

LGA Corporate Peer Challenge 2018 *Position Statement*



February 2018

Contents

1	Welcome to Malvern Hills and Wychavon	1
2	Introduction to Malvern Hills and Wychavon councils	2
2.1	Why we want a peer challenge	2
2.2	About the two districts	2–4
2.3	About the two councils	4–10
3	Understanding of the place and priority setting	11
4	Leadership of place	14
5	Organisational leadership and governance	18
6	Capacity to deliver	22
7	Financial planning and viability	26
8	Specific areas of focus	28
9	Sharing of successful practice	33
10	Key documents	41
	Appendix A: Progress on recommendations from previous Peer Challenges	42
	Appendix B: Statement of joint working	45
	Appendix C: Service Manager Structure charts	51

1 Welcome to Malvern Hills and Wychavon

Both districts are great places to live, work and visit with beautiful countryside, historic natural and built heritage, and strong economies. Life expectancy is good and our residents are some of the happiest in the county. There are some real challenges too, which we're working hard to address with our partners.

Both our councils have previously undertaken a Corporate Peer Challenge (CPC) as part of the sector-led improvement process. We feel that it is important that councils such as ours continue to welcome external challenge as that is one of the key factors in helping us improve as organisations.

The two councils are independent organisations with their own political structures and distinct identities. We share a Chief Executive/Managing Director and a joint senior management team as well as growing number of services. We have agreed with the LGA that both councils will undergo the CPC at the same time reflecting how we stand in terms of our joint working arrangements, which have been to the benefit of both organisations.

As well as receiving feedback from our peer team on the five core components of all CPCs, we have identified some specific areas where we would welcome some challenge and feedback from our peer team.

Both councils have ambitious corporate plans and robust financial planning underpinned by business plans which bring our medium-term financial plans

and the corporate plans together. However, in the current climate there is always a balance to be struck between our ambitions and constraints. So we would value some feedback about how we should develop our approach to business and service planning in the longer term.

We are also asking for some feedback around our work on supporting the economy for both councils, on developing Malvern Hills' tourism potential and what more we can do on affordable and rural housing delivery and homelessness in Wychavon.

We warmly welcome our LGA peer team to both councils. This position statement sets out both a comprehensive picture of our two councils and the part of South Worcestershire which our administrative areas cover. Notwithstanding that this is a joint CPC, we are looking forward to each council receiving its own feedback report and being able to develop its own action plan based on the findings.



Cllr David Chambers

Leader, Malvern Hills District Council



Jack Hegarty

Chief Executive/Managing Director



Cllr Linda Robinson

Leader, Wychavon District Council

2 Introduction to Malvern Hills and Wychavon councils

2.1 Why we want a peer challenge

Both councils have previously benefitted from an LGA Corporate Peer Challenge (CPC): Malvern Hills in February 2012 and Wychavon in December 2013. Appendix A sets out the key recommendations from these and identifies what we've done in response.

Bearing in mind the timing of our previous CPCs, the leadership of both councils feels it is timely for us to have another CPC. So in March 2018, we are inviting a team of peers to carry out an independent assessment of both councils and to provide us with:

- a) A stock-take on our progress since our last Corporate Peer Challenges.
- b) An assessment of our more recent joint working arrangements, particularly the balance between sharing services, where it makes financial or practical sense, and retaining each council's identity and independence.
- c) Feedback on progress on our councils' priorities, plans and performance.
- d) Feedback on the specific questions we are asking around strategy and planning, developing our economy (for both councils), affordable and rural housing delivery and homelessness (Wychavon focus), and developing our tourism potential (Malvern focus).



2.2 About the two districts

The **Malvern Hills district** covers an area of west Worcestershire and is dominated by the Malvern Hills on its western border. It comprises the four major settlements of Malvern, Tenbury, Kempsey and Upton, which together account for over half of the district's population.

Wychavon borders the Malvern Hills district to the east and is the largest of the six Worcestershire districts. It contains the three towns of Droitwich Spa, Evesham and Pershore and nearly 100 hamlets and villages including Broadway, the gateway to the Cotswolds.

Table 1 summarises some key facts and data about each district. More in-depth information can be found in our **Knowing Our Communities** and **Knowing Wychavon Communities** reports. These comprehensive reports present data and trends about the two districts from a wide range of sources. We use them to inform strategic priority setting, decision making and planning services.

We have also created ward profiles for both **Malvern Hills** and **Wychavon**, providing each of our councillors with more local information to help in their roles. We have developed a complete set of parish profiles for **Malvern Hills** and we're producing profiles for **Wychavon** parishes on request.

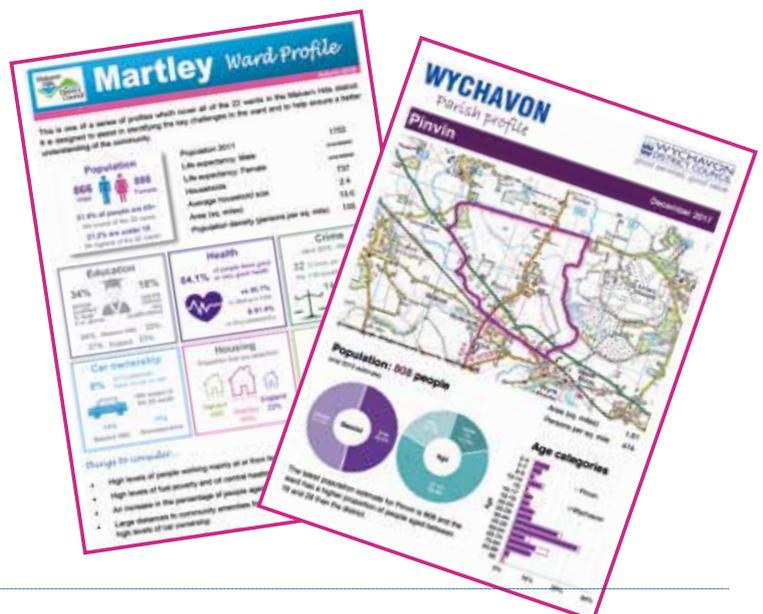


Table 1: Summary of key data about the district

	Malvern Hills	Wychavon
Population	76,130	122,943
Proportion aged under 18	18.6%	18.9%
Proportion aged over 65	26.5%	24.4%
Number of households	33,815	51,943
Area (square miles)	222.8	256.2
Satisfaction with the area as a place to live	90%	86%
Halifax Quality of Life surveys <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Best place to live in Britain • Best rural place to live 	24th (2016) 17th	4th (2017) 2nd
Indices of Multiple Deprivation ranking out of 324 (where 1 is most deprived)	188	191
Social Mobility Index ranking out of 324 (where 1 is best)	200	310
Life expectancy <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • female • male 	83.4 years 80.4 years	84.6 years 81.3 years
Gap in life expectancy between most and least deprived areas <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • female • male 	3.9 years 2.4 years	8.8 years 7.5 years
Average resident salary (full-time)	£25,878	£28,005
Average house price (July 2017)	£258,994	£260,205
Home ownership	71.9%	73%
Economically active 16-64 year olds	72.2%	82%
Number of enterprises	4,275	6,430
Proportion of businesses that employ under 10 people	91.4%	90.4%
Top five sectors (including local units) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Professional, scientific and technical • Agriculture, forestry and fishing • Construction • Business administration and support services • Retail • Production 	15.5% 14.8% 9.3% 7.3% 7.0%	15.2% 10.7% 10.6% 8.5% 7.7%

Both districts are great places to live, work and visit with beautiful countryside, historic natural and built heritage, low crime levels and strong economies. Life expectancy is good and residents are some of the happiest and most satisfied in the county. However, with an ageing demographic, high house prices and limited public transport options, there are real challenges too.

Challenges for **Malvern Hills** include:

- an ageing population – 25.6% over 65
- 27.8% of pensioners live alone and there are estimated to be over 1,000 lonely older people
- highest number of alcohol-related road traffic accidents per 1,000 residents in the West Midlands
- higher than the county average for levels of hospital admissions for alcoholic liver disease
- higher proportion of obese children in reception year than the national average
- median house prices 12 times the average annual salary
- pressure on existing infrastructure as a result of levels of housing growth.

In **Wychavon** the challenges include:

- an ageing population – 24.4% over 65
- 27% of pensioners live alone and there are an estimated 1,770 lonely older people

- increasing gap in life expectancy between those living in the most and least deprived areas
- two-thirds of the adult population are overweight and over a fifth are estimated to be obese,
- over a quarter of reception year children are considered overweight, which is considerably higher than both the county and national averages
- poor social mobility ranking
- median house prices 11 times the average salary
- growing number of homelessness presentations
- pressure on existing infrastructure as a result of levels of housing growth.

2.3 About the two councils

The two councils are independent organisations with their own political structures and distinct identities. **Malvern Hills** is a ‘fourth option’ style administration based upon a politically balanced committee system. The annually appointed Council Leader works with a number of **Portfolio Holders** to oversee the strategic direction of the council’s services.

Wychavon has adopted the ‘strong leader’ model of governance, appointing a Leader for a four year term. The Leader appoints a Deputy Leader and other members to form an Executive Board, which makes decisions on key issues and services.



Figure 1: Malvern Hills Portfolio Holders



EXECUTIVE PORTFOLIO HOLDERS 2017/18

All portfolios support the three corporate priorities:

Building stronger and healthier communities

Driving economic prosperity and growth

Making the most of our superb environment

David Chambers	Melanie Baker	Jeremy Owenson	Bronwen Behan	James O'Donnell	David Watkins
					
Leader of Council (includes economic development portfolio)	Deputy Leader of Council Portfolio Holder for Sustainable Development and Infrastructure	Portfolio Holder for Policy, Governance and Localism	Portfolio Holder for the Environment	Portfolio Holder for Finance and Resources	Portfolio Holder for Healthier Communities

Figure 2: Wychavon Executive Board

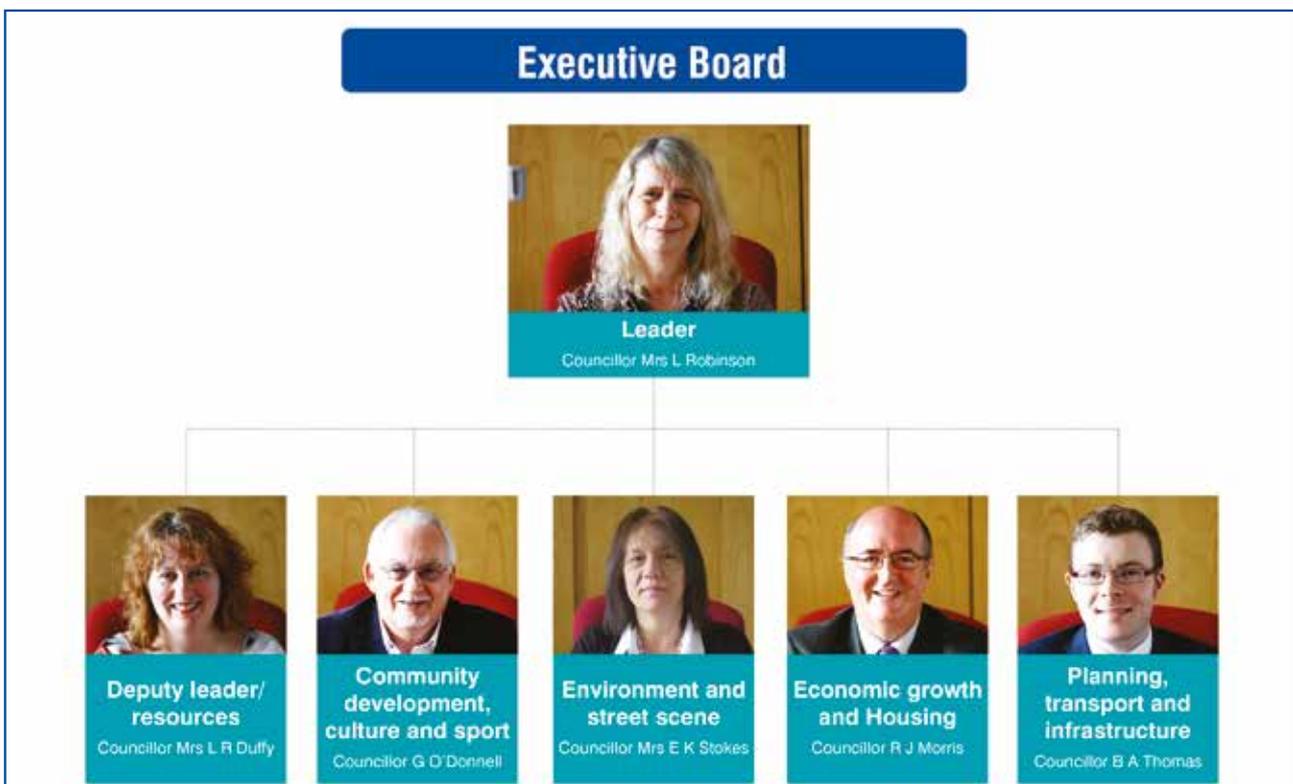


Figure 3: Joint Senior Management Team responsibilities



We share a Chief Executive/Managing Director and a joint senior management team (SMT). This comprises the Chief Executive/Managing Director, each council's Deputy Managing Director/Deputy Chief Executive and three other senior managers. This has enabled us to make significant savings and work more closely together to deliver a wide range of services to our residents. Figure 3 provides an overview of each senior manager's responsibilities

In November 2016, the councils invited the **LGA to review the shared Chief Executive/Managing Director arrangements**. The review concluded that the arrangements were seen as a success, were valued by all and there was no desire to return to the previous arrangements. The LGA identified

that the councils needed to carefully monitor senior management capacity and ensure that the strengths of both councils were built on to ensure continuous improvement.

Service managers underpin SMT and are responsible for the day-to-day running of services. Some service managers have joint roles as we share a significant number of services including housing, human resources, legal services, heritage and planning policy. Appendix B contains details of all joint working involving both councils and joint working with other organisations too.

Table 2 provides a brief overview of information relating to each council and is followed by a description of each council's business model.



Table 2: Summary of key data about the councils

	Malvern Hills	Wychavon
Budget 2017/18 total service expenditure	£8,509,000	£12,235,000
2017/18 gross expenditure budget	£32,081,000	£50,274,900
2017/18 Council Tax average Band D charge	£1,638.21	£1,588.43
Resident satisfaction with how the council runs things	70%	73%
Resident agreement that the council provides value for money	49%	58%
Number of staff (FTEs) ¹		
• actual	135.90	222.85
• established	168.16	240.82
Number of wards	22	32
Number of councillors	38	45
Political make up		
• Conservative	23	39
• Independent ²	8	1
• Liberal Democrat	4	5
• Green ²	3	0

¹ Some staff operate across both councils but are only counted once.

² At Malvern Hills District Council the Independents and the Greens form the Democratic Group.

Malvern Hills

Malvern Hills is a relatively small rural district council. The district is a great place to live, work and visit. In the 2017 **Worcestershire Viewpoint Survey**, our residents told us that the quality of life in the district was good, with 90% of them believing their local area was a good place to live. As a council we work hard to ensure that the district retains its appeal to all residents, businesses and visitors. Our **annual report** demonstrates how we have achieved this each year.

We are a small council with big ambitions. We have made significant savings over the last five years. The on-going challenges we face, however, mean that we need to become more enterprising and innovative than ever before. Further collaborative working will be critical to our continued success and sustainability. This is recognised in our **business plan** which is based on four key themes: efficiencies, partnerships and services, investment and growth, income and taxation.

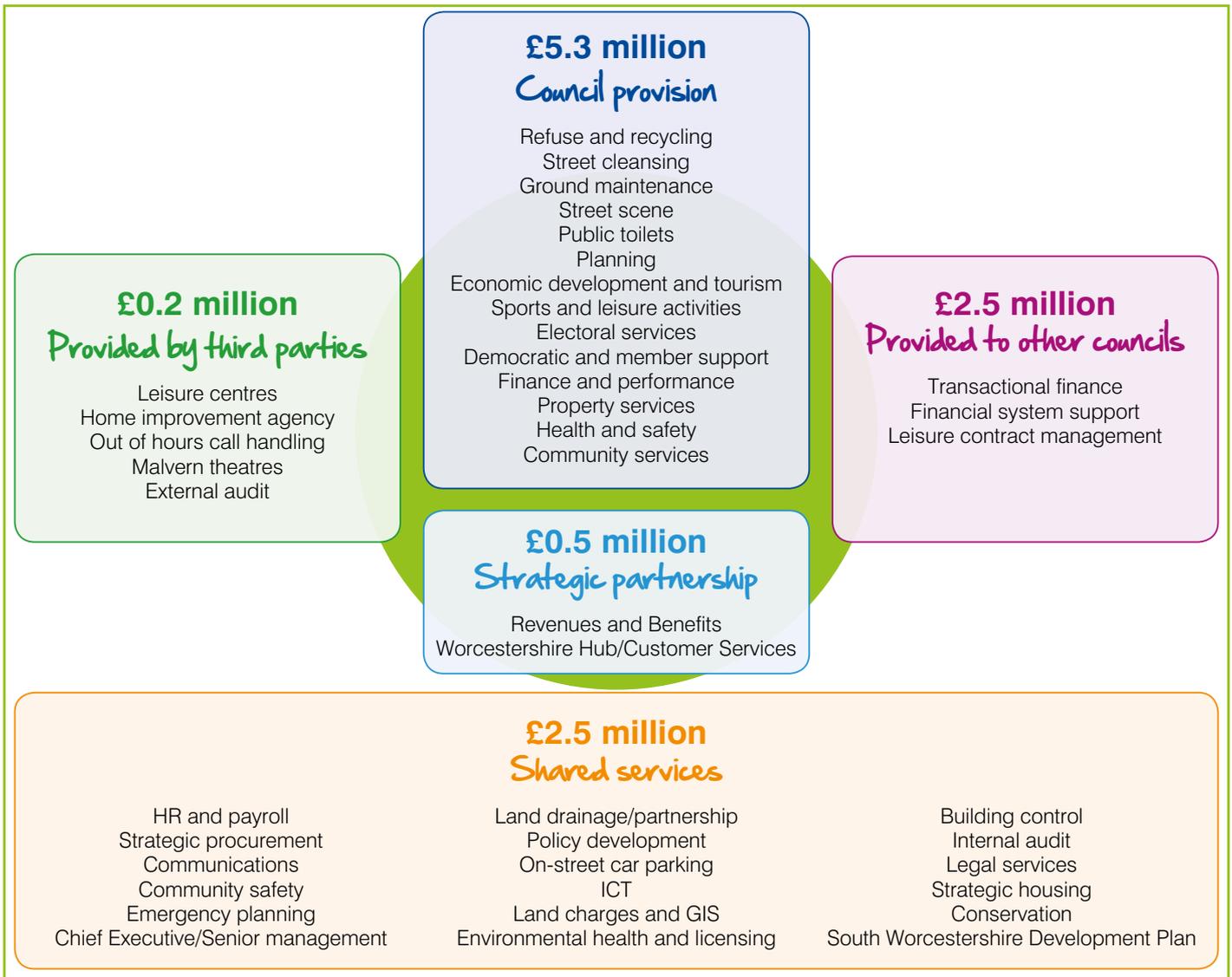
We have undergone significant managerial leadership change in recent years, most notably the

appointment of a joint Chief Executive/Managing Director with Wychavon and the creation of the joint SMT.

We have a proven track record of financial resilience and building a strong base on which to move forward. We aim to provide high quality services to residents, businesses and visitors whilst ensuring value for money. Our Council Tax is set at one of the lowest levels in the country and is the second lowest in Worcestershire. We operate with a lean workforce.

Our current business model is that services should be provided by whoever can provide the best mix of quality and price. This has resulted in a mixed economy with some services provided directly by us and some provided in partnership with other local authorities or private sector partners (see Appendix B). This model, which is summarised in **Figure 4**, has been very successful in reducing our costs whilst maintaining service levels.

Figure 4: Malvern Hills business model



Wychavon

We have a long history of operating as an innovative council, dating back to the mid-nineties when our political leaders were keen for us to approach our work as a business. Daily language and the way we operated shifted – entrepreneurial not municipal; a Managing Director not a Chief Executive; an Executive Board not a Cabinet.

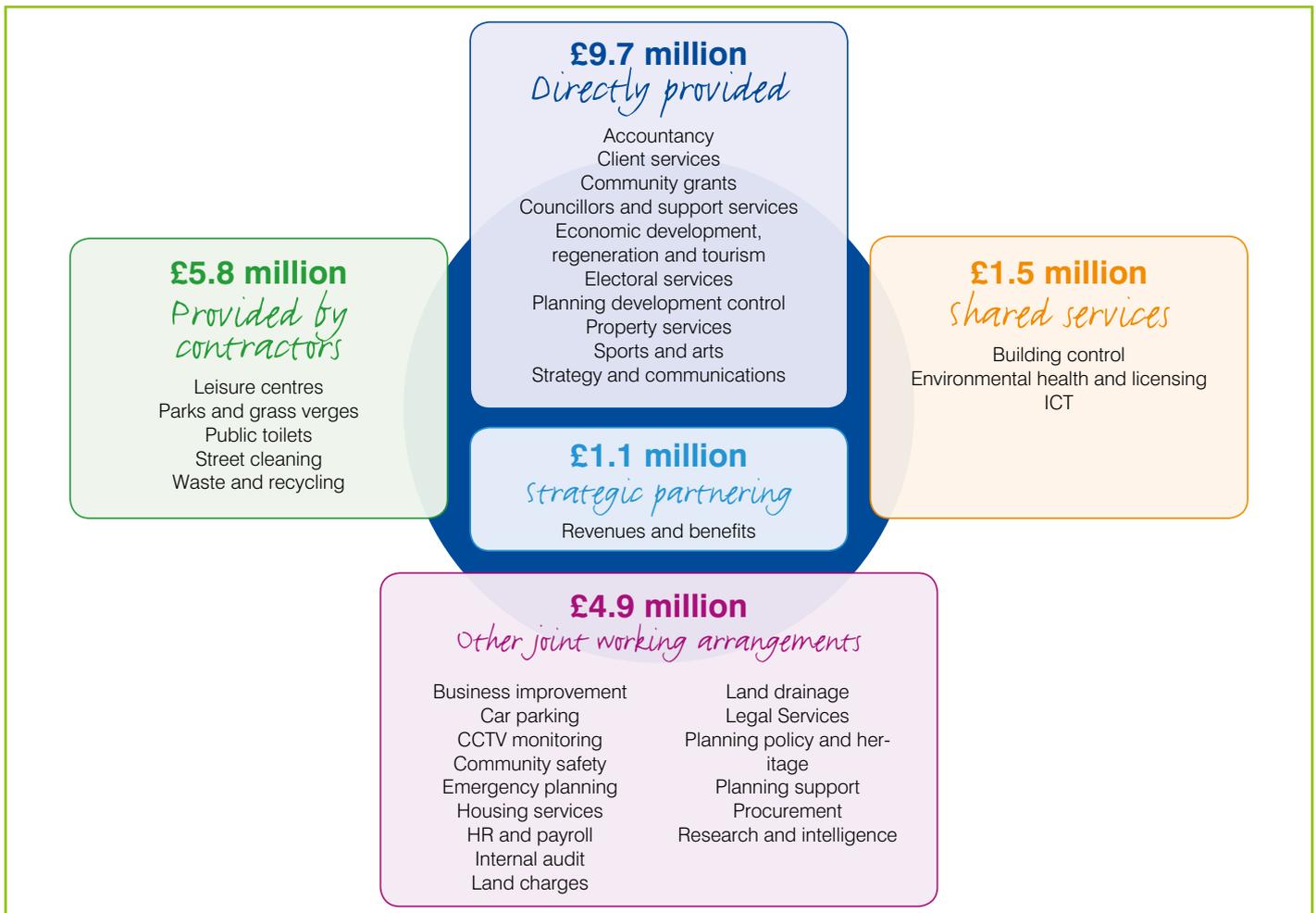
We are known for using our resources in an innovative way - investing in projects, working with others and making capital investments that not only generate a financial return but also support the economy, local facilities and green initiatives. We were one of the first councils to sell our housing stock and use the capital to invest in projects such as building a hospital and a Waitrose store, as well as developing the Droitwich canals and more recently buying and selling commercial land to

encourage business growth, inward investment and job creation. We welcome new ideas and calculated risk-taking.

For many years, we have operated a mixed economy model of service delivery, which is summarised in **Figure 5**. This has proved successful in both controlling and reducing our revenue costs and has resulted in a lean workforce.

We deliver some services directly and others through a range of shared service or joint working arrangements with other councils (see Appendix B). Our waste and recycling service, street cleaning, parks and verges maintenance and public toilet cleaning are delivered by contractors. Our leisure centres have been run by a not-for-profit trust for over 18 years.

Figure 5: Wychavon business model



3 Understanding of the place and priority setting

Both councils

Our corporate plans set out our ambitions and provide a clear direction to help us prioritise resources and deliver actions that benefit everyone living in, working in and visiting our districts. This is becoming increasingly important with fewer resources, but both councils have an approach to ensure ambitious, evidence-based strategic plans.

We base our corporate plans on four things: government expectations, local needs, residents' and partners' views, and what councillors and managers want us to do. The Malvern Hills **Knowing Our Communities** and **Knowing Wychavon Communities** reports provide a robust evidence base for developing our priorities and goals.

We have very open approaches to strategy development, including running workshops for councillors and managers, consulting residents and asking partners what they would like to see included.



The format of Malvern Hills' **Five Year Plan** and Wychavon's four year **strategy** is very similar too. Each contains three priorities, with improving the economy being a strong focus for both councils in recent years. These priorities are underpinned by a number of objectives or goals articulating the wider outcomes that we are seeking to achieve over the life times of the plans – for example delivering quality, affordable housing and supporting people most in need.

The actions or promises set out what we will deliver over and above the 'day job'. Both plans are refreshed every year to include new actions and promises replacing those that have been delivered. The **annual update of Malvern Hills' Five Year Plan** was approved in January. **Wychavon's annual strategy refresh and new promises for 2018/19** will be approved at the February Council meeting.

Both plans are summarised on one page posters so that residents, councillors and staff can easily see what we are trying to achieve. These are supported by longer documents setting out the rationale behind the choice of focus. We communicate our priorities and annual actions/promises to residents and partners through our websites, annual reports, GovDelivery emails, residents' magazines and in the annual Council Tax and Business Rates leaflets.

Both plans are underpinned by service plans, which add service-based actions that, combined with our strategic actions/promises, contribute to the delivery of our priorities. Service plans are also used to develop personal targets for staff.

Faced with a reducing Government grant, both councils have developed robust financial plans to achieve savings and income targets that align with the corporate plans. Further details are provided in section 7.

We have a good track record of delivering business transformation and efficiencies. Often we achieve this by working together, for example we jointly procured and deployed a new planning system across both councils. This has driven improved service performance as well as helping to contribute towards significant savings.

We also carried out a joint procurement exercise across both councils' waste and street cleaning services to test the market for savings.

At Malvern Hills, the waste service will continue to be delivered in-house. The market testing exercise and the imminent introduction of an alternate weekly collection for residual household waste will generate significant savings.

At Wychavon, we are about to implement a key change in the way we manage our waste, recycling and street cleaning contract. We will transfer responsibility for a number of current client-side functions to a contractor at the commencement of the new waste and street cleaning contract in April 2018. This will avoid duplication and create further efficiencies, and we are putting appropriate safeguards in place in terms of performance monitoring.

In the current climate there is always a balance to be struck between our ambitions and constraints - both financial and capacity. This is an on-going challenge for both councils. Prioritising our ambitions in our respective corporate plans is, therefore, a matter that we wish to explore for the future. This sits alongside our wish to ensure we have the right type of business planning for the next administrations after the current plans come to an end, as we know the operating context both nationally and locally will be different.



Malvern Hills

In April 2016 we launched our **Five Year Plan**, which outlines our vision, priorities and objectives, including the actions required to achieve these. Our vision is 'To make life better for everyone who lives, works in and experiences the Malvern Hills District.'

Our three main priorities are **building stronger and healthier communities, driving economic prosperity and growth and making the most of our superb environment**.

Our plan is updated annually for a rolling five year period and sets out a series of actions under each priority to help us deliver against each one. These range from the strategic purchasing of land to boost economic prosperity in the district and the long-term goal of achieving Green Flag status for Priory Park by December 2021, to working with partners to tackle the loneliness and social isolation that is felt by some of our elderly residents.

We use a range of methods to elicit residents' views. For example, in 2017 we received nearly 500 responses from surveys with residents using a variety of means including social media, focus groups and attendance at events to garner feedback. We have used **these views** to shape the Five Year Plan including actions across all of the priority areas.

We are keen to ensure that there are opportunities for all political groups to fully participate in strategy development.



Wychavon

Our four year **strategy** runs from April 2016 to March 2020. Our process to develop the strategy was open and involving. We reviewed the evidence about local needs, consulted residents, held a strategy debate with partners and ran workshops with the Executive Board, Overview and Scrutiny Committee, and other councillors and managers.

To help us make sense of all the evidence, views and expectations gathered we analysed 16 possible themes that could be included in our new strategy and ranked each against the key ingredients we base our strategy on. Taking the **results of this analysis** and the outcomes from the workshops, we developed a new purpose and three new priorities - **people**, **place** and **prosperity** - that are underpinned by seven goals. This process involved balancing evidenced needs against residents' priorities and political ambitions. For example, while building more homes to meet local needs was a low priority for residents, the evidence clearly demonstrated a need for more affordable housing, so our strategy contains a goal around this.

Our strategy contains a set of annually refreshed promises and 25 corporate success measures to help us keep track of progress towards the priorities and goals. There are currently 24 promises, ranging from investing up to £5 million in sport and leisure facilities and using our investments to support the creation of 400 new jobs, to setting out a plan for our direct involvement in housing provision and getting councillors out to meet residents and businesses in every ward.

As we emerge from a number of years of austerity, we need to be certain that our corporate strategy sets ambition in the right direction. We are relatively well-placed financially and we want to remain ambitious. We also want to use our corporate strategy to tackle some difficult issues, such as improving social mobility across the district.



4 Leadership of place

Both councils

Partnership working across public sector bodies is very strong in Worcestershire and is critical to the delivery of our challenges. We take a collaborative approach to economic growth, improvement of local services, and delivering efficiencies as well as maximising other opportunities such as boosting housing growth.

Malvern Hills and Wychavon sit within a three-tier local authority structure (county, district and parish). Together with Worcester City Council, they form the south Worcestershire districts. A number of public and voluntary agencies work on a south Worcestershire footprint, such as policing divisions, Clinical Commissioning Group and Citizens Advice Bureau. Other agencies work on a county wide footprint, such as the Worcestershire Local Enterprise Partnership (WLEP). The police and fire services work on a multi-county footprint.

There are good and mature relationships between the public bodies in the county. Leaders of the seven councils meet regularly as the Worcestershire Leaders' Board and, from time to time, involve others in their meetings, such as the Police and Crime Commissioner, WLEP, health commissioners and providers.



Both leaders play an active part in the work of the Leaders' Board, which the five Chief Executives in the county also attend. The main strategic matters considered by the Leaders' Board include reviewing and progressing our devolution priorities, data sharing, local government finance including Business Rates, One Public Estate, Local Transport Plan 4, children's services challenges and Syrian refugees. The WLEP Chief Executive also attends each meeting to brief the Leaders on forthcoming WLEP Board decisions.

In 2015/16, the Leaders and public sector partners built a **case for devolution** on a single county footprint. The vision had two clear goals:

- Faster economic growth through the creation of better jobs and increased productivity building on the **Strategic Economic Plan**.
- Better public sector reform to deliver and commission better services for and with our communities.

Notwithstanding the strong local support across the public and business sectors, the bid, as with many others nationally, did not progress in government. Although there was no appetite locally for an elected mayoral model, the six identified priority areas (connecting families, health and social care, public estates, infrastructure and investment, skills and innovation, and environment) are still progressing well. We have found that there has been no barrier to securing change and better outcomes.

Leaders are also members of a public/private sector think tank called the **Shenstone Group**. The group, which has been in existence since 2009, convenes leaders of place across the county from business, third sector, academic institutions, MPs and the public sector to consider 'big issues'. Issues debated in recent years have included areas of highest need across the county, which resulted in member champions being assigned to each of the six districts. Other areas include economy and infrastructure, environment, social and economic equality and Worcestershire's external image.

The Partnership Executive Group (PEG) is now a key body and has wide and comprehensive representation at Chief Executive level across major organisations in the county, including county and district councils, health commissioners and providers, higher and further education, the LEP, police and fire service and the voluntary sector. The Department for Work and Pensions is also represented.

Currently, PEG is overseeing three major Worcestershire-wide initiatives. These are:

- Data sharing – including the new Worcestershire Office of Data Analytics (WODA).
- **Connecting Families** – a strategic board that also has responsibility for the Children and Young People's action plan (CYPP), and reports to PEG.
- One Public Estate – PEG sits as the strategic board for Worcestershire One Public Estate Partnership (WOPEP) and the Programme Delivery Board reports to it. Our Chief Executive/ Managing Director chairs WOPEP.

In terms of leadership of place, there are number of current examples of cross-sector collaboration to seek major funding for the county. These include One Public Estate round six, the Housing Investment Fund (bids have been made for our districts) and the European Social Investment Fund (ESIF). In Malvern Hills, the **Route to the Hills** is a multi-partner project attracting significant lottery funding.

Worcestershire Local Enterprise Partnership (WLEP) is responsible for creating and delivering economic growth and jobs in the county through the delivery of a ten year **Strategic Economic Plan** (SEP). WLEP is working towards creating 25,000 jobs, increasing Gross Value Added (GVA) by £2.9 billion and contributing towards the delivery of 21,500 new homes by 2025.

Both councils play an active role in supporting the WLEP and the delivery of actions covered in the SEP. For example, Government Regional Growth Fund monies have benefitted a number of major employment and infrastructure projects in both districts. In Malvern Hills these include **Malvern Hills Science Park** and Worcester Southern Link Road, including the purchase of Park Farm. In Wychavon they include Vale Park in Evesham, **Worcester Six business park**, Pershore Northern Link Road and the Worcestershire Parkway station.

In addition to these capital investments, the councils contribute towards developing world-class skills and businesses. This includes both districts providing £75,000 to provide match funding to help deliver £8 million of EU funding to support business growth, new businesses, resource efficiency, developing new products and inward investment.

Along with Worcester City Council, both councils adopted the **South Worcestershire Development Plan** (SWDP) in February 2016. The plan aims to ensure that future development within south Worcestershire is well planned and managed effectively, whilst having a positive impact on the environment. The SWDP considers the long-term vision and objectives up to 2030, and includes policies for dealing with creating jobs and economic prosperity, meeting housing needs, transport and the environment. We have just commenced work on a review of the SWDP.

At a more local level, both councils support the development of Neighbourhood Plans. We have run events aimed at parish and town councils to both promote the concept of Neighbourhood Plans and to provide networking opportunities for those already preparing plans. Planning officers meet with community groups on request, provide advice and guidance and comment on the draft content of plans. Towards the end of the Neighbourhood Plan process it is our responsibility to manage and pay for the examination, referendum and adopt the plan if it is supported by the local community. There are currently six adopted Neighbourhood Plans in both districts with some 20 or so groups working on emerging plans.

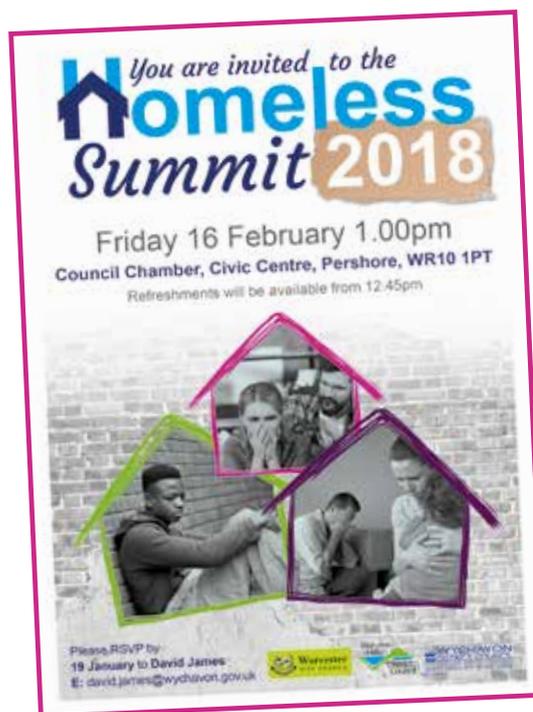
In February 2018, the two councils are holding a **homelessness summit**. This will bring partners together to hear about the changes that are to take place under the Homelessness Reduction Act, the impact of these changes and the importance of close partnership working in both our preparation and implementation.

The **Rural Communities Programme** has been running for three years in Wychavon and for the past two years in Malvern Hills. In that time, we have worked with over 30 parish and town councils and made over 800 referrals to services for vulnerable residents in rural areas. We have met with many parish councils, delivered door knocks and given feedback to the parish councils about the key issues that have emerged. Although this approach has proved very successful, it has been very resource-intensive. In Wychavon, we are now refocusing on closer work with parishes and community groups to identify and address needs in their communities and support them with developing practical projects.

We are always seeking to build on leadership of place and we don't shy away from taking the lead on tricky place-based issues that are not in our direct control. For example, Wychavon is convening a social mobility summit with key local stakeholders to gain a better understanding of the district's social mobility ranking, the reasons why it is so poor and what we can collectively do to improve it. Malvern Hills developed the '**SELFie Where's the HARM?**' film and teaching resource aimed at supporting schools, community groups and relevant professionals to raise awareness of the signs of early mental health issues amongst young people (see section 9 for more details).

Our challenges include engagement with county council colleagues to secure place-based improvements in our towns. Because of the significantly changing dynamic at a regional level with the West Midlands Combined Authority, we need to ensure we can influence growth and investment potential. The Policing Plan for West Mercia has resulted in previously devolved functions now being funded through the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner (OPCC), and others, such as rural crime, now being delivered by the OPCC directly. Another of our challenges is to ensure that community safety needs continue to be met in our districts.

Below we briefly outline how we work with parish and town councils and others in our districts. One of our challenges is how we can best support those parish and town councils that are less active, or have limited capacity to lead at a very local level.



Malvern Hills

There are 51 **parish and town councils** and three parish meetings in Malvern Hills. We publish a **parish newsletter** every six months and hold a regular parish forum with topics selected by the parish and town councils themselves. Recent topics included speeding, fostering and Neighbourhood Plans at the October 2017 meeting.



The **Malvern Hills Health and Well-being Partnership** includes key organisations that work together to improve the health and well-being of residents. These partners have developed a five year plan (2016-2021) as a district response to addressing local areas of need and the countywide health and well-being priorities including mental health, alcohol and physical activity.

We support and enable volunteering within the district in a number of ways such as the providing grants to organisations including community transport providers, hosting a biannual volunteering forum for voluntary and community organisations to provide support and discuss best practice, and celebrating volunteers through the **Our Malvern Hills Community Awards**.

Wychavon

There are 66 **parish and town councils** and seven parish meetings in Wychavon. We publish a **Parish Matters newsletter** twice a year and hold periodic **events for parish and town councils** on a range of topics including affordable housing, community renewable energy projects, Council Tax and Neighbourhood Plans.

We have ear-marked £3.5 million of our **New Homes Bonus** monies for reinvestment in local communities where new development has taken place. We have invited parish and town councils to submit proposals for spending New Homes Bonus allocations for their area. To date, we have paid out over £1.4 million and approved around 200 different projects, ranging from benches, defibrillators and vehicle-activated speed signs to village hall improvements, play areas and other community facilities.

Our **Localism and Community Funding Advisory Panel** sponsors **Partners Together events**, which take place once or twice a year and bring together public, private and voluntary sector organisations to explore our response to key issues and challenges affecting the district. Topics covered so far include culture, skills, ageing well, health, housing and tourism. One of the outcomes from the health event was **Wychavon Wellbeing Week** (see section 9 for more details) and following the tourism event, we will be developing a visitor action plan over the coming months.



5 Organisational leadership and governance

Both councils

While the two councils are independent organisations with their own political structures, councillors from both organisations work together where a joint approach makes sound business sense. For example, in 2015 we established a **Joint Working Advisory Board** (JWAB) to undertake assessments of joint working opportunities for both councils and to make recommendations to Malvern Hills' Executive Committee and Wychavon's Executive Board.

Both councils, along with Worcester City Council, each appoint five councillors to the **South Worcestershire Joint Advisory Panel** (JAP). The JAP's role is to examine a wide range of issues and make recommendations to the three councils relating to the **South Worcestershire Development Plan**. This includes reviewing the Local Development Schemes, agreeing timetabling of Supplementary Planning Documents, considering future plan-making and developing Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) charging schedules.

Our joint senior management team (SMT) meets together on a fortnightly basis with the location rotating between Malvern and Pershore. Meetings are inclusive and the chairs of each council's Service Manager teams also attend.

24 Service Managers underpin the senior managers and their roles are summarised in Appendix C. Some are joint roles and others are council-specific. Service Managers from both councils meet together on a monthly basis in order to share information and provide input into the strategic direction of the two councils.

Each Service Manager is responsible for devising a service plan with targets that will seek to ensure we meet our statutory obligations and strategic objectives. While the format of the Malvern Hills service plans and Wychavon service delivery plans differs, both set a clear direction for services so that managers and staff know what is expected of them and so members can see the priorities for the year. They also show how each service unit contributes to the delivery of our corporate plans.

We have recently agreed a suite of shared HR policies and procedures in order to enable consistent management of staff regardless of which council they are employed by.

We have a healthy range of staff engagement mechanisms. Key messages from SMT meetings are circulated via fortnightly **staff bulletins** and via team meetings. We hold staff briefings led by the Chief Executive/Managing Director several times a year. At **Malvern Hills** we also hold one session at our depot for the waste and recycling operatives to attend. **Wychavon staff briefings** are filmed to allow those members of staff unable to attend a physical briefing to remain well-informed.

Both councils have staff forums that meet regularly and have influenced a range of actions and run charity fundraising events. We send out quarterly staff magazines – **Team Talk** at Malvern Hills and **ASPIRE** at Wychavon.

Our joint Monitoring Officer (MO) is responsible for reviewing and updating the two Constitutions, and whilst Council is responsible for approving any amendments, the MO has the delegated authority to make minor changes. Each Constitution provides a pragmatic basis from which we can remain agile enough to act decisively balanced alongside the need for effective challenge and scrutiny.

We have well-developed and refreshed corporate performance management systems. We report on our performance four times a year through Malvern Hills' **Quarterly Performance Reviews** and Wychavon's **Signals of Success reports**. These reports summarise progress against the actions/promises in our corporate plans, key success measures, partner performance and other matters. The Malvern Hills report also includes risks. The **Malvern Hills'** and **Wychavon annual reports** look back at how we performed in the previous year and forward to some of our plans for the year ahead.

Malvern Hills

As already mentioned, Malvern Hills District Council is a small rural district with a 'fourth option' style administration based upon a politically balanced committee system. This system provides for a certain level of flexibility and enables opposition membership of the **Executive Committee**.

A Leader of the Council is appointed every 12 months at the Annual Council meeting. The Leader then selects a number of Portfolio Holders (see Figure 1) to oversee the strategic direction for the services within their **portfolio**. They are supported by SMT, which meets with the Portfolio Holders as a group on a monthly basis to discuss major strategic issues facing the council. As part of their organisational leadership role, the Portfolio Holders have set out their **top 12 priorities** which currently concern policy, development and service delivery plans.

Corporate Risk Registers are agreed by SMT and are regularly assessed by our **Audit Committee**. Every quarter progress is reported via Overview and Scrutiny Committee (O&S) to our Executive Committee in the form of where any areas of strategic risk can be readily highlighted and reviewed.

Member-led scrutiny, challenge and performance management of the council's functions is led by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, which meets monthly. The latest **O&S annual report** details the areas scrutinised by the committee in 2016/17. Topics are chosen by the members of the committee, and scrutiny is conducted via a range of channels from presentations and follow-up questioning at committee meetings, to more detailed examinations via the establishment of O&S Task and Finish Groups. Portfolio Holders are required to attend O&S Committees at least once a year to present and take questions on their portfolio responsibilities.

There are number of opportunities for non-executive members to inform and influence decision making. Members are invited to attend **strategy workshops** to put forward potential objectives for the Five Year Plan and member surveys are conducted to gather both qualitative and quantitative information about specific issues. The Leader (in consultation with the Leader of the Opposition) can also establish a

Council Policy Group (CPG) to discuss and advise on a specific aspect of policy formulation, such as the **CPG established in 2017** concerning the imminent move to alternate weekly collections of domestic waste and recycling.

Councillor-officer relationships are supported in a number of ways. The foundation for our decision making processes lies with our **Constitution**, and enshrined within it are the protocols and codes of conduct for both Members and officers based upon the Seven Principles of Public Life. To ensure we adhere to these principles, we share information with all Members via a number of avenues, from the fortnightly email **round-ups** from the Chief Executive, to Member information briefings about issues such as the **county strategic housing plan** or the **homeless prevention service**. There is also a cross-party Members' Liaison Group, which focusses on member development and training priorities.

Our staff survey results indicate that Member-officer relationships have improved in recent years, feedback on this is welcome.



Wychavon

Wychavon has a Leader and cabinet style administration, which was introduced following the Local Government Act 2000. This is formed by the majority party.

The Council appoints a Leader for a four year term of office that expires at the Annual Council following the main district council elections. The Leader is responsible for all executive functions and decides how they will be carried out. The Leader appoints a Deputy Leader and a number of Portfolio Holders overseeing the various services, and together these form the Executive Board (see Figure 2). SMT supports the Executive Board and individual Board members meet regularly with the SMT members responsible for aspects of their portfolios.

As part of their organisational leadership role, the Executive Board has set out its top ten priorities. These cover policy, development and service matters, including investment in housing, strategic development sites and promoting Wychavon as a sustainable tourist destination.

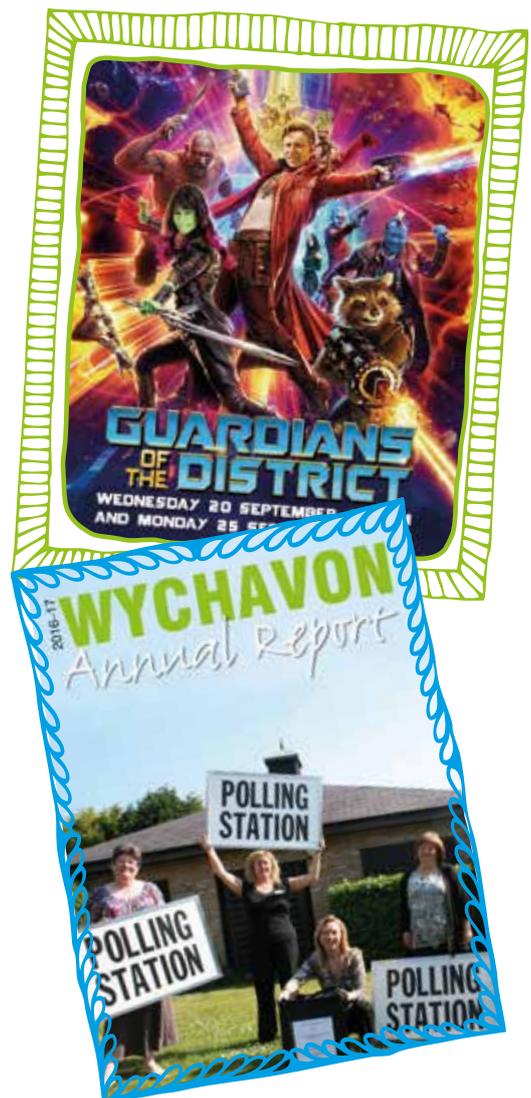
The Council also appoints an Overview and Scrutiny Committee which is an important role in the Council's governance structure as it provides challenge to the Executive Board and SMT helping to drive improvement. The committee acts as a 'critical friend' to the council and can look at any area that is causing concern or is an important issue for local residents. Examples of scrutiny reviews include **planning enforcement** and future provision of public space CCTV monitoring.

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee produces an **annual report** which details the areas scrutinised by the Committee during the year. Areas for consideration are chosen by members of the Committee or residents and can take various forms, from presentations and questioning at Committee meetings, to a more detailed investigation via the establishment of a scrutiny team.

The Executive Board has created three **Advisory Panels (Localism and Community Funding, Rural Communities and Economy, and Town Regeneration and Economy)** to help it to develop and implement policy. The Panels, which each

comprise six non-executive district councillors and three community co-optees, cover a wide range of issues and ensure a local focus to our work.

There are many other opportunities for non-executive members to inform and influence decision making. Members are welcome to attend and express their views at any meeting of the Executive Board, Overview and Scrutiny Committee and other committees. There are also regular **strategy workshops** and both non-executive and non-scrutiny members are also invited to become members of scrutiny teams, particularly if they have an interest in or knowledge of the subject being discussed. Training sessions take place on finance/budget matters so that non-executive members are better able to take part in discussions at the Executive Board and Council meetings when the annual budget is agreed.



The Member-Officer relationship is supported in a number of ways. The Council's **Constitution** underpins the decision making processes and codes of conduct for both Members and officers. Information is shared with all Members via a number of different routes from the fortnightly **Jack's Round-up** or local Member briefings on specific issues. Slides from training/information events are also saved on the modern.gov committee system and can be accessed by all Members whether they attended the training or not.

Our **corporate risk register** is reviewed approximately twice a year or whenever there is a significant change affecting our risk exposure. The team that meets to review the register comprises the Managing Director, Deputy Managing Director, Joint Head of Economy and Communities, ICT Service Manager, Head of Internal Audit Shared Service or their representative and the Deputy Leader/Portfolio Holder for Resources. The revised corporate risk register is then reported to the **Audit Committee** for further consideration.

In addition a **full risk analysis** accompanies the budget proposals for the year ahead when being considered by the Executive Board. New proposals, particularly in respect of significant corporate projects such as a **development opportunity in Evesham town centre**, will always be accompanied by a risk commentary. Whilst we are keen to understand and manage risks, we are far from risk-averse where the financial or community benefits justify the level of risk.

Our challenges looking forward are ensuring that we set realistic targets (see Section 8a), and being better at accountability for performance.



6 Capacity to deliver

Both councils

We know we can't deliver any of our ambitions without strong leadership, a team of motivated managers and staff, and active councillors.

We have adopted a set of shared **values** across both organisations. These articulate what our customers can expect when dealing with us and what we expect from our staff. The style of management and leadership at every level is crucial to living up to our values.

We have high levels of staff satisfaction. Our 2016 staff survey results showed that 79.5% of Malvern Hills staff enjoy their jobs and nearly 70% are proud to work for the council. 86% of Wychavon staff enjoy their job, 88% rate the council as a good or excellent employer and 82% are proud to work for the council.

We run biannual joint SMT/Service Manager away day development sessions. The focus of these is on developing and embedding an effective joint working culture and creating time and space, away from the day job or desk, to think strategically and creatively.



We have developed a **new annual review process** for staff with a greater emphasis on the quality of discussion and training and development. Annual reviews are underpinned by regular one-to-one meetings between employees and their managers.

We have also introduced a new suite of core HR policies, underpinned by training for all managers. We are currently developing a talent framework incorporating workforce planning based on analysis of individual development aspirations; known and anticipated up-coming retirements; critical posts and succession gaps. We are still in the early days of this approach.

We measure sickness absence monthly and report the figures as part of a wider HR metrics report to SMT each quarter. Service managers receive monthly Bradford Factor reports for their areas and are supported by HR to follow up cases exceeding Bradford Factor trigger points. We have also introduced biannual formal reporting of pay supplements, diversity and recruitment data.

Both councils have introduced the 'EverythingDiSC' behavioural assessment profiles to increase awareness and understanding of communication styles and approaches. SMT and Service Managers have all received DiSC profiles and taken part in workshops and follow-up sessions to extend individual and corporate learning from this tool. In addition the tool is available for use by teams to support their development and facilitate the resolution of communication issues.

We operate an on-line e-learning platform (South Worcestershire E-Learning Lounge) from which we provide a suite of courses and a significant amount of formal and informal CPD takes places across both councils. As part of our developing talent and development framework all supervisors and front line managers are encouraged to attend formal training (Step Up). Those keen to develop into leadership roles are invited to join a leadership development programme (Accelerate: Steps to Leadership).

Both councils are members of the **West Midlands Coaching and Mentoring Pool**, with three of our managers being active coaches in the pool. We actively promote the pool although take-up has been disappointing to date.

We work closely with colleagues from other councils and partner organisations to ensure our services deliver best practice and value for money for our residents. We have access to a wide range of professional bodies, such as RICS, CIPFA, Law Society, RTPI and the LGA, and use this to review best practice, new concepts and ideas and to compare and benchmark services. We also make use of a wide range of informal networks across the county.

We currently participate in the annual county-wide **Worcestershire Viewpoint survey** which enables us to benchmark residents' perceptions of us against some neighbouring councils and identify local issues. We participate in the quarterly LG Inform benchmarking survey, and use system user groups to seek ideas, comparisons and identify process improvements. We subscribe to a number of organisations and receive communications from advisory bodies such as Knowledge Hub, LG Inform, Sparse, LG Futures and LGA (Improvement and Innovation Bulletin).

Our external auditors, Ernst & Young, provide a thorough annual assessment of our financial management and value for money and our insurers undertake periodic risk management assessments/ risk reduction reviews into specific areas at each council.

Both councils maximise the value of Section 106 contributions from developers for public open space, sport and recreation enhancement and improvement. Since April 2012, over £4.1 million has been secured for the Malvern Hills district. We have funded a number of projects with these contributions, including play areas in Welland and Malvern Wells, BMX/skate facilities in Martley and Tenbury, sports facilities at Dyson Perrins, Malvern Cube and The Chantry School, and public open space in Hallow and Great Witley.

Since April 2012, Wychavon has also secured significant Section 106 contributions, including a contribution of £250,000 to pay for resurfacing and improvement works the hockey pitch at Droitwich leisure centre, £229,945 to redevelop a

field in Honeybourne for sport and leisure use and £288,000 for a **range of rural projects**. Developer contributions are currently being used to improve sports and leisure facilities in our towns.

Critical to maximising resources is the approach we adopt to working in partnership to achieve shared priorities. Examples include each council hosting a public health employed Health Improvement Coordinator and the annual revenue funding we receive via the Sports Partnership Herefordshire and Worcestershire.

As already highlighted, both districts have a successful working relationship with the WLEP and the county council, which has helped attract a significant amount of Government and business funding that helps support the local economy.

We work with housing colleagues and other partners across the county through the Worcestershire Strategic Housing Officers Group and the Worcestershire Strategic Housing Partnership to enhance services that are made available for some of our more vulnerable customers. We have been successful in attracting Government funding to the county including for victims of domestic abuse, rough sleepers, those at risk of rough sleeping and migrants, who are often living in accommodation of a poor standard.

We have a dedicated Homeless Prevention Officer as a result of the rough sleeper funding who is undertaking work to improve our prevention tools for singles and couples at risk of homelessness within the districts. We have also been commissioned by Worcestershire children's services to provide an individual district based Young People Pathway Worker to undertake preventative work with 16 to 23 year olds facing homelessness and to help secure accommodation and the right support provision where homelessness occurs. This work has reduced the number of young people accessing statutory services. The county council has delegated funding to the district councils to commission an outreach service for singles and couples at risk of homelessness across the county, this is providing some very positive outcomes.

The joint working across both councils has, without doubt, increased service resilience and created new opportunities. Looking forward, however, we want to maintain our capacity to meet demand,

develop workforce skills and transfer more earning from one organisation to another. Our training and development offer needs to be better and this is a challenge for us. We also need to continue to be alert to recruitment and retention issues in some professions.

Malvern Hills

We have an excellent track record of securing external funding as well as drawing upon a wide range of expertise and knowledge from partner organisations, to support the delivery of our priorities and objectives. For example as a leading member of **Route to the Hills** Partnership, which we chair and project manage, we have secured a grant of £482,000 from the Heritage Lottery Fund for an exciting project to make special parts of Malvern more obvious to everyone and to help invigorate tourism and the local economy. We have also secured funding for the **Malvern Hills Science Park** development, including £4 million WLEP funding for phase five, which is currently under construction.

A significant contribution to our Medium Term Financial Plan was made through the reprourement of our leisure facilities resulting in working with a new partner, Freedom Leisure, and a net revenue improvement of around £6.7 million over a 15 year period from April 2015. In addition to the improved revenue position, the procurement exercise has yielded significant capital investment of around £1.8 million in the leisure facilities, as well as transferring our facility maintenance responsibilities onto the leisure operator. A proportion of the annual income received is directly transferred into our capital reserves to meet future capital costs, thus providing financial stability in the long term.



We support the development of community capacity through the provision of grant funding and property-linked management agreements to key community and voluntary organisations in support of the delivery of vital local services. Additionally, we also offer support and advice to community groups to enable them to secure and manage external funding themselves, for community benefit, including most noticeably parish councils and sports clubs.

Our challenges are to improve staff sickness rates while accepting they are not problematic to service delivery, ensuring that we continue to develop effective ways of informing and engaging staff, including those based at our depot, and using the skills of Members better with a comprehensive training programme.



Wychavon

We recognise that we don't have to do everything and given our reduced capacity we are more than happy to work with others, such as the community and voluntary sector. Examples include community litter picks, our **annual community grants programme** and providing annual funding to the Citizens Advice Bureau and volunteer centres. This in addition to the distribution of **New Homes Bonus** to parish councils (see section 4).

We have supported local horticulture businesses with the development of the **Growers United Football Charity** since 2012. This charity has tapped into football as a way towards creating

greater community spirit and cohesion between the many international workers in local horticulture and the community. The highlight is an annual football tournament that last year involved over 200 players. To date, the charity has raised over £100,000 for local charities and has also had the benefit of improving contact with and between the businesses.

We offer support and advice to community groups to enable them to secure and manage external funding themselves, including most noticeably parish councils and sports clubs. We work with a range of partners to deliver sports, art and youth programmes as well as directly running a **Youth Bus**. We run the annual **Community Recognition Awards** to celebrate people who volunteer, coach or help others in the district.

The most important way we have increased capacity in recent years is through the use of shared services. We have a number of shared services operating across south Worcestershire (see Appendix B) and wider, which have reduced costs, increased performance and improved resilience. A good example of improved resilience is from the payroll service - a small service but one that illustrates the point well. As part of the HR shared service, payroll is now provided by Wychavon to both Malvern Hills and Worcester City Councils, requiring two FTE's and therefore greater resilience.



We welcome external support and challenge and use it to inform our thinking and generate improvement and innovation. Since 2011, we've had a close relationship with **Elmbridge Borough Council** in Surrey and the two councils have carried out several reciprocal **peer review** visits that have provided useful insights and led to a number of improvements. We undergo an annual Customer Service Excellence review and have recently retained our Investors in People (IIP) gold status. We have also benefitted from working with a range of expert organisations. For example, our work with the **Design Council** led to us produce a book, '**Grow in Wychavon**', which shared the stories of over 50 businesses to inspire the entrepreneurs and leaders of tomorrow. Our **Town Regeneration and Economy Advisory Panel** is currently working with **People & Places** to better understand trends in the district's three towns.

Looking ahead, our challenges are to retain our IIP Gold Status within the next 12 months and satisfy ourselves that all our staff are having annual reviews and regular one-to-ones with their managers. We need to prepare for the next administration with a four-year member development offer rather than just focusing on initial induction training after the election.



7 Financial planning and viability

Malvern Hills

We have a proven track record of managing our finances to ensure financial sustainability at a time of unprecedented reductions in funding.

The financial environment that we work within, including the key risks and our chosen business model, can be found in our **Business Plan 2018 - 2023**. This plan brings together the financial imperatives from our **Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP)** and our **Five Year Plan**, setting a clear blueprint for how the council will be managed. The business plan then forms the framework from which the annual budget is constructed and Council Tax levels for the new year are approved.

In the past ten years, we have made significant savings whilst protecting front line services as far as possible. Reserves have been rebuilt and we have been able to invest in our core priorities as set out in our Five Year Plan, particularly in economic development. We have general balances of just over £3 million at 31 March 2017. We have a further £7 million in earmarked reserves to cover known future commitments. Of the earmarked reserves, £2 million is Section 106/developer contributions held pending schemes coming forward and £2 million is to fund future capital investment. **Our Statement of Accounts** for 2016/17 contains more information.

The Business Plan details that £950,000 of savings per annum are required by the end of the plan, together with our actions for achieving them. We have already generated direct savings in the delivery of services of over £4.7 million per annum since 2010/11. The Business Plan enables us to plan well in advance for changes that need to be made to achieve our financial targets. This has the added benefit of ensuring that in-year budgetary projections are always over-achieved, and the resulting underspends contribute to our balances, which in turn aids financial sustainability.

Our current financial risks are set out in the Business Plan and include risks around Business Rates retention in terms of volatility and the Fairer Funding Review, future levels of inflation and the impact of the National Living Wage, the impact

Brexit may have on the economy and future treasury decisions and the uncertainty regarding the future of New Homes Bonus.

The MTFP, Business Plan and budget are all subject to member scrutiny before adoption. We undertake monthly budget monitoring with Service Managers and the results are reported to SMT. We also report quarterly to the Executive Committee on a full range of financial indicators. We report financial and service performance to the Overview and Scrutiny Committees on a quarterly basis.

Council Tax rates are the second lowest in Worcestershire, although, apart from two years of freezes, they have been increased annually to ensure that we do not need to cut front line services. Whilst the tax base is growing our Business Rates base is by far the lowest in Worcestershire and has not seen significant growth since the retention of Business Rates was introduced.

Wychavon

Managing our finances effectively is vital to the successful delivery of our priorities and goals. Our Medium Term Financial Strategy, known as the Money Plan, is now fully integrated within our **Grow, Save, Charge Business Plan**, which creates a strong link between our finances and strategy.

We developed our first Grow, Save, Charge business plan in 2013. The business plan sets out our response to reductions in our Government grant and how we will meet the challenges this presents. Our three-pronged approach includes making savings in terms of efficiencies and reductions to services where these were deemed acceptable, charging more where residents are prepared to pay, and most importantly growing what we do by carrying out work for others and providing services to significantly more homes and businesses.

We have healthy general balances of £8 million at 31 March 2017. We have a further £34 million in earmarked reserves to cover known future commitments. Of the earmarked reserves,

£15 million is Section 106/developer contributions held pending schemes coming forward and £9 million is to repay internal debt raised to pay for Evesham town centre development. Our **Statement of Accounts for 2016/17** contains more information.

The latest **Money Plan** projects a deficit of over £500,000 in 2022/23 before further Grow, Save, Charge budget reductions. Total savings to date from Grow, Save, Charge are over £5 million per year, but we do not feel that the current target savings can be relied upon to completely close the gap in 2022/23. It is important, therefore, that further Grow, Save, Charge reductions are identified, not only to address this deficit but also to address any further changes which worsen our financial position over the medium term.

A significant part of our Grow, Save, Charge savings to date has been from retained Business Rates growth. This amounts to £750,000 per year currently. Savings have also been significant following joint working/shared services, other efficiency initiatives and alternative income streams from a range of sources, from property development to the expansion of the garden waste service. Going forward, a new waste contract starting in April 2018 will achieve savings of at least £500,000 per year, representing another over achievement of the Grow, Save, Charge target.

In addition to an increase in the Business Rates rates base, we have also seen significant increases in domestic properties over the past few years. This has resulted in New Homes Bonus payments of around £4 million per year and strong growth in the Council Tax base. Wychavon's Council Tax is the lowest in the county and one of the lowest nationally.

Our current financial risks were set out in the **budget report** to the Executive Board in November 2017 and updated in the February 2018 **budget report**. These include risks around Business Rates retention in terms of volatility and a potential system reset, future pay awards and the impact of the National Living Wage, a reduction in income for our demand-led services, such as planning, pressure on services, for example housing following the Homelessness Reduction Act, and the uncertainty regarding the future of New Homes Bonus.

Our financial position is well understood by members and managers. The fact that our position

is relatively healthy compared with other councils is appreciated, but so is the need to continue to find efficiency and other savings as our Government grant disappears completely. More importantly, the risks we face, which could change our financial position, are well known and are discussed regularly with managers and leading councillors.

We carry out budget monitoring monthly and the results are reported to SMT and **Audit Committee**. The headlines also incorporated within the quarterly Signals of Success performance report.

We are well known for our innovative approach to property investments. This approach pre-dated the current rush by councils to invest for a return. We do not borrow to invest, will only invest within Wychavon and will not acquire assets purely for a financial return. There are many developments within Wychavon where we have invested to make a difference to local communities and not just to our finances. These include employment, leisure, retail and health facilities. The establishment of a **strategic land investment fund** is a further example of our commitment to investing to support council priorities over a longer timeframe.

Both councils

In summary, both councils have robust financial planning underpinned by business plans which bring our MTFPs and the corporate plans together. Both councils have demonstrably benefitted from the joint working from a financial perspective and this is reflected in our business plans and shown in Appendix B.

There is a commonality in terms of Member and officer engagement with financial issues across both councils. Both councils recognise, however, that there needs to be a debate on what type of business planning approaches is sustainable beyond the current administrations.

Malvern Hills retains the risk of future uncertainty about New Homes Bonus. In addition, the employment land supply needed to facilitate business rate growth could be quicker than at present.

For Wychavon, the financial position is solid but we will need to consider what more we can do for our residents as well as keeping our focus on economic growth.

8 Specific areas of focus

In this section we provide more detail about the four specific areas of focus we have identified for our peer team to give us feedback on.

a) Strategy and planning (both councils)

We have set out our approach to strategic planning in section 5, and our approach to business and financial planning is explained in section 7.

We are aware that the approach taken to both corporate planning and business planning has been a successful one in each council. Our business plans give us confidence that the aspirations set out in our corporate plans can be cross referenced to the medium-term financial planning of each council. In a changing local government context, however, we will need to set out how we intend to approach future strategic planning, taking full account of any risks.

Wychavon finds itself in a strong financial position and where most other councils are focused on viability issues and identifying savings, the bulk of Wychavon's savings work is done and a balanced budget going forward is within reach. It is only right, therefore, that we should set new targets ahead of the end of the current Grow, Save, Charge business plan period. These ambitions may include supporting other public and voluntary sector organisations to provide better services for our residents, further support for our businesses and growing alternative income streams further to avoid future increases in Council Tax.

Likewise, Malvern Hills has been able to set balanced budgets while being very focused on securing efficiencies and savings. The pillars of the business plan around income generation, investment and growth, partnership and service, and efficiencies will achieve financial stability for the council. However, with limited capacity, we need to use our resources well and articulate where we should focus.

Therefore, in summary, with four and five year corporate plans in place, we would value some feedback about how we should develop our approach to business and service planning in the

longer term? Can we improve our approach to strategy development and the mix of consultation, evidence and councillors' and managers' input?

b) Developing our economy (both councils)

The economy is the number one priority for both councils and we are spending significant time and resources in this area. Some of the key objectives, set out below, are similar across both councils.

- **Bring forward land and premises for business to grow**

For our districts to thrive we need to provide the sites and buildings that businesses tell us they need for their future prosperity. Existing successful businesses have told us that they need readily available sites, preferably freehold, to enable them to build bespoke premises and therefore stay in the area.

In Malvern Hills, we have directly invested in the successful growth of **Malvern Hills Science Park** and the release of land at Tenbury Business Park. In addition, we have purchased land at Blackmore Park (Malvern) in order to help release land for future employment use. In partnership with Worcestershire County Council and WLEP we are seeking to secure land (4.5 hectares) that will enable the substantial expansion of the Science Park. Elsewhere in the district, a range of employment sites are identified in the SWDP as part of large-scale mixed use sites. Unfortunately these are proving slow to come forward.



In Wychavon, a wide range of employment sites in the SWDP have been developed in recent years with significant growth at business park locations such as **Worcester Six**, Vale Park, Keytec 7, Hartlebury Trading Estate and Stonebridge Cross. Whilst much of this investment has been delivered by private sector property developers, it has often been stimulated by the strategic investments made by Wychavon with the purchase of employment land at Vale Park (14 hectares) and Interbrook (three hectares) and infrastructure investment at Worcester Six business park.



- **Develop the skills of our young people.**

There is a growing shortage of skills in our priority growth sectors, which include cyber-security, engineering and agri-tech. Consequently we are keen to work with local employers and educational establishments to ensure that young people are given a greater opportunity to develop skills and careers in these sectors.

In response we have allocated staff and financial support to encourage businesses to take on apprentices and graduates and provided and promoted work experience placements. We have supported job fairs, school enterprise advisors, careers events and school visits. We are also

represented on the advisory boards of Evesham, Malvern Hills and Pershore further education colleges.

- **Improve our infrastructure and broadband speed.**

Businesses tell us that the physical time and difficulties involved in getting to and from our districts can act as a barrier to investment and attracting staff. We also know that superfast broadband and mobile telephone coverage is crucial to business success so that they can compete on an equal footing with other better connected areas.

Both councils are partners in **Superfast Worcestershire** and Worcestershire Digital Partnership. This is delivering superfast broadband to 83% of premises in Malvern Hills and 89% of premises in Wychavon. We are supporting initiatives to improve mobile telephone coverage across both districts and are supporting a Worcestershire LEP application for a 5G test bed to be developed at Malvern Hills Science Park.

In terms of physical infrastructure, we have both successfully supported the county council and WLEP in attracting funding for the new Carrington Bridge (£53 million), Pershore Northern Link Road (£11 million) and new Worcestershire Parkway station (£8.3 million). In addition, Highways England has recently completed a smart motorway between junctions 4a to 6 of the M5 and in 2018 will undertake improvements to junction six.

Wychavon is also a member of the cross region A46 Steering Group, which is lobbying for improvements to this nationally important trunk road.

Both councils are also contributing towards the county council's Active Corridor initiatives which promote increased cycling and walking opportunities. The development of Boardman Bikes new headquarters and performance centre at Evesham is acting as a stimulus to this activity.

- **Areas of specialism**

Both councils target support towards those business sectors that are especially clustered in each district. Malvern has been a centre for technology research since World War 2, as currently exemplified with QinetiQ's Malvern Technology Centre. Over time, this centre has

resulted in the attraction of a highly skilled workforce and has helped support a large number of spin-off technology businesses. To help promote Malvern Hills as a centre for innovation we have helped deliver a proof of concept programme supporting new products and services in local businesses, provided partnership support for the annual week long Malvern Festival of Innovation, delivered a TEDx Malvern event and supported the development of Malvern Hills Science Park.

The agri-tech sector, based around food growing and supply, is a key part of the Wychavon economy, especially around the Vale of Evesham. It is a sector that has attracted substantial innovation and investment in recent years. We have supported the sector in a number of ways including the provision of networking opportunities, awareness of business grant and training opportunities and recently with the opening of the National Centre for Excellence in Horticulture (£5.8 million) at Pershore College.

We welcome feedback from our peers in response to the following issues:

- Are we doing the right things to make the most impact in terms of creating new jobs, expanding our business base and developing our workforce?
- Are there other interventions we should be making based on successes elsewhere?
- Whilst the two economic development teams work well together, is there scope for more joint working?

c. Affordable and rural housing delivery and homelessness (Wychavon)

Wychavon is in the top 50 most rural local authorities in the country. The delivery of affordable housing is one of our priorities and there is a good level of affordable housing supply within the district with 231 units being delivered in 2016/17, of which 103 were in rural areas (45%). This is partly due to the development management process and the application of now adopted SWDP policies for affordable housing.

Over recent years there has been a lot of development activity and a number of large sites, including strategic sites, are still in the process of coming forward. To a significant degree we rely on this source of new affordable homes to meet our housing needs and in particular the needs of those households who are threatened with, or at risk of, becoming homeless. However, this is not to the exclusion of utilising other innovative mechanisms such as community land trusts, supporting exception sites and working with Registered Providers and local communities.



We have an ageing population - 28% will be over 65 by 2026 and many residents are socially isolated, and living in inappropriate accommodation to meet their needs. We have sought to address these sorts of issues alongside our direct work on housing provision.

Across the district there are significant affordability issues, with median house prices 11 times median household incomes. This is likely to be even higher in some rural parishes. This means that many households are unable to buy homes on the open market and many are unable to afford intermediate products or even an affordable rented option. The most affordable option for many households is social rented housing. Last year we agreed to set up a wholly **Wychavon owned housing company** to develop and manage houses primarily for private rent to meet some of the needs and to provide a commercial return for the council.

Our strategy has helped us focus work on identifying housing needs in our rural communities and to enable adequate provision of affordable housing to be made available to meet these needs. This has led to an increased focus on undertaking parish needs surveys to gather evidence of rural needs. Recently, both councils have pledged their support for the NHF 5 Star Rural Housing Plan. Our **Rural Communities and Economy Advisory Panel** has also committed funding to undertake some research into the impact of housing growth on our rural communities, which led to a debate by Members at Executive Board that is being used to contribute towards the scope of this work. The Board also made a commitment to develop a strategic plan setting out priorities for affordable housing provision in the rural areas of Wychavon.

Given the impact of welfare reforms, the potential impact of the Homeless Reduction Act 2017 and the current high levels of homelessness (272 applications and 223 homeless preventions in 2016/17), this remains a challenge for the future and in particular during times when new affordable housing delivery may reduce.

Our challenges are:

- To sustain a good level of suitable and affordable housing supply (cross-tenure), both temporary and permanent across the district including to meet the local housing needs in a creative way.

- To increase the number of homeless preventions we are able to achieve despite the environment within which we operate – that is high value homes and private rentals, low wage economy in some areas, high level of people in receipt of benefits, no supporting people programme, increasing incidences of single homeless with complex needs.

We would welcome feedback on whether there is more we can do to improve the delivery of affordable homes, particularly in rural areas. We would also welcome the peer team's views on what more can we do to tackle homelessness, whether there is scope for us to work more creatively to deliver schemes and if we should we be playing a more interventionist role.

d Developing our tourism potential (Malvern)

Malvern Hills is one of the most visited districts in Worcestershire, attracting almost 3.5 million visits per year. The visitor economy is a very important element of the district's economic base with the most recent Tourism Economic Impact Assessment suggesting that:

- 3.46 million trips were undertaken to (and within) the district – 3.3 million day trips and 164,000 overnight visits.
- The overnight trips account for a total of 0.6 million nights in the area (an average of 3 nights per trip).
- During their visit to Malvern Hills, visitors spent approximately £106 million, of which £26 million was from overnight visits.
- This spending supported in the region of 2,500 jobs within Malvern Hills; approximately 2,100 direct tourism related jobs plus around 400 non-tourism jobs based on multiplier spending from visitors. This equates to over 8% of employed people in the district.
- The average spend per day trip was around £25, with overnight stays generating an average of £160 per visit.

Malvern Hills is already a fabulous place to visit with an exciting and unique range of events and attractions, as well as stunning hills and scenery, but we punch below our weight compared to other areas, such as the Cotswolds, in terms of marketing the area and bringing in people and income.

We are therefore starting to develop a far longer term plan to market 'The Malverns' as a key tourist destination and really strengthen the brand. Our aim is to increase visitor spending and support the retention of this income within the local economy, to benefit local employment, businesses and communities.



Our **Visitor Economy Action Plan 2020** builds on the previous three year plan and supports the district's **Economic Development Strategy** with the following key objectives:

1. To build stronger partnerships to effectively promote, manage and invest in tourism with businesses, supporting organisations, other sectors and across the district.
2. Raise the market profile of The Malverns with better targeted, focused and packaged information and promotion, using digital technologies wherever possible.
3. To enhance the tourism product and visitor experiences in The Malverns, including accommodation, attractions, events and activities; and attractive and welcoming environments in the three main towns which are key visitor destinations
4. To support successful businesses across the visitor economy which deliver quality service, including improving the skills and training of those working and volunteering in the visitor economy.

We have recently delivered projects such as a new **tourism website**, a self-guided walking app, a series of walks and cycle rides as part of the Teme Valley Trail and the Route to the Hills project linking the town and the hills.

We have made a decision to invest in new facilities at the Council House including the provision of a new reception, which would also provide tourism information services. Once completed the current large scale Tourist Information Centre on Church Street in Malvern would close.

We would welcome feedback from our peers on the following issues:

- Is 'The Malverns' brand a realistic ambition and are there other interventions we should be making?
- What does a modern tourist information service look like? Are there examples of success from elsewhere that we could learn from?
- How can we help balance the needs of a high value landscape and built environment with the investment needs of a modern tourism sector?

9 Sharing of successful practice

This section contains two examples of successful practice involving both councils and three for each council that we think will be of help to other councils. We would like these to be shared with other councils through their corporate peer challenges and the LGA innovative councils' database.

Both councils

South Worcestershire Development Plan (SWDP)

The **South Worcestershire Development Plan (SWDP)** was adopted in February 2016. It remains one of only a few Local Plans nationally that covers more than one local planning authority area, and which also includes specific allocations for employment, housing and retail development alongside detailed development management policies.

The SWDP was jointly prepared by Malvern Hills, Worcester City and Wychavon councils, collectively known as the South Worcestershire Councils (SWC). Staff and financial resources were pooled, producing significant savings compared to each council working alone. The project was driven by a joint officer steering group and a non executive **Joint Advisory Panel (JAP)** of members from all three councils. The panel also has officer and member representation from the county council.

One of the main cross-boundary reasons the SWDP was prepared was because Worcester could not meet all of its identified development requirements within the city boundary. Consequently the SWDP contains a number of strategic employment and housing allocations which are primarily to meet Worcester's needs but lie within Malvern Hills and Wychavon districts. The plan also deals with strategic cross-boundary infrastructure needs.

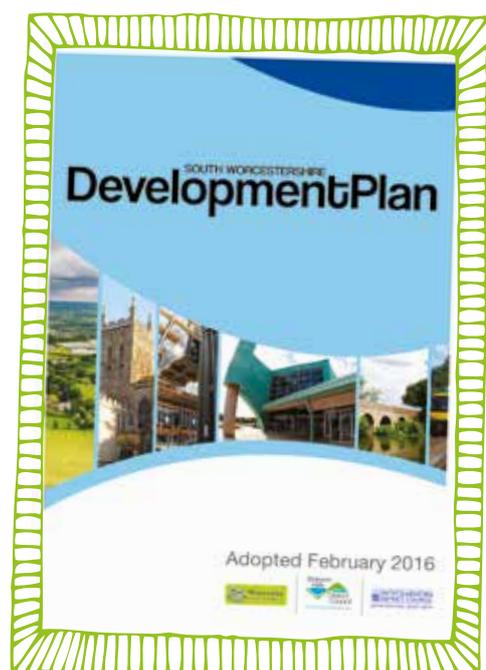
Clear, positive communication between the SWCs was essential as the plan was prepared under informal arrangements requiring each council to agree each step of the plan's production. Numerous briefings were therefore given to the JAP,

district councillors, parish and town councils, the Worcestershire Local Enterprise Partnership and various stakeholder organisations.

The SWDP consultations attracted tens of thousands of representations and were subject to an extensive and exhaustive joint public examination. As the plan and agreeing housing growth requirements were both hugely contentious, time was invested in preparing consultation material, media releases and using the bespoke SWDP website to convince interested parties that to not have a statutory Local Plan in place would expose each SWC to speculative planning applications.

Following the Government's 2017 Housing White Paper and its subsequent publication, Building the Right Homes in the Right Places, the SWC have responded positively. We have formally agreed to continue plan making on a joint basis, a three year timetable for a SWDP review commencing and maintaining the established governance arrangements.

Contact: Fred Davies, Planning Policy Manager
E: fred.davies@wychavon.gov.uk
T: 01386 565367



Community engagement

This case study highlights some of the ways both councils engage with residents, businesses and other organisations across the two districts.

Both councils run Meet Your Council programmes that involve councillors, supported by officers, meeting residents and businesses in their wards. The councillors chose the formats, which can vary from standing outside a village shop, holding a drop-in session in a public place and attending a community event, to knocking on doors, visiting schools and meeting with businesses.

We attend festivals and events in towns and villages, particularly over the spring and summer months. In Malvern Hills, this provides an ongoing opportunity for residents to feed into the council's **Five Year Plan** and give views on key priorities including **Route to the Hills** and alternative weekly collections. In Wychavon, we promote services and gather views on arrange of issues at village fetes and town events, alongside offering free activities such as a climbing wall, smoothie bike, face painting and activity challenges.

Other forms of engagement are outlined Malvern Hills' **community engagement action plan** including its twice year parish forum and visits to schools that focus on citizenship and democracy.

Wychavon's engagement activities also include an annual business breakfast, **Partners Together events** and meeting residents door to door through the **Rural Communities Programme**.

Both councils' community engagement activity helps raise our profile, increases the visibility of local councillors and ensures we are in touch with and acting on residents' and businesses' concerns. Our engagement with businesses continues to improve our awareness of the types of businesses in our districts and give us an insight into their needs, growth plans and how we can help to support them.

Contact: Claire Vaughan
Community Leadership and Engagement Officer,
Malvern Hills District Council
E: claire.vaughan@malvernhills.gov.uk
T: 01684 862449

Contact: Cherrie Mansfield
Strategy and Performance Manager,
Wychavon District Council
E: cherrie.mansfield@wychavon.gov.uk
T: 01386 565508



Malvern Hills

Local Democracy Day

The aim **Local Democracy Day** is to promote and foster democratic participation at a local level, in particular to raise residents' awareness of how councils operate and what local elected representatives are doing.

We have been involved in European Local Democracy Week since 2016 when we invited five high schools to take part in a day of debating and questioning. 20 students took part and we asked them all to complete a feedback form, with views helping to shape our second day on 11 October 2017.

Chantry school hosted the day and we organised separate activities for those aged 11 to 13 and those aged 14 and over. 45 students took part. The younger students were asked to design their perfect community and took part in a series of games that got them thinking about politics, citizenship and democracy.

Students also took part in political speed-dating sessions with five local councillors, voting for their preferred candidate at the end. The older students were asked to build their own political parties and present their manifestos to judges on the day.



This contributes to our Five Year Plan action to give young people a voice and develop skills, which is also part of our community engagement action plan. Members are crucial to the success of these days and 12 took part this year.

The winning and highly commended schools from the day then went on to present their manifestos to Full Council in November 2017. The Leader confirmed that one of the actions featured in the winning school's manifesto, to 'introduce new schemes, such as primary school trips to nursing homes to socialise and build respect' and work towards tackling loneliness, would be included as an action in the Council's Five Year Plan from April 2018.

Feedback was positive, with 100% rating the day as either good or excellent. In terms of activities, the political speed-dating came out top and we have plans to roll this format out to the individual high schools over the next few months. We hope to continue to develop these days every year, and we are already discussing plans for 2018.

Contact: Claire Vaughan
Community Leadership and Engagement Officer
E: claire.vaughan@malvern hills.gov.uk
T: 01684 862449

SELFiE Where's the HARM

The 'SELFiE Where's the HARM?' film and teaching resource is aimed at supporting schools, community groups and relevant professionals to raise awareness of the signs of early mental health issues amongst young people.

We commissioned 'SELFiE Where's the HARM?' after the district was highlighted as a hot spot for mental health issues amongst young people. Public Health figures show that across Worcestershire 7,000 children are living with mental ill health at any one time.

One of the council's priorities is to build stronger and healthier communities and to support this we have committed to raising awareness of issues relating to self-harm amongst at least 500 young people before 2021, as part of a five year strategy.

The film has been adapted from a theatre project based on research around mental health issues conducted with Year 9 pupils living in the district. It is available as a free teaching resource to all Worcestershire schools, community groups and relevant professionals supported by lesson plans to allow the content to be actively discussed by young people.

The initial theatre performance was seen by more than 1,300 young people aged between 11 and 15 in the district's schools, almost tripling the initial targets set as part of the five year strategy. Feedback revealed 82% of those who watched

it better understood how to detect early signs of mental health issues and where to seek advice and guidance.

Anecdotally, a number of pupils have disclosed that they were self-harming and got the help and support that was needed.

The film is a powerful drama, dealing with a sensitive but important subject. As well as encouraging young people to consider the issues involved, it also ensures they know where they can go for help and support. The project has been acclaimed by teachers and health professionals and was shortlisted for Campaign of the Year at the 2017 National Local Government Chronicle Awards.

Evaluations have been sent out with the film and teaching resources to assess the further impact this awareness campaign will have on young people within Worcestershire.

Contact: Amanda Smith
Community Services Manager
E: amanda.smith@malvern hills.gov.uk
T: 01684 862469

Trailer: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mcAGJzWiQ3c>
Film: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OC43fdjUIIM&t=26s>



Malvern Hills Science Park

As a key employment location in the district, **Malvern Hills Science Park (MHSP)** has had a very positive impact on the economic growth of Malvern and the county. We are a significant shareholder in MHSP Ltd, with the Chief Executive currently acting as Chairman of the Board.



The original concept for Malvern Hills Science Park was to accommodate and nurture science-based businesses generated through historic changes at the former Defence Evaluation Research Agency (DERA), part of which was privatised as QinetiQ in 2001/02. QinetiQ's major site in Malvern is directly adjacent to MHSP and is Malvern's largest employer with around 900 employees.

In 1997, a public interest company was set up in a process led by Malvern Hills District Council (MHDC) and Worcestershire County Council, which took the form of a Joint Venture Agreement. We provided £1 million in initial capital.

MHSP occupies a ten-acre site in Malvern with the first building (Phase 1) completed in 1999. A two-storey extension (Phase 2) followed in 2002 with an approximately 35,000 sq ft development (Phase 3) providing laboratory, café and boardroom space completed in 2008.

The recently completed 30,000 sq ft building (Phase 4) was financed by £3.9 million of investment from the county council alongside £370,000 from MHDC. It is now the new home for existing MHSP tenants UTC Aerospace Systems and provides space for around 100 staff.

The overall site, which is currently full, now provides over 100,000 sq ft of high-tech workspace and has over 350 employees from 30+ businesses. Redevelopment of an adjacent site is underway with the Worcestershire LEP investing £4 million from the Growth Deal for the development of Phase 5. This new building will provide 16,000 sq ft of floor space, which will be available to new companies or existing tenants seeking to grow their businesses.



A final Phase 6 plot remains and proposals are being developed to bring this site forward by 2020. Beyond this, we are working with partners to secure 4.5 hectares of land at the QinetiQ site to provide further high-tech development land and eventually join the two sites as one single R&D campus.

Contact: Simon Smith
Economic Development Manager
E: simon.smith@malvernhills.gov.uk
T: 01684 862199



Wychavon

Financial entrepreneurship

We have invested in projects, joint working and capital investments that not only make a financial return but also support the economy, local facilities and green initiatives. From hospitals to Waitrose stores, canals to commercial land, solar panels to art deco cinemas – we have made smart investments that serve our communities.

Our two Waitrose stores are a good example of this. In 2005 we built a superstore for Waitrose in Droitwich Spa, which has significantly benefited the town centre economy. In 2015 we started the Evesham town centre project, which saw us invest £10 million in moving the fire station to release land which has led to the Waitrose store construction that is happening right now in 2018.

The Evesham store will generate a rental stream of £500,000 per year, which represents a 5% return, significantly more than we could achieve on the money markets. Whilst this is great news for our overcoming financial challenges, the main aim of the project is to attract more big name retailers, grow confidence in the town and stimulate the local economy. This builds on the tried and tested success in Droitwich.

We have also purchased almost 40 acres of employment land in Evesham for new and expanding businesses. This has already enabled the expansion of one company and the relocation of another. With 28 acres remaining, we have now entered into a joint venture to ensure the sale of more plots, bringing further jobs to the area.

What these initiatives have in common is that we have invested for an economic and community benefit as well as a financial return. Furthermore, we have invested where the market has failed. In the case of the Evesham employment land, this land was only made available with our involvement and sale terms are now flexible to suit the needs of businesses.

Contact: Vic Allison
Deputy Managing Director
E: vic.allison@wychavon.gov.uk
T: 01386 565586



Droitwich West project

We have developed a three year promise to raise aspirations and improve outcomes in the **Droitwich West ward**. The ward, which includes the Westlands estate, is the most deprived in the district with poor outcomes around skills, health, housing and child poverty. The pilot project is costing £100,000 and is being funded from part of our New Homes Bonus allocation.

In 2016, the Government's Social Mobility Commission identified that Wychavon was the third worst district in the country for outcomes for children and young people from poorer backgrounds. Although the social mobility indicators look at issues across the district, our Executive Board decided that the focus of this project should be on its most hard-pressed community.

As many of the outcomes around health, skills, children and young people are outside of our direct sphere of influence, partnership working is key to successful delivery. We are taking the role of facilitator and enabler, encouraging public, private and voluntary sector partners to focus delivery on the Droitwich West ward and using an operational budget to try new approaches. We have formed, and chair, a multi-agency group with 17 partner organisations represented.

Although it is early days in the project there have already been some significant outcomes. Crime is down on the estate thanks to an agreement with the police to target drugs and anti-social behaviour on the estate over the next three years. Skills projects with the three schools and voluntary sector partners are underway to build confidence and address young people not in education, work or training (NEET) or at risk of becoming NEET. Physical improvements to the estate are also happening, including a new footbridge, improvements to footpaths and projects tackling litter.

With key stakeholders, we are also looking at a major regeneration scheme on the centre of the estate which will transform a run down shopping precinct.

The project is low key, in order to avoid further stigmatisation in an already isolated community. However, further information about the work is available directly upon request from the Project Manager.

Contact: David Manning
Community Programmes Manager
E: david.manning@wychavon.gov.uk
T: 01386 565478



Wychavon Wellbeing Week

The idea for **Wychavon Wellbeing Week** originated from the Partners Together event on health that we held in November 2016.

The aims of the week, which took place in October 2017, were to raise awareness of mental health issues, promote positive and practical ways to improve wellbeing and promote the **help and support** available for people experiencing mental health problems.

During the week, we teamed up with over 15 different **organisations** to put on nearly 100 events and activities across Wychavon to promote mental wellbeing based around one or more of the **five ways to wellbeing**.

Activities included talks, training courses, health checks, free virtual classes, health walks, martial arts training, lifestyle yoga, workshops, coffee mornings, art activities and bulb planting. Visitors to the libraries created colourful hand prints on a giant map of Wychavon and three of our councillors spent a Saturday morning talking to passers-by and encouraging them to think about wellbeing.

We encouraged people to take the **Wychavon Wellbeing Challenge** by doing five things that related to each of the ways to wellbeing.

We created a strong **Wychavon Wellbeing Week web** presence with a unique web address and a suite of resources that partners could download for use in printed and digital formats.

Based on the feedback we have received, we estimate that around 1,000 people took part in events and activities during the week and we reached around 90,000 people with wellbeing messages in print and online.

All the partners who gave feedback felt the week was successful at achieving its aims, particularly at promoting positive and practical ways to improve wellbeing.

Participants said the week had helped them to “think about something completely different for a while and perhaps give me a different perspective on things” and to “realise that it is fun and inspiring to try something different and has given me the confidence to try something new”. One partner

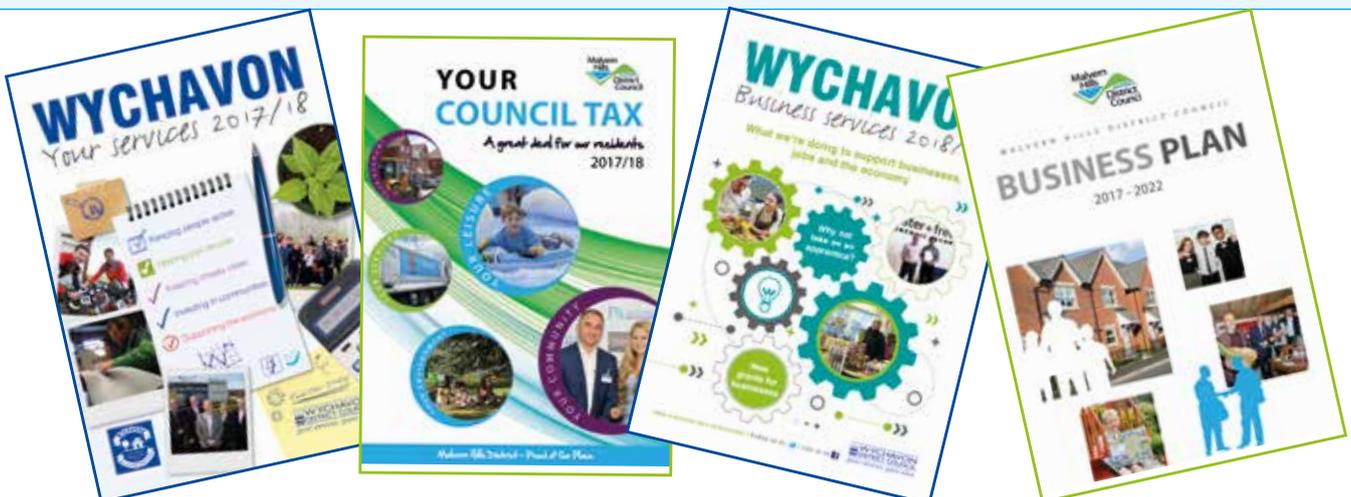
commented it had enabled “us work together to create a bigger impact in raising awareness on general wellbeing within our communities - for staff and customers.”

Contact: Cherrie Mansfield
Strategy and Performance Manager
E: cherrie.mansfield@wychavon.gov.uk
T: 01386 565508



10. Key documents

Malvern Hills	Wychavon
Annual Audit letter (latest)	Annual Audit Letter 2016/17
Annual Report	Annual Report
Business Plan 2018-23	Business Rates leaflet
Business Rates leaflet	Council Tax leaflet
Community engagement action plan	Grow, Save, Charge Business Plan including Medium Term Financial Strategy (Money Plan)
Council Tax leaflet	Knowing Wychavon Communities
Economic Development Strategy	Quarterly Signals of Success performance reports
Five year plan	Statement of Accounts 2016/17 including Annual Governance Statement
Knowing Our Communities	2016 staff survey results
Medium Term Financial Strategy	Strategy 2016-2020
Quarterly performance reports	Treasury Management Strategy 2017/18
Statement of Accounts 2016/17 including Annual Governance Statement	Ward profiles
2016 staff survey results	Worcestershire Housing Partnership Plan
Visitor Economy Action Plan	2017 Worcestershire Viewpoint results
Ward profiles	
2017 Worcestershire Viewpoint results	
Both councils	
Our values	
South Worcestershire Development Plan	



Appendix A: progress on recommendations from previous Peer Challenges

Malvern Hills District Council, 20 – 22 February 2012

To support the Strategic Review the report offers the team's perspective on the overall approach and the five themes. We have highlighted issues that emerged from our interviews and focus groups and have identified a number of additional questions we feel the groups ought to explore. In addition we have highlighted a number of specific points that we feel need to be addressed by MHDC. These are:

Key recommendations	What we've done
<p>1. Carefully consider the consequences of the current restructure in view of statutory posts, capacity and skills and put in place firm plans or arrangements to address the potential capacity and skills gaps as a matter of priority.</p>	<p>Now share a Chief Executive/Managing Director and senior management team with Wychavon. The new joint structure fully addressed capacity issues as well as making senior management savings for both councils.</p>
<p>2. Put in place a communications plan to ensure that the progress and outcomes of the Strategic Review is communicated appropriately both internally and externally</p>	<p>Original recommendations were achieved and now superseded by the Council's new 5 year plan, which is reported quarterly as part of performance report</p>
<p>3. Articulate and communicate the purpose (explicitly stating the what?, how? And why?) of the Sounding Board and consider extending the membership to include non-executive members and the Chairs of the Shaping Groups.</p>	<p>Overtaken by events and the new Council post May 2015</p>
<p>4. Consider the introduction of peer mentoring for new councillors.</p>	<p>This was addressed and the LGA offer was accepted</p>
<p>5. Improve the conduct of Council meetings and review governance arrangements generally. [We will provide more detailed feedback and recommendations separately].</p>	<p>Historically this was an issue for the Council. All groups now ensure Council is a more constructive forum.</p>
<p>6. Ensure that partners and councillors are aware of MHDCs flagship projects, in particular the Science Park by organising a visit.</p>	<p>Committees both external and internal have been addressed e.g. Jack's Round-up and Parish Newsletter.</p>
<p>7. Following the outcome of the Strategic Review, ensure that the council's stated ambitions are translated into clear performance targets.</p>	<p>Refreshed quarterly performance review process and reporting. Council review a 5 year strategic plan and a Business Plan.</p>

Wychavon Council Corporate Peer Challenge,

3 – 5 December 2013

The peer team developed some key recommendations for you to consider. These are based on what we saw, heard and read. Drawing on our experience of the sector and knowledge of local government improvement, the following are things we think will help you to make best use of your skills and experience, deliver some quick wins, and develop the strengths you will need to see your change agenda through:

Key recommendations	What we've done
<p>1. Consider appointing a lead officer to monitor and drive the Grow Save Charge plan.</p>	<p>Deputy Managing Director is the lead for the Grow, Save, Charge Business Plan. Performing well against our Grow, Save, Charge targets with most savings now realised and a strong financial position achieved.</p>
<p>2. Explaining to residents the current position in relation to planning and housing development and communication the benefits that development and growth can bring such as new affordable housing.</p>	<p>Included articles in WYCHAVON magazine about the need for new development.</p>
<p>3. Ensure the risk and implications of not getting the Local Plan in place quickly enough is understood.</p>	<p>Adopted the South Worcestershire Development Plan (SWDP) in February 2016.</p> <p>Ran regular briefings for all three sets of councillors about progress with the plan and associated issues such as five-year land supply and the associated implications of not having a plan in place.</p> <p>Ran briefings and workshops for parish and town councils. Issued media releases and maintained a joint bespoke SWDP website</p> <p>Continued to brief members about developing case law that might impinge on the implementation of the SWDP</p> <p>Published articles about the SWDP in the WYCHAVON magazine for the public to read.</p> <p>Involved key members in the process through JAP</p> <p>The SWDP was a feature of the corporate risk register and progress was followed by SMT. Arrangements around the SWDP plan making process were subject to internal audit review</p> <p>Taking a proactive stance to keeping the plan up to date by committing (November 2017) to an early review of the SWDP which proposes submission by February 2021.</p>
<p>4. Clearly articulate ambitions and targets for new start up businesses.</p>	<p>Incorporated in the development of the current comprehensive Worcestershire business start-up programme of initiatives which are delivered with European funding and local match funding from partners including ourselves.</p>

Key recommendations	What we've done
<p>5. Undertake a review of all funding activities to allow a decision to be taken on whether some can be cut and how they can be brought into line with the council's priorities.</p>	<p>Did not undertake a comprehensive funding review. Undertook a review of our Local Strategic Partnerships in 2014 and as a result disbanded the four partnerships and transferred their budgets to become operational budget for the then Town Managers.</p> <p>Continue to run an annual Wychavon community grant scheme and in recent years have allocated a significant proportion of our New Homes Bonus to communities where development has taken place. Parish and town councils put forward proposals for spending this. We are about to set out a new approach for our New Homes Bonus monies.</p>
<p>6. Consider succession planning for leading members.</p>	<p>Former Leader and Deputy Leader both stood down at the May 2015 district council elections and a new Leader and Deputy Leader took over. Both were from outside the Executive Board but with some support (including the LGA's Leadership Academy) have proven to be highly successful in their roles with both the Leader and Deputy Leader taking on national roles.</p>
<p>7. Ensure any under performance by staff is managed consistently and training for managers to help manage performance put in place.</p>	<p>Introduced a new capability policy and procedure, which provides a clear framework for managing capability and performance issues and includes a new Performance Improvement Plan template. Ran associated training for managers on this and other new policies and procedures.</p>
<p>8. Create an environment which encourages greater staff flexibility, career progression and contribution to corporate projects.</p>	<p>Experience Wychavon days, opportunities for joint working, introduced a staff volunteering scheme.</p>
<p>9. Ensure back office services can support front line service change.</p>	<p>This was largely following feedback concerning the ICT service. Since that time we have introduced a Priorities Board which considers priorities and resources for self service products across all three south Worcestershire councils and seconded the Business Improvement Manager to work with the ICT web development team. All major customer transactions that the council is responsible for can now be conducted on line through the council's website. A new planning system introduced in 2017 has been and will continue to be instrumental in transforming the planning service and enabling joint working between Wychavon and Malvern Hills councils</p>
<p>10. Increase communication to residents on future housing development.</p>	<p>Articles included in WYCHAVON magazine and Parish Matters newsletter. Held a Partners Together event on housing in April 2016.</p>

Appendix B: Statement on joint working

Introduction

This document sets out brief details of all joint working involving the two councils, often involving other partners as well. Joint working can take many forms – from formal shared service arrangements under the governance of a joint management board, to less formal joint working arrangements to deliver services.

Joint working involving both councils

Shared services governed by Management Boards	
South Worcestershire Building Control	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Involves the three south Worcestershire councils.• Commenced in 2009.• Hosted by Malvern Hills District Council.• Employs eight full-time equivalent (FTE) staff.• Key current issues concern maintaining market share and protecting income levels, and recruitment and retention of staff.
South Worcestershire ICT Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Involves the three south Worcestershire councils.• Set up in 2010.• Originally hosted by Worcestershire County Council, but transferred to Wychavon on 1 April 2014.• Employs around 24 FTE staff.
Worcestershire Regulatory Services (WRS)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The only fully county wide shared service.• Set up in 2010 involving all six district and borough councils.• Originally WRS included Trading Standards, but it now provides a management service for the county council.• Hosted by Bromsgrove District Council.• Directly employs around 67 FTE staff.• Total cost of the service is around £3.4 million a year.• The Joint WRS Board is made up of two councillors and one officer from each council.

Shared services provided by strategic partners	
South Worcestershire Revenues and Benefits Service	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Involves the three south Worcestershire councils.• Established in 2007. Originally hosted by Wychavon District Council.• Shared service transferred to Civica as part of a strategic partnership with effect from October 2013.• Each partner benefits from a £200,000 annual efficiency saving plus profit-sharing arrangements.

Other services subject to joint working

Worcestershire Internal Audit Service	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Involves the three south Worcestershire councils, plus Redditch and Bromsgrove Councils and Hereford and Worcester Fire and Rescue Service. • Established in 2010. • Hosted by Worcester City Council. • Employs around ten FTEs.
HR and payroll	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Service provided by Wychavon to Malvern Hills District Council since April 2011. • Wychavon also provides payroll for Worcester City Council, Healthwatch Worcestershire and a number of parish councils.
South Worcestershire Land Drainage Partnership (SWLDP)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wychavon hosts the SWLDP on behalf of the county council as Lead Local Flood Authority, Malvern Hills District Council and Worcester City Council. • Commenced in October 2011. • Employs around four FTEs.
Car parking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Penalty Charge Notice processing service provided by Wychavon on behalf of Malvern Hills District Council since November 2013. • Wychavon also provide a similar service to Wyre Forest, Stratford upon Avon, Redditch and Bromsgrove Councils and on-street enforcement for Bromsgrove and Redditch.
Housing services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Joint service between Malvern Hills and Wychavon. • Set up in 2016. • Hosted by Wychavon. • Malvern Hills homeless contract brought in house from Fortis Living with effect from June 2017.
Research and intelligence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Joint service between Malvern Hills and Wychavon. • Set up in 2016. • Hosted by Wychavon.
Legal services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Joint service between Malvern Hills and Wychavon. • Set up in 2016. • Hosted by Malvern Hills.
Planning policy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Joint service between Malvern Hills and Wychavon. • Set up in November 2016. • Hosted by Wychavon.
Heritage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Joint service between Malvern Hills and Wychavon. • Set up in 2016. • Hosted by Wychavon. • Archaeology service added.
Some planning support services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Joint corporate database team hosted by Wychavon covering street naming and numbering, local land searches and the National Land and Property Gazetteer. • Common IT platform introduced in 2017. • Interim joint management with full integration under consideration.

Other services subject to joint working

Community safety	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Joint service between Malvern Hills and Wychavon. • Set up in October 2017. • Hosted by Malvern Hills
Communications	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shared management arrangements between Malvern Hills and Wychavon. • Set up in 2015.
Finance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Service hosted by Malvern Hills and provided to Worcester City and Gloucester City Councils.
Leisure management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Service hosted by Malvern Hills and provided to Forest of Dean District Council
CCTV	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wychavon provides a monitoring service to Worcester City Council.
Procurement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wychavon provides a procurement advice service to Malvern Hills District and Worcester City Councils.
Self-service product development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wychavon currently provides resources on a secondment basis to the ICT shared service to accelerate self-service products for the benefit of all three south Worcestershire councils.
Insurance and banking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Joint procurement involving all Worcestershire district councils and two other district councils to achieve preferential terms.

Joint working partnerships with separate governance arrangements

South Worcestershire Development Plan (SWDP) and SWDP review	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Non-executive Joint Advisory Panel (JAP) established to advise the three south Worcestershire councils on the development of the SWDP. • Worcestershire County Council is also represented on JAP.
South Worcestershire Community Safety Partnership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Joint approach to prioritisation and tasking of resources across the three south Worcestershire districts plus partners. • Source of funding for community safety initiatives.
Herefordshire and Worcestershire Sports Partnership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • County wide plus other partners. • Supports development of community sports activities and securing funding for sports infrastructure.

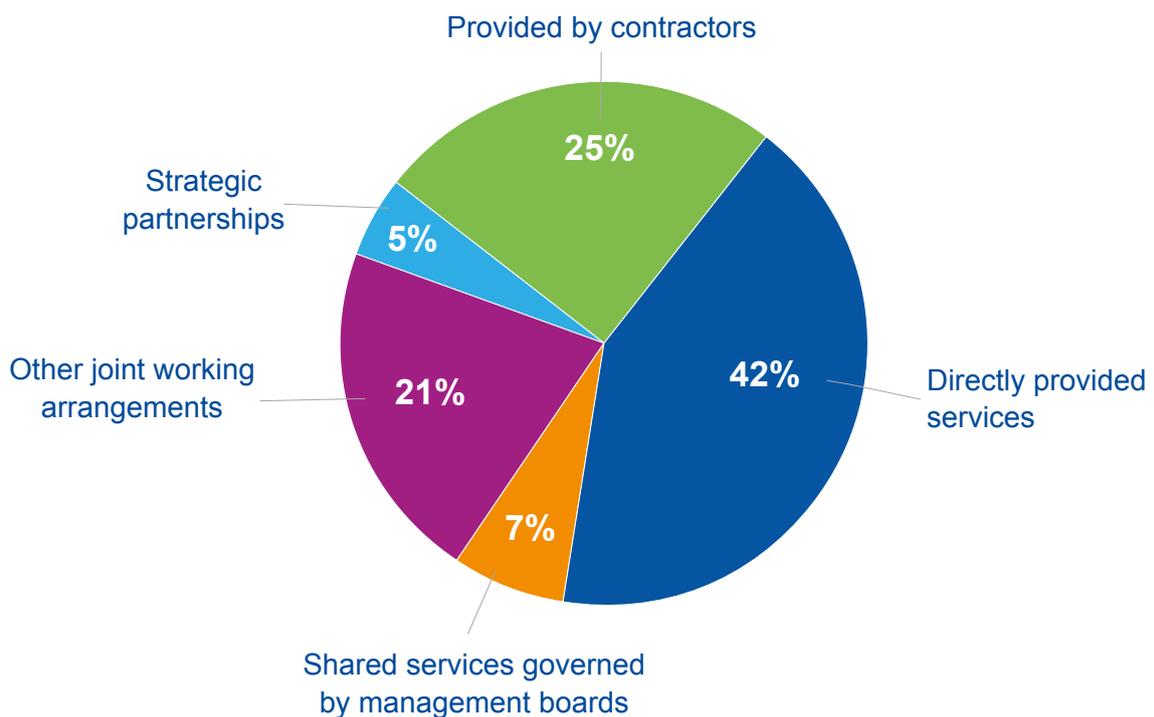
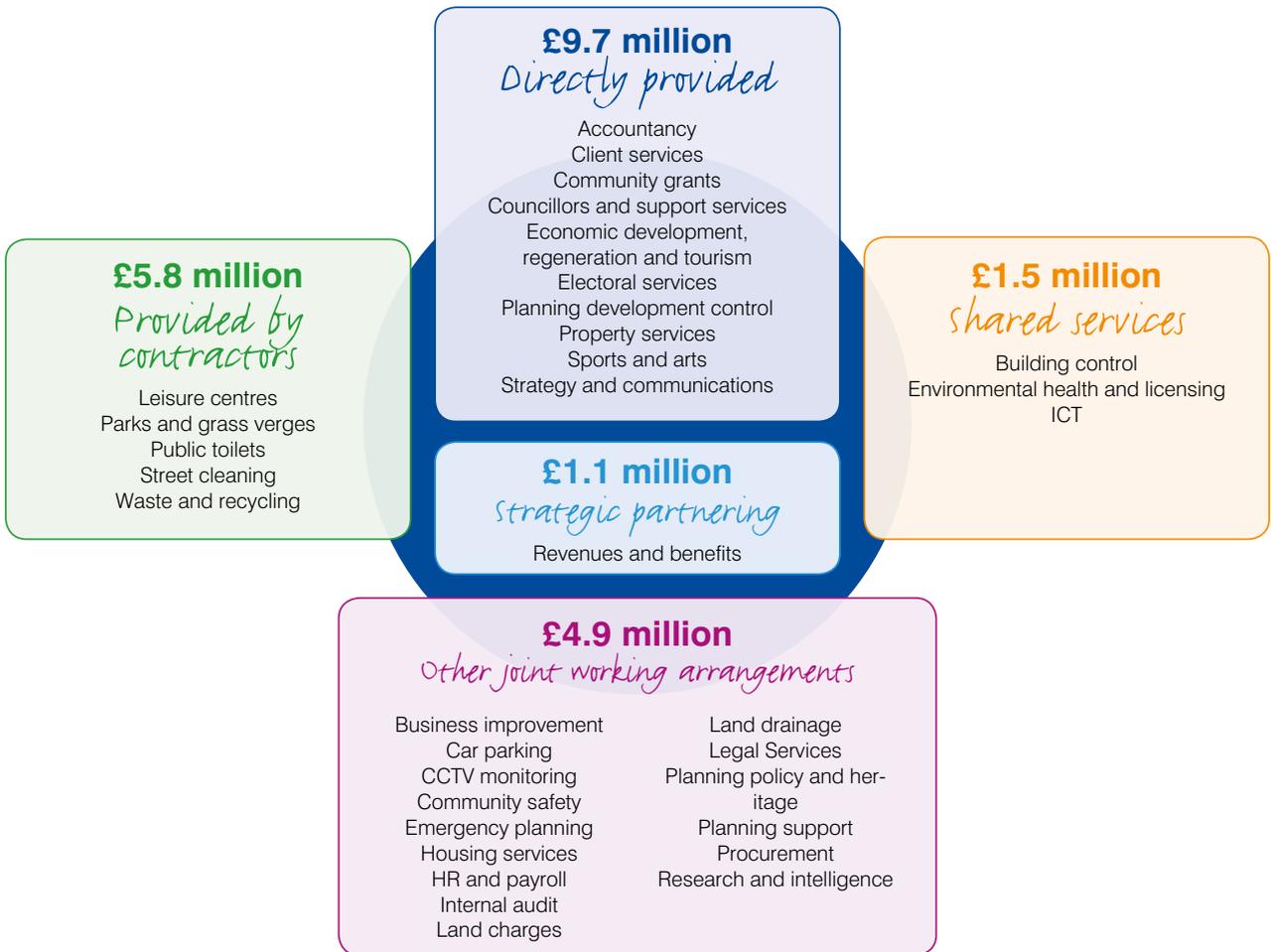
Outsourcing arrangements

Wychavon District Council

Waste collection and street cleaning	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Contract with FCC.
Public toilets	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Contract with Mitie.
Parks and open spaces	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Contract with Continental Landscapes.
Leisure management	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Provided by Wychavon Leisure Limited
Verges	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Contract with Smartcuts.

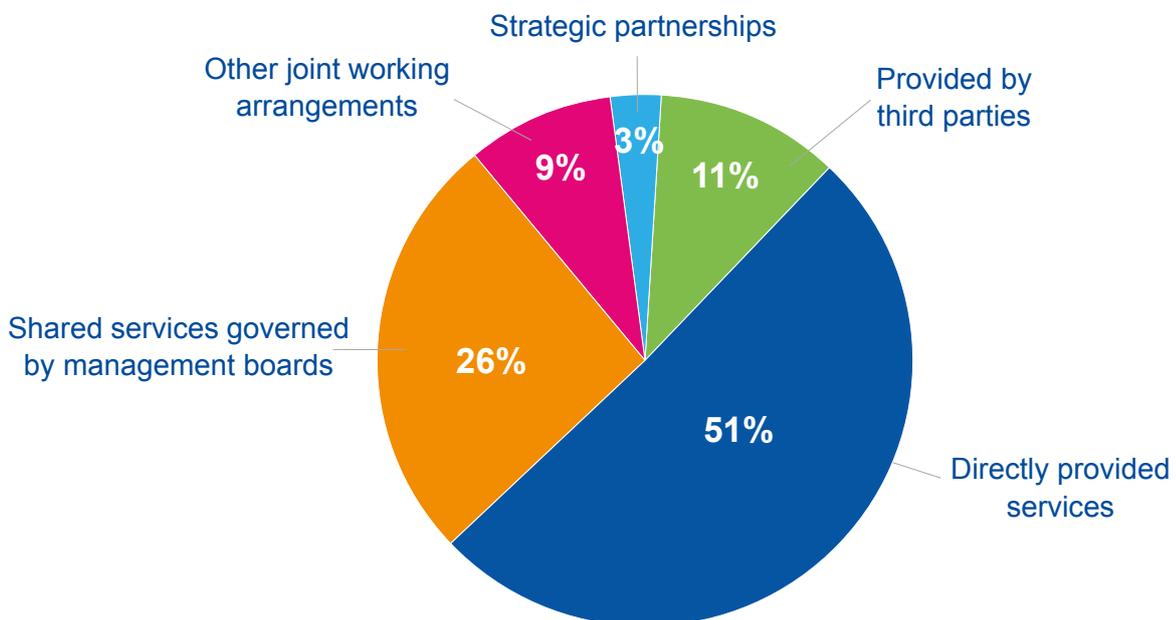
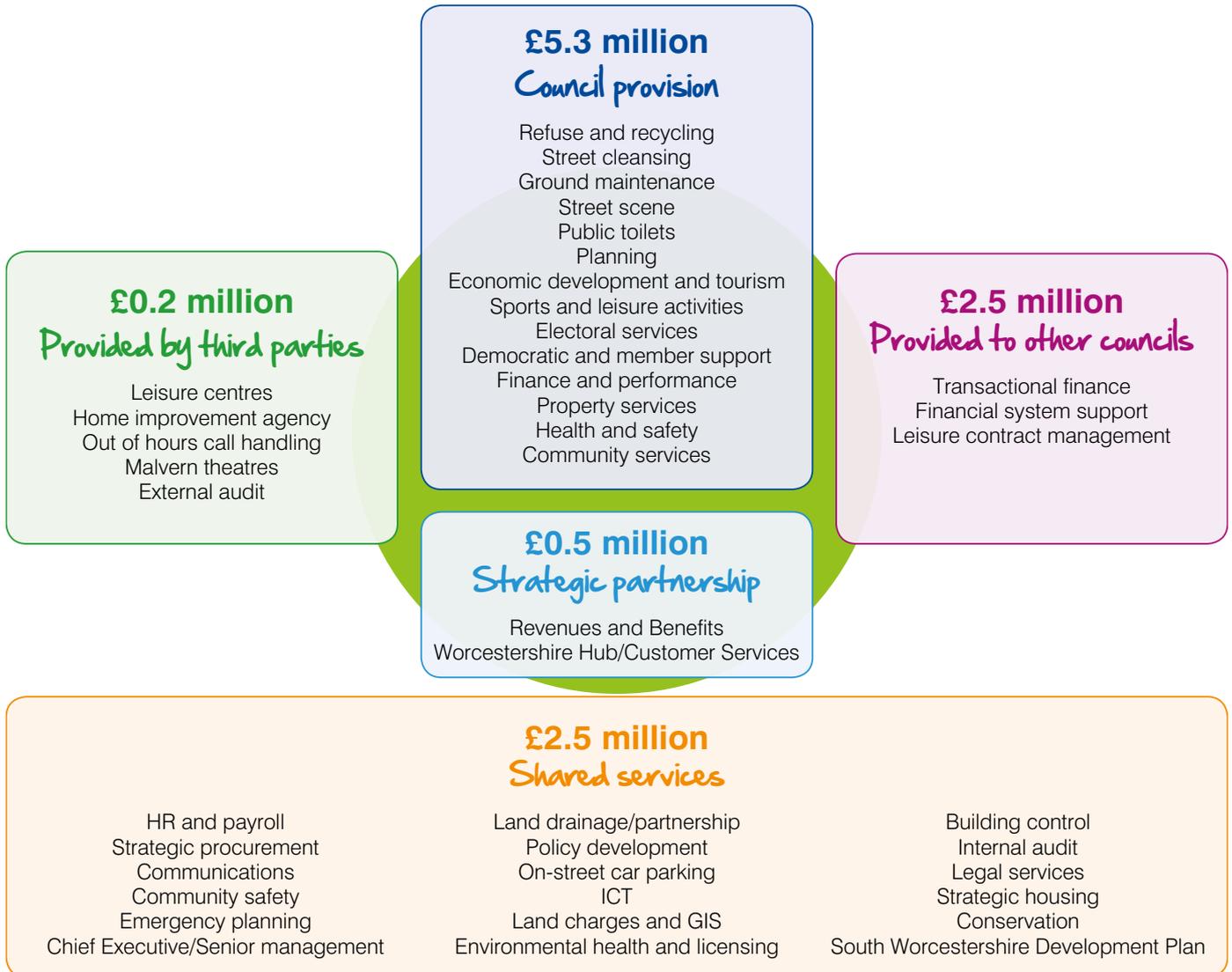
Malvern Hills District Council

Customer services	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Hub with Worcester City Council and Worcestershire County Council.• Plans underway for Malvern Hills to replace this service.
Leisure management	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Freedom Leisure
Theatre	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Malvern Theatres Trust



Business models

Malvern Hills



Appendix C: Service Manager structure charts

Deputy CE (Malvern Hills) and Deputy MD (Wychavon)



Joint Head of Strategy, Democratic and Customer Services



* Line management for Wychavon Electoral Services and Deputy Monitor Officer for MDC ** Line management for Malvern Hills Electoral Services and Deputy Monitor Officer for MDC (Reporting to MD / CE on electoral matters)

Joint Head of Economy and Communities



Joint Head of Planning and Housing





Malvern Hills District Council

Council House, Avenue Road,
Malvern, Worcestershire, WR14 3AF

www.malvern hills.gov.uk



Wychavon District Council

Civic Centre, Queen Elizabeth Drive,
Persore, Worcestershire, WR10 1PT

www.wychavon.gov.uk