

Open

Overview & Scrutiny Committee

Agenda

6pm
Thursday, 6th April 2017
Council Chamber
Wyre Forest House
Finepoint Way
Kidderminster



Overview & Scrutiny Committee

Members of Committee:

Chairman: Councillor H E Dyke
Vice-Chairman: Councillor M Rayner

Councillor J R Desmond
Councillor N Gale
Councillor A T Hingley
Councillor S J Walker

Councillor P Dyke
Councillor K Henderson
Councillor D Little
Councillor S J Williams

Would Members please note that, to ensure continuity in scrutiny, substitutes should only be appointed for the Scrutiny Committee in exceptional circumstances.

Information for Members of the Public:

Part I of the Agenda includes items for discussion in public. You have the right to inspect copies of Minutes and reports on this Agenda as well as the background documents used in the preparation of these reports.

Part II of the Agenda (if applicable) deals with items of “Exempt Information” for which it is anticipated that the public may be excluded from the meeting and neither reports nor background papers are open to public inspection.

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.

Co-opted Members

Scrutiny Committees may wish to appoint Co-Opted Members to sit on their committee in order to add value to the scrutiny process. To appoint a Co-Opted Member, a Committee must first agree to appoint either a specific person or to approach a relevant organisation to request that they put forward a suitable representative (e.g. the local Police Authority). Co-Optees are non voting by default but Committees can decide to appoint voting rights to a Co-Optee. The Co-Option of the Member will last no longer than the remainder of the municipal year.

Scrutiny Committees can at any meeting agree to terminate the Co-Option of a Co-Opted Member with immediate effect. Where an organisation is appointed to put forward a Co-Opted Member, they are able to send a substitute in exceptional circumstances, provided that they notify Democratic Services in advance. Co-Opted Members must sign up to the Members Code of Conduct before attending their first meeting, failure to sign will mean that they are unable to participate. This also applies to substitute Co-Opted Members, who will need to allow sufficient time before a meeting in order to sign the Code of Conduct.

The following will apply:

- i) The total number of voting co-opted members on any Scrutiny Committee will not exceed 25% at any one time.
- ii) The total number of voting Co-opted Members on any Review Panel will not be limited.
- iii) Those Co-opted Members with voting rights will exercise their rights in accordance with the principles of decision making set out in the constitution.

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 Louisa Bright, Principal Committee and Member Services Officer, Wyre Forest House, Finepoint Way, Kidderminster, DY11 7WF. Telephone: 01562 732763 or email louisa.bright@wyreforestdc.gov.uk

Wyre Forest District Council

Overview & Scrutiny Committee

Thursday, 6th April 2017

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.	Appointment of Substitute Members To receive the name of any Councillor who is to act as a substitute, together with the name of the Councillor for whom he/she is acting.	
3.	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.	
4.	Minutes To confirm as a correct record the Minutes of the meeting held on the 2nd March 2017.	6
5.	Draft Response to Housing White Paper – Fixing Our Broken Housing Market To consider a report from the Director of Economic Prosperity & Place which sets out a draft response to the Government's Housing White Paper.	11
6.	Industrial Strategy Green Paper To consider a report from the Head of Economic Development & Regeneration – North Worcestershire which provides a briefing on the Government's Industrial Strategy Green Paper and the consultation process.	29
7.	Feedback from Cabinet To note the content of the Cabinet action list, following consideration of the recommendations from its meeting on 14 th March 2017.	43

8.	Work Programme To review the work programme for the current municipal year with regard to the Sustainable Community Strategy Theme, Corporate Plan Priority, Annual Priorities and the Forward Plan.	45
9.	Press Involvement To consider any future items for scrutiny that might require publicity.	
10.	Industrial Units Investment Outline Business Case To consider a report from the Head of Economic Development & Regeneration – North Worcestershire on a proposal for the Council to develop a new small industrial units scheme on a Council owned site.	47
11.	To consider any other business, details of which have been communicated to the Solicitor of 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.	
12.	Exclusion of the Press and Public To consider passing the following resolution: “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”.	

Part 2

Not open to the Press and Public

13.	Agenda Item No. 10 Industrial Units Investment Outline Business Case Appendix 3 - Financial Appraisal	-
14.	To consider any other business, details of which have been communicated to the Solicitor of 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

OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

COUNCIL CHAMBER, WYRE FOREST HOUSE, FINEPOINT WAY, KIDDERMINSTER

THURSDAY, 2ND MARCH 2017 (6PM)

Present:

Councillors: H E Dyke (Chairman), J Baker, R Bishop, J R Desmond, P Dyke, A T Hingley, D Little, S J Walker and S J Williams.

Observers

Councillors: I Hardiman, N Knowles, F M Oborski MBE, J A Shaw and J D Smith.

OS.71 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors: M Rayner (Vice-Chairman), N Gale and K Henderson.

OS.72 Appointment of Substitutes

Councillor J Baker was a substitute for Councillor K Henderson.
Councillor R Bishop was a substitute for Councillor N Gale.

OS.73 Declarations of Interests by Members

No declarations of interest were made.

OS.74 Minutes

Decision: The minutes of the meeting held on 2nd February 2017 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

OS.75 Worcestershire Partnership Plan

The Committee received a report from the Strategic Housing Services Manager which set out the consultation responses and amendments to the Worcestershire Housing Partnership Plan that had been developed by the Worcestershire Strategic Housing Partnership.

Members were led through the report and considered the different sections of the Plan together with the consultation responses.

A lengthy and robust discussion ensued with a range of topics being debated including: the District's housing stock, Welfare Reform and the pending introduction of the bed room tax for OAPs in social housing, national and local policy direction, Worcestershire County Council's recent Ofsted inspection of services for children in Worcestershire and reduced levels of Supporting People funding.

It was agreed to revise the recommendation in the report to reflect some of the key discussion points.

Agreed: Recommend to Cabinet:

- 1. The Worcestershire Housing Partnership Plan be approved.**
- 2. That the Overview and Scrutiny Committee's concerns about the following areas of The Worcestershire Housing Partnership Plan be noted, for the reasons stated:**
 - a) The Sustainability and Transformation Plan**
Members have not received a local briefing yet on this Plan and therefore do not understand how it will support the housing agenda.
 - b) Care Leavers and the Corporate Parenting Role in Worcestershire**
Work regarding Care Leavers is not made reference to in the "What Are We Doing Section" of the Plan. This is very concerning given Worcestershire County Council's recent inadequate rating for its Ofsted inspection of services for children in Worcestershire.
 - c) Supported Housing**
Due to the reduced levels of supported accommodation which will be available for people with disabilities, following cuts to the Supporting People budget, there needs to be robust monitoring procedures in place as part of the plan to understand the impact of funding cuts.
- 3. That the Wyre Forest Clinical Commissioning Group be invited to a future meeting of the Members' Forum to brief Members on the Sustainability and Transformation Plan for this area.**

OS.76 Initiating a Collective Energy Switching Scheme

The Committee received a report from the Principal Health and Sustainability Officer which sought permission for Wyre Forest District Council to initiate a Collective Energy Switching Scheme (CESS) on behalf of residents.

The Principal Health and Sustainability Officer led Members through the report and explained that Ofgem allow energy companies to offer special tariffs for CESSs and supports them as a way of 'activating' people who are unlikely otherwise to switch. A CESS provides one of the few opportunities energy suppliers have for creating bespoke tariffs. Ofgem promote the involvement of Local Authorities in this process for enabling customers to be helped and supported through the process by an organisation that is already known to them and with whom they have an existing relationship.

A discussion ensued whereby Members reflected on their own experiences of switching energy suppliers and felt this scheme offered an excellent opportunity as long as it was effectively promoted to hard to reach groups and people without internet access. Members were encouraged to provide the Principal Health and

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Sustainability Officer with contact details of community groups whose users may benefit from the scheme. The Principal Health and Sustainability Officer agreed to liaise with iChoosr (the potential switching scheme partner) to see if the length of the fixed rate contract could be increased from one year to two years to encourage more people to switch.

Agreed: Recommend to Cabinet:

To initiate a Collective Energy Switching Scheme on behalf of residents.

OS.77

Worcestershire Local Transport Plan 4

The Committee considered a report from the Planning Policy Manager which gave an overview of the Worcestershire Local Transport Plan 4 consultation documents.

The Planning Policy Manager led Members through the draft proposed consultation response from this Council which must be submitted to Worcestershire County Council by 17 March, the deadline for responses.

A lengthy and robust discussion ensued with a range of key points being debated including: The timetable for the Mustow Green Junction Enhancement Scheme, Car Parking requirements of Kidderminster Rail Station, Blakedown Rail Station Enhancement and the potential impact on the Green Belt, the poor quality of the District's roads, the future need for some form of Stourport Relief Road, and exploring passenger transport models.

It was agreed to revise the recommendation in the report to reflect the key discussion points.

Agreed: Recommend to Cabinet:

- 1. The consultation response, as set out at Appendix 1 of the report to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, be agreed with the following additions:**
 - a) Mustow Green Junction Enhancement Scheme – to request an early timetable for improving the efficiency of this busy junction.**
 - b) Kidderminster Rail Station– that a full assessment is undertaken of the impact of the growth potential for Kidderminster Station on car parking requirements at the site and network and highway capacity to access the station in the future.**
 - c) Blakedown Rail Station Enhancement –More analysis is required of the impact of enhancing the provision at the station and the advantages and disadvantages that this will have for the settlement and surrounding highway network. In particular there's concern about the potential impact on the Green Belt Land which surrounds the station.**
 - d) Quality of the surface of the District's roads – the poor quality of surface needs addressing.**

- e) **Stourport Relief Road** –continued support for at least the partial completion of the Relief Road if the River Severn crossing element is no longer feasible.
 - f) **Passenger Transport** – that alternative delivery models are explored for the provision of bus passenger transport in the district such as community – led schemes.
2. **The consultation response, as amended, be approved for submission to Worcestershire County Council by the deadline of 17th March 2017.**

Councillor FM Oborski left the meeting at 7.22pm.

OS.78 Annual Crime and Disorder Review 2016/17

The Committee received a report from the Community Safety and Partnerships Officer which provided an update on the progress of the North Worcestershire Community Safety Partnership (NWCSP) during 2016/17.

The Community Safety and Partnerships Officer explained the structure of the NWCSP and its statutory duty to produce a three year rolling plan outlining how the partnership intends to address key crime and community safety priorities. It was noted that the vision of the Police and Crime Commissioner, as set out in his Safer West Mercia Plan, will be reflected in the NWCSP plan. The vision focuses on: Building a more secure West Mercia, Reassuring West Mercia's Communities, Putting Victims and Witnesses First and Reforming West Mercia. The funding that the NWCSP currently receives to support its wide ranging programme of initiatives including: Community Ambassadors (which has been shortlisted for a National Award), Safe Place Scheme, Hate Crime, Managing Harm, Domestic Violence and Team Wyre Forest is being reviewed by the Deputy Police and Crime Commissioner so it is more outcome focussed.

A discussion ensued around the Crime and ASB data presented for the District for the period April 2016 to January 2017 and in particular the increase in crime which is a Worcestershire trend and not unique to Wyre Forest. The Community Safety and Partnerships Officer confirmed that locally the NWCSP works closely with the Drugs Misuse Service which is funded by Worcestershire County Council and that she wasn't aware of any plans to review the future of PACT meetings but will ask the question at the next partnership meeting.

The Community Safety and Partnerships Officer advised that Inspector James Ashton has recently started as the new policing inspector for the Wyre Forest District and she is due to met with him next week.

The Chairman of the Committee thanked the Community Safety and Partnerships Officer for the comprehensive update.

Agreed: The progress made by the North Worcestershire CSP be noted.

OS. 79 Changes to Community Housing Group Community Member Nominations

The Committee received a report from the Director of Economic Prosperity & Place

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which advised the Committee of changes that were expected which impact on the Council's approach to nominating Council Members to the Community Member positions on Community Housing Group (CHG).

A robust discussion ensued and several Members expressed concern that without Councillor representation on the Board or other Groups there will be no one to protect the rights of the tenants or hold CHG to account. However other Members who have previously held positions on CHG for the Council felt that their role no longer provided them with the ability to influence change, or effectively represent the tenants due to the changing operating landscape of the Company, which bears little resemblance to when the company was first established.

The Director of Economic Prosperity & Place confirmed that none of the other working practices or policy arrangements that the Council has in place with CHG would change.

The Chairman of the Committee took a vote on the Recommendation to Cabinet that no further nominations to the roles of Community Member are made to any of the vacancies on CHG. Eight Members of the Committee present voted in favour of the recommendation. No Members voted against the Recommendation. However Councillor Peter Dyke abstained from the vote due to being an employee of CHG. The decision was therefore unanimous in support of the Recommendation.

Agreed: Recommend to Cabinet:

That no further nominations to the roles of Community Member are made to any of the vacancies on CHG.

OS.80 Feedback from Cabinet

Agreed: The content of the Cabinet decision list following consideration of the recommendations from its meeting on 7 February 2017.

OS.81 Work Programme

The Committee considered the work programme for the remainder of the municipal year. Members were reminded to submit any suggestions for future scrutiny items to the Chairman.

Agreed: The work programme be noted.

OS.82 Press Involvement

There were no future items for scrutiny that might require publicity.

There being no further business, the meeting ended at 8.10pm.



Overview & Scrutiny Committee

Report of: Mike Parker
Director of Economic Prosperity & Place

Date: Thursday 6th April 2017

Draft Response to Housing White Paper – Fixing Our Broken Housing Market

1. Summary

- 1.1 The government published its White Paper – Fixing Our Broken Housing Market in February 2017 and has invited a response to the 38 consultation questions by 2nd May 2017. A draft response for consideration is proposed in the paper.

2. Background

- 2.1 The White Paper sets out a list of proposals under a four step approach; Step 1 – Planning for the right homes in the right places; Step 2 – Building homes faster; Step 3 – Diversifying the market; Step 4 – Helping people now. A full version of the White Paper can be found at https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/590464/Fixing_our_broken_housing_market_-_print_ready_version.pdf

3. Key Issues

- 3.1 The White Paper sets out a series of 38 consultation questions across the four steps and the proposed draft response is appended to this paper.

4. Options

- 4.1 The Overview and Scrutiny Committee is invited to consider the appended draft consultation responses and:

4.1.1 Recommend the responses to Cabinet (in which case the response will be sent as set out in time to meet the consultation deadline)

4.1.2 To recommend to Cabinet any amendments or additions to the draft responses (in which case a strong leader approval will be required as there is no Cabinet meeting scheduled before the consultation response is due to be returned)

5. Consultation

- 5.1 Corporate Leadership Team.
Cabinet

6. Appendices
Appendix 1 – Draft Responses

Officer Contact Details:

Name: Mike Parker
Title: Director of Economic Prosperity & Place
Contact Number: 01562 732500

Fixing Our Broken Housing Market Consultation

<u>Question No.</u>	<u>Response</u>
<p>Question 1</p> <p>Do you agree with the proposals to:</p> <p>a) Make clear in the National Planning Policy Framework that the key strategic policies that each local planning authority should maintain are those set out currently at paragraph 156 of the Framework, with an additional requirement to plan for the allocations needed to deliver the area's housing requirement?</p> <p>b) Use regulations to allow Spatial Development Strategies to allocate strategic sites, where these strategies require unanimous agreement of the members of the combined authority?</p> <p>c) Revise the National Planning Policy Framework to tighten the definition of what evidence is required to support a 'sound' plan?</p>	<p>This is supported but the wording could be made clearer to ensure that this covers instances where local authorities are failing under the duty to cooperate to make sufficient allocations to meet their own needs.</p> <p>As long as the sovereignty of each partner in the Combined Authority to make decisions that affect its area is preserved by the requirement for unanimous agreement, then this suggestion would seem appropriate to encourage spatial planning on a wider geography.</p> <p>The suggestion of a more proportionate approach to the definition of 'sound' is welcome and the Council would encourage CLG to devolve as much responsibility as possible to the local authority concerned to be able to demonstrate and justify what it believes to be proportionate for its area.</p>

<u>Question No.</u>	<u>Response</u>
<p>Question 2</p> <p>What changes do you think would support more proportionate consultation and examination procedures for different types of plan and to ensure that different levels of plans work together?</p>	<p><u>A more proportionate approach to procedures for adopting plans is welcomed but we have no specific proposals.</u></p>
<p>Question 3</p> <p>Do you agree with the proposals to:</p> <p>a) amend national policy so that local planning authorities are expected to have clear policies for addressing the housing requirements of groups with particular needs, such as older and disabled people?</p> <p>b) from early 2018, use a standardised approach to assessing housing requirements as the baseline for five year housing supply calculations and monitoring housing delivery, in the absence of an up-to-date plan?</p>	<p>This is agreed.</p> <p><u>It is imperative that the introduction of any new standardised baseline for assessing the 5 year HLS includes flexibility for the Secretary of State to not only give additional time before the baseline applies to authorities that are collaborating on new homes proposals, but that it also applies to authorities at an advanced stage of preparing their Local Plan to ensure that authorities are not disadvantaged by having to revisit their evidence base and delay the adoption of their Plan as this will be counter-productive to the government's aims. The advanced nature of a Local Plan under review and an already sound methodology for calculating the OAHN should be an acknowledged reason for a council to decide not to use the new approach.</u></p>
<p>Question 4</p> <p>Do you agree with the proposals to amend the presumption in favour of sustainable development so that:</p> <p>a) authorities are expected to have a clear strategy for maximising</p>	<p><u>This is supported</u></p>

<u>Question No.</u>	<u>Response</u>
<p>the use of suitable land in their areas?;</p> <p>b) it makes clear that identified development needs should be accommodated unless there are strong reasons for not doing so set out in the NPPF?;</p> <p>c) the list of policies which the Government regards as providing reasons to restrict development is limited to those set out currently in footnote 9 of the National Planning Policy Framework (so these are no longer presented as examples), with the addition of Ancient Woodland and aged or veteran trees?</p> <p>d) its considerations are re-ordered and numbered, the opening text is simplified and specific references</p>	
<p>Question 5</p> <p>Do you agree that regulations should be amended so that all local planning authorities are able to dispose of land with the benefit of planning consent which they have granted to themselves?</p>	<p><u>This proposal is fully supported as is the suggestion that the government is to review the need to obtain Secretary of State approval to dispose of land at less than best consideration. These flexibilities are much needed at the local level in two tier areas where councils are taking proactive steps to intervene in the market to deliver new homes. This proposal would also be compatible with aims of the HCA's Accelerated Construction Programme where ambitious councils want to build their own homes on their land.</u></p>
<p>Question 6</p> <p>How could land pooling make a more effective contribution to assembling land, and what additional powers or capacity would allow local authorities to play a more active role in land assembly (such as where 'ransom strips' delay or prevent development)?</p>	<p><u>Any thoughts anyone?</u></p>
<p>Question 7</p> <p>Do you agree that national policy should be amended to encourage local planning authorities to consider the social and economic benefits of estate regeneration when preparing their</p>	<p><u>This would seem appropriate.</u></p>

<u>Question No.</u>	<u>Response</u>
plans and in decisions on applications, and use their planning powers to help deliver estate regeneration to a high standard?	
<p>Question 8</p> <p>Do you agree with the proposals to amend the National Planning Policy Framework to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) highlight the opportunities that neighbourhood plans present for identifying and allocating small sites that are suitable for housing?; b) encourage local planning authorities to identify opportunities for villages to thrive, especially where this would support services and help meet the authority's housing needs?; c) give stronger support for 'rural exception' sites – to make clear that these should be considered positively where they can contribute to meeting identified local housing needs, even if this relies on an element of general market housing to ensure that homes are genuinely affordable for local people?; d) make clear that on top of the allowance made for windfall sites, at least 10% of sites allocated for residential development in local plans should be sites of half a hectare or less?; e) expect local planning authorities to work with developers to encourage the sub-division of large sites?; and f) encourage greater use of Local Development Orders and area-wide design codes so that small sites may be brought forward for development more quickly? 	<p><u>Agreed</u></p> <p><u>Agreed</u></p> <p><u>Agreed</u></p> <p><u>This is not agreed, it is too prescriptive and a blunt tool. The appropriate amount of development and site size should be left to the Local Plan adoption process.</u></p> <p><u>Without further definition and regulation this would appear impractical; simply 'working with' is too ambiguous.</u></p> <p><u>This should remain at the discretion of the local authority.</u></p>
<p>Question 9</p> <p>How could streamlined planning procedures support innovation</p>	<p><u>No comment</u></p>

<u>Question No.</u>	<u>Response</u>
and high-quality development in new garden towns and villages?	
<p>Question 10</p> <p>Do you agree with the proposals to amend the National Planning Policy Framework to make clear that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) authorities should amend Green Belt boundaries only when they can demonstrate that they have examined fully all other reasonable options for meeting their identified development requirements? b) where land is removed from the Green Belt, local policies should require compensatory improvements to the environmental quality or accessibility of remaining Green Belt land? c) appropriate facilities for existing cemeteries should not to be regarded as 'inappropriate development' in the Green Belt? d) development brought forward under a Neighbourhood Development Order should not be regarded as inappropriate in the Green Belt, provided it preserves openness and does not conflict with the purposes of the Green Belt? e) where a local or strategic plan has demonstrated the need for Green Belt boundaries to be amended, the detailed boundary may be determined through a neighbourhood plan (or plans) for the area in question? f) when carrying out a Green Belt review, local planning authorities should look first at using any Green Belt land which has been previously developed and/or which surrounds transport hubs? 	<p><u>Agreed but question whether this is necessary given that the current 'exceptional circumstances' test is considered adequate protection.</u></p> <p><u>Agreed but some concerns about practicality and deliverability and it would be preferable rather than 'require' to replace with 'local policies should require developers to demonstrate that they have made reasonable endeavours to ensure that compensatory improvements...'</u></p> <p><u>Agreed</u></p> <p><u>Agreed</u></p> <p><u>Agreed</u></p> <p><u>Agreed</u></p>
Question 11	

<u>Question No.</u>	<u>Response</u>
<p>Are there particular options for accommodating development that national policy should expect authorities to have explored fully before Green Belt boundaries are amended, in addition to the ones set out above?</p>	<p><u>No comment</u></p>
<p>Question 12</p> <p>Do you agree with the proposals to amend the National Planning Policy Framework to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) indicate that local planning authorities should provide neighbourhood planning groups with a housing requirement figure, where this is sought?; b) make clear that local and neighbourhood plans (at the most appropriate level) and more detailed development plan documents (such as action area plans) are expected to set out clear design expectations; and that visual tools such as design codes can help provide a clear basis for making decisions on development proposals?; c) emphasise the importance of early pre- application discussions between applicants, authorities and the local community about design and the types of homes to be provided?; d) makes clear that design should not be used as a valid reason to object to development where it accords with clear design expectations set out in statutory plans?; and e) recognise the value of using a widely accepted design standard, such as Building for Life, in shaping and assessing basic design principles – and make clear that this should be reflected in plans and given weight in the planning process? 	<p><u>This would eliminate any misunderstandings about the amount of housing required in a local area.</u></p> <p><u>Agreed</u></p> <p><u>Agreed</u></p> <p><u>This is not agreed; no design code will be so prescriptive that there isn't some degree of interpretation required by designers and whilst that remains the case it should also be for the local authority to reserve the right to refuse applications that fall short of the highest standards expected.</u></p> <p><u>Not agreed, this is too prescriptive and runs the risk of curtailing creation and innovation in favour of standardisation.</u></p>

<u>Question No.</u>	<u>Response</u>
<p>Question 13</p> <p>Do you agree with the proposals to amend national policy to make clear that plans and individual development proposals should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) make efficient use of land and avoid building homes at low densities where there is a shortage of land for meeting identified housing needs?; b) address the particular scope for higher- density housing in urban locations that are well served by public transport, that provide opportunities to replace low-density uses in areas of high housing demand, or which offer scope to extend buildings upwards in urban areas?; c) ensure that in doing so the density and form of development reflect the character, accessibility and infrastructure capacity of an area, and the nature of local housing needs?; d) take a flexible approach in adopting and applying policy and guidance that could inhibit these objectives in particular circumstances, such as open space provision in areas with good access to facilities nearby? 	<p><u>Not agreed, appropriate densities should remain the discretion of the local authority.</u></p> <p><u>On a site by site basis this would be a useful amendment so that appropriate sites (not every site) could accommodate higher densities.</u></p> <p><u>Agreed</u></p> <p><u>This needs to remain at the discretion of the local authority.</u></p>
<p>Question 14</p> <p>In what types of location would indicative minimum density standards be helpful, and what should those standards be?</p>	<p><u>Local authorities know their area best and it would be inappropriate to develop a national blanket approach that over-rode local knowledge about what densities are best for particular locations.</u></p>
<p>Question 15</p> <p>What are your views on the potential for delivering additional homes through more intensive use of existing public sector sites, or in urban locations more generally, and how this can best be supported through planning (using tools such as policy, local development orders, and permitted development rights)?</p>	<p><u>As 14 above.</u></p>
<p>Question 16</p>	

<u>Question No.</u>	<u>Response</u>
<p>Do you agree that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) where local planning authorities wish to agree their housing land supply for a one- year period, national policy should require those authorities to maintain a 10% buffer on their 5 year housing land supply?; b) the Planning Inspectorate should consider and agree an authority's assessment of its housing supply for the purpose of this policy? c) if so, should the Inspectorate's consideration focus on whether the approach pursued by the authority in establishing the land supply position is robust, or should the Inspectorate make an assessment of the supply figure? 	<p><u>The principle of this is supported but it is felt that the 10% requirement will be a disincentive for authorities in exchange for a one year fixing of the figure. An alternative proposal would be to agree a one year fixed period or a two year fixed period with a 10% buffer.</u></p> <p><u>This is not agreed, it is unnecessary and places an additional burden on the Planning inspectorate already incapable of managing demand to determine planning appeals in a timely manner.</u></p> <p><u>See b) above</u></p>
<p>Question 17</p> <p>In taking forward the protection for neighbourhood plans as set out in the Written Ministerial Statement of 12 December 2016 into the revised NPPF, do you agree that it should include the following amendments:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) a requirement for the neighbourhood plan to meet its share of local housing need?; b) that it is subject to the local planning authority being able to demonstrate through the housing delivery test that, from 2020, delivery has been over 65% (25% in 2018; 45% in 2019) for the wider authority area? c) should it remain a requirement to have site allocations in the 	<p><u>Agreed</u></p> <p><u>Not agreed; see comments below on Delivery Test</u></p>

Question No.	Response
<p>plan or should the protection apply as long as housing supply policies will meet their share of local housing need?</p>	<p><u>In support of 17a) above it is considered preferable to have the allocations in the plan for absolute transparency.</u></p>
<p>Question 18</p> <p>What are your views on the merits of introducing a fee for making a planning appeal? We would welcome views on:</p> <p>a) how the fee could be designed in such a way that it did not discourage developers, particularly smaller and medium sized firms, from bringing forward legitimate appeals;</p> <p>b) the level of the fee and whether it could be refunded in certain circumstances, such as when an appeal is successful; and</p> <p>c) whether there could be lower fees for less complex cases.</p>	<p><u>This is supported as long as the fee is retained by the local authority to cover its costs in administering the appeal.</u></p> <p><u>This could be on a sliding scale with a lower fee for minor applications and a larger fee for major applications.</u></p> <p><u>A higher fee should be levied for public inquiries and hearings with the costs of holding them – Inspectorate costs, venue costs etc met in full by the appellant. There should be no refund, in the same way that the planning application fee is levied to reflect the [part] costs of determining the application, not on whether permission is granted or not, neither should the cost of an appeal be determined by the outcome. Appellants have the ability to make a claim for costs against an authority that has acted unreasonably and this should remain a deterrent for local authorities to refuse more applications just because the applicant might not appeal because of the cost of appealing.</u></p> <p><u>Agreed, see a) and b) above.</u></p>
<p>Question 19</p> <p>Do you agree with the proposal to amend national policy so that local planning authorities are expected to have planning policies setting out how high quality digital infrastructure will be delivered in their area, and accessible from a range of providers?</p>	<p><u>This is agreed as long as the providers are required to disclose their plans for future provision as part of the local plan evidence gathering process, otherwise this could be another impediment to bringing forward a local plan that lies outside the direct control of the local authority.</u></p>
<p>Question 20</p> <p>Do you agree with the proposals to amend national policy so that:</p>	

<u>Question No.</u>	<u>Response</u>
<p>a) the status of endorsed recommendations of the National Infrastructure Commission is made clear?; and authorities are expected to identify the additional development opportunities</p> <p>b) which strategic infrastructure improvements offer for making additional land available for housing?</p>	<p><u>Agreed</u></p> <p><u>Agreed</u></p>
<p>Question 21</p> <p>Do you agree that:</p> <p>a) the planning application form should be amended to include a request for the estimated start date and build out rate for proposals for housing?</p> <p>b) that developers should be required to provide local authorities with basic information (in terms of actual and projected build out) on progress in delivering the permitted number of homes, after planning permission has been granted?</p> <p>c) the basic information (above) should be published as part of Authority Monitoring Reports?</p> <p>d) that large housebuilders should be required to provide aggregate information on build out rates?</p>	<p><u>This would seem to serve no point; as the White Paper recognises it will just be a an estimate and it serves no purpose.</u></p> <p><u>This would be welcomed.</u></p> <p><u>Agreed.</u></p> <p><u>This would be welcomed</u></p>
<p>Question 22</p> <p>Do you agree that the realistic prospect that housing will be built on a site should be taken into account in the determination of planning applications for housing on sites where there is evidence of non-implementation of earlier permissions for housing development?</p>	<p><u>The sentiment of this proposal is wholeheartedly supported, but as currently proposed most likely to fail; inevitably the applicant will provide robust supporting information with any application to demonstrate that the site will be built on making it virtually impossible for the authority to form an alternative view about whether there is a realistic prospect of development taking place. Far better to strengthen the powers to penalise developers that don't bring forward development on sites with extant permissions on (see below).</u></p>

<u>Question No.</u>	<u>Response</u>
<p>Question 23</p> <p>We would welcome views on whether an applicant's track record of delivering previous, similar housing schemes should be taken into account by local authorities when determining planning applications for housing development.</p>	<p><u>Again, the sentiment behind this proposal is supported but it needs much more refinement to shape it into a robust policy that can be an effective tool for the authority to use.</u></p>
<p>Question 24</p> <p>If this proposal were taken forward, do you agree that the track record of an applicant should only be taken into account when considering proposals for large scale sites, so as not to deter new entrants to the market?</p>	<p><u>It is not the size of site that should be considered but the size of the developer; the track record of a large scale volume housebuilder should be a factor regardless of the size of the site under consideration.</u></p>
<p>Question 25</p> <p>What are your views on whether local authorities should be encouraged to shorten the timescales for developers to implement a permission for housing development from three years to two years, except where a shorter timescale could hinder the viability or deliverability of a scheme? We would particularly welcome views on what such a change would mean for SME developers.</p>	<p><u>If the government really wants to get to grips with the delivery of housing numbers on a large scale it needs to get to the heart of landowners and developers who landbank suitable residential sites and/or who obtain planning permissions but then fail to implement them. Simply nibbling at the edges of amending the timescales for permissions to be implemented is not going to address the real issue. A much better approach likely to get results would be to introduce a 'Right to Acquire' by local authorities where land has been granted planning permission but it has been allowed to expire without development taking place; and where sham starts are made on site to keep permissions 'alive' to maintain the Right to Acquire land covered by the permission that remains undeveloped for a period of two years after the 'start' began on site. Further, Council Tax should become payable where planning permissions are in place for a specific number of units but the developer or landowner has unjustifiably failed to bring forward the development.</u></p>
<p>Question 26</p> <p>Do you agree with the proposals to amend legislation to simplify</p>	<p><u>See 25 above, there are far more effective methods of getting sites</u></p>

<u>Question No.</u>	<u>Response</u>
<p>and speed up the process of serving a completion notice by removing the requirement for the Secretary of State to confirm a completion notice before it can take effect?</p>	<p><u>delivered.</u></p>
<p>Question 27</p> <p>What are your views on whether we should allow local authorities to serve a completion notice on a site before the commencement deadline has elapsed, but only where works have begun? What impact do you think this will have on lenders' willingness to lend to developers?</p>	<p><u>See 25 above.</u></p>
<p>Question 28</p> <p>Do you agree that for the purposes of introducing a housing delivery test, national guidance should make clear that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) The baseline for assessing housing delivery should be a local planning authority's annual housing requirement where this is set out in an up-to-date plan? b) The baseline where no local plan is in place should be the published household projections until 2018/19, with the new standard methodology for assessing housing requirements providing the baseline thereafter? c) Net annual housing additions should be used to measure housing delivery? d) Delivery will be assessed over a rolling three year period, starting with 2014/15 – 2016/17? 	<p><u>The whole concept of the proposed delivery test is opposed in the strongest terms. See 25 above; this is another clear example of the government wanting to appear to 'get tough' on delivery but targeting the wrong body. Delivery of housing rests with the housebuilder, not the local authority. The local authority should quite correctly be held to account on establishing the policy and sites allocations to enable delivery and for the regulatory process to grant permissions, but it is wholly misguided to also hold them to account for the delivery in the manner suggested. The government needs to address the heart of the problem regarding delivery of houses with the housebuilders not by using the local authority as the developers' 'whipping boy'. If the government proceeds with this delivery test it will only seek to make the situation worse; by undermining the status of the local plan and the 5 year housing land supply in the draconian manner intended it will simply enable landowners and developers to get more planning permissions on sites that are inappropriate for development for good reasons and simply exacerbate the landbanking and unimplemented permissions situation.</u></p>
<p>Question 29</p> <p>Do you agree that the consequences for under- delivery should be:</p>	<p><u>See 28 above.</u></p>

<u>Question No.</u>	<u>Response</u>
<p>a) From November 2017, an expectation that local planning authorities prepare an action plan where delivery falls below 95% of the authority's annual housing requirement?;</p> <p>b) From November 2017, a 20% buffer on top of the requirement to maintain a five year housing land supply where delivery falls below 85%?;</p> <p>c) From November 2018, application of the presumption in favour of sustainable development where delivery falls below 25%?;</p> <p>d) From November 2019, application of the presumption in favour of sustainable development where delivery falls below 45%?; and</p> <p>e) From November 2020, application of the presumption in favour of sustainable development where delivery falls below 65%?</p>	
<p>Question 30</p> <p>What support would be most helpful to local planning authorities in increasing housing delivery in their areas?</p>	<p><u>The introduction of a 'Right to Acquire' in favour of local authorities, land that is legitimately capable of being brought forward for residential development either because it has been allocated, is in the 5 year supply but where there is no prospect of it being brought forward; or where there is an extant or lapsed permission but no prospect of the site being developed.</u></p>
<p>Question 31</p> <p>Do you agree with our proposals to:</p> <p>a) amend national policy to revise the definition of affordable housing as set out in Box 4?;</p> <p>b) introduce an income cap for starter homes?;</p> <p>c) incorporate a definition of affordable private rent housing?;</p>	<p><u>Agreed</u></p> <p><u>Agreed</u></p> <p><u>Agreed although with the prospect of eight different definitions of affordable housing the government is encouraged to consider a simpler definition rather than to keep adding further to an already</u></p>

<u>Question No.</u>	<u>Response</u>
<p>d) allow for a transitional period that aligns with other proposals in the White Paper (April 2018)?</p>	<p><u>over extended list.</u></p> <p><u>The principle of transition is agreed but there should be additional exceptions for those authorities already well advanced in the review of their local plan for the transition to extend to the adoption of their plan.</u></p>
<p>Question 32</p> <p>Do you agree that:</p> <p>a) national planning policy should expect local planning authorities to seek a minimum of 10% of all homes on individual sites for affordable home ownership products?</p> <p>b) that this policy should only apply to developments of over 10 units or 0.5ha?</p>	<p><u>Agreed as long as there is flexibility to consider the impact of this on site viability and for it to be disapplied where it would prevent a site from being brought forward for development because it is made unviable or there is no demand for affordable home ownership due to affordability ratios or the nature of the area.</u></p> <p><u>Agreed</u></p>
<p>Question 33</p> <p>Should any particular types of residential development be excluded from this policy?</p>	<p><u>Development being brought forward by Registered Providers where an element of market sale units are being proposed to cross subsidise affordable units.</u></p>
<p>Question 34</p> <p>Do you agree with the proposals to amend national policy to make clear that the reference to the three dimensions of sustainable development, together with the core planning principles and policies at paragraphs 18-219 of the National Planning Policy Framework, together constitute the Government's view of what sustainable development means for the planning system in England?</p>	<p><u>Agreed</u></p>

<u>Question No.</u>	<u>Response</u>
<p>Question 35</p> <p>Do you agree with the proposals to amend national policy to:</p> <p>a) Amend the list of climate change factors to be considered during plan-making, to include reference to rising temperatures?</p> <p>b) Make clear that local planning policies should support measures for the future resilience of communities and infrastructure to climate change?</p>	<p>Agreed. Planning policy should be amended to better assist with adaptation to increasing temperatures e.g through passive building techniques (solar orientation, natural ventilation) and should more actively promote more energy efficient/ insulated homes to help keep people cool in hotter weather as well as keeping them warm in winter. We believe that Planning Policy should also encourage water efficiency and drought adaptation. The planning policy should not only focus upon the buildings themselves but should address open space issues too as good quality green space could help significantly in various ways (flood management, reducing urban heat effects, assisting biodiversity adaptation through green corridors etc).</p> <p>Agreed. For flood risk a level of resilience is already built-in into the NPPF but for other effects of climate change this is not the case. We would urge that it is made as clear as possible what effects of climate change need to be included, and to what extend.</p>
<p>Question 36</p> <p>Do you agree with these proposals to clarify flood risk policy in the National Planning Policy Framework?</p>	<p>Agree with all three proposals, but would like to urge the government to set out clearer in the paragraphs concerned that the Sequential Test and Exception Test need to be passed for development in areas known to be at risk of any form of flooding – too often surface water flood risk does not get</p>

<u>Question No.</u>	<u>Response</u>
	<p>the same weight as fluvial flood risk, whereas it does not matter for the homeowner where the flood waters originated from.</p> <p>We fear that under the current system owners of homes built after 1st Jan 2009 still face difficulties getting insurance, even if the development is made appropriately flood resilience and resistance, and therefore meets the requirements of paragraph 103. The reason for this is that insurers use maps to assess the flood risk, and only sporadically the formal process of changing these maps is successfully completed – for this the developer has to convincingly demonstrate that the flood zone map / surface water flood risk map is inaccurate. An alternative would be to get insurers to fully acknowledge the merit of resilient and resistance measures, so that homeowners that have had these resilience and resistance measures installed can get affordable flood insurance even if the maps available show their property is at risk of flooding.</p>
<p>Question 37</p> <p>Do you agree with the proposal to amend national policy to emphasise that planning policies and decisions should take account of existing businesses when locating new development nearby and, where necessary, to mitigate the impact of noise and other potential nuisances arising from existing development?</p>	<p><u>Agreed but it must be made clear that it is for the new development to undertake the mitigation to reduce the effect of the noise, not the existing user. It is often the case that longstanding existing businesses are adversely impacted by new residential development in proximity that when occupied the residents use the EPA to complain and the responsibility for mitigation is then the responsibility of the business and this jeopardises local economic recovery.</u></p>
<p>Question 38</p> <p>Do you agree that in incorporating the Written Ministerial Statement on wind energy development into paragraph 98 of the National Planning Policy Framework, no transition period should be included?</p>	<p><u>No comment</u></p>



Overview & Scrutiny Committee

Briefing Paper

Report of: Dean Piper
Head of Economic Development & Regeneration –
North Worcestershire

Date: Thursday 6th April 2017

Industrial Strategy Green Paper

1. Summary

1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide a briefing on the Government's Industrial Strategy Green Paper and the consultation process and to invite the committee to consider the proposed consultation response from the North Worcestershire Economic Development & Regeneration service (NWEDR).

2. Background

2.1 The UK Government has recently published a Green Paper setting out its vision and proposals for 'building a modern industrial strategy' to deliver a high skilled, competitive economy as part of its overall 'Plan for Britain'. The stated objective of the strategy is to improve living standards and economic growth by increasing productivity and driving growth across the whole of the UK.

2.2 The document is presented as a series of proposals for discussion and there is an invitation to contribute to the development of these proposals through a consultation process which runs until 17th April 2017; a full version of the Green Paper can be viewed at:

<https://beisgovuk.citizenspace.com/strategy/industrial-strategy>

3. Key Issues

3.1 The proposals within the paper are focused on 3 key objectives:

1. **To build on our strengths and extend excellence into the future** – ensuring the UK's attractiveness to global investment and talent including excellence in business, research, key technologies, professions and cultural achievements;
2. **To close the gap** between our best performing companies, industries, places and people and those which are less productive
3. **To make the UK one of the most competitive places in the world to start or to grow a business** – particularly to increase the

translation of scientific and technological discovery into new business and by increasing access to the 'patient capital' for business growth.

3.2 In the paper, the Government identifies ten 'pillars' that it believes are important to drive forward the industrial strategy; these include:

1. Investing in science, research and innovation – increasing the commercialisation of new technology including supporting universities to increase their impact on local business, by building local capacity to commercialise Intellectual Property (IP), introducing a pilot challenger prize programme for entrepreneurs, focusing on supporting world class clusters across the UK and substantially increasing R&D investment by providing an additional £4.7 billion of funding by 2020-21 and creating a new Industrial Strategy Challenge Fund to back technologies at all stages from early research through to commercialisation.

2. Developing skills – the paper includes a range of proposals including action to improve basic skills, provision of free digital skills training for adults in England and reforming Further Education (FE) to create a new system of technical education based on new employer led education programmes for 16 to 19 year olds; £170m of new capital funding for Institutes of Technology to deliver higher level technical education in Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics – STEM and creation of higher quality careers education and working with local areas to test new approaches to addressing local skills gaps.

3. Upgrading infrastructure – the paper sets out the need to increase levels of infrastructure investment in transport, digital and housing and also proposes higher levels of public sector investment including a £2.3 billion Housing Infrastructure Fund, £2.6bn for transport projects, £400m for a Digital Infrastructure Investment Fund and a commitment to better matching infrastructure investment to local plans, using infrastructure to support growth. There is specific mention of strategic transport bodies such as Midlands Connect being supported to ensure that major transport projects are aligned to economic priorities and to roll out smart ticketing across multiple transport types.

4. Supporting businesses to start and grow - the paper recognises the UK's excellent track record in creating new business start ups, however the proposals within the paper focus on addressing barriers to business growth or 'scale up', particularly the lack of long term equity and venture capital; it recognises that there are regional variations in the availability of funds with funding mainly skewed towards London and the south east. Proposals for a 'Midlands Engine Investment Fund' are set out in the paper.

5. Improving procurement – the paper notes that the public sector spends approximately £268 billion per year – approximately 1.4% of GDP and that a strategic approach to government procurement presents an opportunity to create more opportunities for SMEs. Proposals include stimulating innovation through government procurement, action to cut bureaucracy in government procurement practices and transforming digital procurement.

6. Encouraging trade and inward investment – the proposed focus is on addressing the low export rate amongst business and developing a more strategic approach to targeting inward investment including joining up trade and investment promotion with local areas with teams dedicated to the Northern Powerhouse, Midlands Engine, Greater London and southern England, working closely with LEPs and Combined Authorities.

7. Delivering affordable energy and clean growth – the paper focuses on two specific areas; affordability of energy and securing opportunities in energy innovation for the UK economy. With regards to affordable energy; the Government proposes to publish a ‘roadmap’ in 2017 to minimise business energy costs in transitioning to a low carbon economy. Proposals also including rolling out interactive smart meters to every household and business by the end of 2020, publishing an Emissions Reduction Plan by 2017 and the Government will review the case for a new research institution for battery, storage and grid technologies.

8. Cultivating world leading sectors – the paper recognises the importance of developing sector strengths and opportunities and in particular highlights the contribution that sectors such as aerospace, automotive, life sciences, creative industries, digital, financial and business services have made to the economic growth of the UK; the paper proposes the creation of new ‘Sector Deals’ between Government and industry, collaborating with universities to set out proposals to transform and upgrade their sector, taking steps to address challenges and opportunities in areas such as productivity, innovation, supply chain growth, export and skills.

9. Driving growth across the whole country – the paper notes that the foundations have been laid for stronger and more sustainable growth via the establishment of LEPs, city deals, devolution deals, Local Growth Fund, new incentives for growth such as the proposed business rate retention and development of pan regional initiatives such as the Midlands Engine. The paper proposes further measures to reduce regional disparities in growth through strategic infrastructure investment, investing locally in science and innovation and working with local areas to put in place the right institutions to develop industrial and economic clusters of businesses and specialisms.

10. Creating the right institutions to bring together sectors and places –

the paper states that areas need to have the right institutions in place at both national and local level to identify emerging areas of strength and develop policies and targeted investments to support them. The paper outlines proposals for the Government to work with business to build on national business led partnerships in the automotive and aerospace sectors – creating new ones where needed. Further commitments include exploring further devolution deals for the largest cities, working with LEPs to review and strengthen their role in delivering local economic growth, working with new mayoral Combined Authorities to build their capacity and Government working with local government to review how to bring more business expertise into local government, for example through the creation of a modern “Alderman” type of role within local government.

3.3 The paper sets out four main consultation questions as follows:

1. Does this document identify the right areas of focus: extending our strengths; closing the gaps; and making the UK one of the most competitive places to start or grow a business?
2. Are the 10 pillars suggested the right ones to tackle low productivity and unbalanced growth? If not, which areas are missing?
3. Are the right central government and local institutions in place to deliver an effective industrial strategy? If not, how should they be reformed? Are the types of measures to strengthen local institutions set out here and below the right ones?
4. Are there important lessons we can learn from the industrial policies of other countries which are not reflected in these ten pillars?

3.4 There are also a number of consultation questions relating to each of the ten pillars.

3.5 Given that the proposals within the Green Paper are strategic and wide ranging, it is proposed to respond to the consultation at a North Worcestershire wide level rather than submit a Wyre Forest response. The North Worcestershire Economic Development & Regeneration (NWEDR) shared service will prepare and submit the response. The draft response is attached at Appendix 1.

4. Options

4.1 The Overview and Scrutiny Committee is invited to consider this report and:

1. Endorse the proposed NWEDR response at Appendix 1 or
2. To recommend any amendments that should be made to the draft response before it is submitted.

5. Consultation

- 5.1 Corporate Leadership Team.
Cabinet Member for Planning & Economic Regeneration.

6. Equality Impact Needs Assessment

- 6.1 There are no issues to be addressed.

7. Wards affected

All

8. Appendices

Appendix 1 – Draft NWEDR consultation response

9. Background Papers

Officer Contact Details:

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Title: Head of Economic Development & Regeneration
Contact Number: 01562 732192

Building our Industrial Strategy Green Paper – Consultation response from North Worcestershire Economic Development & Regeneration service (NWEDR)

Pillar 1	Government focus	NWEDR response
Investing in science, research and innovation	Capitalise on local strengths across the UK	<p>The North Worcestershire area is not home to a University or Research Institution although it does benefit from close proximity to Universities in Worcester, Wolverhampton and Birmingham.</p> <p>At a general level, NWEDR would support the proposed direction of travel set out in the Green Paper and would endorse a renewed focus on developing a sector based approach to support business investment in R&D. We would like to see an alignment of this policy with existing strategies and investment plans of the LEPs to ensure that there is co-ordination of resources and to maximise the impact on locally prioritised key sectors.</p> <p>NWEDR would advocate the role that District Councils (through their Economic Development teams) can play in facilitating links between businesses and HE/ Research institutions and we have already done this locally by developing a relationship with both the Universities of Wolverhampton and Birmingham to help facilitate access to Knowledge Transfer Partnerships, graduate placements and innovation support. Indeed related to this are NWEDR's ambitions to work with local partners to develop locally based Innovation Centre's within the area.</p>

Pillar 2	Government focus.	NWEDR response
Developing skills	Basic Skills, creation of a new technical education system, higher level technical institutions and new institutes of Technology in all regions.	<p>NWEDR welcomes a very clear focus on the skills agenda, which is one of our most important priorities locally. Although good progress has been in terms of increasing attainment rates, there still remains a skills gap locally. Often, local employers report that they cannot fill their vacancies locally and increasingly are having to recruit from outside of the locality. The Green Paper focuses on skills shortages in sectors that depend on science, technology, engineering and maths (STEM) skills; there is a particular issue in North Worcestershire regarding a lack of readily available skilled engineers and more must be done nationally to ensure that all levels of education are working to provide employers with the skills that they need. The proposals for a new system of technical education is to be broadly welcomed although we would like to see more detail on these proposals and there needs to be an assurance that new technical qualifications will not be seen as inferior to traditional academic routes. NWEDR would suggest that the new system of technical education should consist of both 'on' and 'off' the job training, much as the German Dual System does. There is a need to overcome the frequent employer position that (college based training in particular) based on a taught curriculum, doesn't deliver what is needed. Young people and adults receiving training need immersion in the tasks that an individual employer will ask them to do.</p> <p>The model for technical education is being tested in North Worcestershire with a £1.5m Engineering Centre of Excellence recently opening (run by a private training provider) and providing much needed skills for the area's important engineering and manufacturing sector; more investment is needed though in other sectors.</p> <p>We also welcome reforms to careers advice and guidance in schools as this is an issue that has been raised by our local Employment & Skills Board and we often hear that the quality of careers advice in schools is mixed and doesn't always</p>

		<p>provide young people with sufficient information on alternative progression routes such as technical education and Apprenticeships. School engagement with employers is critical but needs to take place in the workplace rather than a visitor talking to pupils in the school. This approach has been piloted in North Worcestershire with the 'Opening Doors to Business' initiative where 200 Year 10 students visited 15 local employers to find out more about their business and potential career opportunities.</p> <p>We would like to see any careers advice and guidance strategy backed up with funding to ensure that a quality offering can be provided across all schools and FE institutions. We welcome actions to address sector specific skills gaps and would strongly urge that such actions are closely aligned with LEP strategies and undertaken in conjunction with LEPs and their Employment & Skills Boards.</p> <p>Government should take into account that there is a serious gap in funding for training for older age groups such as career changers who may be seeking to change (and increase their productivity) through re-training at a time in the life cycle when they may not be in a position to self finance an academic route or cost of vocational training.</p> <p>Government should fully recognise the role that District Councils (through their Economic Development functions) can play in helping to shape local skills strategies and to facilitate links between skills programmes and local businesses. There is a lot of good activity underway locally involving District Councils and local businesses to promote career opportunities, Apprenticeships and training and there should be recognition of that within the strategy. District councils can also play a leading role in delivering employment and skills strategies through their knowledge of local businesses and ability to gather intelligence relating to a business and its specific needs, many of which may be locational.</p>
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Pillar 3	Government focus.	NWEDR response
Upgrading infrastructure	<p>Better matching of infrastructure to local plans, using infrastructure to support local growth, £400m Digital Investment Fund, £740m for local fibre broadband roll out, £1.1b funding for local roads and transport, Data infrastructure, improving flood defence and making infrastructure costs more competitive.</p>	<p>NWEDR welcomes the plan for the Government to further invest in infrastructure to unlock economic and housing growth. There is clear evidence that investment by the public sector can drive economic growth and act as a catalyst for private investment and funding. LEPs have played a key role in funding new infrastructure schemes through their Growth Deals and use of Local Growth Funding. We have seen first hand locally the impact that targeted infrastructure investment can have on driving economic growth; the £20m Hoo Brook Link Road in Kidderminster is an excellent example in this regard and through partnership working, it has been possible to fund the construction of a new road to accelerate the development of the Silverwoods site which is providing new employment land and housing opportunities.</p> <p>We would strongly advocate that the Government strengthens the role of LEPs in investing in major infrastructure schemes. This should include a commitment to continuing to invest in the Local Growth Fund post 2021. We would concur with the view expressed in the paper in that there has been a lack of clear long term thinking in the Government's approach to national infrastructure strategy and as a consequence there is an urgent need for investment for infrastructure in regions such as the West Midlands. There has been too much emphasis on short term funding initiatives or stop gap improvements. New investment such as HS2 will clearly improve connectivity between Birmingham and London, however we would like to see this complemented by further investment in regional and local rail services, improving frequency of services, reducing travel times and improving the experience of passengers to ensure that the benefits of HS2 are maximised as far as possible.</p> <p>The investment in the roll out of fibre broadband needs to be complemented with improvements to mobile phone reception which can be sporadic in both urban and rural locations.</p>

Pillar 4	Government focus.	NWEDR response
Supporting businesses to start and grow	Accessing finance to grow, improving support for scale ups and entrepreneurs and sharing performance through peer to peer network	<p>NWEDR plays an important role in working with local businesses to help them grow and to support new business start-ups, therefore we welcome the focus on supporting businesses within the Green Paper. As the paper states the UK has an excellent record in creating new companies; however there needs to be a renewed focus on ensuring that we are starting up sustainable companies and investing in those companies that have the greatest potential to grow and 'scale up' to the next level. The Government needs to set out a more strategic approach to achieving this goal. We would encourage the Government to ensure that the national network of Growth Hubs are more targeted on supporting companies that can drive up productivity and skills levels rather than adopting a generalist approach. District Councils also can play an important role in engaging with local companies but there needs to be more joined up working between LEPs, Growth Hubs, Local authorities and other strategic partners to ensure that we achieve maximum impact.</p> <p>We feel that the Government needs to more clearly set out in the Industrial Strategy how it will deliver this objective and in particular how it intends to resource and funding the Growth Hubs going forward to ensure that they can deliver a quality support service to those businesses can deliver growth.</p>
Pillar 5	Government focus.	NWEDR response
Improving procurement	Stimulating economic growth through better procurement – the balanced score card, and transforming digital procurement	<p>NWEDR welcome these proposals especially around removing barriers to public procurement for SMEs and doing more to stimulate the local economy by buying our services locally.</p> <p>We also welcome the proposal to consider supporting economic growth through better procurement (via the balanced scorecard) to link score cards to businesses that promise to take on local apprentices, staff and suppliers.</p>

Pillar 6	Government focus.	NWEDR response
Encouraging trade and inward investment	Building Global Prosperity, joining up trade and inward investment promotion with local areas, develop a new more strategic approach to Inward Investment and making government trade services easier to use.	We welcome the proposals for more joined up trade and inward investment promotional activities and the decision to set up new teams focused on areas such as the Midlands Engine. We would welcome the opportunity for more local businesses to join in with the overseas trade missions as the impact of these needs to be fully maximised and more targeted activity from the Department for International Trade (DiT) is required to increase the number of small-medium sized businesses that export their products and services overseas. NWEDR would like to emphasise the important role that Local authorities can play in attracting inward investment projects into the UK, not just through its statutory plan making role but by pro-actively supporting prospective new investors to make a positive decision to locate in an area and to assist with their 'soft landing' by facilitating access to a range of support services. Further joint working between District Councils and DiT teams would be welcomed, as District Council Economic Development teams are well placed to provide DiT colleagues with local intelligence relating to availability of sites, support schemes and local supply chain companies.
Pillar 7	Government focus.	NWEDR response.
Delivering affordable energy and clean growth	Affordable Energy, changes to energy infrastructure and harnessing the industrial opportunities from new energy technology	NWEDR welcomes further measures to deliver growth in green industries and sectors and this presents a growth opportunity for areas like North Worcestershire, where there is a critical mass of manufacturers, engineering firms and automotive supply chain businesses. We would also welcome further action to support SMEs with their energy costs. We have seen demand locally from SMEs for schemes to help lower energy bills, a good example of this in Worcestershire is the Business Energy Efficiency Programme (BEEP), which provides a free energy assessment to SMEs and potential funding to support energy efficiency measures such as improved lighting and heating and use of renewable technologies. However, such programmes are often short lived and funding led; therefore the Government needs to provide strategic leadership by committing to longer term programmes of action and support.

Pillar 8	Government focus.	NWEDR response
Cultivating world leader sectors	Sector deals, supporting emerging sectors and innovative business and building on existing sector relationships and challenging all sectors of the economy to upgrade via sector deals.	NWEDR broadly welcomes a renewed focus on those sectors that can generate the greatest increase in productivity and prosperity across the economy. The idea of 'Sector Deals' is an interesting one, however we would strongly urge that these deals need to be constructed in conjunction with companies at all levels of the supply chain, to ensure that the voices of the top tier firms do not outweigh the smaller companies. Local authorities in conjunction with LEPs, FE and HE institutions and local business leaders have a key role to play in helping to shape the content of these deals and in particular there should be recognition of the important contribution that District Councils can make in creating the conditions for growth of sectors locally, through its place making, planning and regulatory functions.
Pillar 9	Government focus.	NWEDR response
Driving growth across the whole country	Backing local connectivity with strategic infrastructure investment, raising skill levels nationwide but particularly in areas where they are lower, investing in local frameworks to support local industries.	Clearly NWEDR welcomes the emphasis on the Industrial Strategy working to drive growth across the UK and in particular to rebalance the UK's economy and narrow the productivity gap between areas like the West Midlands and London and the South East. North Worcestershire, whilst relatively affluent, is facing a number of underlying issues with its economy, ranging from lower than average wages, flat employment growth, skills gaps and an imbalanced housing market which is not providing a sufficient number of affordable housing opportunities. There is a need for continued investment in road, rail and digital infrastructure in North Worcestershire to ensure that economic and housing opportunities can be unlocked. There is a real need for the Government to commit to a long term strategy to support local areas to invest in critical infrastructure if the country is to be competitive in the future. There also needs to be improved co-ordination between Government investment in infrastructure and local growth strategies and Local Development Plans. Too often short term funding streams are set up on an ad hoc basis. If local authorities are to be successful in their place and plan making roles they need more certainty and joined up thinking across all areas of Government. NWEDR welcomes the commitment from Government to work

		with local areas to identify and help develop industrial clusters of businesses and local specialism's, but again would advocate that as District Councils are the closest level of government to communities and employers that this work is undertaken in close consultation with them.
Pillar 10	Government focus.	NWEDR response
Creating the right institution to bring together sectors and places	Local leadership institutions, local business institutions, institutions that support innovation, cultural, sporting and quality of life institutions and Connectivity institutions	<p>NWEDR welcomes the acknowledgement from Government that Local authorities can play a key role in coordinating the different things that local industries and businesses need to develop. We also welcome the commitment to reviewing the role of Local Enterprise Partnerships in delivering local growth, but are disappointed that there are no firm commitments as to how their role could be strengthened going forward.</p> <p>We note the intention to work with local government to review how to bring more business expertise into local governance, and improve links between councils and the private sector. There are already many ways in which councils involve businesses, or in which businesses could play a more effective part. Many District councils already have in place local business networking groups. In North Worcestershire, we have in place three very effective Economic Development groups consisting of local business leaders, Local authority representatives and key stakeholders. In our experience, these groups have direct knowledge and experience of what is happening with the economy locally and can be well placed to support and direct public policy around economic development, transport, housing and planning. Other relevant arrangements include: the fact that many councillors work in a wide range of private sector roles; existing partnerships that bring together leading business representatives and councils, notably local enterprise partnerships; the ability of overview and scrutiny committees to co-opt members who are not councillors; and the ability of businesses to contribute to council meetings and influence decision-making directly, for example by taking advantage of the public's right to address meetings.</p>

		<p>We are concerned by the suggestion of the creation of a modern “Alderman” type of role within local government and we are unsure as to what this role would actually look like and deliver. If the suggestion implies appointed, unelected individuals sitting in a decision-making role in councils, we consider that this would be an inappropriate erosion of local democratic accountability and a backward step: the ability of councils to appoint aldermen was rightly removed many decades ago. Such a step should be considered only if the Government is going to advocate the introduction of aldermen into the House of Commons, as it cannot be the case that business expertise is required only in local governance.</p> <p>A general comment is that we think that this section is quite weak and requires further detail as to how the proposed institutions and bodies will actually support the various components of the strategy.</p>
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WYRE FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL

FEEDBACK FROM CABINET MEETING HELD ON
TUESDAY 14TH MARCH 2017

Agenda
Item No.

DECISION

7.1 **Worcestershire Housing Partnership Plan and Consultation Exercise**

In line with the recommendations from the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, 2nd March 2017:

Decision: The Worcestershire Housing Partnership Plan be approved and work to develop detailed action plans commenced.

7.2 **Council Membership on Community Housing Group (CHG)**

In line with the recommendations from the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, 2nd March 2017:

Decision:

Recommended to Council:

- 1.1. That from May 2017 the Council no longer makes any nominations to the roles of Community Member on any of the Community Housing Group boards or committees;
- 1.2. That the Council considers the outcome of the governance review commissioned by Community Housing Group when it is received and makes necessary changes to nominations to positions on the Community Housing Group as a result of any re-structure, as invited to;
- 1.3. That delegated authority if given to the Solicitor to the Council to terminate the Memorandum of Understanding between the Council and Community Housing Group relating to Community Member Nominations

7.3 **Collective Energy Switching Scheme**

In line with the recommendations from the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, 2nd March 2017:

Decision: Wyre Forest District Council to initiate a Collective Energy Switching Scheme on behalf of residents.

10.1

Worcestershire Local Transport Plan 4

In line with the recommendations from the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, 2nd March 2017:

Decision:

- 1.1 The comments and representations as set out at Appendix 1 of the report to Cabinet, be agreed as the District Council's formal response to the Worcestershire Local Transport Plan 4 Consultation.**
- 1.2 The Director of Economic Prosperity and Place be authorised to submit the District Council's representations in accordance with the consultation deadline of 17th March 2017.**

Overview and Scrutiny Committee Work Programme 2016-2017

June 2016

“How are we doing?” Q4 update (Housing and Planning)
Tracking Recommendations from 2015-2016
Temporary Accommodation Policy
A Strategy for Enabling Business Growth and Enterprise
Local Development Scheme

July 2016

Nominations for the Treasury Management Review Panel
Housing Assistance Policy
Kidderminster Eastern Gateway Development Framework

September 2016

“How are we doing?” Q1 update (Enabling)
Treasury Management Strategy Statement and Annual Investment Strategy Backward Look 2015/16
Section 106 Obligations Supplementary Planning Document (SPD)
Health Action Plan
Climate Change Action Plan
Recommendations from S106 Monies Review Panel
DFG's Presentation
Safer West Mercia Plan Consultation

October 2016 – Cancelled

November 2016

“How are we doing?” Q2 update (Business and People)
Treasury Management Strategy Statement and Annual Investment Strategy Mid Year Report 2016/17
Council Tax Reduction Scheme Review 2017/18
Report on the Worcestershire Partnership Plan
Alternative Temporary Accommodation Provision
Wyre Forest District Local Plan Review: Revised Local Development Scheme (Project Plan 2016 - 2019)
EXEMPT - Industrial Units Investment Business Case

December 2016

Review of District Car Parks 2016
Town Centres Busking Policy

January 2017 – Cancelled

February 2017

Treasury Management Service Strategy 2017/18
“How are we doing?” Q3 update (Place)
Disposal of Land at Lion Fields
Local Transport Plan 4 Consultation (presentation from WCC)

March 2017

Annual Crime & Disorder Review
Worcestershire Housing Partnership Plan
Local Transport Plan 4 Consultation Response
Community Housing Group - Review of Nominations
Collective Energy Switching

April 2017

Draft Response to Housing White Paper – Fixing Our Broken Housing Market
Industrial Strategy Green Paper
Industrial Units Investment Outline Business Case

Work Programme 2017-2018

June 2017

Open Space, Playing Fields and Built Facilities Strategies
Local Plan Preferred Options
Establishment of a Local Authority Trading Company (LATC)
Industrial Strategy Document
Part EXEMPT Industrial Unit Investment Business Case
EXEMPT Residential Unit Investment Business Case
Part EXEMPT Asset Investment Strategy



Overview & Scrutiny Committee

Briefing Paper

Report of: Dean Piper
Head of Economic Development & Regeneration –
North Worcestershire

Date: Thursday 6th April 2017

OPEN WITH EXEMPT APPENDIX 3

Industrial Units Investment Outline Business Case

1. Summary

1.1 The purpose of this report is to invite the Committee to consider a proposal for the Council to develop a new small industrial units scheme on a Council owned site and to proceed with the project subject to the satisfactory completion of a detailed business case.

2. Background

2.1 As part of its medium term financial strategy, the Council has agreed a proposal to use its prudential borrowing capability to create a new Capital Portfolio Fund of up to a maximum of £25m that allows Cabinet to proceed with individual investments without the need to seek further Council approval and a policy to support investment of up to £10m in loans to third parties.

2.2 The Council's Strategic Asset Management Plan and Enterprise and Business Growth Strategy provide the strategic context for the Council to identify new opportunities to expand its current industrial unit portfolio to support its economic development priorities and to generate new revenue streams.

2.3 The Council has recognised that there is a strong demand for small industrial units of up to 6,000 sq ft and that this unmet demand is not being fully addressed by the private sector. In particular, there is a shortage of good quality units at the smallest end of the range between 500 and 1,000 sqft.

2.4 In November 2016, Cabinet approved a business case for the Council to invest in building 6 new small industrial units of between 2,000 and 4,000 square feet, which will provide much needed grow on space for existing companies within the area. In parallel, officers have been exploring a number of other opportunities to develop smaller industrial units either by building on Council owned sites or by purchasing suitable third party land.

2.5 The most immediate opportunity available to the Council is to develop a small parcel of vacant Council owned land off Silverwoods Way and is adjacent to

the existing Council run Hoobrook Enterprise Centre. The proposed site comprises 0.26 hectares (0.64 acres) and is shown outlined in red on the plan attached at Appendix 1. The site was formerly occupied by a depot building owned by an automotive parts and accessories company which has since been demolished and the site has since been remediated. The parcel of land is in a prominent position and directly fronts to the newly built Hoobrook Link Road (Silverwoods Way), which improves the deliverability of a commercial scheme on the site. The land is in the Council's ownership and is available for immediate development. The site is within the boundary of the South Kidderminster Enterprise Park Local Development Order area which provides a simplified planning process for commercial developments in this area and it is anticipated that any scheme brought forward on the site would be compliant with the LDO.

- 2.6 The Council has undertaken an initial feasibility study to ascertain the viability of developing a small industrial units' scheme on this site including an analysis of local market demand and preparation of an outline business case incorporating a financial appraisal of delivering the scheme.

3. Key Issues

The proposal

- 3.1 To meet the identified gap in the market and to support the delivery of its Enterprise and Business Growth Strategy, the Council proposes to develop a suite of small industrial units on the vacant parcel of land that it owns off Silverwoods Way.
- 3.2 The proposed scheme provides the opportunity to provide an extension to the existing industrial estate and to increase the supply of small units in the Kidderminster area. Other options for development have been ruled out in view of the small size of the site and the Council's ambitions to support local economic development and business growth. Based on an analysis of the capacity of the site an indicative scheme has been developed comprised of 9 small industrial units of 600 square feet each (total 5,400 sqft) plus car parking (see layout at Appendix 2). There is flexibility to combine the units should tenants require larger accommodation up to 1,200 sqft.
- 3.3 A demand assessment completed by Thomas Lister Ltd on behalf of the Council has confirmed that the site should be an attractive proposition for a small industrial units' scheme and would provide a natural extension of the existing Hoobrook Enterprise Centre, which is a very popular business location with high levels of business occupancy. With the site currently vacant and the Hoobrook Link Road recently opened, it is considered that such a scheme would be capable of early delivery and would fulfil market demand for good quality small industrial units. The market analysis completed by Thomas Lister Ltd provides an assessment of the anticipated rental level for the units and the gross annual income that the units could yield on full occupation.

- 3.4 An outline cost plan has been generated for the proposed scheme, which is based on costings provided by Thomas Lister Ltd and additional support procured by NWEDR from independent consultant PER Consulting Ltd. The outline costings include estimated costs for constructing the units, professional fees, contingencies and preliminaries. The costs would need to be tested and refined as part of the detailed business case and a detailed cost plan for the external build and internal fit out of the units would need to be prepared and verified by a Quantity Surveyor.
- 3.5 Officers have undertaken an initial high level evaluation of the scheme in terms of its financial viability by using an Investment Appraisal Tool which calculates an estimated net rental income based on the estimated costings and income potential of the scheme (Appendix 3). The appraisal takes into account the cost of borrowing from the Public Works Loan Board (PWLb), the minimum revenue provision (MRP) the Council would be required to make based on the amount borrowed and the life of an asset.
- 3.6 Officers have sensitivity tested potential financial returns based on different rental levels and build costs. For purposes of the appraisal, officers have tested the impact of high, medium and low construction costs and high, medium and low rental levels being achieved. The estimated construction costs are set out in Column A in the table at Appendix 3 and the estimated income levels are set out in Column B. In terms of assessing the income potential of the scheme, a void rate of 10% and a 5% rate for bad debt has been applied, which are standard metrics for considering developments of this type. For completeness, the Appraisal sets out the notional land value for the site, which is based on advice obtained by Thomas Lister Ltd.
- 3.7 The outcome of the evaluation is that to ensure that the scheme generates an acceptable annual income stream; the Council will need to fund the project using recycled capital receipts from its Evergreen Investment Fund (EIF) and prudential borrowing from the PWLB. The proposed split of funding is set out in column C in the table at Appendix 3. If the Council was to fund the scheme using solely funding from prudential borrowing then it becomes unviable, as the borrowing costs significantly diminish the anticipated income levels to a point where it generates a deficit.
- 3.8 Subject to the development of a satisfactory detailed business case, it is proposed that the Council directly delivers the scheme and procures suitably qualified and experienced contractors to construct the units to an agreed specification and price. The scheme would be managed internally within the North Worcestershire Economic Development & Regeneration service (NWEDR), with specialist advice and support, such as architectural support, financial viability testing and market analysis commissioned as and when required. The Council's Property team would be responsible for managing the units and dealing with lettings and tenancy agreements.
- 3.9 As part of the final business case, a more detailed financial appraisal will need to be undertaken to finalise project costs, including a detailed cash flow both through the construction period but also up until the proposed scheme is fully

let and income generating. The assessment will programme project construction costs, professional fees and other costs such as void NNDR and management costs in order to assess the cash flow requirements and projected net returns of the proposed investment to the Council. The business case will also include further analysis on local market conditions and an assessment of project benefits, risks and timescales for delivery.

4. Risks

4.1 A risk matrix for the scheme has been produced as follows. It is anticipated that further analysis of risks will be undertaken as part of the full business case for the scheme.

RISK REGISTER	Impact (H/M/L)	Likelihood (H/M/L)	Risk Rating (R/A/G)	Risk Mitigation
Construction costs are higher than anticipated	H	L	A	A detailed cost plan will be prepared by a suitably qualified and experienced cost consultant on the finalisation of the scheme layout and specification; the aim will be to secure best value on construction through a competitive tendering process.
Council unable to secure 100% occupancy of units	M	L	G	Market advice demonstrates that there is a strong demand for the proposed size of units from local SMEs. A void rate of 10% has been built into the Council's financial appraisal.
Economic conditions decline	M	M	A	Evidence suggests that there is strong demand for this type of units.
PWLB borrowing rates increase meaning the financial affordability test fails	H	L	A	Dependant on prevailing macro economic conditions and timing, it is likely that rates will increase slightly but that the scheme will remain viable.
Council unable to achieve desired rental levels for the units reducing the net income generated through the scheme	M	L	G	Demand assessment shows that the proposed rental levels are realistic and other Council run industrial units are achieving these values.

5. Options

5.1 The Overview and Scrutiny Committee is invited to consider this report and:

1. Recommend to Cabinet that the proposal for the Council to develop a small industrial units scheme at Land off Silverwoods Way in Kidderminster be approved subject to the production of a satisfactory detailed business case **or**;
2. To recommend to Cabinet any amendments that should be made to the proposal.

6. Consultation

6.1 Corporate Leadership Team

6.2 Cabinet Member for Planning & Economic Regeneration.

7. Equality Impact Needs Assessment

7.1 There are no issues to be addressed.

8. Wards affected

8.1 Foley Park and Hoobrook

9. Appendices

Appendix 1- Land off Silverwoods Way – site plan

Appendix 2 – Proposed scheme layout

Appendix 3- EXEMPT Financial appraisal

10. Background Papers

Enterprise and Business Growth Strategy

Strategic Asset Management Plan

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