enhances Community Safety, Housing and independent Living and Public Health.

The Community Strategy aims include a better environment and community safety. Discretionary financial assistance, advice and enforcement action that provides for energy efficiency and security measures to dwellings will support these aims. This policy is intended to provide for flexibility in dealing with the needs and context of the local population and the housing stock.

The key objective is to assist vulnerable people achieve decent, suitable and affordable homes in sustainable communities and in particular will aim to;

- Provide for an efficient and effective response to need for property adaptation for disabled persons.
- Provide for alternatives and support mechanisms for disabled persons, meeting the national Better Care Fund Metrics.
- Reduce the number of people living in homes in the private sector that have category one hazards.
- Reduce the number of households in fuel poverty.
- Increase the number of people who are able to live independently at home.
- Reduce the number of victims of domestic violence who are forced to leave their own accommodation because of a lack of alternative options.
- Increase the number of empty properties that are brought into to use particularly where that accommodation can then be used to reduce homelessness or the use of temporary accommodation.

The Home Improvement Agency will continue to be supported in part by funding from the Council, including fees for acting as an Agency in the administration of mandatory grants and discretionary financial assistance. They are also able to investigate and provide other mechanisms of funding and assistance to meet the aims of this policy and its functions. This may include third party grants, loans, equity release etc.

The provision of mandatory grants and discretionary financial assistance will be subject to internal auditing and external auditing to ensure adequate procedures are in place and followed and that there is an appropriate use of public funds.

The Council will continue to work with the voluntary sector in order to facilitate their roles in helping vulnerable people.

Disabled Facilities Grant and Discretionary Financial Assistance policies and procedures will be reviewed over time with the intent of bringing a common approach across

Worcestershire wherever appropriate.

2 Purpose and Form of Housing Assistance

Housing Assistance may be offered by Wyre Forest District Council in accordance with this policy towards the cost of:

- (i) the improvement, repair or adaptation of existing living accommodation including permanent residential caravans and houseboats
- (ii) any other initiatives which are consistent with the aims and objectives of the District Council in relation to housing.

Housing Assistance may be offered in any form including but not restricted to financial assistance, advice, provision of materials, carrying out of works, loans. The Council may enter into partnership with other organisations or agencies to deliver financial assistance.

The specific types of Housing Assistance available at the time of this policy and the conditions for eligibility are specified in Part 9 of this policy.

The Council will pay reasonable costs of associated fees and charges for financial assistance and grants up to 15% and the administration costs and of schemes to deliver the aims set out.

Financial Assistance will be given upon condition of repayment where applicable and appropriate and any recycled funds to be used for the same aims as set out in the policy.

The assistance will be focused primarily on particular clients' e.g. disabled, elderly and vulnerable households across the District and on particular themes, for example to improve energy efficiency and eradicate fuel poverty.

Assistance and enforcement are both used by the Council when considered appropriate to ensure standards in relation to housing matters. The provision of financial and other assistance will be considered as an alternative to enforcement when considered appropriate and the relevant parts of this policy apply. Factors that will affect the decision to assist or enforce include individual's capabilities, personal circumstances and responsibilities and the legal and social responsibilities of the Council.

3 Persons Eligible for Housing Assistance

Any person who makes an application for Housing Assistance must:-

- (i) be over 18 years of age at the date of the application, and
- (ii) live in the dwelling as his/her only main residence (except where the applicant is a landlord who intends to let the dwelling or where the housing assistance is in relation to an empty property), and
- (iii) have an owner's interest in the dwelling (other than an interest by virtue of being a Registered Social Landlord under Part 1 of the Housing Act 1996 or being eligible for such registration), or be a tenant or licensee of the dwelling, alone or jointly with others but not being a member of the landlord's family, with a tenancy or license permitting occupation of the dwelling for a minimum period of 12 months after approval of the housing assistance,

and

- (iv) have the power or duty to carry out the works and where appropriate have the owner's consent in writing to carrying out the works, and
- (v) satisfy such test(s) of resources as the Council may from time to time have in place
- (vi) not be ineligible, by virtue of the Housing, Grants, Construction and Regeneration Act 1996, regulations made under the Act or any other enactment.
- (vii) homeowners have the primary responsibility for ensuring their homes are properly maintained but we will assist vulnerable homeowners to make sure they have the opportunity for achieving safe, healthy and appropriately adapted homes.

4 Types of Assistance Available

The provision of assistance or schemes for works and other activities other than mandatory disabled facilities grants is subject to the availability of funding.

The type of assistance available to home owners and tenants will be based on a mixture of advice, private finance and public finance (if available) to priority cases. This is a hierarchy of assistance based on the need and circumstances of the applicant.

The basic information, advice and "sign posting" service provided with the Home Improvement Agency will cover repairs, maintenance and improvements including information on builders, energy efficiency, other re-housing options, etc.

A higher level of service, namely grant aided assistance and access to the Agency Service (for which a fee will be charged) for households to whom we have a mandatory duty and where they meet the means testing criteria.

5 Making a Formal Application

All applications must be on a form approved by the Council and must include the following original documentation:-

- (i) Where the estimated cost of the works exceeds £10,000, three quotations are required to be set out on the schedule of grant works/housing assistance provided by the Council. If the estimated works is below £10,000 then there can be either two quotes or one if a comparable costed schedule exists to ensure value for money.
- (ii) Particulars of the work to be carried out including where appropriate plans, specifications and specialist reports.
- (iii) Details of any professional fees or charges relating to the work and for which assistance is being sought.
- (iv) Confirmation of planning and/or building control approval where appropriate.
- (v) For applications above £10,000, proof of ownership from a solicitor or mortgagee, or copies of the title deeds/land registry certificate, or copy of the tenancy agreement or licence to occupy.
- (vi) Where the application is the owner or landlord, a signed undertaking to repay the assistance if the conditions imposed are not met or complied with.

The application will only be considered complete when the Council has all the information it needs to be able to make a decision on the application.

The Home Improvement Agency will have their own procurement process where they act in

an Agency role, as outlined in the Service Level Agreement. The Council will accept single quotes for costs where provided through such a procurement process.

6 Restrictions on Assistance

No assistance will normally be given for work started before formal approval of an application, except that:

- (i) The Council may in exceptional circumstances exempt an application from this condition for example where a defect may present a serious risk to health and safety.
- (ii) The Council may, with consent of the applicant, treat the application as varied so exclude any works that have been started before approval.

The Council will not consider an application for assistance in respect of premises built or converted less than 10 years from the date of the application, except in the case of an application for a disabled facility grant or sanctuary grant.

The Council will assess whether the scope of works are reasonable and practicable and eligible, in particular having regard to the age and condition of the property.

The Council will assess whether prices given by contractors meet value for money. In determining this, the Officer will give consideration to similar jobs priced within the last year.

In the event that the Officer believes the price for contracts are too high and identifies an appropriate price for this work (which is lower), then they will advise the client that the total eligible grant or assistance will be the lower amount. The client is under no obligation to use the cheaper priced contractor but must be aware that the Council will only make a grant or assistance payment up to the value of the lower price.

Grant assistance will not normally be provided for works covered by insurance. Where, before a grant or assistance is approved, it is found that an applicant can make an insurance claim, the insurance company will be requested to confirm in writing the level of their liability, if any. The level of grant or assistance will be reduced by an amount equivalent to the insurance company's liability. Where a grant or assistance is approved, a condition will be imposed requiring the applicant to pursue any relevant claim against an insurance company or third party for: -

- a) claims for personal injuries where the applicant is in respect of works required under a Mandatory Disabled Facilities Grant:
- b) claims on the applicant's property insurance or on a third party where the application is in respect of works for which financial assistance has been given and to repay the financial assistance provided out of the proceeds of such a claim.

The Provision of grants/assistance is allowed for caravans and houseboats used and allowed to be used as main residence, subject to meeting other eligibility requirements. It will not normally be allowed for in the case of 'shacks' and chalet type structures. Shack properties are those that are identified in the Wyre Forest District Council Shack Site Survey carried out in 1979. Holiday residences, caravans on holiday sites or those with restricted occupancy and second homes (as defined by Council Tax) will not be provided with grants/assistance.

The Council recognises that these policies cannot cover every likely situation and there will be people who genuinely are in need of some form of urgent support that are precluded from accessing them due to a certain aspect. In these situations the Council may consider offering assistance in exceptional circumstances, in particular where support would help the Council meet its strategic objectives, as determined by the Strategic Housing Services Manager or Director.

7 Supervision of Works

In the absence of any agency agreement with the Council or the Home Improvement Agency, the responsibility for supervision of the works rests with the applicant or with any suitably qualified and indemnified building professional or agent acting on the applicant's behalf and not with the Council.

8 Payment of Assistance

A Grant or Financial Assistance will only be paid if

- (i) the assisted works are completed within twelve months from the date of approval unless the delay was not the fault of the applicant and deemed reasonable, and
- (ii) the assisted works are carried out in accordance with the specifications set out in the formal approval or as varied with the agreement of the Council, and
- (iii) the assisted works are carried out to the satisfaction of the Council and the applicant (or just the Council if the applicant appears to be unreasonably withholding approval), and
- (iv) the Council are provided with an invoice, demand or receipt for payment in an acceptable format. Any such invoice must contain sufficient detail for the Council to identify in full the works carried out, by whom and the price charged and must not be provided by the applicant or a member of his/her family.

The Council may pay the Grant or Financial Assistance to the applicant, however it will be normal practice to pay direct to the builder or contractor engaged by the applicant. The Housing Assistance may be paid in one lump sum on satisfactory completion of the works or in instalments ("stage payments") as the work proceeds. Stage payments will only be made where the Council is satisfied the value of the work completed exceeds the value claimed. A maximum of three stage payments will be considered, normally for 25%, 50% and then 100%.

No Grant or Financial Assistance will be given until binding agreements appropriate to the form of assistance have been formally executed.

The Council will not enter into any Form of Contract with a builder or contractor and, in the absence of any agency agreement with the applicant, it is a matter for the applicant to agree any contract with the builder or contractor.

Although not governed by Council Standing Orders in relation to procurement, as the payment of any assistance given is due principally to the applicant and not the builder but Standing Orders do act as a useful reference for determining the administration of procedures regarding obtaining quotes etc.

9 Types of Grant and Financial Assistance

The types of Housing Assistance offered, and the conditions applicable, are as follows and

will remain so until a further Housing Assistance Policy is published. All are discretionary (except in the case of a Disabled Facilities Grant) and are subject to the Council having sufficient resources. As already stated there is discretion to extend the eligibility criteria, level of grant or assistance and scope of works where the situation is exceptional and, in the opinion of the Strategic Housing Services Manager, assistance would help the Council meet its strategic objectives.

Mandatory Disabled Facility Grants

These grants are mandatory under the Housing Grants, Construction and Regeneration Act 1996 and are subject to statutory means test.

These grants are awarded to enable applicants to have access to and around their homes, or to use essential facilities in the home to enable them to live independently. Mandatory DFGs can only be given for purposes set out in this Act. Ongoing maintenance and repair of adaptations and equipment provided under the grant will become the responsibility of the applicant or landlord as relevant.

Whilst it is recognized that a DFG is a mandatory grant it is the Council's intention where possible to investigate all housing options which could include moving to more suitable accommodation.

A disabled housing need can be met in a number of different ways and all options will be investigated to identify which will meet the needs of the applicant in the most cost effective and suitable way, whilst acknowledging that DFGs are a mandatory grant.

Discretionary DFG Disabled Facilities Grants for costs above £30,000 will be made available up to £10,000 where the Council agrees the works are eligible, and practicable and represent the most satisfactory course of action. Where works requested are in excess of £40,000 total cost or considered to be unreasonable given the age and condition of the property, alternatives including the following will normally be considered:

- a) Referral to Social Services for their consideration of providing additional resources.
- b) Alternative schemes of work, including modular buildings.
- c) Provision of reasonable funding to enable a move to alternative accommodation with funding for adaptations to the new accommodation.
- d) Referral for consideration of Equity Release funding if applicable.

Disabled Facilities Grant	
Eligible applicants	Any applicant registered or capable of being registered under the Chronically Sick and Disabled Persons Act 1970 and requires adaptations to be provided.
Qualifying criteria	<p>Details of works requested</p> <p>An assessment confirming that the works are 'necessary and appropriate' is required.</p> <p>Entitlement to a Disabled Facility Grant is mandatory but, before approval, the Council has to be satisfied that the relevant works are both necessary and appropriate for the Disabled Person, and also that it is reasonable and practicable to carry out the works.</p> <p>Works eligible are only those that are eligible in the legislation and deemed to be required to meet the needs of the disabled person.</p>
Conditions	<p>Subject to a financial assessment of resources</p> <p>The Council will use its powers to place a limited charge against the property where the DFG grant exceeds £5,000 up to a ceiling of £10,000. Repayment of the grant up to a maximum of £10,000 will be required if the property is sold within 10 years of the grant being awarded.</p> <p>A means test will not be applied to parents where adaptations are required for a disabled child</p> <p>Proof of title is required.</p> <p>Landlord consent is required where applicable</p> <p>Conditions relating to the recovery of equipment in specified circumstances are applied</p>
Maximum grant	<p>£30,000 mandatory grant</p> <p>Up to £10,000 discretionary top up where applicable</p>
Prioritisation and Timescale	<p>The Council will endeavour to respond to all valid applications as soon as possible. This will normally be within 2 weeks unless further information is required to enable that decision.</p> <p>In exceptional circumstances where further enquiries are necessary and other options may need to be investigated or determination may be reliant on third party information, the Council will respond within the Statutory timescales of a decision within 6 months of a valid application.</p>

Home Repair Assistance

This is discretionary financial assistance and subject to available resources. A charge is placed on a property receiving Home Repair Assistance. If demand for assistance exceeds the budget available, the Council does not undertake to maintain a waiting list. This discretionary financial assistance will be considered after other avenues of funding have been considered and found not to be available.

Home Repair Assistance	
Eligible applicants	<p>Available to carry out works to allow persons to remain in their home. Owner-occupiers or private tenants with a repairing responsibility having savings of less than £16,000 and in receipt of one or more of the following means tested benefits:-</p> <p>Working Tax Credit (with an income, after tax, of less than £15,460) Income Support Council Tax Benefit (doesn't include single person or disabled person discount) Pension Guarantee Credit (not pension saving credit) Jobseekers allowance (income based only, in receipt for longer than 6 months) Employment Support Allowance (income related) Income support / job seekers allowance / working tax credit/housing benefit / council tax benefit / pension guarantee credit.</p> <p>OR: owner-occupiers assessed as having low income, have undergone a financial assessment to demonstrate this and are not able to access funding from a high street bank loan or able to affordably take or extend a mortgage or access an appropriate equity release.</p>
Qualifying criteria	<p>Property in need of essential repairs as determined by the Housing Act 2004 as a 'Category 1 Hazard' or significant category 2 hazard, in order to make the property healthy, safe, wind and weatherproof. Assistance may be prioritised based upon the hazard score or circumstances of the applicant.</p> <p>Works to bring the property up to the Decent Homes Standard will be aimed for if practical, reasonable and sufficient funds are available.</p>
Conditions	<p>Only one application for assistance will be considered up to a maximum of £10,000 within any 5-year period. (this condition is at the discretion of the Strategic Housing Services Manager and only in exceptional circumstances)</p> <p>Grant repayable in full to the Council should the property be disposed of or sold. The charge will be registered as a local land charge.</p> <p>Must have lived at the relevant property for at least 12 months.</p> <p>Once approval has been given, the applicant has until 12 months from the date of approval to complete the works.</p>
Maximum grant	<p>£10,000.00 for works.</p> <p>In exceptional circumstances the Strategic Housing services Manager may consider works above this amount where it is considered the most satisfactory course of action and meets strategic housing objectives.</p>

Private Sector Measures

The Government Regional Initiatives Capital fund for private sector initiatives towards decent homes has been delegated to the relevant Cabinet Member and Director for determination of which projects are to be allocated the funds. Part of this funding is allocated to the Home Repair Assistance and the rest is allocated to various projects.

Projects agreed on an annual basis typically include measures to improve conditions in the private rented sector where the works are above what can be reasonably expected of a landlord and are of benefit to the tenants, for example improved, efficient heating systems and ventilation.

Other examples of schemes include the provision of gating to entries, sanctuary schemes for vulnerable individuals, fire safety improvements, flood defence property protection, heating and insulation measures.

Any money received in repayment of assistance is recycled into this funding stream for the same overarching purposes.

Better Care Fund Metric Supporting Measures

Government funding through the Better Care Fund to the District Council is able to be used for activities other than provision of mandatory Disabled Facilities Grants if those activities support the national aims or 'metrics' for the fund. Although any demand for DFGs must first be addressed, any remaining funding will be used to support the metrics through a variety of activity including the following:

Discretionary "top-up" to mandatory DFGs: The maximum DFG awarded is £30,000 but some larger schemes such as extensions now exceed the maximum grant and additional funding from other sources (e.g. charities) is either unavailable or very resource intensive to identify and obtain. Funding up to £10k above the mandatory limit is available for this purpose. This fund could also top up handy person works and minor DFGs where they exceed the cap and other funding isn't available.

Funding for category 1 or serious category 2 hazards under the Housing Act 2004 for vulnerable applicants: Where a vulnerable resident, on a low income, has hazards within the home that are contributing to the unsuitability of the property. This exists in the current HAP (2013) and is known as Home Repair Assistance.

Hospital Discharge scheme: fast tracked and non-means tested works to the home to enable earlier hospital discharge where problems in the home are identified as a possible reason for delayed discharge.

Dementia Friendly Dwelling Grant: to offer financial assistance to make homes more dementia friendly to help people manage their surroundings, retain their independence and reduce feelings of anxiety and confusion.

Financial assistance for adapting and improving properties: to offer financial assistance for costs associated with moving to a more suitable home and/or purchasing / building / improving properties (in conjunction with a Registered Provider).

Social care capital grant: to work with County Council to develop projects (where required) that are now required following the demise of the social care capital grant.

Housing options: funding to facilitate the delivery of a housing options service within CRW where DFGs and care / support costs can be avoided through the move to more appropriate housing at an earlier stage.

Independent Living Centre: funding to facilitate the development of an innovation centre, with multi-agency / disciplinary staff co-located that enable applicants for a DFG and self-funders to test out potential aids and adaptations and make effective choices

The budget likely to be available, priorities and allocation of funding to be undertaken by the Director for Economic Prosperity and Place in consultation with the Lead Cabinet Member and the Head of Finance and subject to annual review.

10. Repayment of Assistance

General

Repaid money will be recycled into provision of future housing assistance.

If an applicant is approved but it subsequently appears to the Council that the applicant (or one of two or more joint applicants) was not, at the time the application was approved, entitled to the assistance approved, then no payment shall be made (or no further instalments paid) and the Council may seek to recover immediately any payments made together with interest accruing from the date of payment.

If the applicant is the owner of a dwelling in respect of which Housing Assistance has been approved and ceases to be the owner before the works are completed he/she shall repay to the Council on demand the total amount of Housing Assistance that has been paid.

Breach of Undertakings

Where an owner occupier has given a signed undertaking to occupy a property as his/her principal residence after completion of the assisted works for a period of time, and if they cease to do so during that time, they shall repay on demand to the Council the total amount of assistance paid out.

Where a landlord (or owner) has given a signed undertaking that the property will be available for letting for a period specified after completion of the assisted works, and if the landlord ceases to make the relevant property available for letting during the specified period then the landlord shall repay on demand to the Council the total amount of Housing assistance paid out.

Where the Council has the right to demand repayment but extenuating circumstances exist, the Council may determine to waive the right to repayment or to demand a sum less than the full amount of Housing Assistance.

Death of Applicant

If the applicant should die before the before the Housing Assistance is approved, the application will be treated as withdrawn.

If the applicant should die after approval of the Housing Assistance or whilst the approved works are in progress, the Council may at its discretion agree to completion or making good of the works and pay the Housing Assistance in full or, if the works originally agreed are not completed in full, an appropriate proportion of the Housing Assistance.

Where an applicant dies after completion of the works but before the expiry of the ten year undertaking, the Council will seek repayment of the Housing Assistance from the applicant's estate if a disposal by sale or a change in ownership / tenure takes place.

Additional Conditions

The Council reserves the right to impose additional conditions when making a grant approval. These may include but are not restricted to:

- (i) A contribution to the cost of the assisted works by the applicant
- (ii) The right to nominate tenants to housing accommodation available for rent
- (iii) Housing accommodation being maintained in repair after completion of the assisted works.
- (iv) The right of the Council to recover specialised equipment when no longer needed.

Breach of any additional conditions gives the Council the rights to seek repayment of the Housing Assistance on demand.

Security and Repayment

Where a grant condition imposes a liability to repay the Housing Assistance, the condition will be registered by the Council either as a local land charge or on the national land charge register.

The Council may at its discretion determine to require repayment of a lesser sum than the full amount of Housing Assistance

11. Enquiries and Applying for Assistance

Persons wishing to pursue a grant where a test of resources applies will be asked to provide all relevant financial information.

The Council will include in any housing assistance provided an Agency a fee for the Home Improvement Agency who assist eligible persons with their applications etc.

The applicant can either through the Agency or directly submit a formal application along with a priced schedule and any other document required (such as plans, building and planning consents, etc).

Once approval has been given, the applicant has until 12 months from the date of approval to complete the works unless otherwise stated.

For disabled facilities grants, the applicant has the right to apply direct to the Council rather than through an Agency. However the Council would not assist the application process in

the manner of an Agency in such circumstances and the Council may take up to the full legal timescale to consider and determine approval or refusal of an application.

12 Decision and Notification

The Council will notify applicants (normally through the Agency) in writing whether their application has been approved or refused. The decision will be notified as soon as reasonably practicable and in any event no later than six months after receipt of a valid application which includes all required supporting documentation.

If the application is approved, the notification will specify the works that are eligible for assistance, the value of the assistance, the form the assistance will take, any conditions applicable and the builder/contractor who will carry out the works

If the application is refused, the Council will give the reasons for the refusal and also confirm the procedure for appealing against the decision.

13 Re-determination of Amount of Grant

Where the Council is satisfied that because of circumstances beyond the control of the applicant which could not have reasonably been foreseen, the cost of the assisted works has either increased or decreased, the Council may at its discretion re-determine the assistance given in accordance with grant framework set out in this document and notify the applicant accordingly.

Additional works carried out without prior approval of the Council will not result in increased financial assistance being provided and would be the responsibility of the applicant to fund.

14 Appeals Against Decisions

Any person who is aggrieved by a decision not to give financial assistance as a consequence of this policy may appeal to seek review of the decision.

The appeal should first be made in writing to the Strategic Housing Services Manager. If the person appealing remains dissatisfied they have the right to go through the Council's Corporate Complaints procedure or approach the Local Government Ombudsman.

Any possible departure from Policy will only be considered where the applicant can demonstrate both wholly exceptional circumstances to justify such a departure and also that the applicant has not means by which he or she could reasonably be expected to undertake the work.

Complaints about service delivery rather than policy should also be made in writing to the Strategic Housing Services Manager and will be investigated in accordance with the Council's Corporate Complaints procedure, a copy of which is available on request.

Appendix Two – Better Care Fund Metrics

The BCF Policy Framework establishes that the national metrics for measuring progress of integration through the BCF will continue as they were set out for 2015-16, with only minor amendments to reflect changes to the definition of individual metrics. In summary these are:

- a. Non-elective admissions (General and Acute);
- b. Admissions to residential and care homes;
- c. Effectiveness of reablement;
- d. Delayed transfers of care.



**Department for
Communities and
Local Government**

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18th April 2016

Dear Colleague

Disabled Facilities Grant 2016/17 – Better Care Fund

April 2016

For the attention of:

1. Upper Tier Local Authority Chief Executives – covering Grant Determination
2. Unitary Authority Chief Executives – covering Grant Determination
3. London Borough Chief Executives– covering Grant Determination
4. Housing Authorities- by way of information
5. Care Commission groups – by way of information

The Chancellor announced at the 2015 Spending Round that up to £500 million of capital funding is being made available by 2019-20 for the Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG) as part of the Department of Health's Better Care Fund ('the fund'). DFG is for the provision of adaptations to disabled people's homes to help them to live independently in their own homes for longer. The Fund is made up of local pooled funds, local partnerships between Care Commissioning Groups and local Authorities under section 75 of the NHS Act 2002. Many pooled funds are or are likely to have local authorities as "host partners" which means they have ultimate sign off on the accounts.¹

DFG has been included in the Fund so that the provision of adaptations can be incorporated into the strategic consideration and planning of investment to improve outcomes for service users. As was the case last year, DFG will be paid to upper-tier authorities in 2016/17. The statutory duty, however, remains on local housing authorities to provide adaptations to those disabled people who qualify for it will remain. Therefore each area will have to allocate this funding to their respective housing authorities (district councils in two-tier areas) from the pooled budget to enable them to

¹ Section 7 NHS Bodies and Local Authorities Partnership Arrangements Regulations 2000 (SI 2000/617)

continue to meet their statutory duty to provide adaptations to the homes of disabled people, including for young people aged 17 and under.

Special conditions have therefore been added to the DFG Conditions of Grant Usage (under Section 31 of the Local Government Act 2003) which stipulate that, where relevant, upper-tier local authorities must pay funds into their local pool and then they must ensure the pooled fund cascades an amount at least equivalent to the DFG allocation to district council level in a timely manner such that it can be spent within year. Condition 3 makes clear that Upper Tier Local Authorities have a duty to ensure that Housing Authorities covered by Annex B to their grant determination receive the correct amount so that they can meet their statutory duty. Minimum allocations for DFG have been provided for all upper-tier authorities, with further breakdowns for allocations at district council level. We recognise that the holders of the Fund may decide that additional funding is appropriate to top up the minimum DFG funding levels. Please ensure you carefully read the attached Section 31 Grant and comply with the conditions contained therein. The grant determination requires you to confirm that funding was used for the purposes that a capital receipt may be used for (condition 1); it is for you to determine how you obtain the assurance you need from the lower tier authority allowing you to meet this condition.

As you will know, in March 2016 the Department of Health discontinued the Social Care Capital Grant from 2016-17 and issued a letter to local authorities explaining that it was focussing all of its capital funding through the Disabled Facilities Grant. In the letter the Department of Health also stated that some areas may agree to invest some of the Disabled Facilities Grant into broader strategic capital projects, although this would be a local decision to be considered as part of the Better Care Fund planning process. The statutory duty on housing authorities to provide adaptations remains, so any decision at the local level to spend the Disabled Facilities Grant on wider capital projects must be considered as part of enabling housing authorities to continue to meet their statutory duty.

You may be aware that earlier this year, the Local Government Ombudsman published its report 'Making a house a home: Local Authorities and disabled adaptations'. The report highlighted varying levels of waiting times for adaptations around the country. While some areas are excellent, disabled people in other areas face extremely long waits for adaptations. We are keen to minimise these delays and would appreciate it if you could consider what action you can take with this year's grant to address this.

Officials from the Department of Communities and Local Government (DCLG) or the Department of Health (DH) have contacted you, and you have informed them that you are the host authority for the pooled BCF fund. In accepting this funding, you acknowledge that you (rather than the Clinical Commissioning Group) are the host in your area, have accountability for funding paid into the pooled fund, and that you can and will meet the conditions placed on the grant.

The Department of Communities and Local Government would also like to draw your attention to Foundations who are funded by the department. Foundations act as the

national body for home improvement agencies. Foundations can offer advice and support to home improvement agencies on the efficient delivery of adaptations and to local authority commissioners on commissioning local home improvement services. More information can be found at: <http://www-foundations.uk.com/home/>

Yours sincerely,



Sally Randall
Director
Housing Standards and Support Directorate

WYRE FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL

CABINET
12 JULY 2016

Bewdley Medical Centre – Demolition and Redevelopment

OPEN	
CABINET MEMBER:	Councillor Tracey Onslow – Cabinet Member for Planning & Economic Regeneration
RESPONSIBLE OFFICER:	Mike Parker – Director of Economic Prosperity & Place
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APPENDICES:	Appendix 1 – Plan of land ownerships

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

1.1 To agree steps to complete this successful project including:

- a. the exchange of land of part of the Bewdley Medical Centre (BMC) currently occupied by the GP Surgery with the land currently occupied by the Library;
- b. undertaking demolition of both sets of buildings when they are vacated by way of an arrangement with Worcestershire County Council (WCC);
- c. use of part of the BMC currently occupied by NHS England together with the library site to provide public car parking as an extension to the existing Load Street car park.

2. RECOMMENDATION

Subject to the completion of an indemnity agreement with Worcestershire County Council, the grant of planning permission and the conclusion of the procedures relating to the asset of community value referred to in the report, the Cabinet is asked to DECIDE :

- 2.1 **to agree the exchange of land between the Council and Worcestershire County Council of the Bewdley Library and part of the land of Bewdley Medical Centre occupied by the GP Practice and fronting Dog Lane and to delegate to the Director of Economic Prosperity & Place authority, in consultation with the Chief Financial Officer and Solicitor to the Council, to complete all necessary documentation to effect the exchange.**
- 2.2 **To delegate to the Director of Economic Prosperity & Place authority to negotiate and agree with Worcestershire County Council any consequential valuation of the land subject to exchange and, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Planning & Economic Regeneration, to agree to make or receive any payment of capital value arising as a result of any difference in valuation between the 2 pieces of land.**

- 2.3 To delegate to the Director of Economic Prosperity & Place authority to include the new car park within the Wyre Forest (Off-Street Parking Places) Order 2016 and advertise accordingly.**

The Cabinet is asked to RECOMMEND to Council:

- 2.4 That the Capital programme is amended to accommodate the gross additional costs of £167,250 associated with the overall project, for which funding is already available or will be secured as set out in section 5 of this report.**

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 On 18 September 2012 Cabinet considered a confidential report from the Director of Economic Prosperity & Place proposing an exchange of land with the GP Practice in the current BMC off Load Street with part of the Council's Dog Lane car park. The reason for the proposal was to enable the GPs to provide a new fit for purpose medical centre for the residents of Bewdley and the surrounding area within the confines of the town rather than the only other alternative which was to relocate on the outskirts of the town. Following public meetings it became clear that the community of Bewdley preferred the town centre location for its accessibility and to retain footfall in the town to continue to support the local businesses.
- 3.2 Due to the overwhelming benefits to the community of Bewdley, Cabinet agreed to proceed with the exchange of land. Planning permission was obtained. Work began on the new medical centre in 2015 and is due to be complete in July 2016 when the final exchange of land will take place and will see the Council acquire the existing BMC land and premises (part of which is owned by the GPs and part by NHS England who are also party to the exchange).
- 3.3 There was obvious concern at the time at the loss of c100 car parking spaces at the Dog Lane car park site whilst construction was taking place, before the Council would be able to demolish the existing BMC to make way for new parking spaces on the site accessed from the existing Load Street car park. In the meantime the Council has added additional parking spaces through extensions to Gardner's Meadow (which was specifically envisaged in the September 2012 report) and the Dog Lane car park alongside the river (which was not).. Once the spaces are laid out on the current BMC site there will be a small net addition to the number of parking spaces available for the town, compared to the number lost on Dog Lane car park. One of the benefits of the project therefore is an overall increase in parking provision in Bewdley.
- 3.4 As part of the new medical centre development, WCC has also agreed to relocate the library into the new building to create more of a multi use community hub. Consequently the current library site will also become surplus to requirements and WCC will look to dispose of the site for redevelopment purposes. The library lies to the south east of and adjoins the BMC site. To the east of and also adjoining the BMC site is Bewdley Fire Station, the future of which is still under review by the Fire Authority. In order to ensure the best opportunity for comprehensive redevelopment of all three sites, rather than unconnected piecemeal development, the three public sector partners have been in a dialogue facilitated through the Worcestershire Place Partnership, of which both WCC and the Fire Authority are partners.
- 3.5 The library has been registered as an asset of community value ("ACV") following an

application by Bewdley Development Trust. It is understood that the trust is supportive of the principle of the agreement between the Council and WCC but there are procedures that must be followed before an ACV can be disposed of. If Cabinet agree to the land exchange, these procedures can be commenced which allows expressions of interest in the acquisition of the asset from a qualifying community group to be considered alongside these proposals before a decision to proceed can be made by WCC.

- 3.6 In June 2012 as part of the Final Accounts for 2011/12 the Cabinet made available £250k for Town Centre Support. As part of the 2012 Budget report Council on 27th February 2013 approved the use this as capital funding towards the total Bewdley Medical Centre relocation regeneration project. This Council's £250k capital budget has funded the works to extend the Dog Lane and Gardner's Meadow car parks and the balance will be used to complete the works on the current BMC.

4. KEY ISSUES

- 4.1 The project to secure a new medical centre for Bewdley has many benefits for the town's residents and businesses, and the Council. It involves an estimated £8m investment in the town which has been able to proceed because of this Council's direct financial support and involvement in a complex partnership. Modern, state of the art medical facilities will also incorporate a new library for the town. Two unattractive buildings within the Bewdley Conservation Area can be removed as a result. Location of the new centre on the Dog Lane car park will retain footfall associated with the medical centre in the town, supporting local businesses. From the Council's perspective, overall there will be an increase in car parking spaces and this should generate additional ongoing revenue income.
- 4.2 The Council is committed to demolishing the BMC and replacing the car parking that has been lost at Dog Lane. It is envisaged that this work will commence once the visitor season has closed in Bewdley thereby minimizing the impact on the trade of the local businesses, so it is anticipated that work will start sometime after 1st October 2016 with the aim of completing before the 2017 visitor season commences in March/April.
- 4.3 The Council also recognises, as does WCC, that if nothing changes then the Council will lay out the parking on the site of the current BMC and at some point concurrently or shortly thereafter WCC will aim to dispose of the library site for redevelopment purposes and the two will sit side by side as discrete and unconnected developments. This is not the best design outcome for this important part of the town centre which lies within the Bewdley Conservation Area. Although the future of the Fire Station in Bewdley has yet to be determined, were it to be the case that also is deemed surplus to requirements, then there could be a further stand alone discrete development at some point on that site, further adding to the piecemeal development of the area.
- 4.4 Clearly this would be an unsatisfactory outcome if it were allowed to continue unabated, so quite sensibly the three public sector partners have been in discussion about how to avoid this outcome. With the pressing need to provide the replacement parking on the BMC site being out of step with the likely timescale for the determination of the fire station site it is impossible to plan for this part of the site comprehensively at this time and it will not be acceptable to delay the introduction of the new car parking until the future of the fire station site is known. It is expected that

Hereford & Worcester Fire & Rescue Authority will consider a report in October 2016 on the matter of the proposed Emergency Hub for Wyre Forest.

- 4.5 However, the future of the library is much more certain and discussions with WCC have been productive in that a sensible agreement in principle has been reached that would see the library site exchanged for the majority of the BMC site fronting Dog Lane that is occupied by the GP practice (see Appendix 1). In the short term this would then enable the Council to provide the new car parking on the site of the BMC occupied by NHS England together with the land currently occupied by the library, whilst enabling WCC and the Fire Authority to continue to pursue a dialogue about comprehensively developing the two sites fronting Dog Lane if the fire station becomes surplus to requirements.
- 4.6 It is therefore proposed that the Council and WCC enter into an agreement to exchange the land. There are a number of other consequential actions flowing from this. Planning permission will be required to demolish the library and lay the land out for car parking purposes; WCC has submitted a planning application (16/0347/FULL) for the Council to determine. Any agreement with WCC to exchange the land would be subject to planning permission being granted. The application proposes access is gained to the site from the Load Street car park and it is also proposed to retain the splendid Beech tree at the south east of the site, which, although not the subject of a Tree Preservation Order, is very worthy of retention. It should be noted though that in terms of good arboricultural husbandry there are some works required to the tree to maintain its health and again WCC, through the Place Partnership has made an application to undertake works comprising a height reduction of 3-4m and reduction of 2-3m in the radial spread (16/0337/TCA).
- 4.7 It also makes sense for the Council to undertake the demolition of the library as part of the contract to demolish the BMC. An in principle agreement has been reached with WCC for them to recompense the Council for the cost of these works. Further, in order to achieve the same numbers of parking spaces on the library and NHS England Land as would be capable of being achieved on the entire BMC site, it has been necessary to utilize a small part of the GP part of the overall BMC and discussions through the Place Partnership will need to be undertaken in terms of any valuation issues that arise from this.
- 4.8 It will also be necessary for the Council to include the new car park within the Car Park Places Order to ensure that it can be operated as a public car park by the Council in the usual way.
- 4.9 The Council has obtained a quotation for the works to include the demolition of the library as well as all the BMC demolition and laying out of car park works from the Council's term maintenance contractor, Snape Contracting, which enables the Council to proceed with the works without any further procurement. There will be a period where the Council takes over ownership of the BMC and will have to secure it before demolition takes place.

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 The Council set aside £250k originally in the 2013/14 Capital Programme as its direct financial contribution to the overall cost of this town centre regeneration scheme, estimated to represent an £8m investment in the town. The report in September

2012 estimated that this sum would be sufficient to pay for the demolition of the current medical centre and the layout of the new car parking in Load Street car park. The report also identified that the cost of extending the Gardner's Meadow car park would have to be met from this sum.

- 5.2 Paragraph 8.3 of the September 2012 report made clear that "if this sum [i.e. £250k] is insufficient to cover the expenditure anticipated then further approvals to release additional funding will be required". This is the situation that has arisen, because works were also undertaken to extend Dog Lane car park and these were not explicitly envisaged by the September 2012 report. As a result of the land swap proposed in this report, the demolition of the current library would also be included.

- 5.3 The overall position is as follows:

	£
<u>Expenditure</u>	
Extensions to Gardner's Meadows and Dog Lane car parks	125,890
Stamp duty land tax	57,000
Demolition of buildings, laying out of additional car parking at Load Street (see footnote)	234,360
Total estimated cost of WFDC element of scheme	417,250
<u>Funding</u>	
Earmarked reserve, created June 2012	250,000
Contribution from WCC for demolition of library	28,000
Additional funding to be allocated from earmarked regeneration revenue reserves	139,250
Total funding	417,250
Increase in funding approval sought within the capital programme	417,250 less 250,000 = 167,250

Footnote: the demolition costs include provisional sums of £52.5k so the final expenditure may be lower.

- 5.4 It will be seen that all funding for the project is in place, including a contribution from the County Council for the demolition works. Nevertheless, the total expenditure on the project exceeds the original sum identified in the Capital Programme. Council will therefore need to be asked to increase the gross allocation in the Capital Programme by £167,250.
- 5.5 In order to protect the Council's financial VAT position an option to tax will be exercised on the land site of the current Bewdley Medical Centre.

- 5.6 Property valuations will be prepared for all sites covered by this proposal and exchanges agreed will be for equivalent values.

6. LEGAL AND POLICY IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 The Council will need to enter into an agreement with WCC to facilitate the exchange of land and to cover the associated recompense of costs associated with the demolition of the library. This agreement will include full indemnification of all costs of demolition including any that are unknown until the work is progressed.

7. EQUALITY IMPACT NEEDS ASSESSMENT

- 7.1 An Equalities Impact Assessment is not required.

8. RISK MANAGEMENT

- 8.1 If the Council fails to act in conjunction with its partners then the comprehensive redevelopment of the area around the BMC will not be achieved and the outcome for the town will be a poorer one. There are risks associated with the Council undertaking the demolition of the library on behalf of WCC, but these will be mitigated through a legal agreement with WCC.

9. CONCLUSION

- 9.1 The proposals in this report allow the completion of this successful project for the creation of the new medical centre and regeneration of an important town centre site in Bewdley. The Council is committed to an exchange of land with the GPs at BMC involving part of Dog Lane car park and the current BMC land. The Council is also committed to demolishing the current BMC when it is vacated to provide new car parking to compensate for that lost in Dog Lane car park to facilitate the new medical centre, which will also incorporate the new library. Working with WCC through the Place Partnership, the two intend to enter into an agreement to swap the current library site with that part of the BMC occupied by the GP practice fronting Dog Lane. This will enable better comprehensive development of the wider site and enable the potential inclusion of the fire station site alongside the WCC land were that to become surplus to requirements at some point in the future.

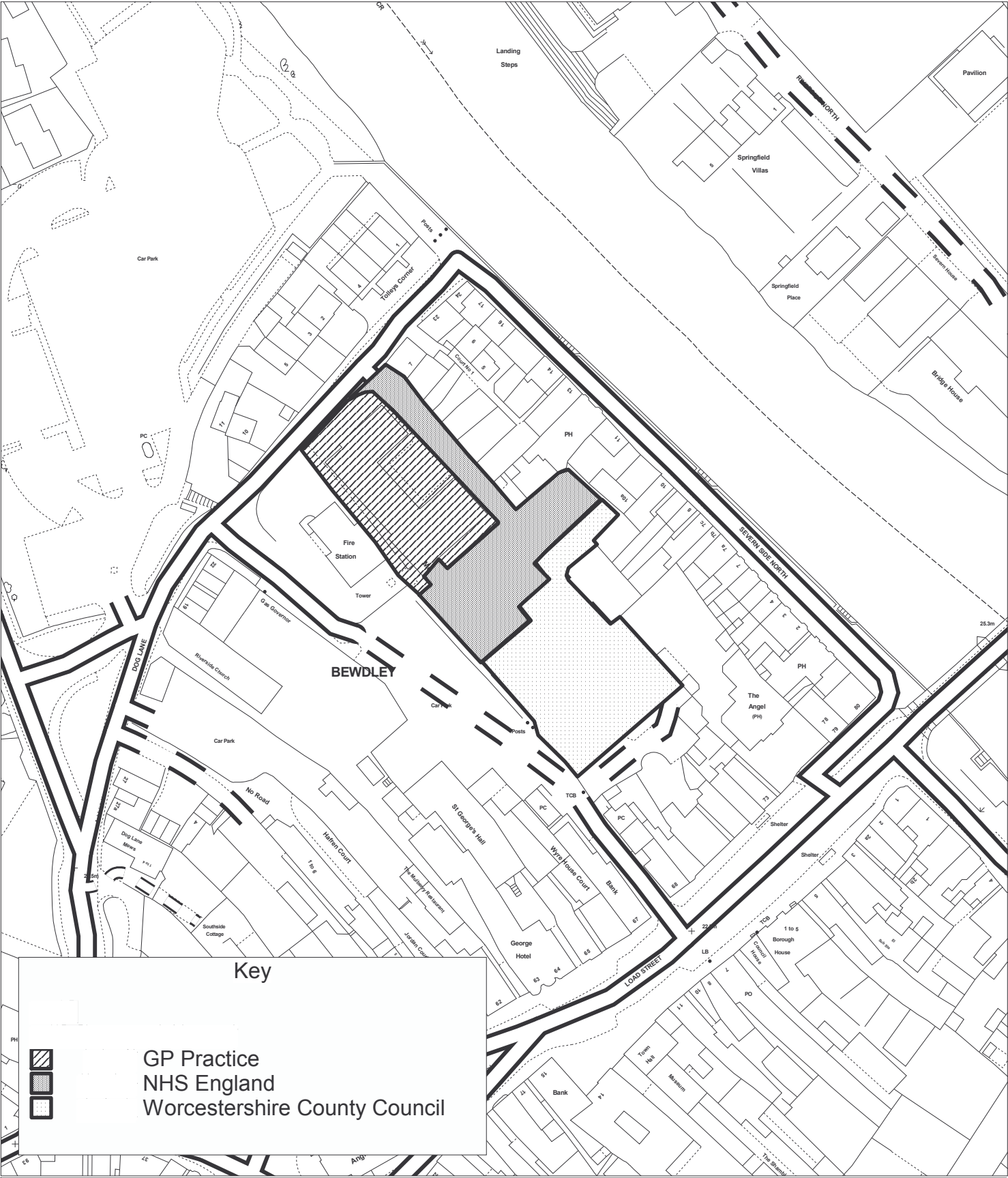
10. CONSULTEES

- 10.1 Corporate Leadership team

11. BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 11.1 Cabinet 18th September 2012.
- 11.2 Cabinet 19th June 2012
- 11.3 Council 27th February 2013

Bewdley Medical Centre - Land Ownership



WYRE FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL

CABINET
12th July 2016

Kidderminster Eastern Gateway Development Framework

OPEN with an Exempt Appendix 2 which contains information which is commercially sensitive	
CABINET MEMBER:	Councillor Tracey Onslow, Cabinet Member for Planning and Economic Regeneration
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APPENDICES:	Appendix 1: Kidderminster Eastern Gateway Development Framework <u>Exempt</u> Appendix 2: Kidderminster Eastern Gateway – Viability assessments produced by Savills

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To report the final version of the Kidderminster Eastern Gateway Development Framework and to seek approval for the document as an appropriate basis for bringing forward the comprehensive regeneration of the site, in conjunction with key landowners.

2. RECOMMENDATION

The Cabinet is asked to DECIDE:

- 2.1 **That the Kidderminster Eastern Gateway Development Framework (as set out at Appendix 1 to this report), be approved as a suitable framework to bring forward the comprehensive regeneration of the site.**
- 2.2 **To approve the proposed Vision and Preferred Option for the KEG as set out in the Development Framework, namely Option 3 (mixed use);**
- 2.3 **To commission an options appraisal from the Director for Economic Prosperity and Place on the demolition of The Glades and to bring forward a report to Cabinet on (1) the most cost effective way forward in the light of that appraisal and (2) recommending any adjustment to the Capital Programme.**

3. BACKGROUND

ReWyre Renewed

- 3.1 Members may recall that a ReWyre Renewed conference was held in October 2014. The purpose of the conference was to set out the key priorities for the ReWyre initiative for the next 5 years. The event was well attended by key stakeholders, including elected members, business leaders and public sector organisations. The outcome of the conference was the identification of a number of initiatives that had the potential to drive the economic growth of the district.
- 3.2 In December 2014, Cabinet resolved to agree a number of 'Action Areas' for ReWyre for the period 2015-2019, these activities reflected the themes that came out of the conference.
- 3.3 Since the Action Areas were adopted, the Council has made progress in delivering a number of its key regeneration priorities including the £2 million Public realm improvement scheme in Kidderminster Town Centre and the near completion of the Hoo Brook Link Road which will open up the full potential of the former British Sugar development site. The Council has also taken steps to set out how it will support the growth of the local economy with the adoption of a new Enterprise and Business Growth Strategy and committed £500,000 (match funded by Worcestershire County Council) to support the next phase of its Kidderminster Town Centre transformation work, which will see Worcester Street re-opened to traffic.
- 3.4 One of the key priorities arising from the ReWyre Renewed conference and adopted by Cabinet as part of the future Action Areas for ReWyre, was the 're-imagination of the Bromsgrove Street and Worcester Street areas' in Kidderminster Town Centre, as part of the wider re-development of the Kidderminster Eastern Gateway (KEG) site. This was in recognition of the fact that in particular, Worcester Street, had suffered most in recent years, due to the changing nature of the Town Centre and was characterised by vacant shops and poor public realm.
- 3.5 There was consensus by stakeholders that there was a need for a new vision for the Eastern Gateway and that it could be better served as a mixed use area, including residential opportunities, smaller leisure and retail uses, high quality design and public space and improved connectivity to the planned new Railway Interchange on Comberton Hill.
- 3.6 Consequently, as part of its budget setting process, Council allocated £200,000 to fund the development of a new vision and development framework for Worcester Street and the wider Eastern Gateway area.
- 3.7 The Development Framework has been considered by the Council's Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 7th July 2016 and any recommendations made will be available for consideration at this meeting of Cabinet.

4. KEY ISSUES

Site context

- 4.1 The Kidderminster Eastern Gateway (KEG) site is comprised of a collection of inter-related sites on the eastern side of Kidderminster Town Centre. The site extends to approximately 6.5 hectares and includes a public surface level car park at Bromsgrove Street, a medical centre, Youth House, the former Magistrates Court and the Glades Leisure Centre. It also encompasses Worcester Street, which forms part of the town's traditional retail core, but has suffered serious decline during the last decade, exacerbated by the growth of the Weavers Wharf and Crossley Park retail parks.
- 4.2 The KEG area is due to change significantly during the next 12 months. The Glades Leisure Centre is due to close in July and the current GP practice based in the Bromsgrove Street Medical Centre, is re-locating to a new facility in the former Cheshires Printworks site. Some residual NHS services are expected to continue to operate out of the Bromsgrove Street centre; however this is not envisaged to be a long term arrangement.
- 4.3 A significant portion of the KEG site is in public ownership. This means that there is a real opportunity for public sector partners to work together to combine the development potential of their sites which could act as a catalyst for the wider regeneration of the KEG. Properties within Worcester Street are in private ownership and largely are controlled by investors, owner-occupiers and local developers. The Youth House, is currently used as a Youth Centre and is owned and operated by a Trust.
- 4.4 The current planning context is set by the Kidderminster Central Area Action Plan (KCAAP), which was adopted in July 2013 and is a statutory document within the adopted Local Plan. Within the KCAAP, the Bromsgrove Street site is identified as being suitable for a mix of uses, whilst Worcester Street is identified as being suitable for retail, office and residential uses. The KCAAP also places an emphasis on strong design and improving the connectivity of the site to the Railway station and the wider Town Centre. Going forward, the Local Plan is currently being reviewed and will further consider the policy framework for the Eastern Gateway site.

Development Framework

- 4.5 In October 2015, following a competitive procurement process, the North Worcestershire Economic Development & Regeneration (NWEDR) service on behalf of the Council appointed a multi-disciplinary team led by the global commercial property company, Savills, to produce a new vision and Development Framework for the KEG site.
- 4.6 The brief for Savills was to produce a Development Framework which would create a new identity and purpose for KEG and to inform and guide future development within the KEG area. The Framework would need to be credible and provide the Council and other key landowners, with a flexible, practical and deliverable route to achieve the following:

- Comprehensive regeneration of the KEG site
- A new destination which is complementary to and integrated within the wider Town Centre function
- A high quality development, with a mix of uses, which encourage activity and footfall
- Improved connectivity of the site, within the Town Centre and key transport nodes – pedestrian, cycle and vehicle
- A robust solution which is:
 - Viable
 - Deliverable
 - Appropriately phased to deliver early wins, whilst ensuring a sustainable long term solution
 - Has the support of the wider community
 - Is flexible in response to market demand

4.7 Since October 2015, Savills have worked on the production of the KEG Development Framework, taking into account a number of inputs:

- **A baseline assessment** which provides a detailed understanding of the site and its surrounds, including a review of the planning policy position, confirmation of land ownerships, review of existing uses, topographical surveys, review of services and utilities, review of car parking provision and usage and a review of current pedestrian and vehicular access into the site and building condition surveys for the Glades Leisure Centre and the former Magistrates Court;
- **Stakeholder engagement;** a programme of meetings has taken place between Savills and existing land and property owners, with the meetings helping to clarify their aspirations and future plans for their assets;
- **Market assessment;** Savills have undertaken a desktop review of current property trends and market sectors which constitute Town Centre uses i.e. retail, leisure, residential, office. The assessment looks at national and regional trends and then relates these to the Kidderminster Town Centre market itself, the review identifies a 'gap analysis', identifying what is currently missing from the town;
- **Soft Market Testing;** Savills used their extensive national database of developers to test the appetite for the potential redevelopment of parts or the entire KEG site;
- **Vision statement;** in conjunction with the Council, Savills have developed a vision statement for KEG, which has been used as a starting point for dialogue with key stakeholders and land owners; the vision statement was tested with members at a workshop session in February;

- **Options Analysis;** taking into account the site's constraints, opportunities and the market assessment, Savills have developed a number of potential development options that encompass a mix of development uses;
- **Public consultation;** Savills ran a public consultation event in February 2016 to ascertain local residents views on three of the proposed development options and also ran an on-line survey; the results of the consultation have informed the final outputs of the Development Framework;
- **Preferred option;** Savills have recommended a preferred option based on an assessment of the financial viability of the proposed development mix, deliverability, fit with stakeholder aspirations and the vision statement and the views of local residents.

4.8 The final Development Framework is attached at Appendix 1 of the report. It is intended that the document will be adopted by the Council to guide and inform the comprehensive regeneration of the KEG site and to provide the Council with a routemap to realising the value of its own land assets, whilst contributing to the wider vision for the site. The Framework is not a statutory planning policy document, but will inform the future planning policy context for the KEG site and act as a flexible tool to ensure that the Council and other land owners can respond positively to opportunities presented to it by developers and investors.

Vision Statement

4.9 The Development Framework sets out the following vision for the future of KEG, which has been tested with key stakeholders and refined following feedback from them. Members were given the opportunity to comment on the draft vision at a workshop event facilitated by Savills in February 2016.

To bring forward an exciting new destination for Kidderminster Town Centre:

- *To rebalance and improve the vitality of the Town Centre as a whole;*
- *To diversify the Town Centre offer with uses that generate an improved day and night-time economy and footfall;*
- *To improve connections to Worcester Street and the High Street, to augment the scheme's interaction with the Town Centre core;*
- *To support local business and enterprise;*
- *To encourage greater dwell times, through improved public spaces and uses serving the community*

To create a dynamic place that residents, workers and visitors can enjoy, which is attractive, easily accessible and safe:

- *Solutions must be aspirational and improve the quality of the built environment to attract inward investment and draw back to Kidderminster a proportion of the expenditure which is currently lost to facilities at Merry Hill Shopping Centre, Worcester and Birmingham*

- *Public and private sector engagement and collaboration is key to unlocking the opportunity;*
- *Solutions should come forward in deliverable and achievable phases, which can secure early wins whilst creating a catalyst for long term, sustainable activity.*

Options Analysis

4.10 Within the Development Framework, Savills present three potential development options which could be delivered by the market. Each of the options comprises six 'development parcels' which could offer distinct development mixes, as follows:

Parcel 1	South eastern area of the site; area includes the Glades Leisure Centre, prominent frontage to Comberton Hill and the A451
Parcel 2	South western area of the site; area includes the former Magistrates Court
Parcel 3	North eastern area of the site; area includes Youth Trust House, prominent frontage to the A451
Parcel 4	Central area of the site; currently includes Bromsgrove Street car park, benefits from vistas across the town centre
Parcel 5	Worcester Street – it is proposed that re-development in this area should occur 'organically' through investment by the existing private sector owners, responding to improvement in surrounding sites owned by the public sector
Parcel 6	A 'gateway' to the site is proposed at the Comberton Hill roundabout; this will require improvements to visibility and the public realm

4.11 The inclusion of land ownerships in each proposed parcel does not necessarily imply that they are to be re-developed. This particularly applies to the properties along Worcester Street (Parcel 5) and the Youth House within Parcel 3.

4.12 The proposals for the three development options is set out in full in the Development Framework, however they can be summarised as follows:

- **Option 1:** 120,000 square foot retail and leisure scheme; alongside creative workspaces and 580 car parking spaces.
- **Option 2:** Residential led scheme, with private sector housing / apartments (92 units) alongside retirement and/or extra care accommodation and facilities (96 units) alongside community uses.
- **Option 3:** Mixed use scheme, with retail and leisure uses alongside residential, creative workspaces and community use.

4.13 A public consultation was held during February 2016, to find out the public's opinions on the proposed vision and the three development options. 102 local residents completed a feedback form and questionnaire. 76% of respondents

agreed with the proposed vision for KEG and 72% of respondents felt that the proposed options were appropriate for the site.

Development Framework - Preferred Option

- 4.14 Each of the options has been tested by Savills in terms of market appetite, ability of the option to deliver against the proposed vision for KEG, financial viability for each land parcel and the site as a whole and acceptability of the potential end value to each respective land owner. Savills have run development appraisals for each parcel based on the proposed uses. The viability assessments are attached at Exempt Appendix 2 of the report (they are exempt as they contain commercially sensitive information).
- 4.15 Option 3 (mixed-use) is recommended by Savills as the preferred development option and would deliver a mix of retail and leisure uses alongside residential, creative workspaces, and community uses.
- 4.16 Option 3 would be anchored by a multi-screen cinema complex, with 6 restaurant/café units and a 420 space multi-storey car park. Options for the former Magistrates Court include creative workspaces and residential accommodation with active ground floor uses, including cafes and restaurants. Requirements for community, education and medical facilities can be accommodated within this option. As part of the indicative retail offer on the site, a small number of independent shops and cafes are proposed which will add vibrancy to the current town centre mix.
- 4.17 Savills advise that Option 3 is sufficiently flexible to respond to changing market demands and requirements. For example, if the cinema and leisure element of the scheme could not be delivered, then this option allows the flexibility of increasing the number of residential units on the site. However, Savills advice is that demand for a cinema/leisure scheme in Kidderminster Town Centre is strong and that the KEG site would be an attractive location for this type of scheme. This has been confirmed by the soft market testing process.
- 4.18 As part of the preferred option, Savills recommend a series of public realm and transport improvements which would be required to improve connectivity into the KEG site. This would include improvements to the Comberton Hill and Birmingham Road junctions on the Ring Road, for example introduction of 'at grade' pedestrian crossings across the Ring Road and enhanced public realm. The report suggests that, to improve accessibility to and from the site, Prospect Hill could be converted to two way traffic. This could limit the scope for on street parking at this location but the proposals envisage high levels of provision of parking within the scheme, which would not be at a significant distance from businesses in this part of the town centre. The businesses could also benefit from being close to a regenerated area. The Preferred Option proposes improved connectivity between the lower levels of Worcester Street to the upper levels of Bromsgrove Street, in effect replacing the current 'Step Entry'. However, this would require a new pedestrian link through the site of the former Woolworths building. Therefore, given that this would require the

acquisition of this site and subsequent clearance of the building, it should be viewed as a long term aspiration rather than an immediate priority.

Key issues for the Council

- 4.19 Within the Development Framework, it is envisaged that Parcel 1 (Glades Leisure Centre) would come forward for development first. This would enable the delivery of the 'anchor' cinema / leisure use to come forward as an early win and act as a catalyst for the wider regeneration of the KEG site.
- 4.20 To ensure that the Glades Leisure Centre site can come forward as the first phase, it is desirable that the Council should seek to commence early demolition and clearance of the existing building and secure the site, readying it for development. This will enable the Council to demonstrate to the market that the regeneration of the KEG site is progressing and will open up the site as a more immediate development opportunity, therefore increasing the potential for a developer to be secured at an earlier stage. Demolition will also avoid or minimise costs associated with holding an empty building, including security and potentially business rates. The recommendations in this report therefore include the commissioning of an options appraisal on the demolition of The Glades and a further report on the most cost effective way forward in the light of that appraisal and any adjustment to the Capital Programme that would need to be recommended to Council.
- 4.21 As part of its consideration of the development of a new leisure centre in October 2013, Cabinet considered a refreshed business case which included the presumption that both the Glades and Stourport Sports Centre would be disposed of with disposal values assumed to be net of demolition costs. This principle was taken forward into the Council's budget agreed in February 2014.
- 4.22 The Preferred Option has the presupposition that the existing Bromsgrove Street Car Park owned by the Council will be released for development. There are currently 330 public car parking spaces on the site, which serve the Town Centre and the existing Glades Leisure Centre.
- 4.23 The car parking at this location provides a close convenient facility for residents, visitors and people working in the town centre. In 2015, the car park also generated £191,741 of net income to the Council, of which just under 20% was attributed to visitors to the Leisure Centre. Even allowing for the closure of the Leisure Centre, the car park generates a significant level of income to the Council. Therefore, the Council will need to seek ways of replacing this income (or some of this income) by identifying new income streams that could be generated as a result of the proposed new developments. This could include management of a portion of the new car parking spaces that will serve the site or by disposing of sites on long leases, subject to ground rents.

Next steps

- 4.24 The next phase of work will involve the development of a Delivery Strategy, which will clearly set out how the development parcels will be brought forward and meet the requirements of each landowner. It is likely that a first step will be to develop and negotiate a landowner's agreement between the public sector landowners, which will set out the agreed basis for collaboration. It is envisaged that the agreement will extend to submitting a planning application and an agreed formula for cost sharing. Other key activities will include the development of a phasing plan, marketing of the site, potential procurement of development partners and/or sale of development parcels and the delivery of new infrastructure to serve the site.
- 4.25 It is proposed that specialist support will be sought by the Council to prepare and execute the Delivery Strategy and assist the Council in delivering the aspirations set out in the Development Framework.
- 4.26 As the Glades closed to the public on 2nd July 2016 the Council will ensure that the site is made secure to prevent vandalism and antisocial behaviour and this will entail Herras fencing around the perimeter of the site and metal grilles to every opening. This will then remain in situ until demolition takes place. Subject to the further report on the options appraisal for demolition, the demolition of the building would be procured in accordance with the Council's Contract Procedure Rules.

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 The Council will need to mitigate against the potential loss of income generated from the Bromsgrove Street Public Car Park. This will need to be achieved by identifying new revenue streams that can be generated through the new uses that are proposed in the Development Framework. The impact on the revenue budget will be reported as part of the ensuing budget process
- 5.2 To secure the early re-development of the Glades Leisure Centre, the Council will prepare an options appraisal on funding a series of 'enabling works' including potentially the demolition of the Leisure Centre, site clearance and preparation. If the Council goes ahead with demolition itself, the cost of the demolition and site clearance works would be offset by generating a future capital receipt from the disposal of the cleared development parcel to a developer. Sufficient funding to cover the costs of any bridging finance between demolition and realisation of the capital receipt from sale has been included in the revenue budget.
- 5.3 The estimated value of the site if it was to be developed as a mixed use scheme (the preferred option) is set out in the exempt Appendix 2. Depending on the outcome of the procurement process for the demolition work if supported by the options appraisal, it is anticipated that Council will need to make an adjustment to the Capital Programme and this will be reported in full once the detail is known.

6. LEGAL AND POLICY IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 The Development Framework is not a statutory document, but will be used to inform and guide the comprehensive regeneration of the Eastern Gateway site.

7. EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

- 7.1 An Equality Impact Assessment is not required at this stage.

8. RISK MANAGEMENT

- 8.1 There is a risk that development would be considered in a piecemeal way if a comprehensive Development Framework were not prepared.

9. CONCLUSION

- 9.1 Working with a multi-disciplinary team led by Savills, the Council has prepared a new vision and Development Framework for the Kidderminster Eastern Gateway site.
- 9.2 The Development Framework will act as a guide for future development opportunities within the Kidderminster Eastern Gateway area and will seek to influence the plans of land owners within the area and future Planning Policy. A Preferred Option is proposed within the Development Framework which includes a mix of uses which are considered to be credible and deliverable and will help to create an exciting new destination for Kidderminster Town Centre.

10. CONSULTEES

- Cabinet
- Corporate Leadership Team

11. BACKGROUND PAPERS

- Cabinet report 22nd October 2013 – New leisure Centre for Wyre Forest
- Report to Cabinet, 16th December 2014 – ReWyre – Update on Progress over the last 5 years and a Strategic Action Plan for the Next 5 Years
- Council –25th February 2015 – Financial Strategy 2015-2018

KIDDERMINSTER EASTERN GATEWAY DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK REPORT

JUNE 2016



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1. Introduction

This report seeks to set out a Development Framework which has as a principal objective the creation of a new identity for Kidderminster Eastern Gateway. To do so requires the Framework to provide a practical and deliverable route to the following, based on an informed understanding of the site – its physical, transport, planning and market environments:

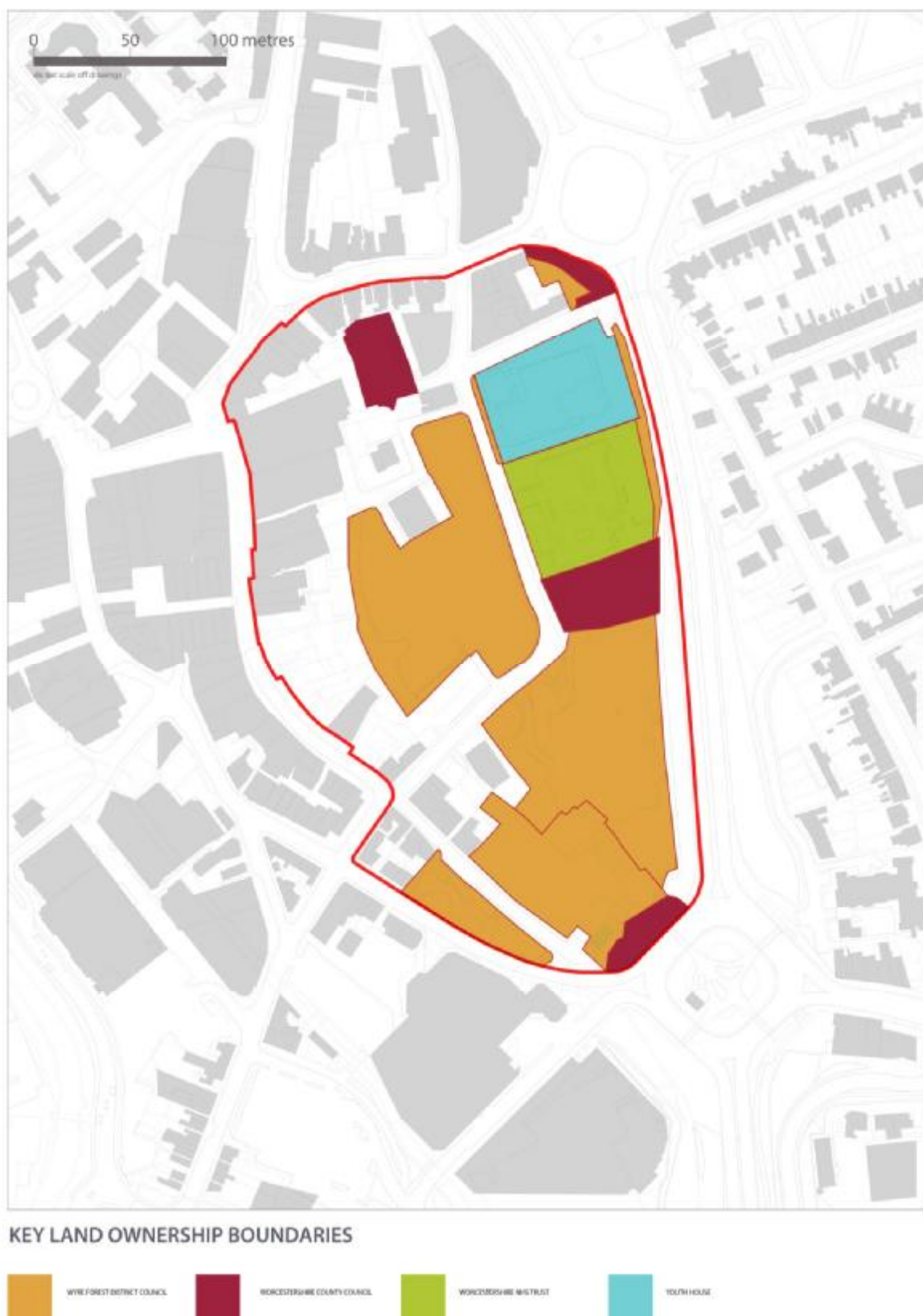
- a. Comprehensive regeneration of this key site
- b. A new destination which is complementary to and integrated with the wider Town Centre function
- c. A high quality development, with a mix of uses which encourage activity and footfall
- d. Improved connectivity of the site with the town centre and key transport nodes – pedestrian, cycle and vehicle
- e. A robust solution which is:
 - Viable
 - Deliverable
 - Appropriately phased to deliver early wins, whilst ensuring a sustainable long term solution
 - Has the support of the wider community

Overall this will:

- Provide a new destination at the heart of Kidderminster
- Rebalance the town following changes to its retail make up over the past 20 years
- Consider legacy impacts linked to relocations both on and off site
- Reflect necessary collaboration and engagement to ensure successful delivery

The public sector, via various organisations, is the majority landowner of the Kidderminster Eastern Gateway (KEG) site. The desire is to generate capital receipts, preserve revenue streams and secure the future of key buildings and gateways. In determining the most appropriate option for delivery there is a balance to be achieved between achieving outputs from the agreed objectives (successful sustainable development which delivers value through jobs, economic output and wider catalytic effects) and maximising capital receipts, consistent with the requirement to achieve best value.

The following plan sets out the principal land ownerships.



The table below sets out the public sector key output summary.

PROPERTY	OWNER	OUTPUT
Glades Leisure Centre	Wyre Forest District Council	Seek capital receipt by disposal, to go towards the cost of new facility
Bromsgrove Street Car Park	Wyre Forest District Council	Revenue stream maintained, enhanced or replaced
Former Magistrates Court	Wyre Forest District Council	Redevelopment / reuse, reduce financial liability
Bromsgrove Street Medical Centre	Worcestershire Health & Care NHS Trust	Retention of part of NHS facility needs to be considered as part of development mix
Strip of land adjacent to leisure centre	Worcestershire County Council	Actively seeking disposal of this land securing capital receipt

In addition there are multiple ownerships along Worcester Street. Their incorporation into wider development plans should be captured; future use need not necessarily be for retail.

The framework's credibility should be demonstrable through its financial and practical viability and flexibility; allowing for deliverable development which responds to the market.

2. Methodology

To fully understand the KEG site and its surrounds and provide the necessary context to inform the Development Framework, a due diligence process has been carried out which has included the following elements:

- Review of **planning, policy and studies** to consider the impact of how regeneration and future development of the site will be shaped by existing and emerging policy, studies and guidance.
- Confirmation of **existing uses** and users on site; their legal interests and confirmation of uses to be retained or relocated.
- Compilation and review of **legal ownerships** on site.
- Review of **topographical** survey data.
- Review of current pedestrian and vehicular **site access**.
- Production of a site plan setting out existing **services and utilities** crossing the site.
- Review of existing **car parking** provision, data and income generated to consider the potential impact redevelopment will have on the overall usage level.
- Regard to previous uses on site and production of a **heritage plan** to consider how past use will impact on future redevelopment in terms of limitations, opportunities and legacy.
- **Building condition** surveys have fed into the demolition quotes for the Glades leisure centre. To inform the framework, a Phase 1 Ground Condition survey has been carried out. A building condition schedule for the former Magistrates Court will be produced.
- The **immediate context** has been reviewed and plotted illustrating the surrounding area to include uses, vacancies, building heights and gateways.
- Liaison with **key stakeholders** has been undertaken to ensure the framework has regard to current users and occupiers both on site and in the immediate context.

3. Baseline Assessment

The due diligence process has been collated into a baseline assessment - which has provided a detailed understanding of the site and its surrounds on which to work up the framework. Summary findings and key issues for each of the elements are set out in this section, and draw upon a suite of commercially sensitive supporting documents which deal with individual topics in some detail. Those supporting documents are referenced in this report but are not published as part of it.

Planning, Policy & Studies

Savills has undertaken a comprehensive baseline assessment of the current planning policy framework for Kidderminster Eastern Gateway, including a review of adopted and emerging planning policy, together with the evidence base which underpins this. A full overview of this assessment is included within a separate supporting document.

Existing Development Plan Framework

The adopted Development Plan for Kidderminster broadly supports a mix of uses at the Eastern Gateway Site. The KCAAP policies for the Eastern Gateway in particular are not over-prescriptive and as such are largely flexible in terms of the range of uses that are considered suitable for each phase (retail, residential, health and education, tourism). The policies also place a strong emphasis on design and improving the connectivity around the area.

Going forward, and in recognition of the fact that Wyre Forest District Council (WFDC) is in the process of undertaking a Local Plan Review, KCA Policies EG5 – EG7 may need to be fine-tuned to reflect the findings of this Development Framework, particularly in terms of the mix and quantum of uses that can be accommodated on each plot. This includes allowing for additional uses such as D2 Leisure. Leisure uses are not identified as a suitable use for any phase in KCA Policies EG5 – EG7 however policy KCA.GPB3 sets out – *In other areas not designated as primary or secondary frontage, but within the Primary Shopping Area, a flexible approach to uses will be encouraged, including... D2 Assembly and Leisure.*

It will be particularly important to ensure there is flexibility within these policies to enable each development plot to come forward as and when there is market demand. It will also be prudent to reduce the reliance on retail uses as a driver for the redevelopment of the site and instead ensure that the site can come forward for a mix of uses. Key routes into and across the site should also be identified although they should not be overly prescriptive.

It is envisaged that the next round of consultation on the emerging Local Plan will invite comments on site allocations, at which point it will be necessary to review the current site allocations for the Eastern Gateway site and update them to reflect the findings of this Development Framework. Consideration of the infrastructure that is required to support the redevelopment of the site will also be important as well as ensuring that there are appropriate mechanisms in place for these items of infrastructure to be funded through planning gain (Section 106 and / or CIL).

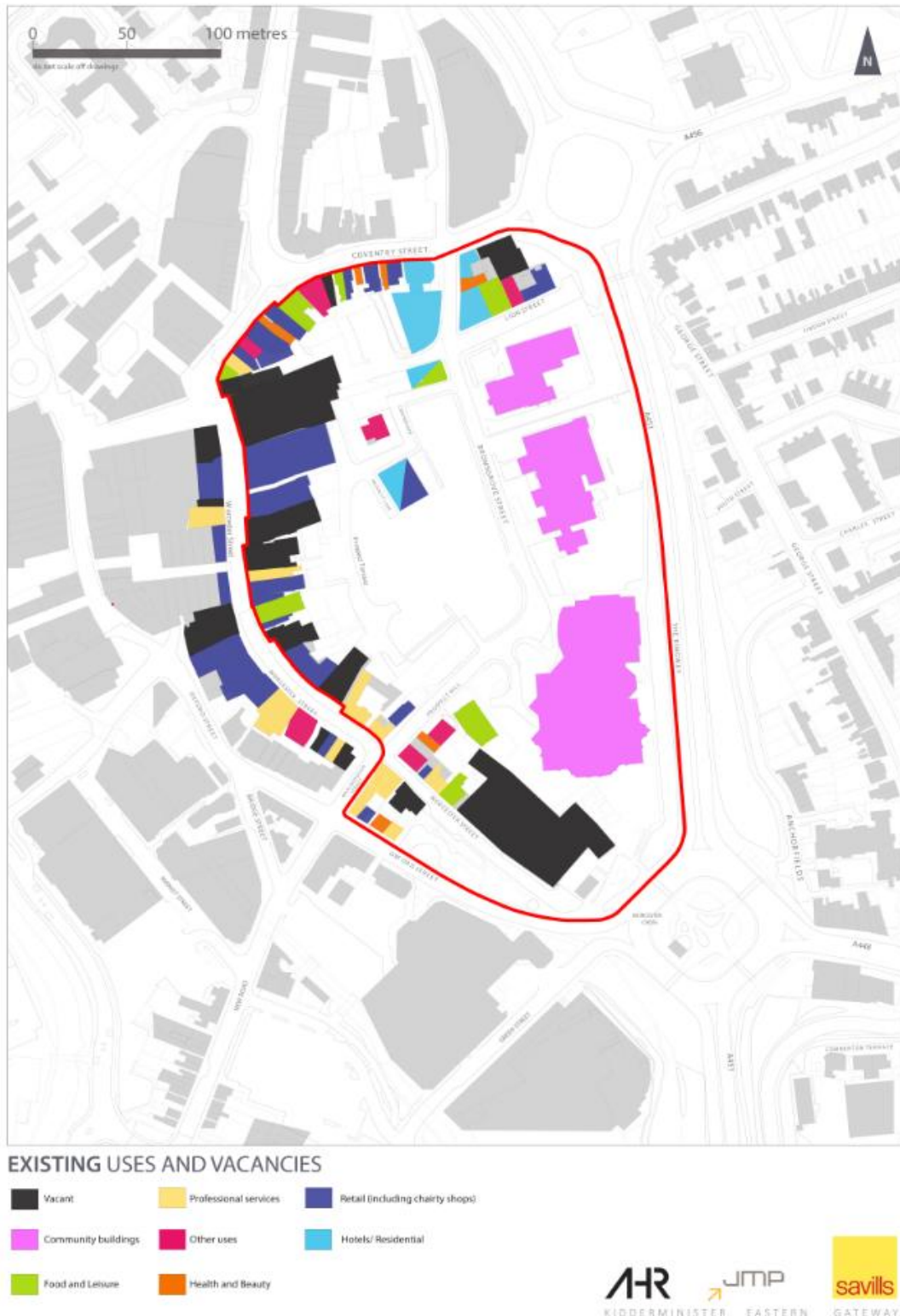
In addition to the above, it is important to note that the evidence base which supports the adopted Development Plan has also been reviewed. That confirms the redevelopment of Kidderminster Eastern Gateway for a mix of uses would be acceptable. Much of this evidence base is now significantly out of date and is likely to be superseded by the findings of this Development Framework.

Where the evidence base is to be refreshed, for example we understand that WFDC has committed to undertaking a Retail and Leisure Study to inform the preparation of the Local Plan Review, regard must be had to this Development Framework to ensure that there is a consistent approach to the redevelopment of Kidderminster Eastern Gateway.

Existing Uses

There is a broad mix of uses currently on site including community buildings, food, and leisure, professional services, health and beauty, retail (including charity shops) and hotels/residential. The plan below sets out these uses as well as the properties which are currently vacant. Vacant possession of the Glades Leisure Centre is expected in July 2016 which will add a further significant vacant plot to the KEG site along with 1 Worcester Street (former Woolworths unit), the former Magistrates Court and various retail units on Worcester Street.

KEG: Existing uses and vacancies



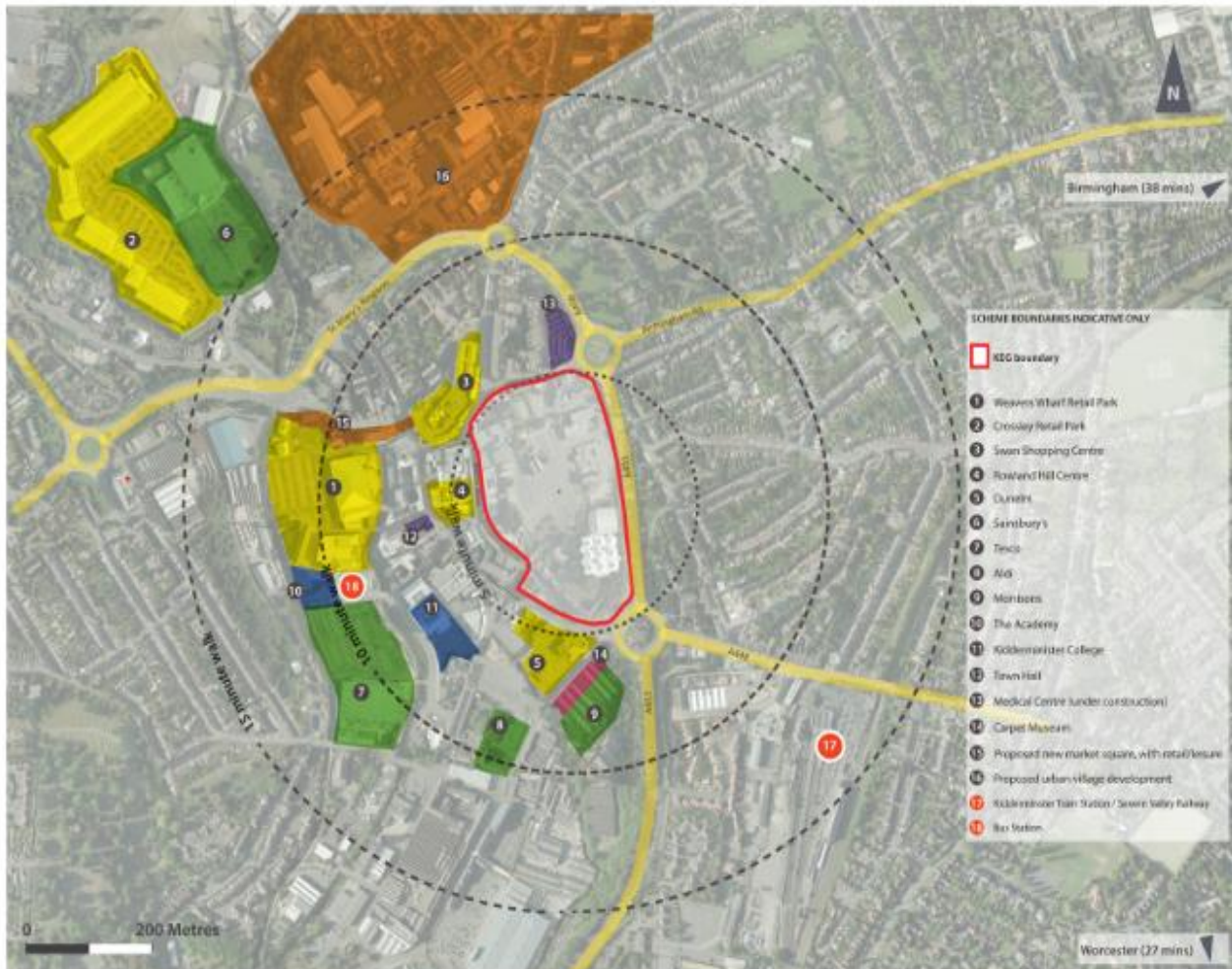
The wider Kidderminster town centre area to the west and south predominantly comprise retail and supermarket uses.

Kidderminster town centre: existing uses and vacancies



EXISTING WIDER SITE USES AND VACANCIES





EXISTING WIDER SITE / KEY SCHEMES

Legal Ownership

The public sector, via a variety of organizations, has the majority ownership (circa 60%) across the site as set out in the table below. Worcester Street is held in multiple ownerships by funds, private individuals and property companies. The appended plan sets out principal ownerships.

PROPERTY	OWNER
Glades Leisure Centre	Wyre Forest District Council
Bromsgrove Street Car Park	Wyre Forest District Council
Former Magistrates Court	Wyre Forest District Council
Bromsgrove Street Medical Centre	Worcestershire Health & Care NHS Trust
Strip of land adjacent to leisure centre	Worcestershire County Council
Youth House	Owned by Trustees
Worcester Street	Multiple ownerships

Geotechnical and Environmental Assessment

The Nott Group has undertaken a site walkover survey, a review of available information and developed a conceptual model in accordance with the current Contaminated Land Legislation as well as undertaking a geotechnical desk based appraisal of the site.

Contamination Assessment and Recommendations

The historical review indicates that from 1884 until 1926 the site was occupied by a number of residential and commercial buildings. The commercial buildings and uses include tannery works, timber yard, carpet works, malthouse, brass foundry, sand pit and various excavation works. From 1965 until 1970s/1980s, a number of industrial units including warehouses, an abattoir, engineering works, electrical substations, carpet works and iron foundry were developed at the site.

From the 1970s to the present day the site has been occupied by retail and commercial units, warehouses, leisure centre, health and youth centre and car parking area.

The site has had a complicated and varied history with a number of on-site sources of contamination identified which include Tannery works, timber yard, carpet works, Malthouse, brass foundry, sand pit and various excavation works, warehouses, an abattoir, engineering works, electrical substations, carpet works and iron foundry, retail and commercial units, warehouses, leisure centre, health and youth centre and car parking area.

In addition, a number of potential off-site sources of contamination have been identified.

Based upon the development of the preliminary conceptual model and assessment, it is considered that there is a low to medium risk of encountering contamination during development.

It is recommended that a site investigation (to include chemical testing of soil samples) is undertaken prior to development and to identify potential constraints. Ground gas monitoring is also recommended at this stage. In addition, groundwater monitoring and testing may also be required.

Based upon the findings of the investigation the conceptual site model should be updated and remedial works undertaken, if required, as part of the development process.

The findings of this report and subsequent testing should be forwarded to the Local Authority for discussion and to inform development proposals and provide a proper understanding of potential "costs in the ground" which developers will seek to make allowance for as abnormal costs.

Geotechnical Assessment and Recommendations

The superficial geology comprises the Holt Heath Sand and Gravel Member which is mapped in the eastern and northern parts of the site. These deposits comprise clay, silt, sand and gravel. Alluvium deposits are mapped in the south-western part of the site.

The solid geology comprises the Kidderminster Formation and is mapped in the western part of the site and comprises interbedded sandstone and conglomerates. The Wildmoor Sandstone Formation is mapped in the eastern part of the site and comprises sandstone with some mudstones and siltstones.

A number of retaining walls have been noted on site which is a consequence of the significant difference of ground levels across the site. There is a difference of ground levels of approximately 10m from north to south and 15m from east to west. A large retaining wall is located in the western part of the site (10m to 12m high).

Based on previous engineering experience of the Holt Heath Sand and Gravel Member (superficial geology) undrained shear strength of clay/silt soils is likely to range from soft to firm while the in situ density of the granular soils is likely to range from loose to medium dense. In addition, Alluvium deposits (superficial geology) undrained shear strength of clay/silt soils is likely to range from very soft to firm while the in situ density of the granular soils is likely to range from very loose to medium dense.

Based on previous engineering experience of the Kidderminster Formation and Wildmoor Sandstone Formation (solid geology) the in-situ density of weathered residual granular soils is likely to range from medium to dense while bedrock is likely to range from extremely weak to very strong.

Although loadings and serviceability limit states are not yet known for the proposed structures it is anticipated that conventional shallow strip footings or isolated pad bases may be suitable for lightly loaded structures (<150kN/m²). However, where deep made ground, reworked soils, poor natural soils are encountered or in areas where significantly loaded structures are required the foundation could be constructed using piles.

Due to the site topography, it is likely that the proposed development will require a cut and fill exercise (in certain areas) in order to create horizontal formation levels for proposed buildings and associated infrastructure. The reuse of site won natural soils should be possible subject to the appropriate chemical and geotechnical laboratory testing. In addition, it is likely that the proposed development may require the construction of a number of earth retaining structures.

It is envisaged the proposed development will fall into Geotechnical Categories 2 and 3. Developments and structures in Geotechnical Category 2 require quantitative geotechnical data and analysis to ensure that the fundamental requirements will be satisfied. Category 3 structures require comprehensive geotechnical data and detailed analysis based on site-specific geotechnical parameters. Therefore, the scope of ground investigation should be designed to meet these requirements.

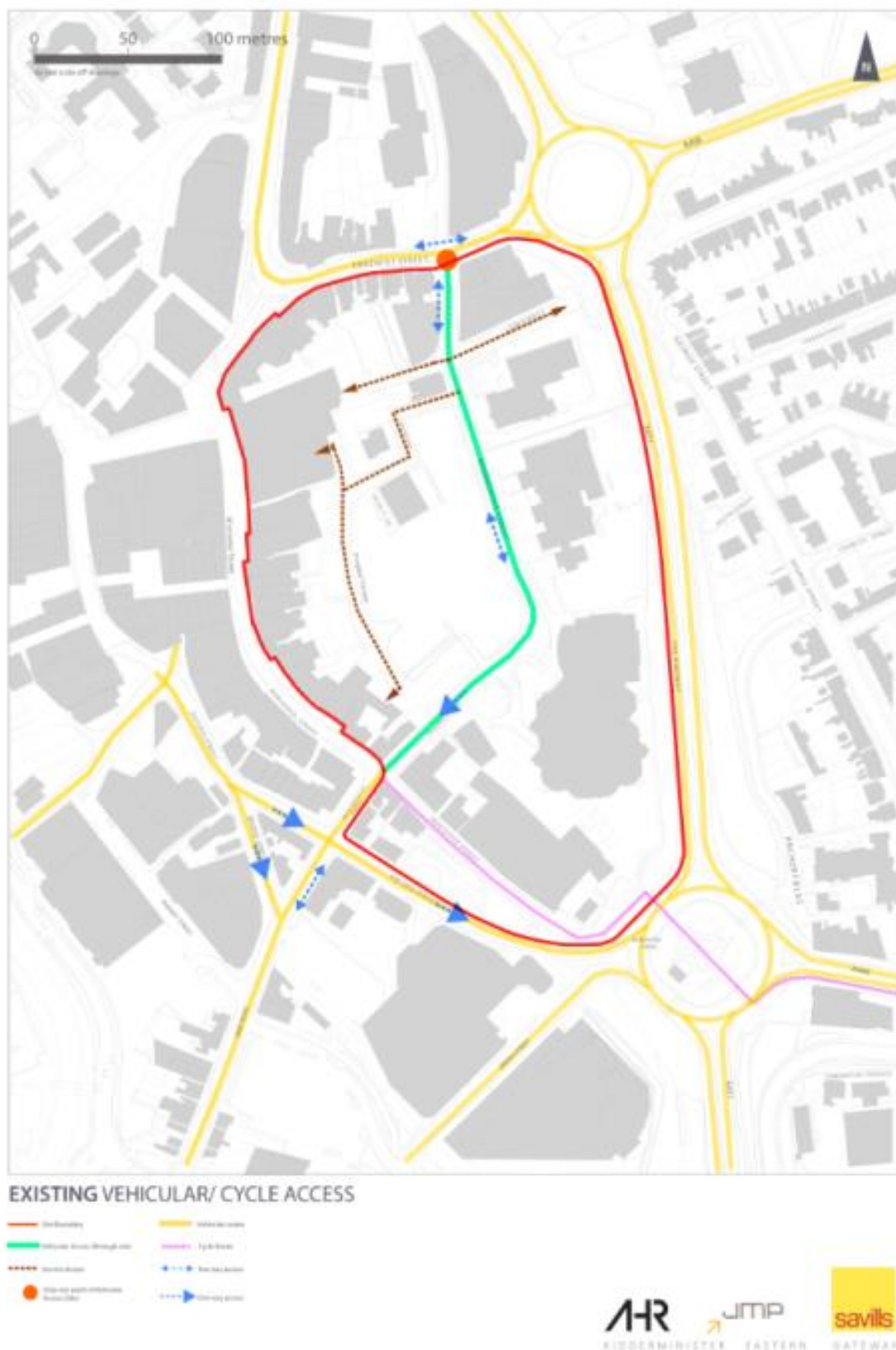
It is recommended that a comprehensive intrusive ground investigation is undertaken with associated geotechnical testing as well as a programme of groundwater monitoring to inform the design of foundations and possible earthworks.

Access

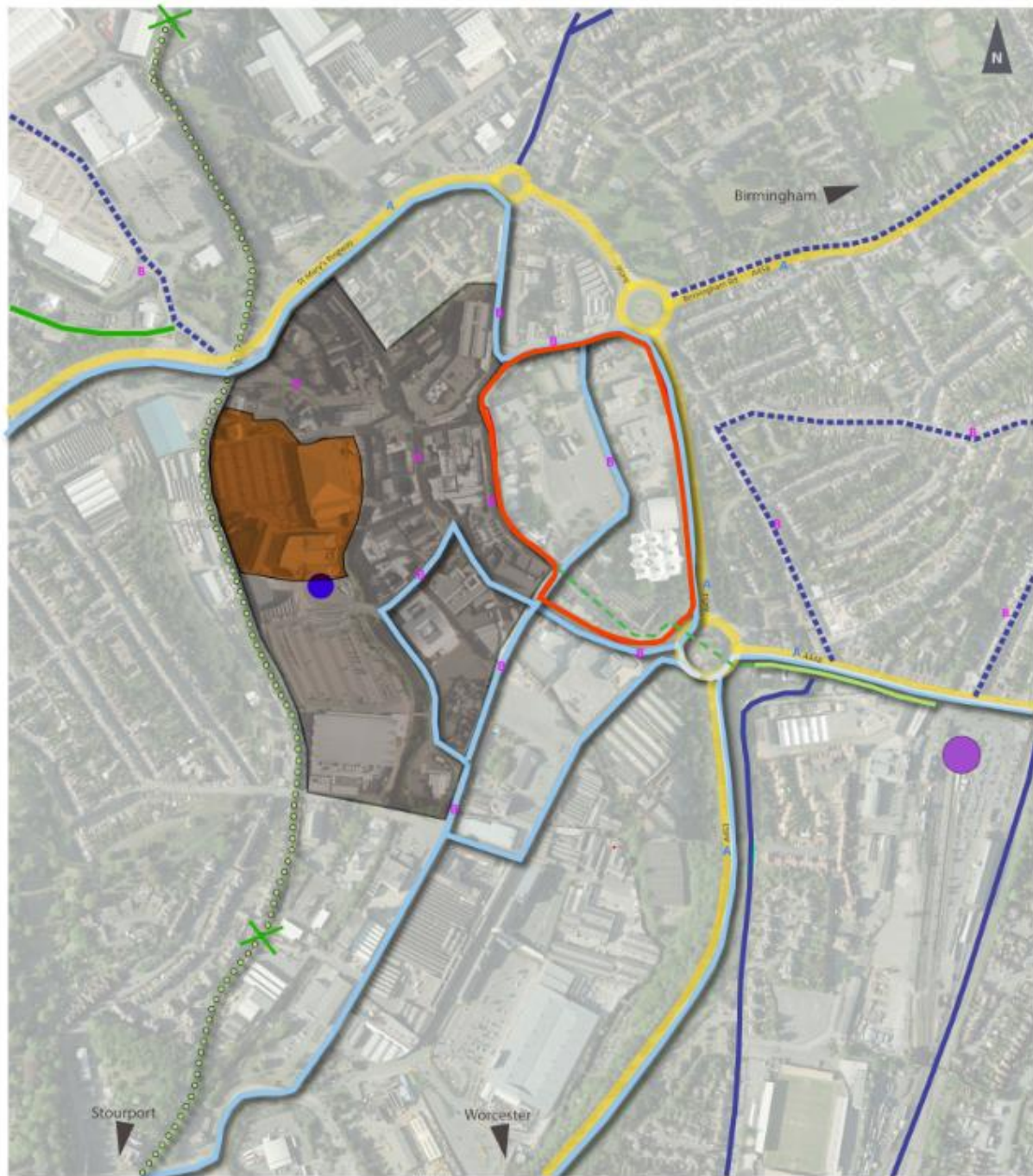
From a transport and movement perspective there are a number of key issues relating to the area covered by this development brief:

- There are very poor pedestrian and cycle connections across the ring road and to the station; access is through underpasses, which are both indirect and unpleasant to use.
- There are indirect but level walking and cycling links to the town centre from the site.
- There is a direct but stepped and narrow pedestrian link from the site to the town centre (Step Entry).
- There is only one vehicular access to the site, but two egress points.
- The streetscape and public realm on the site is poor.
- Significant areas of the site are devoted to parking: primarily a large public car park, which is rarely full.

The plan below sets out existing vehicular and cycle access.



The following plan sets out the existing site access and movement plan in the context of the wider town centre area.



EXISTING WIDER SITE ACCESS AND MOVEMENT PLAN

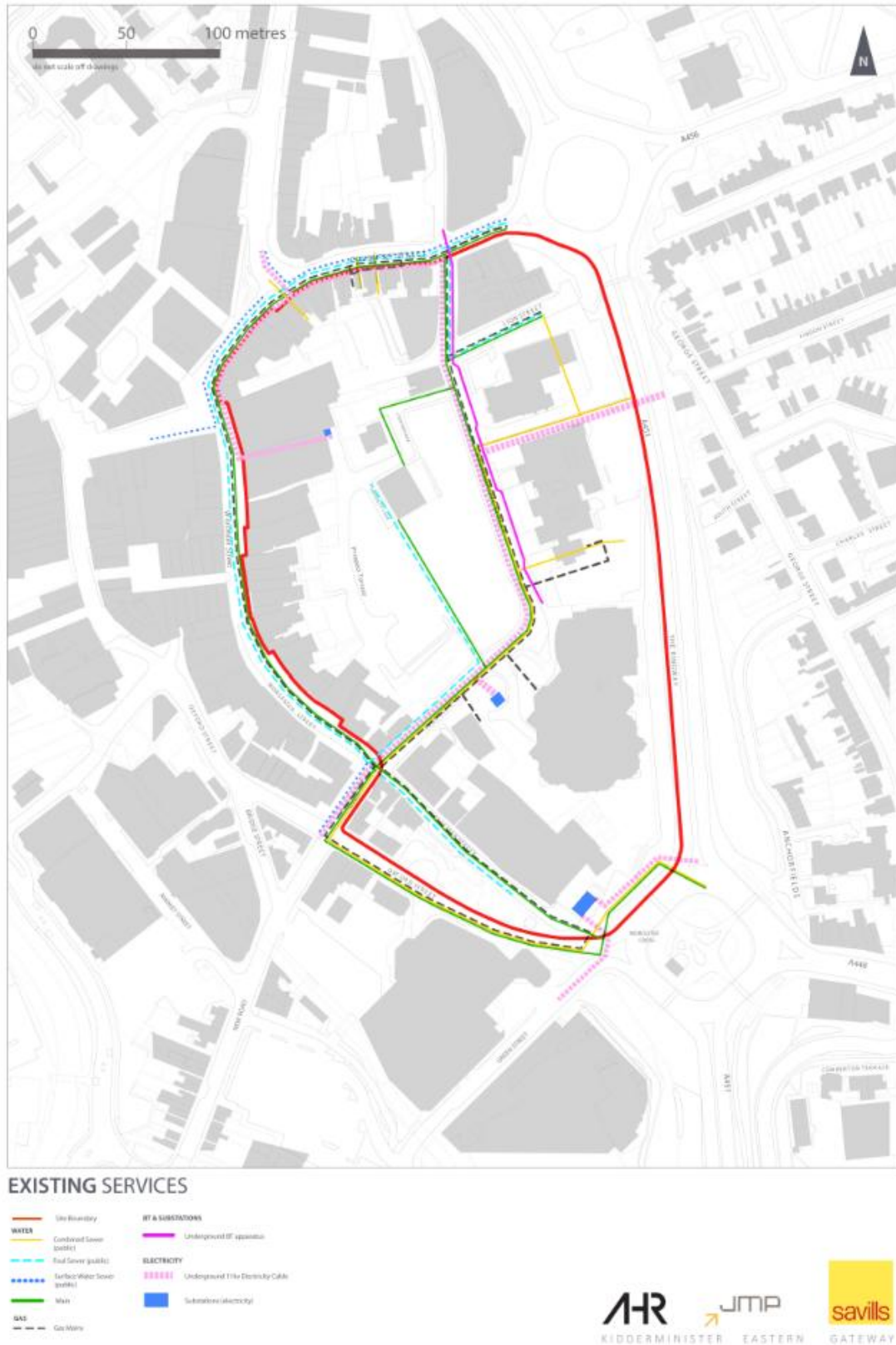


As a result there are a number of opportunities to improve access and movement which development on the site should seek to address, as follows:

- Improve pedestrian and cycle connections across the ring road and in particular to the station.
- Introduce a new direct walking and cycling link to the town centre through the Woolworths site (this would require its acquisition) and improve other level walking routes.
- Improve the stepped and narrow access which is historic.
- Introduce two way working to the current one way egress from the site thereby providing two locations where vehicles can access the site.
- Improve the streetscape by providing enclosure and overlooking to streets, new public spaces and by designing good quality public realm.
- Provide public car parking on the site only to the extent that the proposed uses on the site require it.

Utilities Plan

Existing services border and traverse the site as set out in the utilities plan.



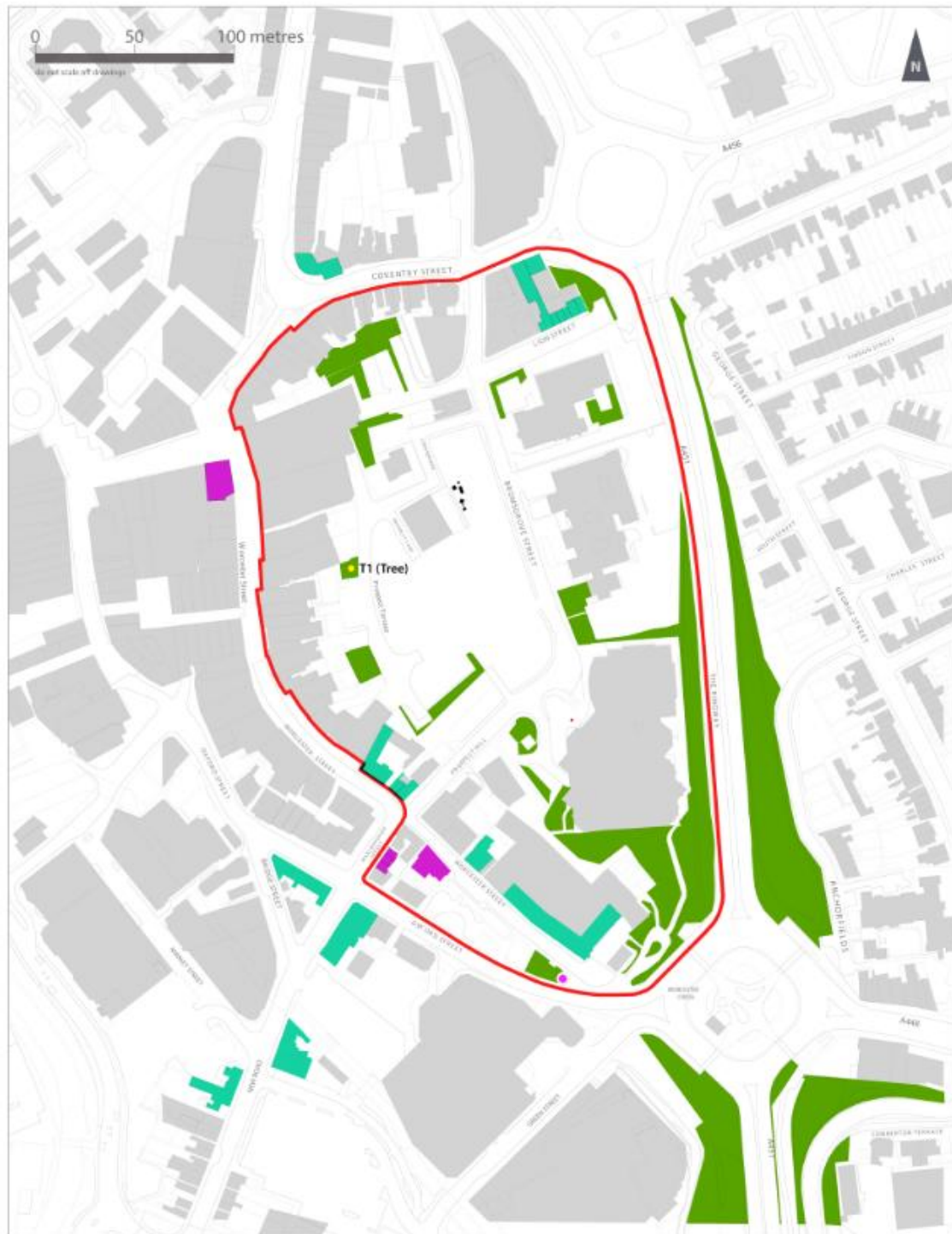
In developing options for comprehensive regeneration of KEG, it is assumed that the existing services have the ability and capacity for the proposed uses to connect into at no additional cost. This will be subject to more detailed investigation when a proposed scheme is at design stage.

It is also assumed that existing utilities should be retained in their current position and at the same invest level in the case of drainage, rather than being relocated (unless they become redundant), in order to minimise associated costs and help viability.

Heritage

Post war development has removed much of the site's heritage interest. This is because the site has been largely cleared for surface car parking and the Glades Leisure Centre. The existing but derelict former Magistrates Court is a locally listed heritage asset, located on the periphery of the site boundary. It is envisaged that through redevelopment the façade of the Magistrate's Court (as a minimum) will remain, retaining character and history within the site and providing context. The extent and form of redevelopment of the Magistrate's court will be informed by the building condition survey and proposed uses will be considered by reference to the potential market and viability.

Statutorily and locally listed buildings and existing green spaces



EXISTING HERITAGE AND ENVIRONMENTAL PLAN

- Site Boundary
- Locally listed
- Statutorily listed
- Existing green spaces
- T1 - Protected tree

HR
KIDDERMINSTER

JMP
EASTERN

savills
GATEWAY

Stakeholder liaison

Contact was made with town centre and existing land owners identified as key stakeholders. Meetings were held and feedback received from the following parties –

Town Centre Stakeholders

- Exchange Street Properties (Riverside Walk)
- 90 North Real Estate Partners LLP (Crossley Retail Park)
- Exeid (Former Magistrates Court)
- Kidderminster College (Kidderminster College)
- Peter Michael (Town Centre Manager)
- The Academy at Kidderminster (Kidderminster Academy)
- The Carpet Museum Trust (The Museum of Carpet)
- Worcestershire LEP
- Worcestershire County Council
- Place Partnership

Existing Land Owners

- Midminster Holdings Ltd (7-8 Worcester Street)
- Jupiter Property Investments (Fabric Warehouse)
- Mr. BA Murdoch (Lion Hotel)
- Malvern Park Estates (Cue & Brew)
- West Midlands Housing Group (St Basils)
- Kidderminster Youth Trust (Kidderminster Youth Centre)
- Worcestershire PCT (Kidderminster Medical Centre)
- SNC Development Ltd (24 Worcester Street)

4. Initial Output

KEG Development Framework Visionary Statement

The working proposition of a vision for KEG which has been part used as a starting point for dialogue with the Council, and as part of the Consultation, is as follows:

To bring forward an exciting new destination for Kidderminster Town Centre:

- To rebalance and improve the vitality of the town centre as a whole;
- To diversify the town centre offer with uses that generate an improved day and night time economy and footfall;
- To improve connections to Worcester Street and the High Street, to augment the scheme's interaction with the Town Centre core;
- To support local business and enterprise; and
- To encourage greater dwell times, through improved public spaces and uses serving the community.

To create a dynamic place that residents, workers and visitors can enjoy, which is attractive, easily accessible and safe:

- Solutions must be aspirational and improve the quality of the built environment to attract inward investment and draw back to Kidderminster a proportion of the expenditure which is currently lost to facilities at Merry Hill Shopping Centre, Worcester and Birmingham;
- Public and private sector engagement and collaboration is key to unlocking the opportunity; and
- Solutions should come forward in deliverable and achievable phases, which can secure early wins whilst creating a catalyst for long term, sustainable activity.

Initial analysis contained in this section and informed by a market assessment (Section 5.0) has led to the development of three options which seek to capitalise on the opportunities the site presents (Section 6.0).

Connectivity and Movement

Constraints Plan

The site currently has poor pedestrian links with the rest of the town centre and railway station. Town centre development and the construction of the ring road has “turned its back” on what should be a key town centre site.

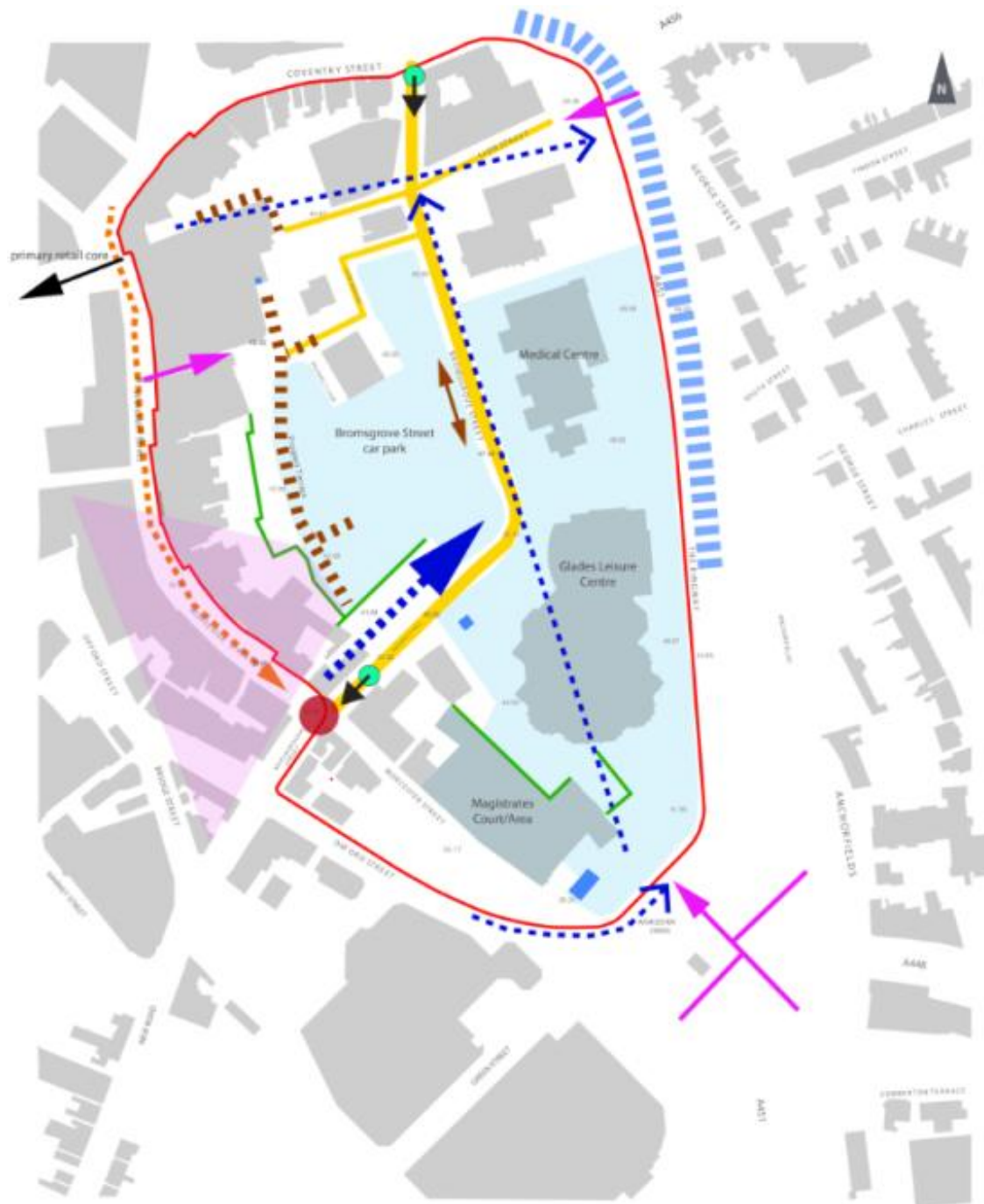


There is an opportunity to provide new and improved access to the town centre as well as improved linkages to and from the railway station.



Parameters Plan

The parameters plan sets out the site's key characteristics and specifics which will influence future development.



PARAMETER PLAN



5. Market Assessment – Summary

In order to inform the framework we have undertaken soft market testing as well as a desktop review of the market sectors which constitute key town centre uses and might drive future development at KEG. A full Market Assessment Report was been completed as a standalone document.

The sectors considered are:

- Retail
- Leisure
- Office
- Creative industries
- Residential
- Residential institutions
- Education

The report covers macro market dynamics for the key market sectors and then provides an analysis of the town centre market itself, including key competing sites encompassing established sites; sites currently being delivered; and those sites in the pipeline. The review includes a gap analysis, identifying what is 'missing' in Kidderminster.

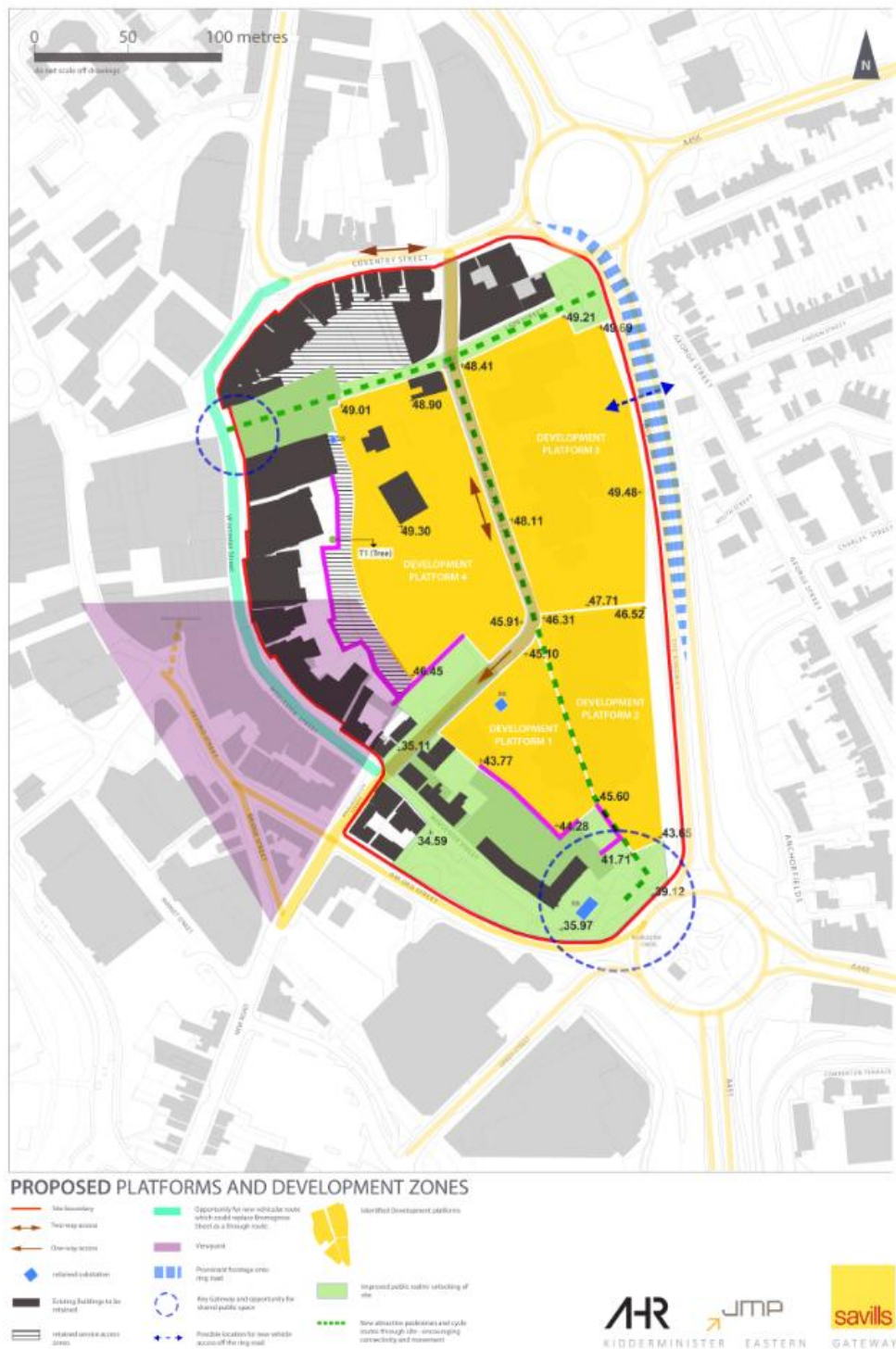
The macro review provides a view of regional recovery and growth in both the development and investment sectors and Government policy to drive growth in the regions. Whilst there may be no direct impact on towns such as Kidderminster by decisions made by major corporate occupiers to locate significant elements of their businesses in Birmingham (HSBC and Deutsche Bank for example), there is an indirect impact through overall regional growth and market interest in opportunities as development confidence returns.

6. Options Analysis

Proposed Uses

Working with the site's constraints and opportunities set in a market context, three options comprising a range of uses have been considered.

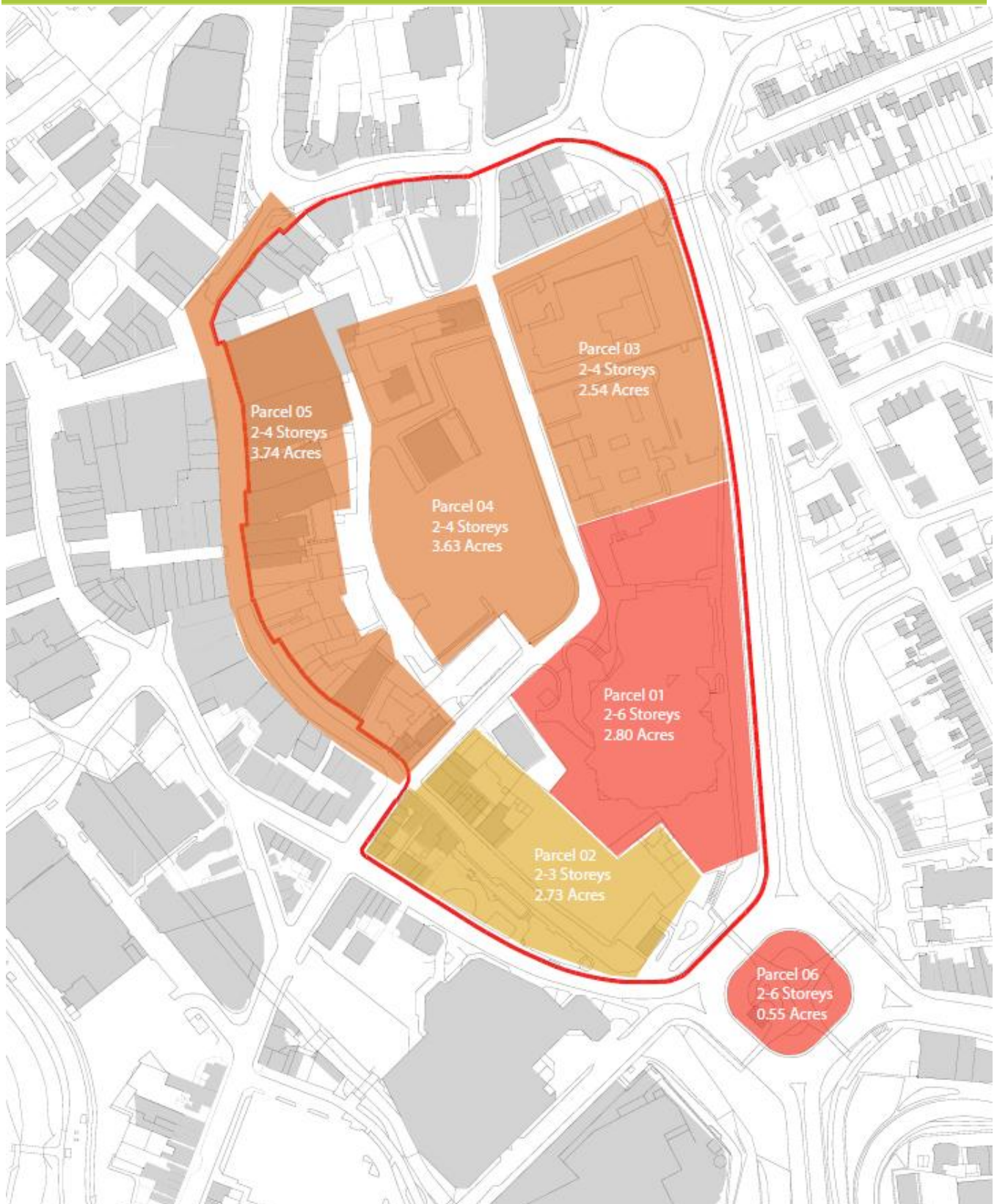
Each of the options comprises six parcels working from identified development platforms.



-
- Parcel 1 (2.8 acres) South eastern area of site. Area currently includes the Glades Leisure Centre. Prominent frontage to Comberton Hill and the A451.
 - Parcel 2 (2.73 acres) South western area of site. Area includes Magistrates Court and Coronation Gardens.
 - Parcel 3 (2.54 acres) North eastern area of site. Area includes Youth Trust House. Prominent frontage to A451.
 - Parcel 4 (3.63 acres) Central area of site. Area currently includes Bromsgrove Street car park. Benefits from vistas.
 - Parcel 5: Worcester Street's redevelopment should occur through organic regeneration through investment by the existing private owners responding to substantial improvements in the immediate environment, with the potential for retail and leisure uses, and possibly live/work spaces.
 - Parcel 6: The 'Gateway' at Comberton Roundabout will require improvements to visibility and public realm. The option levels for intervention are set out in the transport and movement assessment.

Note: Parcel 5 (Worcester Street) and Parcel 6 (Gateway) in all of the options remain the same.

It should be noted that the inclusion of ownerships within Parcels does not necessarily suggest that they are to be redeveloped. That particularly applies to the properties along Worcester Street (Parcel 5), and Youth Trust House within Parcel 3 - which will be a decision for the trustees in due course.



Option 1 Retail and Leisure

Overview: 120,000 sq ft retail and leisure scheme alongside creative workspaces including 580 car parking spaces.

Parcel 1 – Family Leisure Hub		
Use	Use Class	Total size
Cinema	D2	23,400 sq ft 9-11 screens
Family cafes/restaurants	A3/A4	23,000 sq ft 6 units
Multi-storey car park	Car Park	420 spaces 5 storey

Parcel 2 – Creative / Enterprise Zone		
Use	Use Class	Total size
Magistrates Court conversion – ground floor cafes/bar	A3/A4	5,000 sq ft 2 units
Magistrates Court conversion – Workshop/studio units	B1	8,200 sq ft 30-33 units over three floors, plus meeting rooms, break out spaces, management offices
Magistrates Court conversion – basement gym	D2	2,000 sq ft
Car Parking – road-side & dedicated area	Car Park	30 spaces
New build – ground floor cafe/bar	A3/A4	3,300 sq ft
New build – residential/workspaces	C3/B1	6,600 sq ft 4 units over first/second storey
Public realm – new active courtyard		
Existing uses – historic street grain (retail and professional services with residential above / public house)		

Parcel 3 – Retail and Leisure		
Use	Use Class	Total size
Retail anchor	A1	24,200 sq ft
Existing building – Youth House		

Parcel 4 – Retail hub		
Use	Use Class	Total size
Retail uses (high street)	A1	20,400 sq ft 6-7 units
Retail uses (independent)	A1	4,000 sq ft 4-6 units
Car Parking – surface level	Car Park	130 spaces
Public realm		
Existing uses – Fabric warehouse with 8 residential apartments above and Former Barrel Pub comprising restaurant and residential		

Option 2 Residential

Overview: Residential-led scheme, with private sector housing/apartments (68 units) alongside retirement and/or extra-care accommodation and facilities (96 units) alongside community use.

Parcel 1 – Retirement / Extra care		
Use	Use Class	Total size
Retirement apartments, alongside extra care accommodation/facilities	C2/C3	113,000 sq ft 96 units over 3-4 storeys
Public realm		
Car Park	Car Park	88

Parcel 2 – Conversion Apartments		
Use	Use Class	Total size
Magistrates Court conversion	C3	28,300 sq ft 19 units over 3 storeys
Magistrates Court conversion – basement gym	D2	2,000 sq ft
Car Parking – road-side & dedicated area	Car Park	32 spaces
New build – residential/workspaces	C3/B1	6,600 sq ft 6 units over 3 storeys
Public realm – active courtyard		
Existing uses – historic street grain (retail and professional services with residential above / public house)		

Parcel 3 – Traditional private sector housing		
Use	Use Class	Total size
Terraced new build	C3	25,000 sq ft 25 units
Car Park – roadside	Car Park	42
Existing building – Youth Centre		

Parcel 4 – Residential and Community		
Use	Use Class	Total size
Residential – traditional housing	C3	17,000 sq ft 17 units
Residential – apartments	C3	15,000 sq ft 18 units
Car Parking – surface level	Car Park	73
Community/Medical/Education facility	D1 / B1 / D2	24,000 sq ft Over 3 storeys
Cafe/Bar/Retail	A1/A3/A4	3,000 sq ft 1 unit
Existing uses – Fabric warehouse with 8 residential apartments above and Former Barrel Pub comprising restaurant and residential		

Option 3 Mixed-use scheme

Overview: Mixed-use scheme with a retail and leisure hub, alongside creative workspaces, community use and residential. Up to 95,000 sq ft of retail and leisure uses, potential for up to 72 residential units, larger scale community/education use of up to 60,000 sq ft.

Parcel 1 – Family Leisure Hub		
Use	Use Class	Total size
Cinema	D2	23,400 sq ft 9-11 screens
Family cafes/restaurants	A3/A4	23,000 sq ft 6 units
Multi-storey car park	Car Park	420 spaces 5 storey

Parcel 2 – Creative / Enterprise Zone		
Use	Use Class	Total size
Magistrates Court conversion – ground floor cafes/bar	A3/A4	5,000 sq ft 2 units
Magistrates Court conversion – Workshop/studio units	B1	8,200 sq ft 30-33 units over three floors, plus meeting rooms, break out spaces, management offices
Magistrates Court conversion – basement gym	D2	2,000 sq ft
Car Parking – road-side & dedicated area	Car Park	30 spaces
New build – ground floor cafe/bar	A3/A4	3,300 sq ft
New build – residential/workspaces	C3/B1	6,600 sq ft 4 units over first/second storey
Public realm – active courtyard		
Existing uses – historic street grain (retail and professional services with residential above / public house)		

Parcel 3 – Retail and leisure / Residential		
Use	Use Class	Total size
Retail	A1	18,300 sq ft 5 units
Residential option		Minimum 25 units
Existing building – Youth Centre		

Parcel 4 – Residential and Community		
Use	Use Class	Total size
Community/Medical/Education facility Residential option	D1 / B1 / D2 / C3	54,000 sq ft Over 4 storeys Up to 72 residential units
Cafe/restaurants (independents)	A3/A4	4500 sq ft 3 units
Retail uses (independent)	A1	4-5 units

Use	Use Class	Total size
Car Parking	Carpark	96 spaces
Public realm		
Existing uses – Fabric warehouse with 8 residential apartments above and Former Barrel Pub comprising restaurant and residential		

Size and Density

Each of the options set out levels of flexibility in terms of floor space delivery in order to respond to market dynamics in the short to medium term. The floor areas set out by the use types assessed are informed by our market research and soft market testing.

Design and Massing

The framework clearly demonstrates a range of massing intended to respond to market dynamics whilst also maximising the amount of development which could be delivered working with the site's attributes. On the highest parts of the site to the north and central areas, massing ranges from 2 to 4 storeys. Where the site slopes towards the south east, 2 to 6 storeys is considered more appropriate and is considered to be the strongest location to include a multi-storey car park. In the south west part of the site, in the area including the Magistrates Court, the existing heritage dictates the form of future development, and 2 to 3 storeys is considered appropriate from a design and massing perspective.

Phasing Plan

It is envisaged that Parcel 1 would come forward for development first delivering an attraction with critical mass to act as a catalyst for further development activity. Support enabling this early delivery could include demolition of the Glades Leisure Centre demonstrating availability of land ready for development. The prominence of the parcel suggests that it will appeal to developers as a first phase. The framework does not intend to be prescriptive in terms of the order in which future parcels come forward; delivery will be led by market demand.

Transport and Movement

The options for the site are similar in terms of their transport and movement impact. The key transport impacts of the options are set out below;

- The likely scale of development, for all options, is unlikely to result in an increase of vehicular traffic to or from the site.
- The provision of a new pedestrian and cycle access to the town centre through the old Woolworths store site would provide a significantly improved connection and relationship between the development site and the rest of the town centre (but would require acquisition of the former Woolworths property).
- Improvements to the stepped and narrow historic access (Step Entry) are achievable and should be considered with all options.
- Introducing two way working to the current one way egress from the site is possible with all options and will require further work with the County Council to establish detailed feasibility
- Improvements to streetscape and public space can be achieved by all development options
- Improvements to pedestrian and cycle access are not precluded by any of the options.

7. Public Consultation

A public consultation event was held at The Swan Centre on Friday 19th February and Saturday 20th February 2016 and formed part of the process in working towards a preferred option. The purpose was to ascertain the public's opinion of three options for Kidderminster Eastern Gateway, summarised as follows;

- Option 1: 120,000 sq ft retail and leisure scheme, alongside creative workspaces and 580 car parking spaces.
- Option 2: Residential-led scheme, with private sector housing/apartments (92 units) alongside retirement and/or extra-care accommodation and facilities (96 units) alongside community use.
- Option 3: Mixed use scheme, with retail and leisure uses alongside creative workspaces, community use and residential

The event followed a private Members Briefing on 11 February 2016 and was advertised through the following channels:

- Public Notice – x2 public notices were placed in the Kidderminster Shuttle on the 11th and 18th of February.
- NWedR and Wyre Forest District Council Webpages.
- Social Media - promoted through the NWedR Twitter page and WFDC Facebook page.
- Press Release

Members of the Public and Key Consultees at the Public Consultation Event



Summary of Responses

The public consultation boards and questionnaire were also available to view at the Customer Service Hub at Kidderminster Town Hall during the week commencing 22 February and on the NWedR website.

The responses received during of this public consultation were reported to Wyre Forest District Members on 10 March 2016 and have informed the final outputs of this Development Framework.

8. Preferred Option

Selection of Preferred Options

Each of the options here have been objectively assessed against the principal objectives of the framework, the overall principle to “**create a new identity for Kidderminster Eastern Gateway**”. Each of the options has also been separately appraised. In order to assess overall viability and of each parcel of phase.

Option 3 is preferred, it delivers a mix of retail and leisure uses alongside residential, creative workspaces and community uses..

It is recognised that there is a shortage of brownfield land on which to deliver housing in Kidderminster. The delivery of residential accommodation as part of KEG would be consistent with the overall regeneration objectives for Kidderminster town centre subject to such development being at a scale, density and in a form which is consistent with its town centre location and with the other phases and uses within KEG. We would envisage a medium to high density residential scheme as an option to a retail phase, subject to market demand and supply at the time. Hence this would deliver a minimum of 25 residential units (as under Option 2) but probably more, subject to detailed design and market assessment.

Requirements for community, education and medical use have been identified during the process. The development framework provides flexibility to incorporate some or / all of these uses alongside flexible residential floorspace.

Options for the Magistrates Court include creative workspaces and residential accommodation with active ground floor uses including cafes, restaurants and an open courtyard.

As part of the retail provision a collection of independent shops and cafes are envisaged which could provide an alternative offer of interesting and local products currently not provided elsewhere in the town currently.

Option 3 is sufficiently flexible to allow alternative uses (e.g. an increasing element of housing) to be brought forward on particular Parcels. The soft market testing, market assessment and viability work undertaken to date demonstrates that the mix of uses proposed under Option 3, which has an emphasis on retail and leisure, is best matched to the overall objective for KEG and is deliverable.

KEG provides the opportunity for the delivery of a scheme incorporating leisure uses with sufficient critical mass to act as a destination on the eastern side of Kidderminster town centre; which would help reverse the decline of the area and rebalance the town centre.

Transport and Movement

- Works are required to the roundabouts at Comberton Hill and Birmingham Road Junctions to provide meaningful improvements to crossing facilities for pedestrians and cyclists by providing at grade facilities and enhancing the public realm.
- Further work will be needed to develop detailed schemes for improvements at these junctions and to explore the opportunities for incremental delivery. Meaningful improvements to these roundabouts will be expensive but taking a strategic approach to address the ring road at these points has the following potential benefits:
 - Introducing at grade crossing facilities across the ring road whilst optimizing vehicle capacity and accommodating growth is likely to be more effective if a corridor approach is taken;

- Changing the character of the ring road from that which causes significant severance to somewhere that is easy to cross at desire lines requires a comprehensive approach. That is likely to include the introduction of standalone pedestrian / cycle crossings, as well as facilities at the roundabout junctions. Introducing standalone facilities may only be feasible as part of a broader strategy;
- Changing the character of the ring road from that which is an unattractive part of the townscape to somewhere attractive will be a challenge and requires a strategic urban design approach that can be delivered incrementally;
- Attracting funding will require a strong business case which will need to identify the developments and economic growth that are unlocked as a result of any scheme. The more sites and development the works can be linked to, the stronger the business case is likely to be. Looking at the corridor rather than individual junctions is likely to make this easier.

Car Parking

The Bromsgrove Street car park delivers revenue for WFDC. WFDC require proposals to retain or replace this source of revenue with revenue stream at least equivalent. There are approximately 330 public car parking spaces on the site which serve the wider town centre and the existing Glades Leisure Centre (which is to close in July 2016). Public car parking is also available at the Swan Centre.

The separate transport report concludes that on the basis of the information available, there is no requirement for car parking on the re-developed site other than that directly required for, or attributable to, the new uses.

Current draft guidance seeks developers to take an evidence-led approach justifying the level of provision in the context of the relevant policies and approach for assessment. Provision will therefore be dependant on a precise scale, mix and detail of the development proposed and how the site will be managed.

The preferred option includes 546 parking spaces, the level of parking provided is to support the uses within the development and not to provide public parking on the basis that:

- a. the maximum demand for leisure/restaurant use (evenings) will not coincide with the maximum demand community / education use or retail use (daytime) during the week
- b. the maximum demand for leisure /restaurant use and retail will not coincide with the maximum demand community education use at weekends
- c. the site is a town centre site and there is some spare capacity in nearby car parks which visitors could use on very busy occasions
- d. the proposed multi-storey car park would be a shared public car park for the retail/ leisure elements and would therefore serve the whole of the development

The provision assumes that each residential unit would be provided with one car parking space, in keeping with car parking standards of one space for one to two bed residential units. Parking within Parcel 4 is envisaged to be delivered as a shared space broken up by trees and landscaping and improving the quality of existing parking provision.

The remaining spaces within parcels 1, 2 and 4 could provide a rental income to WFDC. It is envisaged the MSCP within Parcel 1 could generate a substantial gross income. However whether WFDC could take the benefit of some or all of the income would depend on the structure of the transaction agreed in disposing of the site. An additional or alternative source of revenue would be for WFDC to dispose of sites, i.e. the balance between capital and revenue by way of long leasehold interests subject to ground rents – which the WFDC would take the benefit of.

a) Option 3 – Preferred Option Pedestrian access via existing ‘Step Entry’ to Worcester Street

The site is currently accessed from Worcester Street via ‘Step Entry’, a direct but stepped and narrow pedestrian link from the site to the town centre. This is identified as a key issue in accessibility terms, although improvements (such as improved / innovative lighting) are achievable. Option 3a (below) uses the existing Step Entry access and is, a minimum intervention solution.



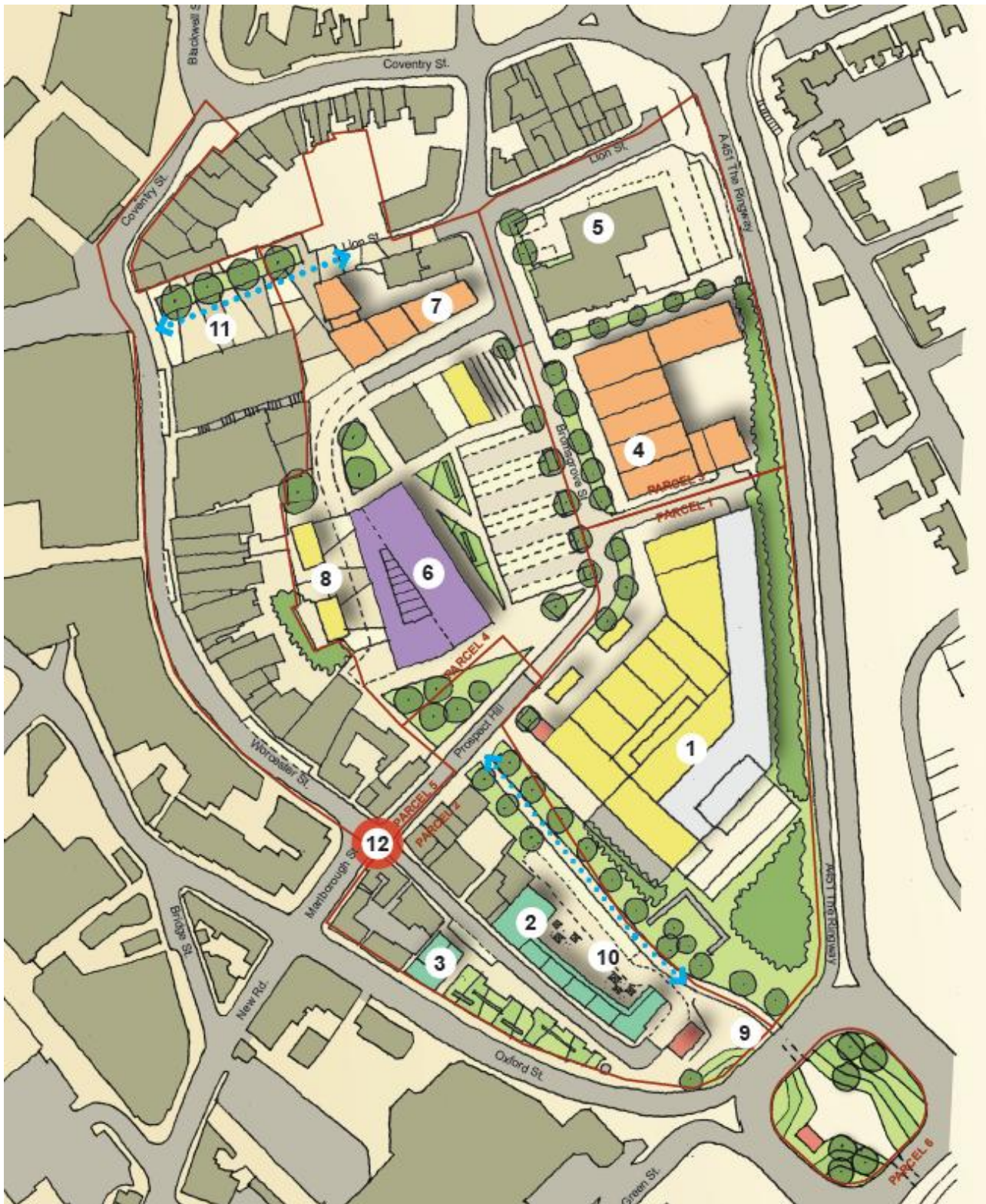
1. Cinema with cafe/ bar/ restaurants and multi-storey car parking
2. Creative/ serviced workspaces with active ground floor uses and basement gym
3. Cafe/ bar with residential/ workspaces
4. Retail use and/ or Residential
5. Existing Youth Centre
6. Community use (education/ healthcare) and/ or Residential
7. Retail/ leisure – independents
8. Cafe/ bar to rear/ upper floors of Worcester Street properties
9. Key gateway for pedestrians/ cyclists
10. New gateway square
11. New public realm (and connectivity in option b) below)
12. Significant urban realm

Option 3 – Preferred Option

b) Pedestrian access via improved linkage to Worcester Street

Through the engagement and feedback process a common theme was the need for Worcester Street to feel more attractive to pedestrians. This could be achieved by creating a pedestrian link at 1 Worcester Street through the partial removal of (the former Woolworths building), improving links with Bromsgrove Street on site and the future appeal of the wider redevelopment of KEG. Option 3b (below) illustrates the scope for improved linkages and urban realm by creating a wide link from Worcester Street restoring the original street.

Improved linkage and accessibility between KEG and the town centre (via Worcester Street) should enhance the marketability of KEG as a redevelopment site, and the speed of its delivery, and should increase land values although the quantum of uplift is difficult to quantify.



The following illustrations provide an indication of how the preferred option may look.

Viewpoint on Bromsgrove Street on site (adjacent to Plot 7)



Viewpoint on corner of Bromsgrove Street/ Lion Street



Viewpoint from Comberton Roundabout/ Oxford Street looking towards Magistrates Court



Viewpoint from Worcester Street looking towards Prospect Hill



9. Recommendations and Conclusions

The principal objective of this report is to set out a framework providing a practical and deliverable route to create a new identity for the Kidderminster Eastern Gateway. The process has taken into account the physical, transport, planning and market environments of the site as well as the wider context.

The baseline assessment has taken into account potential contamination and geo-technical issues which have been factored in to viability assessments.

Access and movement issues for vehicles and pedestrians have been set out with various levels of intervention identified, delivery of which will be dependant on appetite and budget to make significant positive impact.

The baseline assessment combined with soft market testing and stakeholder liaison have shaped the drafting of three indicative schemes (1. Retail and Leisure; 2. Residential-led; and 3. Mixed Use) which were the subject of public consultation.

The mixed use option (option 3) has been selected as the preferred option as it most closely meets the objective of what the framework set out to achieve:

To bring forward an exciting new destination for Kidderminster Town Centre:

- To rebalance and improve the vitality of the town centre as a whole;
- To diversify the town centre offer with uses that generate an improved day and night time economy and footfall;
- To improve connections to Worcester Street and the High Street, to augment the scheme's interaction with the Town Centre core;
- To support local business and enterprise;
- And
- To encourage greater dwell times, through improved public spaces and uses serving the community.

The preferred option reflects a mix of uses which encourage access and activity throughout the day by the inclusion of leisure, residential and retail uses as well as potential for community, medical and/ or education uses. The preferred option offers flexibility in terms of massing and uses in order to be able to respond to market change.

Next Steps

Following preparation of this framework report, immediate workstreams to be considered include (although not limited to): demolition, ground remodelling, infrastructure delivery, branding and marketing.

The position, aspirations and objectives of each of the parties will need to be fully explored and understood at the next stage in order to inform decisions about how KEG is delivered. There are a number of alternatives which can be reviewed against the Council's and other landowner objectives to inform whether or not a fully inclusive landowners' agreement is entered into.

These workstreams will form the next stage in the process to include scheme phasing and delivery mechanisms.

