Berkswell Parish Council

Extraordinary Meeting – 25 June 2026

Agenda Item 6

The following motions are to be considered at the EM on 25 June 2026:

a. Resources Required to Carry Out Workflow Design – Council to:
   i. Agree that, in order to produce key activity workflows for the new merged Parish Council, additional resources are required to free up the clerk to carry out the work (in conjunction with the Balsall PC Clerk).
   ii. Agree to appoint a locum clerk on a 12 hour a week basis for the period up to 31 March 2027 at a budgeted cost of up to £17,000 (plus Employers NI).

Background

The Balsall & Berkswell Parish Councils Joint Merger Working Group met on 18 June (see notes of meeting - Appendix 1) to discuss providing responses to SMBC who require information to complete the Reorganisation Order that will create the new Parish Council. The Clerks of both the existing Parish Councils raised their concern that additional resources will be required in order to support necessary work towards the merger (including supplying information to SMBC) whilst also maintaining Business As Usual (BAU) activities.

Proposal

The Clerk is contracted for 12 hours a week which has proved sufficient to cover BAU activities on a flexible basis. In order to free up the Clerk to focus on the merger preparation work it is proposed to back-fill with a locum clerk. The draft project plan at Appendix 2 indicates the extent of the challenge and the resources required to prepare effectively for the merger.

Balsall PC have consulted WALC as to the availability and cost of a locum clerk; they have shared that an indicative pay would be c.£35 per hour but there was little if no availability of locum clerks. To find appropriate resource would take time and with the merger only 9 months away this would impede completion of the project plan.

Proposed terms for a locum clerk are as follows:

- IR 35 indicates that a locum clerk should be on the PC's payroll, not self employed

- Indicative working hours to be up to 12 hours/week
- Hourly rate to be £35 (per indicative advice via Balsall PC)
- There would be employer's NI to be paid by Berkswell PC
- Actual payments to the locum would be based on timesheets recording time spent (up to 12 hours/week)
- The proposed budget of £17k is based on £35 x 12 hours/week x 40 weeks plus estimated Employers NI.

In terms of finding a suitable candidate, due to the time constraints and the likely difficulty in identifying a suitably qualified locum, the clerk has suggested his wife Judith could be considered for the locum role for this short duration. Judith is a Chartered Accountant with significant governance experience in the not-for-profit sector and has covered for the clerk during periods of ill health. Councillors are asked to consider this and any other options they may be aware of.

Appendix 1

Notes on meeting of Balsall & Berkswell Parish Councils Joint Merger Working Group

Methodist Church, 18th June 11.30-13.00

In attendance:

Tracey Carpenter (TC), Clerk to Balsall PC

Richard Drake (RD), Councillor of both Balsall PC and Berkswell PC (minutes)

Anne Lycett (substitute for Charlotte Shadbolt) (AL), Councillor of Berkswell PC

Liz Macdonald (LM), Chair of Balsall PC

David Slatter (DS), Councillor of Balsall PC

Richard Wilson (RW), Clerk to Berkswell PC+-

1) Draft ToR
   Discussion of draft prepared by LM. LM to redraft in light of comments.
2) Agreed RD to chair working group
3) Draft "Reorganisation Order"
   Discussion of the Draft. RD to draft response with proposed amendments and areas of clarification required *(now sent).*
4) Agreed to approach Ja'neen Day (WALC) to establish willingness and suitability for organisation review as well as James Corrigan (Council HR and Governance Support).
5) TC & RW to discuss and agree the current list of duties across both councils
6) RW to share Berkswell 26/27 budget information
7) DS to share staff consultation information with Berkswell Chair and assist if requested,
8) Resourcing issues:
   a. RW to prepare proposal for Berkswell to recruit resource to take on BAU to free his time
   b. Both councils to seek to reduce BAU activities to include less full council meetings (with EMs where necessary). May require some tweaks to Standing Orders and/or Financial Regulations.
   c. AL confirmed willingness to assist in Project Management and will draft a merger project plan for review. To assist in cresting a draft plan everyone to send AL any documentation on merger activity they have already identified.
   d. Berkswell to arrange EM to discuss any necessary measures required before next full PC
9) Future meetings.
   No dates planned currently but as and when required. Agreed that these could be by Zoom/Teams if appropriate.

Berkswell Parish Council

Appendix 2

Ref	Task	Dependency	Status
0	**Project Set Up**		
0.1	Establish Working Group		
0.2	Agree approach		
0.3	Create a master Plan - high level		
0.4	Create a Project Plan - sub level activities/actions		
0.4.1	Identify resource requirements		
0.4.1.1	Secure resource - Balsall PC		
0.4.1.2	Secure resource - Berkswell PC		
!	**Project Legal & Governance**		
1.1	Define new Council name - Balsall & Berkswell Parish Council		
1.2	Confirm merger date - 1 April 2027		
1.3	Statutory consultee - SMBC		
1.3.1	Establish Quarterly Review Meetings		
2	**Council Structure**		
2.1	Determine number of Councillors -15		
2.2	Confirm Ward Boundaries		
2.3	Plan May 2027 election & co-option process		
2.4	Arrange first new Council meeting		
2.5	Appoint Chair and Vice-Chair		
3	**Closure of Existing Councils**		
3.1	Hold final meetings		
3.2	Finalise accounts		
3.3	Complete audit requirements		
3.4	Formally dissolve Councils		
3.5	Cease existing VAT Registration		
4	**Independent Organisational Review**		
4.1	Specify requirement for Organiastional review and job evaluation		
4.2	Invite proposals		
4.3	Select contractor		
4.4	Support the Organisational Review		
4.4.1	Clerks		
4.4.1	Councillors		
4.5	Review recommendations		
4.6	Obtain approval to appoint		
4.7	Implement recommendations		
4.8	Identify TUPE Implications on legacy staff		
4.9	Identify new Office Accommodation		
5	**Balsall & Berkswell Order 2026**		
5.1	Prepare new Council's Budget for 2027/28		
5.1.1	Estimate the combined closing reserves of legacy PCs at 31/03/2027		
5.1.2	Determine the consequential precept based on budget		
5.1.3	Obtain approval to submit		
5.1.3.1	Balsall PC		

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Ref	Task	Dependency	Status
5.1.3.2	Berkswell PC		
5.1.4	Submit to SMBC		
5.2	Devise a constitution for the new PC w.e.f. 01/04/2027		
5.2.1	Code of Conduct		
5.2.2	Standing Orders	**Ref**	
5.2.3	Financial regulations	**0.5**	
5.2.4	Approve for adoption post 31/03/2027		
5.3	Close-down of existing PCs		
5.3.1	Plan parallel running of key activities to 31/03/2027		
5.3.2	Plan close-down of finance ledgers by 31/03/2027		
5.3.3	Complete 2026/7 AGAR Returns		
5.3.4	Confirm Council Members for perion 01/04/2027 to 06/07/2027		
5.4	Fixed Assets		
5.4.1	Prepare list of assets to transfer to new oranisation on 01/04/2027		
5.4.2	Submit to SMBC		
6	**Staffing**		
6.1	Finalise new staffing structure		
6.1.1	Create Job Descriptions	**4.5**	
6.1.2	Confirm remuneration for each post	**4.5**	
6.1.3	Approve new staffing structure	**4.6**	
6.2	Advise legacy staff of their rights under TUPE	**4.8**	
6.3	Confirm appointments to new staffing structure		
6.4	Manage redundancies	**6.3**	
7	**Key Administrative Actions There may be more**		
7.1	Bank Account		
7.1.1	Select bank/account type		
7.1.2	Create bank mandate with all current Cllrs & Staff		
7.1.3	Arrange transfer of funds from legacy Accounts		
7.1.4	Close legacy Accounts (where applicable)		
7.1.5	Enable on-line banking		
7.2	Insurance		
7.2.1	Select Insurance Company		
7.2.2	Document scope of required cover		
7.2.3	Manage closure of redundant policies		
7.2.4	Start new Insurance policy		
7.3	Finance System		
7.3.1	Select finance system going forward		
7.3.2	Review chart of accounts and amend as necessary		
7.3.3	Transfer historical data from legacy systems		
7.3.4	Implement reporting		
7.3.5	Devise supporting workflows	**5.5**	
7.4	Branding		

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Ref	Task	Dependency	Status
7.4.1	Agree branding - e.g. logos, colours, messaging		
7.4.1.1	Financial stationery		
7.4.1.2	Letter Heading		
7.4.1.3	Signage etc		
7.4.1.4	Website design		
7.4.1.5	Other external communications		
7.5	Communicating change		
7.5.1	Advise all suppliers to legacy PCs of change of name		
7.5.2	Advise any contractors whose services will be discontinued		
7.5.3	Negatotiate termination of redundant contracts & services		
7.5.4	Liaise with other bodies (e.g. statutory, SMBC etc)		
7.5.6	Advertise the new PC to residents and other third parties		
7.5.7	Publish updates		
7.5.8	Inform all 1000 grave owners		
7.6	Parish Council Services supplied		
7.6.1	Combine services provided		
7.6.2	Agree future services provision		
7.6.3	Inform all customers of change		
7.6.4	Align service standards		
7.7	Parish Council Services received		
7.7.1	Combine services received		
7.7.2	Agree future services required		
7.7.3	Inform all suppliers / contractors of change		
7.8	Revision of meeting Timetable (reduce burden on Clerks)		
7.8.1	Plan the move to minimum required meetings for 2026/27		
7.8.2	Assess the impact on current ways of working		
7.8.3	Make any necessary changes to S/Os and Fin Regs		
7.8.4	Issue revised calendar of meetings to 31/03/2027		
7.9	Assets & Liabilities		
7.9.1	Combine asset registers		
7.9.2	Transfer ownership of assets to new Council		
7.9.3	Review contracts & leases		
7.9.4	Transfer liabilities		
7.10	IT & Records		
7.10.1	New domain name		
7.10.2	New email addresses staff/councillors		
7.10.3	Merge IT systems		
7.10.4	Consolidate websites		
7.10.5	Ensure GDPR compliance		
7.10.6	Archive or dispose of historical documents		

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Ref	Task	Dependency	Status
7.11	Post-merger Review		
7.11.1	Review operations		
7.11.2	Address issues		
7.11.3	Gather feedback		
7.12	Risk Management		
7.12.1	Delays in legal approval		
7.12.2	Staffing disputes		
7.12.3	Financial discrepancies		
7.12.4	Service disruption		
7.13	Governance & Reporting		
7.13.1	Working group meetings		
7.13.2	Key decisions		
8	**Policies & Procedures**		
	Review existing policies & draft unified policies for new Council		
Ref	**Task**	**Dependency**	**Status**
0.5	**Project Set Up**		
0.6	Establish Working Group		
0.7	Agree approach		
0.8	Create a master Plan - high level		
0.9	Create a Project Plan - sub level activities/actions		
0.4.2	Identify resource requirements		
0.4.1.3	Secure resource - Balsall PC		
0.4.1.4	Secure resource - Berkswell PC		
!	**Project Legal & Governance**		
1.4	Define new Council name - Balsall & Berkswell Parish Council		
1.5	Confirm merger date - 1 April 2028		
1.6	Statutory consultee - SMBC		
1.3.2	Establish Quarterly Review Meetings		
4.6324	**Council Structure**		
4.7941	Determine number of Councillors -16		
4.9559	Confirm Ward Boundaries		
5.1176	Plan May 2027 election & co-option process		
5.2794	Arrange first new Council meeting		
5.4412	Appoint Chair and Vice-Chair		
5.6029	**Closure of Existing Councils**		
5.7647	Hold final meetings		
5.9265	Finalise accounts		
6.0882	Complete audit requirements		
6.25	Formally dissolve Councils		
6.4118	Cease existing VAT Registration		
6.5735	**Independent Organisational Review**		
6.7353	Specify requirement for Organiastional review and job evaluation		
6.8971	Invite proposals		
7.0588	Select contractor		

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Ref	Task	Dependency	Status
7.2206	Support the Organisational Review		
4.4.1	Clerks		
4.4.1	Councillors		
5.2	Review recommendations		
5.3	Obtain approval to appoint		
5.4	Implement recommendations		
5.5	Identify TUPE Implications on legacy staff		
5.6	Identify new Office Accommodation		
5.7	**Balsall & Berkswell Order 2027**		
5.8	Prepare new Council's Budget for 2027/29		
5.1.4	Estimate the combined closing reserves of legacy PCs at 31/03/2028		
5.1.5	Determine the consequential precept based on budget		
5.1.6	Obtain approval to submit		
5.1.3.3	Balsall PC		
5.1.3.4	Berkswell PC		
5.1.5	Submit to SMBC		
6.2	Devise a constitution for the new PC w.e.f. 01/04/2028		
5.2.5	Code of Conduct		
5.2.6	Standing Orders	**0**	
5.2.7	Financial regulations	**0**	
5.2.8	Approve for adoption post 31/03/2028		
6.3	Close-down of existing PCs		
5.3.5	Plan parallel running of key activities to 31/03/2028		

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