



BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL

EXECUTIVE CABINET

WEDNESDAY, 13TH OCTOBER 2004 AT 6.00PM

COMMITTEE ROOM, THE COUNCIL HOUSE, BROMSGROVE

AGENDA

Council Agendas and Minutes are available on our web site at
www.bromsgrove.gov.uk/meetings

MEMBERS: Councillors D. C. Norton (Executive Leader), Mrs. M. M. T. Taylor (Deputy Executive Leader), B. L. Fuller C.B.E., Q.F.S.M., Mrs. J. M. L. A. Griffiths, R. Hollingworth and P. J. Whittaker.

1. To receive apologies for absence
2. Declarations of Interest
3. To confirm the Minutes of the Executive Cabinet held on 8th September and 15th September 2004
4. To receive the Minutes of the Tenders Committee held on 20th September 2004
5. Public Questions
6. Issues arising from Overview and Scrutiny Committees
 - (a) Scrutiny Report - Taxi Ranks
 - (b) Scrutiny Report - Disabled Facilities Grants
7. Parish Charter for Bromsgrove
8. Medium Term Financial Plan
9. Monitoring of the Revised Capital Programme for 2004/05
10. Voluntary Engagement - Monitoring Board Arrangements
11. Performance Information - First Quarter 2004/05
12. Private Sector Housing Strategy and Grant Assistance Policy

13. Arrangements for the review of decisions on homelessness or non-acceptance on the Council's Housing Register
14. Car Parking Service - Introduction of Keypads
15. Request from Wyre Forest District Council for CCTV Monitoring Service
16. Bromsgrove Housing Capacity Study
17. To consider any other business, details of which have been notified to the Head of Administrative Services prior to the commencement of the meeting and which the Chairman, by reason of special circumstances, considers to be of so urgent a nature that it cannot wait until the next meeting

S. NIXON
Chief Executive

The Council House
Burcot Lane
BROMSGROVE
Worcs.
B60 1AA

4th October 2004

BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL

MEETING OF THE EXECUTIVE CABINET

Wednesday, 8th September 2004 at 5.00 p.m.

PRESENT: Councillors D. C. Norton (Executive Leader), Mrs. M. M. T. Taylor (Deputy Executive Leader), B. L. Fuller C.B.E., Q.F.S.M., Mrs. J. M. L. A. Griffiths, R. Hollingworth and P. J. Whittaker.

Observers: Councillors J. H. Gardener, N. Psirides J.P. and Mrs. M. A. Sherrey.

66/04 **MINUTES**

The Minutes of the Meeting of the Executive Cabinet held on 17th August 2004 were submitted.

RESOLVED: that the Minutes of the Meeting be approved and confirmed as a correct record.

67/04 **STATEMENT OF ACCOUNTS**

Consideration was given to the unaudited Statement of Accounts for the year ended 31st March 2003. It was

RECOMMENDED: that the unaudited Statement of Accounts for the year ended 31st March 2003 be approved in accordance with the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2003.

The Meeting closed at 5.08 p.m.

Chairman

BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL

MEETING OF THE EXECUTIVE CABINET

Wednesday, 15th September 2004 at 6.00 p.m.

PRESENT: Councillors D. C. Norton (Executive Leader), Mrs. M. M. T. Taylor (Deputy Executive Leader), B. L. Fuller C.B.E., Q.F.S.M., Mrs. J. M. L. A. Griffiths, R. Hollingworth and P. J. Whittaker.

Observer: Councillor Mrs. K. M. Gall.

68/04 **LOCAL GOVERNMENT EFFICIENCY - SHARED SERVICES**

Consideration was given to the initiative to explore the feasibility of developing the concept of shared "back office" services with other local authorities within the County in order to seek to achieve savings in line with the Gershon Review. It was

RESOLVED: that the report be noted and that Officers be requested to work with other authorities to produce a more detailed report later in the year.

69/04 **FREEDOM OF INFORMATION**

The Cabinet considered a report on the Freedom of Information Act 2000 which was to become fully implemented on 1st January 2005. It was clear that the Council's practices and procedures would need to be reviewed in order to meet requirements of the Act and to deal with requests for information in an appropriate manner. It was noted that the Act would have a significant impact upon the way all public authorities manage information and records. Following discussion it was

RESOLVED:

- (a) that the Corporate Director (Resources) be designated Lead Officer with overall corporate responsibility for Freedom of Information;
- (b) that the post of Asset and Standards Management Assistant be re-designated Information Management Officer and allocated day to day responsibility for Freedom of Information; and
- (c) that arrangements be made for Members to receive training on the subject of Freedom of Information.

70/04 **CINEMA LICENCE FEES**

Having given consideration to the report and the fees charges by neighbouring authorities, it was

RESOLVED: that the following scale of fees in relation to Cinema Licensing be set with immediate effect:

- (a) in the case of a grant or renewal for one year, £600;
- (b) in the case of a grant or renewal for any less period, £200 for each month for which the Licence is granted or renewed, but does not exceed £600 in a 12 months period; and
- (c) in the case of a transfer, £120.

(NOTE:

- (i) Councillor Mrs. J. M. L. A. Griffiths declared a prejudicial interest in this item as a member of the Arts Centre Trust Board and left the room whilst the item was being considered.

- (ii) Councillors R. Hollingworth and D. C. Norton declared their personal interest in this item as members of the Arts Centre Trust Board.)

71/04

INDEPENDENT REMUNERATION PANEL

Consideration was given to the future Membership of the Independent Remuneration Panel. It was

RESOLVED:

- (a) that the current Members of the Independent Remuneration Panel be re-appointed to serve on the Panel until 30th September 2006; and
- (b) that should any Member(s) of the Panel be unable or unwilling to serve on it until that date, replacements be appointed following a further public advertisement or nomination by the Chamber of Commerce as appropriate.

72/04

PLANNING SERVICES BUSINESS PLAN 2004-2006

The Cabinet considered the Planning Services Business Plan 2004-2006. A number of areas were highlighted relating to the Building Control and Economic Development Sections and it was

RESOLVED: that the Planning Services Business Plan 2004-2006 be approved.

73/04

RESULTS OF CONSULTATION ON BROMSGROVE TOWN CENTRE RETAIL STUDY

Consideration was given to the report on the outcome of the consultation exercise on the Bromsgrove Town Centre Study. It was felt that the consultation exercise could serve as a model for similar future projects.

Members also considered the next steps to be taken. Following discussion it was

RESOLVED:

- (a) that the three sites identified, i.e., the bus station area, the High Street and the Market site be confirmed as the most important areas for improvement;
- (b) that in order to progress with the project, Officers be requested to produce a list of development principles, i.e., key constraints on or potential for the sites to be forwarded to developers in order that development proposals can be produced; and
- (c) that in view of the identification within the study of the Victoria Ground, Bromsgrove as a site peripheral to the Town Centre, the site be not considered as a priority for development in the foreseeable future.

74/04

LOCAL DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK

The Cabinet considered the introduction by the Government of a new planning policy system requiring all Local Planning Authorities to begin work towards the production of Local Development Frameworks for their areas. In Bromsgrove, this will require revisions to essential parts of the existing Local Plan by March 2007. In order to commence work towards a Local Development Framework it was

RESOLVED:

- (a) that a Local Development Framework Working Group be established as set out in paragraph 4.7 of the report;
- (b) that the remainder of the report be noted; and
- (c) that the Head of Local Plans and the Local Plan Section be thanked for their work in relation to the Bromsgrove District Local Plan.

75/04

LOCAL DEVELOPMENT SCHEME

Consideration was given to the draft of the Local Development Scheme attached to the report. The Scheme, which is required as part of the Local Development Framework procedure, sets out a three year work programme for the production of Local Development Framework documents. It was very likely that success in gaining future Planning Delivery Grants would be strongly influenced by the progress made in delivering the Local Development Scheme programme. It was

RESOLVED:

- (a) that the contents of the Local Development Scheme be approved;
- (b) that the Scheme be submitted to the Government Office for approval; and
- (c) that the proposed consultation exercise be undertaken and feedback reported to Members.

76/04

HOUSING LAND AVAILABILITY

The Cabinet considered the latest position in relation to housing land availability as contained in the latest statistics covering the period up to April 2004. It was intended to review Supplementary Planning Guidance 10 as part of the new planning system. At present the strategic targets were comfortably met to 2011. It was

RESOLVED: that the report be noted.

77/04

CLEAN NEIGHBOURHOODS CONSULTATION DOCUMENT

Members were advised of the Government's proposals contained in their consultation paper "Cleaner, Greener, Safer Communities", together with the comments of the Local Government Association on the document. Whilst the proposals were generally welcomed, concern was expressed regarding the resource implications for local authorities as it appeared at present there was to be no additional Government funding provided. Following discussion, it was

RESOLVED: that the views put forward by the Local Government Association on the consultation document be strongly supported and the Government be advised accordingly.

78/04

FORMER COUNCILLOR MR. M. J. SCANLAN

The Cabinet were advised that former Councillor and Chairman of the Council, Mr. M. J. Scanlan, was at present seriously ill in hospital. It was

RESOLVED: that a letter be sent to Mr. Scanlan expressing the Council's best wishes.

79/04

LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972

RESOLVED: that, under Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public be excluded from the Meeting during the consideration of the items of business the subject of the following Minutes on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of "Exempt Information" as defined in Part I of Schedule 12A to the Act, the relevant paragraph of that part, in each case, being as set out below:-

<u>Minute No.</u>	<u>Paragraph</u>
80/04	8 and 9
81/04	1
82/04	3
83/04	12

80/04

PURCHASE OF COLUMN LIFTS FOR USE AT DEPOT

(The Chairman agreed to the consideration of this item as a matter of urgency as a decision was required thereon before the next Meeting of the Executive Cabinet.)

It was reported that in order to maintain and service the new refuse vehicles, the use of six additional column lifts was required. Officers had investigated the options and it was clear that the most cost-effective solution was to purchase the equipment at an approximate cost of £17,000. This could be met from the budget allocated in the Capital Programme. It was

RESOLVED:

- (a) that four column lifts be purchased at a cost of approximately £17,000;
- (b) that an exception to Contract Procedure Orders be approved to enable the Chief Executive Officer and the Portfolio Holders for Finance and Environmental Health to proceed with the arrangements for the purchase; and
- (c) that in view of the urgency of the matter the Cabinet's decision on the matter be not subject to the Council's call-in procedure.

81/04

RESTRUCTURE OF THE AUDIT, BEST VALUE AND PERFORMANCE SECTION

Consideration was given to the proposed organisational changes to the Audit, Best Value and Performance Section. It was noted that any restructure may be an interim measure in advance of wider re-organisation across the Authority. Following discussion it was

RESOLVED:

- (a) that the structure set out in Appendix 2 to the report be approved;
- (b) that the section be renamed the "Audit and Policy Unit";
- (c) that the Audit, Best Value and Performance Manager post be renamed Audit and Policy Manager;
- (d) that the following internal appointments be made effective from 1st September 2004:
 - (i) holder of the post of Systems Auditor be confirmed in the post of Senior Auditor;
 - (ii) holder of the post of Best Value Officer be confirmed in the post of Senior Policy Officer (Best Value, Performance Management and Risk Management).
- (e) that the Corporate Director (Resources) be authorised to agree the job descriptions for the Senior Auditor and Senior Policy Officer (Best Value, Performance Management and Risk Management) and to make future amendments, if appropriate;
- (f) that the posts of Principal Auditor and Senior Policy Officer (Strategy, Consultation and Partnerships) be advertised as soon as possible;
- (g) that additional support in relation to procurement and risk management be provided by way of a 12 months contractual appointment and funded by the use of savings resulting from the delay in the appointment of the two senior posts and the existing Policy Officer post.

82/04

RIGHT TO BUY MATTER

Consideration was given to the request referred to in the report to the postponement of the Council's Statutory Charge on a property sold under the Right to Buy Scheme.

In view of the financial risk to the Council in these circumstances it was

RESOLVED:

- (a) that the request to postpone the Council's Statutory Charge be refused;
- (b) that the Standards Committee be recommended to approve an amendment to the Council's Constitution to authorise the Corporate Director (Resources) and the Portfolio Holder for Finance to determine any similar requests received.

83/04

**T.F.60 LIMITED, TRADING AS HOPEWELL CANTONESE RESTAURANT,
RECREATION ROAD, BROMSGROVE**

Following consideration of the circumstances of the case, it was

RESOLVED: that legal proceedings be instigated against T.F.60 Limited for offences under the Food Safety (General Food Hygiene) Regulations 1995 and Food Safety Act 1990.

The Meeting Closed at 7.30 p.m.

Chairman

BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL

MEETING OF THE TENDERS COMMITTEE

Monday, 20th September 2004 at 9.30 a.m.

PRESENT: Councillors D. C. Norton (Chairman), R. Hollingworth (Vice-Chairman) and G. H. R. Hulett.

09/04 **MINUTES**

The Minutes of the Meeting of the Tenders Committee held on 14th July 2004 were submitted.

RESOLVED: that the Minutes of the Meeting be approved and confirmed as a correct record.

10/04 **LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972**

RESOLVED: that, under Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public be excluded from the Meeting during the consideration of the item of business the subject of the following Minute on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of "Exempt Information" as defined in Part I of Schedule 12A to the Act, the relevant paragraph of that part being as set out below:-

Minute No.
11/04

Paragraphs
7, 8 and 9

11/04 **EVALUATION OF TENDERS FOR THE ARTS CENTRE AUDITORIUM SEATING AND DEMOUNTABLE FLOORING**

Following consideration of the report, it was

RESOLVED:

- (a) that the contract for the supply of auditorium seating for the Arts Centre be awarded to the lowest tenderer at the cost set out in the report;
- (b) that an exception be made to Contract Procedure Rules to enable the demountable flooring to be supplied by Steeldeck at the estimated cost set out in the report without inviting competitive quotations.

The Meeting closed at 9.45 a.m.

Chairman

BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL

EXECUTIVE CABINET

13TH OCTOBER 2004

SCRUTINY REPORT – TAXI RANKS

Responsible Portfolio Holder	Councillor P. J. Whittaker
Responsible Head of Service	Head of Administrative Services

1. SUMMARY

- 1.1 To consider the findings and recommendations of the Taxi Ranks Task Group.

2. RECOMMENDATION

- 2.1 Members are asked to approve the attached Taxi Ranks Task Group Report and the recommendations contained within it.

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 At its Meeting held on 29th January 2004 the Housing and Planning Policy Scrutiny Committee decided to form a Task Group to consider the location of taxi ranks within Bromsgrove town centre.
- 3.2 The Task Group comprised of six Councillors from the Committee and a representative of the taxi trade.
- 3.3 In total the Task Group met on seven occasions including two site visits and several people were consulted. (See Appendix I of the attached Report for details.)
- 3.4 The report was finalised by the Task Group at its meeting on the 21st June 2004 and was submitted to the Housing and Planning Policy Scrutiny Committee Meeting held on the 9th September 2004 for approval.
- 3.5 Members of the Committee resolved that the Executive Cabinet be requested to approve the attached report and the recommendations within it.

4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 A number of the proposals set out in the attached report will require funding to implement.

4.2 Please refer to the table below for estimated costs of implementing recommendations contained within the Task Group's Report which is attached.

<u>RECOMMENDATION</u>	<u>ESTIMATED COST</u>	<u>COMMENT</u>
Bromsgrove Bus Station Recommendation (c) (Page 1 of attached Report)	£150.00	
Church Street Recommendation (a) (Page 1 of attached Report)	£3000.00 (For a Feasibility Study)	A Feasibility Study would need to be undertaken, similar to the Mill Lane Study, which would give accurate costs of works that could be carried out.
Golden Cross Public House Recommendation (a) (Page 2 of attached Report)	£1000.00	The cost for implementing recommendation (a) is for a Traffic Order Amendment and the taxi bay road markings.
Recommendation (b) (Page 2 of attached Report)	£3000.00	The cost of implementing recommendation (b) is dependent on there being no requirements for moving/lowering statutory undertakers apparatus (water, gas etc).
New Arts Centre All recommendations (Page 2 of attached Report)	£400.00 Maximum Total Cost (See comment)	It is anticipated that the Artrix Trust (Arts Centre Operating Trust) will at least contribute towards the total cost of £400 and it is also hoped that North East Worcestershire (NEW) College will contribute to the funding required.
General Recommendation (a) & (b) (Page 2 of attached Report)	£1820.00	For all five taxi ranks (at Bromsgrove Bus Station, Golden Cross Public House, New Arts Centre, The Strand and Worcester Road) to have the larger signs the estimated cost would be £1500 for the making and the installation of the signs. (A verbal update on this cost will be available at the meeting)
Recommendation (a) (Page 2 of attached Report)	£30.00 - £50.00 Per Taxi Bay (Minimum cost of £300.00 within a 5 mile radius to maintain road markings only)	To paint new taxi bay road signs, it would cost approximately £80 per taxi bay. However, there is a minimum cost of £300 which covers the cost of almost four taxi bays within a five mile radius. Three to four new taxi bays are recommended making the total estimated cost for road markings of new taxi bays and taxi signs for all five taxi ranks approximately £1820 To maintain the appropriate road markings in the future it will cost between £30 and £50 per taxi bay depending on whether it is the lines that need to be repainted or whether the wording "TAXIS" also needs to be repainted. However, there is a minimum cost of £300 which will cover between six to ten taxi bays within a five mile radius.

4.3 At present, there is no identifiable budget to meet these costs and therefore it is requested that the Executive Cabinet gives consideration to an appropriate level of financial provision and as part of the next budget revision.

5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

5.1 None.

Background Papers

Minutes of the Taxi Ranks Task Group Meetings.

Contact officer

Name: Della McCarthy, Administrative Officer
E Mail: d.mccarthy@bromsgrove.gov.uk
Tel: (01527) 881407



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SCRUTINY REPORT

SCRUTINY REPORT

TAXI RANKS – SCRUTINY REPORT

Task Group Report –
Housing and Planning Policy Scrutiny Committee
September 2004

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Appendix I – A list of Individuals the Task Group Consulted

Appendix II – A Map showing existing and possible Taxi Rank locations visited by Members of the Task Group (with the exception of the New Arts Centre)

Appendix III – A Map showing the “cash-machine loop” area beside Asda

Appendix IV(a) & (b) – Maps of the New Arts Centre

Appendix V – A Map showing land located on Worcester Road

BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL

TAXI RANKS TASK GROUP REPORT

SEPTEMBER 2004

MEMBERS

Councillors W. R. Newnes (Chairman), A. J. Dent, Mrs. R. L. Dent, D. Hancox, S. P. Shannon and Mrs. C. J. Spencer.

Mr. K. J. Nind (Representative of the Taxi Trade)

SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS

- ASDA
 - (a) In conjunction with the Town Centre Study and any proposals for the provision of a Shopmobility Scheme and/or the introduction of alternative methods of car park payment/management, the need to make suitable provision for taxis in an area close to the main door of Asda should be considered and a solution found;
 - (b) Steps are taken to ensure that representatives of the taxi trade are included in the Town Centre Plan consultation process;
 - (c) Consideration be given to provide more disabled parking spaces for the shopmobility scheme to enable tail-lift vehicles to have enough room to load and unload safely;
 - (d) The above comments are fed into the Study which has been initiated by Mr. J. Moody, Head of Community Safety and Engineering and the Town Centre Study consultation process.

- Bromsgrove Bus Station
 - (a) It is essential that there should continue to be a taxi rank in Bromsgrove Bus Station and that steps should be taken to expand the size of the present rank and to improve safety, bearing in mind that passengers presently have to step into a narrow carriageway, used by buses, to get into a taxi;
 - (b) Improvements to the signing of the present rank should be carried out as a matter of urgency;
 - (c) A "No Entry" road marking be painted on the road by the traffic lights to make it clear to drivers;
 - (d) That the above comments be fed into the Study which has been initiated by Mr. J. Moody, Head of Community Safety and Engineering and the Town Centre Study consultation process.

- Church Street –
 - (a) The parking layout be improved to enable the provision of disabled persons' parking spaces to be increased. This would make good the deficiency resulting from the probable loss of disabled persons' parking spaces in the Bus Station;
 - (b) The above comments be fed into the Study covering this area which has been initiated by Mr. J. Moody, Head of Community Safety and Engineering as well as the Town Centre Study consultation process.

Golden Cross Public House –

- (a) An evenings-only taxi rank be established where the existing daytime loading bay area is situated outside the Golden Cross Public House in the High Street;
- (b) That the existing daytime loading bay area outside the Golden Cross Public House be extended (towards Pizza Hut) and form a 24-hour taxi rank. The rank should accommodate two taxi spaces.

➤ Hanover Street Car Park

The evenings-only taxi rank towards the southern end of the car park be discontinued.

➤ New Arts Centre

- (a) Part of the goods access/loading bay area (accessed via School Drive) be used as a taxi rank, particularly for wheelchair accessible vehicles;
- (b) That there is disabled parking provision in the car park and that the location of the spaces are suitable for the Arts Centre building, therefore, ensuring any disabled persons have the shortest distance to walk to the entrance, preferably, without having to cross in front of traffic moving around the car park;
- (c) That there are appropriate signs for the disabled parking spaces and for the taxi rank (accessed via School Drive).

➤ The Strand

The taxi rank in The Strand should continue in existence for the time being, but that the situation should be monitored with a view to discontinuing it (or re-designating it as an evenings-only rank) if it proves to be unnecessary.

➤ Worcester Road

- (a) The existing evenings-only taxi rank on Worcester Road should continue as an alternative to the proposed taxi rank outside the Golden Cross Public House;
- (b) The Police be encouraged to enforce against illegal parking on this rank.

➤ General

- (a) That all taxi ranks should have larger taxi rank signs (similar to those used in other authorities such as Stratford) and that the Executive Cabinet be asked to approve the relatively small amount of funding required so that this important improvement for both taxi drivers and members of the public can be carried out as quickly as possible.
- (b) Worcestershire County Council's Highways Partnership Unit be asked to ensure all existing taxi ranks and any created in the future have appropriate signs and road markings to make it clear to members of the public where taxi ranks are located;
- (c) Worcestershire County Council's Highways Partnership Unit be asked to maintain the appropriate signs and in particular maintain road markings to assist the police in enforcing against illegal parking on taxi ranks especially the rank located on Worcester Road;
- (d) The Executive Cabinet be asked to give consideration to an appropriate level of financial provision when detailed costs are available and as part of the next budget revision.

TERMS OF REFERENCE

At the Meeting of the Housing and Planning Policy Scrutiny Committee on 29th January 2004, it was decided a Task Group would be formed to consider the location of taxi ranks within Bromsgrove town centre and the Group would include a representative of the taxi trade.

See appendix I for a list of those who were consulted.

BACKGROUND AND METHODOLOGY

The first meeting took place on the 26th February 2004 at which we considered the summary of points made by Mr. Nind at the Housing and Planning Policy Scrutiny Committee Meeting on 29th January 2004 which related to the taxi ranks in Bromsgrove town centre.

It was explained that the general purposes of taxi ranks were: (a) a place where members of the public could have a reasonable expectation a hackney carriage taxi would be waiting and; (b) a place where hackney carriage taxi drivers could have a reasonable expectation they would pick-up members of the public who needed a taxi. It was pointed out that a taxi rank was not meant for private hire taxi drivers who were waiting for their next pick-up call or as a place for private hire taxi drivers to pick-up or set-down passengers. The only exception to that rule was at Asda where both kinds of taxis could use the pick-up/set-down area.

We decided that we needed to visit the taxi ranks and see first hand the problems taxi drivers and their passengers were facing. We therefore agreed that those who were available in the day should go on a site visit to all existing and possible taxi ranks in Bromsgrove town centre. This took place on the 2nd March 2004.

Mr. Cutler who is the Licensing Officer at the Council was invited on the site visit for his input as well as a representative from the Worcester County Council's Highways Partnership Unit. Unfortunately, no one from Highways could attend and therefore a list of questions we needed answers to were sent to the Highways Partnership Unit for a written response.

At the site visit, we visited all existing and possible taxi rank locations on the map attached (appendix II) with the exception of the Arts Centre. It quickly became clear that there is a strong link between the location of taxi ranks and the location of disabled persons' parking spaces and we therefore also visited parking areas to consider parking facilities for the disabled.

One issue that arose from the site visit was to determine the ownership of a piece of land beside Asda (referred to in the Minutes of the Task Group Meetings as the "cash-machine loop"). It was found to belong to Worcestershire County Council and was leased to Asda (a map showing the land outlined in red is attached as appendix III). A letter was sent to the Manager of the Asda Store in Bromsgrove to find out his views on the possibility of using the "cash-machine loop" area in Market Street as a daytime only taxi rank.

The third meeting of the Task Group took place on 22nd March 2004 at which we invited representatives from West Mercia Police (Acting Inspector McDonald and Police Constable Holliday), Mr. Moody, Head of Community Safety and Engineering and Mr. Hawkesworth, Technical Services Manager. A map of the Arts Centre was also distributed (see appendix IV(a) & (b)).

Mr. Hawkesworth and Mr. Hazlehurst contacted the Artrix Trust (Arts Centre Operating Trust) regarding the possibility of using part of the good access/loading bay area as a taxi rank.

A letter was sent to the owner of a piece of land located on Worcester Road to find out his view of using the land as an evenings-only taxi rank. (See appendix V which shows the land outlined in red).

We agreed that further representatives of the Taxi Trade should be invited to the fourth meeting of the Task Group to help us further in making sure any recommendations made were considered useful from the perspective of taxi drivers, particularly relating to the existing taxi rank on Worcester Road. Acting Inspector McDonald was also present.

At the fifth meeting of the Task Group, which took place on the 19th May 2004, we invited a representative of a local Access Group to hear the views of the disabled on town centre parking provision and its interaction with the location of taxi ranks. A representative from the Highways Partnership Unit was asked to attend this meeting to answer further questions raised, in particular those relating to the provision of suitable signs at taxi ranks. Mr. Moody, Head of Community Safety and Engineering was also present.

A further suggestion was raised at this meeting (on the 19th May 2004), which was to create a 24-hour taxi rank near to Pizza Hut on the High Street by extending the daytime loading bay area outside the Golden Cross Public House. Mr. Walton, the representative from the Highways Partnership Unit requested the location be visited to see if it would be possible.

A second site visit took place on 16th June 2004 at which Mr. Walton attended and a final meeting of the Task Group took place on 21st June 2004 to finalise this report.

TAXI RANKS IN BROMSGROVE AND RECOMMENDATIONS

ASDA

Recently, a taxi pick-up/set-down area was created near the entrance to the store. (Please note that it is not a taxi rank). It was indicated by Mr. Nind and other taxi drivers the extent of the problems they were encountering in reaching the present pick-up area near the main door of Asda due to congestion in the car park. It is felt that motorists were also abusing the pick-up area. Other problems indicated were the congestion in Recreation Road and at the car park's entrances and exits. This could be a particular problem for the disabled who are using taxis as it could mean that the disabled have to wait in the taxi in the car park until it is clear for the taxi to drop them nearer to the entrance. This also means that the disabled may have to pay extra fare due to traffic congestion.

It was investigated as to whether the "cash-machine loop" area could be used as a daytime-only taxi rank. However, both the Manager of the Bromsgrove Asda Store and the Highways Partnership Unit were firmly against the provision of a taxi rank in the area near the cash machines at Asda.

Regarding disabled parking provision, we were informed that initially, there would be approximately four to six dedicated spaces for the disabled using the shopmobility scheme, however, we agreed that more space would be needed for tail-lift vehicles which when loading and unloading, could take up to four to five car parking spaces.

Various solutions relating to the taxi rank were considered but all seemed to have disadvantages of various sorts. We therefore **RECOMMEND** that:

- (a) in conjunction with the Town Centre Study and any proposals for the provision of a Shopmobility Scheme and/or the introduction of alternative methods of car park payment/management, the need to make suitable provision for taxis in an area close to the main door of Asda should be considered and a solution found;
- (b) steps are taken to ensure that representatives of the taxi trade are included in the Town Centre Plan consultation process;
- (c) consideration be given to provide more disabled parking spaces for the shopmobility scheme to enable tail-lift vehicles to have enough room to load and unload safely;
- (d) the above comments are fed into the study which has been initiated by Mr. J. Moody, Head of Community Safety and Engineering and the Town Centre Study consultation process.

Bromsgrove Bus Station

Currently, the existing all-day taxi rank is made up of five taxi spaces and there are also two disabled parking spaces alongside Iceland. From the site visit, a number of problems were obvious such as:

- safety concerns for passengers of taxis – getting in and out the vehicle on the “wrong” side of the road;
- the problems taxi drivers have regarding other vehicles parking at the taxi rank;
- safety issues for the disabled using the parking spaces alongside Iceland;
- the number of taxis waiting at the existing taxi rank (which exceeded the five taxi spaces at the rank);
- safety issues at the traffic lights (where some drivers enter the bus station area in contravention of the “No Entry” sign);
- safety issues for pedestrians coming from the High Street accessing Asda, public lavatories and buses (pedestrian/vehicle conflict);
- the lack of signs making it clear to the public the location of the taxi rank.

Various suggestions were considered and discussed which included:

- the possibility of widening the road near the front of the taxi rank (by the stationery shop) by using part of the existing pavement;
- the possibility of widening the whole carriageway in the bus station area by the purchase of a strip of land from the rear of each premises located on the High Street;
- Using the existing disabled parking spaces as part of the taxi rank and moving the two existing disabled parking spaces elsewhere;
- As the traffic lights by the Bus Station obstruct the view of the current “No Entry” sign, a “No Entry” road marking be painted on to the road.

We were advised of proposals to provide a walk-way across Market Street from the car park to the area around Iceland, and that this proposal would be likely to result in the removal of the disabled persons’ parking spaces.

After viewing the drawings of the Bus Station area prepared in connection with the consultation exercise for the Bromsgrove Town Centre Study, we were considerably concerned that the drawings did not show a taxi rank in the bus station. Whilst we noted that the drawings were merely an illustration of what might be provided we do believe that it is essential the taxi rank should remain in Bromsgrove Bus Station.

Therefore we **RECOMMEND** that:

- (a) it is essential that there should continue to be a taxi rank in Bromsgrove Bus Station and that steps should be taken to expand the size of the present rank and to improve safety, bearing in mind that passengers presently have to step into a narrow carriageway, used by buses, to get into a taxi;
- (b) improvements to the signing of the present rank should be carried out as a matter of urgency;
- (c) a “No Entry” road marking be painted on the road by the traffic lights to make it clear to drivers;
- (d) the above comments be fed into the Study covering this area which has been initiated by Mr. J. Moody, Head of Community Safety and Engineering as well as the Town Centre Study consultation process.

Church Street

Church Street has two existing disabled parking spaces but it is clear that an improved layout could enable this provision to be increased. We agreed that this is a difficult area to improve due to the traffic congestion in the area but if the layout was changed to increase the parking provision, this would make good the deficiency resulting from the expected loss of disabled persons' parking spaces in the Bus Station due to changes in that area to decrease pedestrian and traffic conflict.

We therefore **RECOMMEND** that:

- (a) the above solution be approved which is to improve the existing layout to enable the provision of disabled persons' parking spaces to be increased, therefore, making good the deficiency resulting from the probable loss of disabled persons' parking spaces in the Bus Station;
- (b) the above comments be fed into the Study covering this area which has been initiated by Mr. J. Moody, Head of Community Safety and Engineering as well as the Town Centre Study consultation process.

Golden Cross Public House

It was suggested by Mr. Nind that an evenings-only taxi rank (6pm onwards) be created in this location. Although a proposal to put a rank in this location was rejected several years ago, this was in respect of an all-day taxi rank. The Highways Partnership Unit raised no objections in principle of creating an evenings-only taxi rank and the taxi drivers present at one of our meetings indicated they too supported the idea.

Due to problems experienced by taxi drivers using the Worcester Road taxi rank as well as the difficulty of finding a cost-effective solution for moving the location of the rank to another part of Worcester Road, it was also suggested that a 24-hour taxi rank be established near to Pizza Hut by extending the existing daytime loading bay area outside the Golden Cross Public House. We therefore, **RECOMMEND** that:

- (a) steps be taken to establish an evenings-only taxi rank where the existing daytime loading bay area is situated outside the Golden Cross Public House in the High Street;
- (b) the existing daytime loading bay area outside the Golden Cross Public House be extended (towards Pizza Hut) and form a 24-hour taxi rank. The rank should accommodate two taxi spaces.

Hanover Street Car Park

There is an evenings-only taxi rank towards the southern end of the car park which we were informed by Mr. Nind was never used. We therefore **RECOMMEND** that it be discontinued.

New Arts Centre

There is no taxi rank near the new Arts Centre at present. We agreed a taxi rank would be needed at this location and therefore Mr. Hawkesworth and Mr. Hazlehurst contacted the Artrix Trust (the Arts Centre Operating Trust) to find out their views on the suggestion of using part of the goods access/loading bay area as a taxi rank. We received a positive response from the Artrix Trust.

Although we are aware that the car park which will be used to access the New Arts Centre, does provide disabled parking provision, the spaces appear to be only suitable for accessing North East Worcestershire College and not the Arts Centre Building.

Therefore we **RECOMMEND** that:

- (a) part of the goods access/loading bay area (accessed via School Drive) be used as a taxi rank, particularly for wheelchair accessible vehicles (See appendix IV(a) & (b));
- (b) that there is disabled parking provision in the car park and that the location of the spaces are suitable for the Arts Centre building, therefore, ensuring any disabled persons have the shortest distance to walk to the entrance, preferably, without having to cross in front of traffic moving around the car park (See appendix IV(a) & (b));
- (c) that there are appropriate signs for the disabled parking spaces and for the taxi rank (accessed via School Drive) (See appendix IV(a) & (b))

The Strand

Currently, there is an all-day taxi rank outside Oceans Fish Bar. We considered various possibilities including discontinuing the taxi rank as taxi drivers rarely used it, particularly in the day. However, we believe there have been recent indications that the nearby Hogshead Public House is becoming more popular as a late evening venue and if this trend continues, there might still be a need for a rank in this part of the town, possibly on an evenings-only basis.

Therefore, we **RECOMMEND** that the taxi rank in The Strand should continue in existence for the time being, but that the situation should be monitored with a view to discontinuing it (or re-designating it as evenings-only rank) if it proves to be unnecessary.

Worcester Road

There is an existing evenings-only taxi rank on Worcester Road which is located north of Euphoria Night Club. Those in the taxi trade informed members of a number of problems they face due to the location of the taxi rank such as safety concerns of taxi drivers using the rank when rowdy behaviour takes place.

We concluded that the rank is on the wrong side of Euphoria Night Club and various options were considered. One option was to use a piece of land adjacent to the highway but the owner stated in a letter to the group that he was strongly opposed to the use of the land.

We did consider the idea of rearranging the traffic system in Worcester Road, under which traffic would flow down the right hand side of the road, leaving parking provision on the left hand side. An evening-only taxi rank (6.00pm onwards, for three vehicles) could then be provided on the left hand side outside the old C.A.B. offices at 47 Worcester Road. This would have several advantages: (i) passengers would get into the vehicles from the nearside and would not have to cross the road to get a taxi and; (ii) there would be less likelihood of traffic flows being blocked by congregating pedestrians. Some minor physical works would be needed near Hoolahans Public House to enable the traffic to use the right hand side of the road. However, there are also disadvantages, the main one being the expense and length of time it would take to implement if approved. Another disadvantage is that shop owners and businesses on the Worcester Road would be opposed to moving the parking provision to the left hand side of the road, as most businesses are located on the right hand side. If moved, it would also mean that the drivers of cars using the parking spaces in Worcester Road would face the same safety issue which taxi passengers do now, which is stepping into the road to get in and out of a vehicle.

Due to all the options suggested regarding the taxi rank on Worcester Road having various disadvantages we therefore **RECOMMEND** that:

- (a) the proposals for a 24-hour taxi rank to be established near to Pizza Hut by extending the existing daytime loading bay area outside the Golden Cross Public House be approved;
- (b) the existing evenings-only taxi rank on Worcester Road continue as an alternative to the proposed taxi rank outside the Golden Cross Public House;
- (c) the Police are encouraged to enforce against illegal parking on this rank.

General

Currently the taxi rank signs used to show members of the public where they are located appear to be much smaller than we feel appropriate. As it is very important for both taxi drivers and members of the public to be aware exactly where taxi ranks are located in the town centre, we strongly **RECOMMEND** that all taxi ranks should have larger taxi rank signs (similar to those used in other authorities such as Stratford) and that the Executive Cabinet be requested to approve the relatively small amount of funding required (approximately a maximum of £300 each) so that this important improvement, for both taxi drivers and members of the public, can be carried out as quickly as possible.

We **RECOMMEND** that Worcestershire County Council's Highways Partnership Unit be requested to:

- (a) ensure all existing taxi ranks and any created in the future have appropriate signs and road markings to make it clear to members of the public where taxi ranks are located;
- (b) maintain the appropriate signs and in particular maintain road markings to assist the police in enforcing against illegal parking on taxi ranks especially the rank located on Worcester Road.

It is also clear that a number of our proposals will cost money to implement. These include the provision of larger signs and the cost of the minor physical works proposed outside the Golden Cross Public House. The County Council has a small budget to meet the costs for the making of traffic orders in connection with the introduction of some of the proposed changes, however, it seems unlikely that they will have funding to cover the minor physical works proposed outside the Golden Cross. At present, there is no identifiable budget to meet these costs and we therefore **RECOMMEND** that the Executive Cabinet be asked to give consideration to an appropriate level of financial provision when detailed costs are available and as part of the next budget revision.

We have agreed that in 6 months time members of the Task Group will meet again to review the effectiveness of decisions made by the Executive Cabinet relating to this Report.

Contact Officer

Name: Della McCarthy, Administrative Officer

E Mail: d.mccarthy@bromsgrove.gov.uk

Tel.: 01527 881407

A List of Individuals the Task Group Consulted

1. Mr. K. Nind, Taxi Trade Representative
Mr. Nind was made a co-opted member of the Taxi Ranks Task Group at the Meeting of the Housing and Planning Policy Scrutiny Committee Meeting on the 29th January 2004. Mr. Nind attended all the Task Group Meetings and represented the Taxi Trade.
2. Mr. J. Cutler, Taxi Licensing Officer
Mr. Cutler was invited to the site visit of the existing and possible taxi rank locations in Bromsgrove Town Centre which took place on the 2nd March 2004.
3. Taxi Drivers
Members spoke to Taxi Drivers on the site visit and invited several taxi drivers to the meeting of the Task Group which took place on the 20th April 2004. Mr. Talbot (Taxi Driver) also attended the meeting on the 19th May 2004.
4. West Mercia Police
Representatives from the Police were invited to several meetings of the Task Group. Acting Inspector McDonald attended each of those meetings and on one occasion with PC Holliday.
5. Highways Partnership Unit (Worcestershire County Council)
A representative from the Highways Partnership Unit was invited to the meetings of the Task Group. Unfortunately, due to position of Highways Partnership Manager being vacant at that time and staff workloads no one was able to attend the majority of meetings. A written response was given to Members of the Task Group from the Highways Partnership Unit and a representative (Mr. M. Walton) was able to attend one meeting and the second site visit.
6. Asda
A letter was sent to the Manager of the Asda Store in Bromsgrove to find out his views on the possibility of using the "cash-machine loop" area in Market Street as a daytime-only taxi rank. A written response was received from the Manager.
7. Mr. J. Moody, Head of Community Safety and Engineering
Mr. Moody was invited to meetings of the Task Group to discuss the parking provision for disabled persons' in Council owned car parks and the taxi rank on Worcester Road.
8. Mr. R. Hazlehurst, Head of Leisure Services and Mr. T. Hawkesworth, Technical Services Manager
Mr. Hazlehurst and Mr. Hawkesworth were invited to meetings of the Task Group to discuss the possibility of creating a taxi rank at the new Arts Centre. Mr. Hawkesworth was able to attend and Mr. Hazlehurst attended at meeting with the Artrix Trust (the Arts Centre Operating Trust) to find out their views of the suggested location of the taxi rank.
9. Owner of land on Worcester Road
Mr. Pinfield of Pinfield & Company, who is the owner of a piece of land on Worcester Road, was contacted via telephone and letter to find out his view on using the land as an evenings-only taxi rank. A written response was received.
10. Representative from Bromsgrove Access Group
A representative (Mrs. Dipple) from a Local Access Group was invited to a meeting of the Task Group so members could hear the views of the disabled on town centre parking provision and its interaction with the location of taxi ranks.

- (b) maintain the appropriate signs and in particular maintain road markings to assist the police in enforcing against illegal parking on taxi ranks especially the rank located on Worcester Road.

It is also clear that a number of our proposals will cost money to implement. These include the provision of additional signs and the cost of the minor physical works proposed outside the Golden Cross Public House. The County Council has a budget to meet the costs for the making of traffic orders in connection with the introduction of some of the proposed changes, however, it seems unlikely that they will have funding to cover the minor physical works proposed outside the Golden Cross. At present, there is no identifiable budget to meet these costs and we therefore **RECOMMEND** that the Executive Cabinet be asked to give consideration to an appropriate level of financial provision when detailed costs are available and as part of the next budget revision.

We have agreed that in 12 months time members of the Task Group will meet again to review the effectiveness of decisions made by the Executive Cabinet relating to this Report.

Contact Officer

Name: Della McCarthy, Administrative Officer

E Mail: d.mccarthy@bromsgrove.gov.uk

Tel.: 01527 881407

BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL

EXECUTIVE CABINET

13TH OCTOBER 2004

SCRUTINY REPORT – DISABLED FACILITIES GRANTS

Responsible Portfolio Holder	Councillor P. J. Whittaker
Responsible Head of Service	Head of Environmental Health Services Head of Strategic Housing

1. SUMMARY

- 1.1 To consider the findings and recommendations of the Disabled Facilities Grants Task Group.

2. RECOMMENDATION

- 2.1 Members are asked to approve the attached Disabled Facilities Grants Task Group Report and the recommendations contained within it.

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 At the Housing and Planning Policy Scrutiny Committee Meeting held on 4th December 2003 and at the Health and Leisure Scrutiny Committee Meeting held on the 9th December 2003, it was decided a joint Task Group comprising of three to four members of each Committee would be established to scrutinise the processing of Disabled Facilities Grant requests.
- 3.2 In total the Task Group met on six occasions and several people were consulted. (See Appendix I of the attached Report for details.)
- 3.3 The report was finalised by the Task Group at its meeting on the 26th July 2004 and was submitted to the Housing and Planning Policy Scrutiny Committee Meeting held on the 9th September 2004 and the Health and Leisure Scrutiny Committee Meeting held on the 14th September 2004 for approval.
- 3.4 Members of both Committees resolved that the Executive Cabinet be requested to approve the attached report and the recommendations within it.

4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 There are minimal financial implications in implementing the recommendations contained within the attached report.

5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 None.

Background Papers

Minutes of the Disabled Facilities Grants Task Group Meetings.

Contact officer

Name: Della McCarthy, Administrative Officer
E Mail: d.mccarthy@bromsgrove.gov.uk
Tel: (01527) 881407



bromsgrove council

www.bromsgrove.gov.uk

SCRUTINY REPORT

DISABLED FACILITIES GRANTS – SCRUTINY REPORT

**Joint Task Group Report –
Housing and Planning Policy Scrutiny Committee
Health and Leisure Scrutiny Committee
September 2004**

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Appendix I – A list of Individuals the Task Group Consulted and Contact Details

Appendix II – Report by Miss Helen Williams (Birmingham University Student)

BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL

DISABLED FACILITIES GRANTS TASK GROUP REPORT

SEPTEMBER 2004

TERMS OF REFERENCE

At the Meeting of the Housing and Planning Policy Scrutiny Committee on 4th December 2003 and at the Meeting of the Health and Leisure Scrutiny Committee on the 9th December 2003, it was decided a joint Task Group comprising of three to four members of each Committee would be established to scrutinise the processing of Disabled Facilities Grant requests.

See Appendix I for a list of those who were consulted and contact details.

MEMBERS

Councillors Ms. J. A. Marshall (Chairman), Mrs. J. M. Boswell (Acting Chairman), C. R. Scurrall (Acting Chairman) Mrs. S. J. Baxter, Mrs. A. E. Doyle, D. McGrath and S. P. Shannon.

BACKGROUND AND METHODOLOGY

The first meeting took place on the 4th February 2004 at which we were given a brief outline of what and who were involved in the processing of Disabled Facilities Grant requests. We also discussed how the Disabled Facilities Grants process could be scrutinised with the assistance of Mr. Collin, Pollution and General Manager from Environmental Services and Mr. Coel, Head of Strategic Housing. We all agreed at this meeting that we needed more information on the roles of the other bodies involved in the complex processes of Disabled Facilities Grants.

As Disabled Facilities Grants are processed within a tri-partite system (bodies involved are Redditch and Bromsgrove Primary Care Trust, Social Services and this Council), we decided that representatives from the other agencies should be invited to future meetings to give a presentation on their role. We also asked Miss. H. Williams (Birmingham University Student) who attended the meeting as part of her degree coursework, to submit a report to the Task Group and to compile responses to the questions below which were received via the National Environmental Health Enquiry System (please refer to Appendix II):

- (a) Has any other Authority, working under a regime comprising a tri-partite arrangement between the Primary Care Trust (Occupational Therapists), the County Council (Welfare Authority) and the District Council (Environmental Health & Financial Services), set up a Task Group to consider the delivery of Mandatory Disabled Facilities Grants?

- (b) Has any other Authority set Performance Indicator figures for the delivery of the Mandatory Disabled Facilities Grant Scheme?
- (c) With respect to the delivery of Disabled Facilities Grants, has any Authority employed directly, or acquired the services of an Occupational Therapist? Both good and bad experiences welcomed.

On the 9th March 2004 a second meeting took place at which Mrs. C. Orr-Cooper, an Occupational Therapist employed by Redditch and Bromsgrove Primary Care Trust, gave a presentation on her role in the referral process and two case studies. Mr. R. Goundry, Senior Environmental Health Officer from Environmental Services also attended as he and other Environmental Health Officers often liaise with Occupational Therapists regarding requests for Disabled Facilities Grants.

At the third meeting of the Task Group which took place on the 7th April 2004, Mrs. J. Coomby, an Adaptation Service Advisor from Social Services (Worcestershire County Council), gave a presentation on her role in the referral process and two case studies.

At the meeting on the 10th May 2004, Mr. F. Collin, Divisional Manager (Pollution and General) from Environmental Services, gave a presentation on the role of the Council in the processing Disabled Facilities Grants. Mr. L. Butler, Revenues Service Manager from Financial Services, also gave a brief outline relating to financial assessments.

On the 14th June 2004 the fifth meeting of the Task Group took place at which Mr. A. Coel, Head of Strategic Housing gave a report on Home Improvement Agencies which included the proposals for developing a Home Improvement Agency in Worcestershire.

There was one final meeting of the Task Group held on the 26th July 2004 at which members finalised this Report.

DISABLED FACILITIES GRANTS PROCESS AND AGENCIES INVOLVED

Occupational Therapist, Redditch and Bromsgrove Primary Care Trust

Mrs. Orr-Cooper informed the Task Group that she was full-time and together with two part-time Occupational Therapists and the support of a part-time Occupational Assistant, they covered the Bromsgrove area only. It was explained that referrals to Occupational Therapy came from other health professionals such as General Practitioners, Social Workers and Housing Wardens. Referrals were screened and categorised within 24 hours of being received. It was stated that individuals were then contacted to inform them a written appointment would be sent to them. It was clarified that there were three categories which were:

- Category One – cases which are urgent and individuals were usually seen within a working week
- Category Two – medium or “soon” cases and were given an appointment within three to five working weeks
- Category Three – routine cases which were the most common and were dealt with within six weeks

Mrs. Orr-Cooper pointed out to us that the length of time individuals had to wait for an appointment with an Occupational Therapist did fluctuate and depended on various factors such as the amount of referrals being received, the complexity of a referral, staffing and time of year.

It was explained that often an Occupational Therapist will seek advice from an Environmental Health Officer and sometimes required advice from the Council's Architect regarding building regulations and planning, depending on what adaptation is needed.

The referrals are then passed on to Social Services for the next part of the process. The individuals are also advised by the Occupational Therapist which category they have been placed in.

We agreed that although some major adaptations cost a large amount, they were cost-effective in the long term as it gives individuals independence and a better quality of life.

Adaptation Service Advisor, Social Services, Worcestershire County Council

Mrs. Coomby explained to us that she worked three days per week and by herself covered the whole of the County and as a consequence liaised with six different District Councils.

Mrs. Coomby informed our Task Group that she dealt with both minor and major adaptations and the difference was explained as follows:

- Minor adaptations cost under £1,000 which Worcestershire County Council fund
- Major adaptations cost over £1,000 which goes through the Disabled Facilities Grants process.

It was explained by Mrs. Coomby that referrals were received from Occupational Therapists only and the "service-user" was then assessed by Social Services against eligibility criteria relating to financial assistance available. However, providing Social Services agreed that the adaptation(s) were "necessary and appropriate" they were recommended on to the District Council for assessment.

Once the District Council had carried out their part in the process, the Social Services would then become involved again and would carry out a financial assessment of their own if the individual met the eligibility criteria of Social Services and the service-user:

- Needed work carried out that cost more than £25,000 (which is the maximum amount an individual can receive via a Disabled Facilities Grant);
- Needed financial assistance to pay for their contribution; or
- Did not qualify for a Disabled Facilities Grant.

If the service-user was asked to pay a contribution by both Social Services and the District Council, they would only need to pay the contribution requested by Social Services.

Although at present there are two financial assessments carried out, one by the District Council and one by Social Services, the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM) Initiative was endeavouring to bring them together.

We were informed that there were no official performance indicators for Social Services relating to major adaptations, however for minor adaptation, the target time for the time

taken from when a referral was received to the equipment being fitted was currently seven days. Mrs. Coomby stated that this is a difficult target to reach but it was being met approximately 90% of the time.

Mrs. Coomby also sets her own target for major adaptations which is to forward referrals on to the District Council within a week of receiving them. Again, this target is usually attained even though Mrs. Coomby is part-time and is the only Adaptation Service Advisor covering the County. (Whilst Mrs. Coomby is on leave, a colleague ensures urgent referrals received are forwarded to the appropriate District Council.)

Environmental, Financial & Administrative Services, Bromsgrove District Council

Please refer to Appendix III which is a flow chart relating to the Disabled Facilities Grants system and in particular shows the involvement of this District Council in the process.

We were informed that if Social Services considers work to be “necessary and appropriate” to the disabled person’s needs, then they send a letter to the District Council’s Environmental Services recommending that the Disabled Facilities Grant process to proceed. It is at this point that an Officer from the Council visits the applicant’s home and assists them in completing a financial assessment application form, as all grants are means tested.

The completed financial assessment form is forwarded to Financial Services. Data from the application form is inputted into the “Ferret” system which calculates the amount of grant the applicant is entitled to receive. It was reported that 70-80% of applicants have no contribution to make and therefore receive 100% grant, subject to the maximum grant of £25,000. All owner-occupiers, if they wish to proceed, do have to provide proof that they own the property. Proof of tenancy is also obtained from private tenants.

The Council then obtains estimates from separate contractors if it is a small job or a private architect is employed if it is a large job. The lowest quote is chosen and an approval memo is then forwarded to Administrative Services with a copy of all pertinent documents. Administrative Services then issues a Grant Approval Certificate and the original is sent to the applicant.

An Environmental Health Officer often carries out an inspection whilst the work is in progress and it is possible that in some cases unforeseen works or problems may arise that require extra funding. Those extra costs are verified and approved by the Environmental Health Officer and on completion of works the applicant is requested to sign a slip confirming their satisfaction with the work. An invoice from the contractor is then submitted to the Council and if the applicant agrees, the grant monies are paid directly to the contractor.

The Government Guide for delivering Adaptation states that high priority work should be completed within 16 weeks and low priority works should be completed within 12 months and we believe that Officers from this Council are working towards achieving these targets.

We were informed that the process could be slowed down by many factors such as the applicant not supplying information required by the Council, or the contractor being unable to commence work quickly due to workload. We also discovered that near the

end of the financial year the Council has had to occasionally delay works until the budget for the following year was available.

People are living longer and therefore demands are increasing. We were informed that the budget was increased by a certain percentage each year however, for 2004-05 more had been requested to reduce the number of applicants on the waiting list.

Building Contractors

Feedback received regarding builders has been excellent. However, we were made aware that key delays were from waiting for the regular contractors to carry out work due to their workload. All agreed that contractors' standard of work needed to be of good quality but unfortunately, this does mean people sometimes have to wait. However, we were also informed that two more builders were soon to start work for the Council who have carried out similar work for another authority.

Home Improvement Agencies

We received a report from the Mr. Coel, Head of Strategic Housing that covered the background to Home Improvement Agencies; what service a Home Improvement Agency would aim to provide; and what the proposals were for developing Home Improvement Agencies in Worcestershire.

A Home Improvement Agency is a vehicle for assisting and advising vulnerable people, such as the elderly or disabled, of the various options open to them if they privately rent a property or live in their own property. Primarily, its aim is to help people to remain independent in their own homes.

It was explained that Home Improvement Agencies are non-profit organisations funded and supported by local and central government and that the Executive Cabinet at its Meeting on the 9th June 2004, agreed in principle to allocating up to £60,000 towards the annual revenue costs of a Home Improvement Agency covering North Worcestershire.

The development of a Home Improvement Agency in partnership with other authorities should be a cost-effective method of applying grants and enabling a broader range of services and options to be provided for clients. It was explained to us by Mr. Coel that Bromsgrove is to work in partnership with Wyre Forest and Redditch to form the North Worcestershire Care and Repair Service (whilst Wychavon, Worcester and Malvern Hill should come under a South Worcestershire Home Improvement Agency).

A bid was submitted to the ODPM (Office of the Deputy Prime Minister) in January 2004 for a £218,000 additional Supporting People Grant. Although the outcome of the countywide bid submission was an allocation of £96,000 (therefore £48,000 each for North and South Worcestershire), the allocation was the third largest in the country. We were also reassured that it was hoped that there would be similar ongoing funding from Supporting People in subsequent years.

To enable the North Worcestershire Care and Repair Service to proceed, the shortfall will have to be met by the fees charged by the Agency for grant-aided work. The members of the Executive Cabinet have already agreed that a 10% fee would be charged to those accessing the service. However, may it be pointed out that we were

informed that all people accessing the service were likely to be means tested and it is estimated that the majority (approximately 80%) would receive 100% of the grant and would not, therefore, have to pay the 10% fee.

There will be a Management Advisory Board for North Worcestershire and another covering both North and South Worcestershire. The local Advisory Board, once set up, will meet quarterly and will consist of both members and officers from various organisations involved.

It is our understanding that Home Improvement Agencies will not just deal with Disabled Facilities Grants but will also cover a wide range of services (for example home safety checks for the elderly). The North Worcestershire Care and Repair Service will look holistically at the needs of vulnerable people and its performance will be monitored by the North Worcestershire Advisory Board on the performance achieved across the three districts using the criteria set down by "Foundations" (the Home Improvement Agency Advisory Service commissioned by the ODPM).

CONCLUSION

At the outset we believed that the Disabled Facilities Grants scheme is a protracted process due partly to the involvement of 3 administering authorities, the legal parameters that had to be negotiated and the need to properly seek out and manage the available funds. However, despite these difficulties we all agree that the system seems to perform well and there appears to be no undue delays.

We therefore **RECOMMEND** that:

1. Officers from Bromsgrove District Council should continue to ensure there is good communication between the 3 bodies involved. This should be done by making sure letters that have been sent to another agency or to the applicant are copied to ALL agencies involved; therefore, making certain the other parties are kept up to date with the progress of each Disabled Facilities Grant application. In particular, it should be ensured that letters are copied to Social Services to make certain they are aware at an early stage that their involvement in a grant application may be required;
2. The "ODPM Guidance on Housing Adaptations for Disabled People" be used to assist in improving the Disabled Facilities Grants process by helping the tri-partite system become more streamline;
3. Support be given to the development of the Home Improvement Agency covering North Worcestershire (North Worcestershire Care and Repair Service);
4. The minutes of the North Worcestershire Advisory Board quarterly meetings be circulated to members of the Disabled Facilities Task Group;
5. If Councillor P. J. Whittaker, Portfolio Holder for Community Services and Housing Strategy (who has been nominated to be the Council's representative on the North Worcestershire Advisory Board) is unable to attend a meeting of the Advisory Board, a member of the Disabled Facilities Grants Task Group be asked to substitute;
6. All councillors be made aware of the advantages of a Home Improvement Agency and the aims of the service so to assist in making members of the public aware of the services open to them that are likely to be of benefit;

7. When available, the North Worcestershire Care and Repair Service Handbook containing all the contact details of various services be distributed to all councillors.

GENERAL

There are minimal financial implications (printing & postage costs etc) in implementing the above recommendations. Therefore, we **RECOMMEND** that the Executive Cabinet adopt the recommendations put forward in this Report.

We have agreed that in 12 months time members of the Task Group will meet again to review the effectiveness of decisions made by the Executive Cabinet relating to this Report and that Councillor P. J. Whittaker, Portfolio Holder for Community Services and Housing Strategy will be invited to report back to the Task Group on the North Worcestershire Advisory Board.

Contact Officer

Name: Della McCarthy, Administrative Officer

E Mail: d.mccarthy@bromsgrove.gov.uk

Tel.: 01527 881407

A List of Individuals the Task Group Consulted and Contact Details

1. Mr. A. Coel
Head of Strategic Housing
Planning Services
Bromsgrove District Council
Direct Line: 01527 881270
Email: a.coel@bromsgrove.gov.uk
2. Mr. F. Collin
**Divisional Manager
(Pollution & General)**
Environmental Services
Bromsgrove District Council
Direct Line: 01527 881434
Email: f.collin@bromsgrove.gov.uk
3. Mr. R. Goundry
Senior Environmental Health Officer
Environmental Services
Bromsgrove District Council
Direct Line: 01527 881435
Email: r.goundry@bromsgrove.gov.uk
4. Mr. L. Butler
Revenues Service Manager
Financial Services
Bromsgrove District Council
Direct Line: 01527 881234
Email: l.butler@bromsgrove.gov.uk
5. Mrs. C. Orr-Cooper
Community Occupational Therapist
Redditch & Bromsgrove Primary Care Trust
Community Occupational Therapy Service
Princess of Wales Community Hospital
Stourbridge Road
Bromsgrove
Worcestershire
B61 0BB
Tel. No.: 01527 488120
Fax: 01527 488228
Email: Christine.Orr-Cooper@wssa.rbpct.nhs.uk
6. Mrs. J. Coomby
Adaptation Service Adviser
Social Services - Worcestershire County Council
Community Equipment Service
Crown Lane
Wychbold
Worcestershire
WR9 0BX
Direct Line: 01527 869103 (Wed-Fri)
Fax: 01527 869105 or 01527 869102
Email: jcoomby@worcestershire.gov.uk

Other useful contacts:

Ms. J. Ring
Environmental Health Officer (Housing Specialist)
Environmental Services
Bromsgrove District Council
Direct Line: 01527 881439
Email: j.ring@bromsgrove.gov.uk

Ms. M. Taylor
Senior Revenue Officer
Financial Services
Bromsgrove District Council
Direct Line: 01527 881224 (Mon-Wed)
Email: mandy.taylor@bromsgrove.gov.uk

BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL

EXECUTIVE CABINET

13TH OCTOBER 2004

PARISH CHARTER FOR BROMSGROVE

Responsible Portfolio Holder	Councillor D. C. Norton
Responsible Head of Service	Head of Administrative Services

1. **PURPOSE OF REPORT**

To consider a draft Parish Councils' Charter for Bromsgrove

2. **RECOMMENDATION**

That the draft Parish Charter for Bromsgrove be approved as an interim arrangement and be circulated to Parish Councils with an invitation to enter into the relationship described in it.

3. **BACKGROUND**

3.1 For several months, discussions have been taking place with Parish Councils in this District locally about the introduction of a Parish Charter for Bromsgrove. The exercise started as a possible introduction of a County-wide Charter, but there were considerable difficulties in obtaining agreement to a single format or purpose for the Charter, so this Council, like at least one other District Council in the County, has now spent some effort in developing its own Charter, which could be offered to Parish Councils as a framework for future relationships.

3.2 The present draft of the Charter (Appendix "1") lacks a description of the financial arrangements between the District Council and the Parish Councils. These are still being developed in ongoing discussions about concurrent functions, etc. However, the rest of the Charter, including the constitutional arrangements for the Parish Councils' Forum, appears to be complete and could be adopted as an interim measure, pending completion of the financial content.

3.3 If the Executive Cabinet is minded to approve the Charter, it could be offered to each of the 20 Parish Councils, asking them if they wanted to enter into the arrangements described.

4. **FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS**

The financial content of the Charter will be developed at a later date.

5. **OTHER CONSIDERATIONS – LEGAL, RISK MANAGEMENT, ETC.**

None

Background Papers:

None.

Contact officer

Name Vince Harrison - Head of Administrative Services

E Mail: v.harrison@bromsgrove.gov.uk

Tel: (01527) 881419

Model Parish Charter

Part 1 Introduction

1. Bromsgrove District Council and the Parish Councils located in its area have agreed to publish a charter which sets out how they aim to work together for the benefit of local people. This Charter is the result of discussions locally to establish a new way of working and to confirm existing good practice.

2. Bromsgrove District Council acknowledges that Parish Councils are the grass-roots level of local government. By working with them and the Area Committee of the Association of Local Councils, Bromsgrove District Council aims to act in partnership with local communities, while balancing the needs of the wider community.

3. In their role as democratically accountable bodies, Parish Councils offer a means of shaping the decisions that affect their communities. They offer a means of decentralising the provision of certain services and of revitalising local communities. In turn, the Parish Councils recognise the strategic role of Bromsgrove District Council and the equitable distribution of services which it has to achieve.

4. This Charter reflects the increasing importance attached by Central Government to partnership working and the development of *Quality* status for Parish Councils.

Part 2 of this Charter applies to all Parish Councils in the area. Part 3 applies to Quality Parish Councils only.

The working and effectiveness of the Charter will be reviewed annually by the Parish Councils' Forum and the views of the District Council and of all Parish Councils in the District will be invited before the meeting at which the review takes place.

Part 2 All Parish and Town Councils

Sustainability

5. Bromsgrove District Council will work in partnership with all parish and town councils in its area to promote sustainable social, economic and environmental development for the benefit of local communities.

Community strategies and local strategic partnerships

6. Bromsgrove District Council will involve Parish Councils in the processes of preparing and implementing the community strategy to promote or improve the economic, social and environmental well-being of the area, and the role which Parish Councils should take. Bromsgrove District Council will consult and involve Parish Councils accordingly about the content and direction of the community strategy as it affects the local communities they represent.

Local governance

7. Bromsgrove District Council will hold liaison meetings with representatives of all Parish Councils that wish to take part. These meetings will be known as the Parish Councils Forum and will be held quarterly. Each Parish Council will be invited to send up to three representatives and the District Council will appoint a Chairman for the Forum's Meetings. The Forum will have two main purposes –

- Mutual discussion of policy matters
- Mutual exchange of information and views

The Forum should not be a decision-making body and detailed matters, complaints, etc. should be discussed between the Parish Council concerned and the appropriate Department of the District Council.

Regular items should include –

1. Feedback from the District Council on items affecting Parish Councils.
2. Information from the District Council on matters affecting the whole District. The District Council's Officers' Management Team will give consideration to what should be raised in this way, when the Forward Plan is being formulated.

Parish Councils have the ability to request the inclusion of an item on the agenda, provided they do so 4 weeks before a meeting (items arising from CALC meetings need not comply with this deadline, but should be notified as soon as the CALC meeting has taken place). The District Council has the right to refuse to provide a report on an item, but should give a reason for this.

8. Bromsgrove District Council will administer the holding of Parish Council elections and will work to limit, as far as possible, the costs of holding such elections.

Consultation

9. Bromsgrove District Council will aim to give Parish Councils the opportunity to comment before making a decision which directly affects the people living in their particular Parish. In furtherance of this, Bromsgrove District Council will circulate copies of its public reports to those Parish Councils which request a copy although Parish Councils are encouraged to make use of the availability of those reports on the Council's website in order to minimise costs. Parish Councils are encouraged to comment directly to members of the Bromsgrove District Council.

10. Only in exceptional circumstances will appropriate consultation not take place; when this happens, the District Council will circulate an explanation on the agenda for the next meeting of the Parish Councils' Forum.

11. To help achieve the objectives laid down in this Charter, liaison and consultation (both formal and informal) will be further developed with Parish Councils. Formal liaison will take place through the Parish Councils' Forum described in Paragraph 7. Informal liaison will be maintained by contact between Parish Clerks and Parish Councillors with appropriate officers of the District Council. Officers of the District Council will be able to attend meetings of or with Parish Councils when considered necessary and appropriate, but the Parish Councils recognise that the demands on the time of those officers are often considerable and will take this into account in making any requests for attendance.

12. Members of Bromsgrove District Council will attend meetings with the Parish Councils (or groups of such Councils) at a mutually agreed time to discuss matters of common interest, but the same limitations on available time (as described in Paragraph 11) apply. The District Council and Parish Councils agree to adopt the CALC Code of Practice relating to such attendance (Appendix "A"). Parish Councils will send copies of their agendas and papers to Bromsgrove District Council upon request.

Information and complaints

13. When Bromsgrove District Council consults Parish Councils, it will provide them with sufficient information to enable them to reach an informed view on the matter, and give them adequate time to respond in accordance with the statutory requirements where applicable. In return, Parish Councils will undertake that, wherever possible, they will respond to consultations within the stated timescale, and will hold sufficient numbers of meetings (or make alternative delegated arrangements) to ensure that responses are likely to be forthcoming within reasonable timescales.

14. Bromsgrove District Council will communicate with Parish Councils and others in the community by publishing "Council Chat" twice each year and making it available to the local community. Where possible, Parish Councils will assist in the distribution of "Council Chat". Copies of the Council's publication "Planning News" will also be circulated to Parish Councils.

15. Bromsgrove District Council and Parish Councils will acknowledge letters sent by the other party, and both will provide substantive answers to letters which need a reply. When the District Council receives a letter from a Parish Council, it will send an acknowledgement within 10 working days and a substantive reply within 25 working days. There will be occasions when it is not possible to provide a full substantive reply within the 25 working day period, in which case the District Council will provide an explanation of why this is not possible within that period and will indicate when the substantive reply will be available. Parish Councils will endeavour to meet the same standards in responding to correspondence from the District Council.

16. If a Parish Council is dissatisfied with Bromsgrove District Council's actions, the response to a request for information, or a failure to consult, the Parish Council should first explore the possibility of resolving the problem with the Officer, Line Manager or Portfolio Holder concerned, but if this is not successful, the Parish Council should then refer the matter in writing to the District Council's Chief Executive (cc Leader of the Council) as a formal complaint for consideration and response within the timetable set out in paragraph 15.

Standards committee

17. Bromsgrove District Council and the Parish Councils have adopted codes of conduct, based on the national model code of conduct. The Parish Councils will work with Bromsgrove District Council's Standards Committee to promote and maintain high standards of conduct. Bromsgrove District Council has consulted and agreed that one representative of Parish Councils, to be nominated by the Area Committee of CALC, will be a member of its Standards Committee.

Delegating responsibility for service provision

18. If a Parish Council (or group of local Councils) wishes to discharge functions on behalf of a principal authority, Bromsgrove District Council will consider this, (taking account of cost, legality, quality, local preferences and practicability). Where it is not appropriate or practicable Bromsgrove District Council may, in consultation with the Parish Council, explore alternative solutions to encourage more local-level input into service delivery. However, preference for the receipt of delegated responsibility will be given to those Parish Councils which attain *Quality* Parish Council accreditation.

Financial arrangements

19. Bromsgrove District Council has set out its financial arrangements for parish councils at Appendix B in accordance with the principles and good practice guidance [*financial principles as set out in the accompanying document 'Guidance on Financial Arrangements with Parish and Town Councils'*].

(This section still to be completed.)

20. Where a Parish Council takes on the provision of certain services, the level of funding will be agreed by Bromsgrove District Council and the Parish Council.

Local community life

21. Bromsgrove District Council will promote local community life through schemes such as capital grants and loan schemes to village halls, community centres, and other similar organisations.

Practical support

22. Bromsgrove District Council will, where practical, offer Parish Councils access to their own support services, to enable them to take advantage of facilities such as printing and purchasing, at a mutually agreed price. In particular, assistance will be offered in identifying and helping to meet the training needs of Parish Councils (for example, through County Training Partnerships).

Parish Plans

23. The District Council will encourage Parish Councils to produce Parish Plans and will provide advice and support where practicable.

24. The District Council will take account of the proposals and priorities contained within Parish Plans in developing and implementing community strategies as they affect the local areas concerned, provided that each Parish Plan conforms to the District Council's policy framework and has been subjected to a rigorous local consultation and participation process. Bromsgrove District Council will strengthen links between the Parish Council(s) and the Local Strategic Partnership in order to improve delivery of local priorities.

25. Parish Councils are encouraged to precept adequately in order to fund the action plan developed through the Parish Plan process.

Land Use and Development Planning

26. Where a Parish Council (or group of Parish Councils) has prepared (in consultation with Bromsgrove District Council) a Parish Plan which includes proposals concerning land use and development planning issues (e.g. a village design statement) Bromsgrove District Council may adopt this as Supplementary Planning Guidance (provided it meets the requirements set out in national planning guidance).

27. Where the Parish Plan proposals imply some changes to the current development plan or the future local development framework for their area, Bromsgrove District Council will consider and discuss the proposals with the Parish Council (or Councils) as part of its next review of that plan. Parish Councils are encouraged to contribute to the development plan process – in order to satisfy the requirement for comprehensive consultation, contained in the planning system, it is essential that Parish Councils are involved in this process. However, Parish Councils recognise the need to react rapidly when the opportunity for involvement is reached, because the timetable for plan production will usually be a severely constrained one.

Part 3 Quality Parish and Town Councils

28. In addition to the above, Bromsgrove District Council has agreed to work in the following ways with those Parish Councils which are recognised as having attained *Quality* status.

Information and access points

29. If a *Quality* parish council (or group of *Quality* parish councils) wishes to become a local information and/or access point for Bromsgrove District Council services the Bromsgrove District Council will consider helping it to do so. As part of the e-Worcestershire Hub project, there will be a capability for introducing service kiosks (manned or unmanned) in parts of the District outside Bromsgrove and the District Council will be willing to work in partnership with *Quality* Parish Councils to establish these in areas where population and anticipated demand indicate that they will be worthwhile. If a Parish Council does become a local information/access point, the District Council will:

- issue to the Parish Council (and up-date as necessary) relevant written information on and application forms for its services
- give electronic access to similar information and forms (where it provides these electronically) provided the Parish Council has appropriate technology
- provide suitable briefing, training and support to staff of the parish or town council

Delegation of Functions and Service Provision:

30. Bromsgrove District Council has agreed to offer *Quality* Parish Councils (or groups of *Quality* Parish Councils) the opportunity to take on one or more of the functions listed below in Appendix C.

31. As part of its Best Value arrangements, Bromsgrove District Council will give *Quality* Parish Councils (or groups of *Quality* Councils), who wish to, the opportunity to put forward proposals to take on aspects of the delivery, management and monitoring of services provided by the Bromsgrove District Council.

CALC CODE OF PRACTICE RE ATTENDANCE OF DISTRICT COUNCILLORS AT PARISH COUNCILS

Introduction

1. A good working relationship between Local Councils and the local County and District (Principal) Councillors is essential if local service provision is to be delivered in an efficient and effective way.
2. The local Principal Councillors have a special and important role to play as links between Local Councils and the other tiers of local government, and this should be recognised if the Local Council is to obtain the maximum benefit from them. However, it is accepted that a balance needs to be struck which makes it clear that local Principal Councillors are not members of the Local Council and that their participation at meetings is by invitation only.

The Legal Position

3. At meetings of Local Councils, Principal Councillors have only the same legal rights as members of the public unless they are also members of the Local Council. This means that although they have a right to attend meetings they have no right to speak or take part in meetings. Similarly, they can be excluded from a meeting if the Council has resolved to exclude the public because it is considered that publicity would prejudice the public interest by reason of the confidential nature of the business or for some other reason stated in the resolution and arising out of the business to be transacted.

Guiding Principles

4. For a Local Council and Principal Councillor relationship to develop in a mutually beneficial way the following guiding principles should be adopted.

Invitation to attend

5. The Clerk should invite the local Principal Councillor(s) to attend all meetings of the Local Council and the Annual Parish/Town Meeting. This could be achieved by the Local Council adopting NALC Model Standing Order No. 74 which states: *"A Summons and Agenda for each meeting shall be sent, together with an invitation to attend, to Principal Councillors for the appropriate division or ward."*

Opportunity to speak

6. The Local Council agenda should provide an opportunity during the meeting for the Principal Councillors to present a report to the Local Council and for the Council to question them. This can be achieved by including "County Councillor's Report and "District Councillor's Report" as items on the Agenda. The Principal Councillors will also be able to speak during any period set aside by the Local Council for public participation. In addition, in view of their special role and depending on business being discussed, the Chairman of the Council may wish to invite the Principal Councillor(s) to speak during a meeting on a particular topic. This needs to be exercised carefully to avoid individual members of the public, who may also wish to speak on this topic, feeling they are being discriminated against unfairly.

Principal Councillor who is also a Parish Councillor:

7. If a Principal Councillor is also a member of the Local Council (s)he is entitled to speak and vote on any business in the same way as any other member of the Council. However, it is good practice for them to remember that, because of their membership of a Principal Council, they are in fact in a different position from the rest of the Local Council and should bear this in mind when debating issues.

Seating Arrangements

8. Seating arrangements for the Principal Councillors should be chosen carefully to avoid the impression being given that the Principal Councillors are members of the Local Council. A position apart from the Local Council and other members of the public is probably advisable; there is no necessity for the Principal Councillors to have to sit with other members of the public.

Correspondence:

9. The Clerk should send the local Principal Councillors copies of correspondence between the Local Council and the Principal Councils. This could be achieved by the Local Council adopting NALC Model Standing Order No. 71 (*check*) which states: "*Unless the Council otherwise orders, a copy of each letter ordered to be sent to a Principal Council shall be transmitted to the Principal Councillor for the division or ward as the case may require.*"

Principal Councillors' Reports

10. Principal Councillors should, where possible:
 - attend Local Council meetings in their division/ward when time permits;
 - prepare a brief report for each Local Council meeting, to be made in person or relayed to the Clerk;
 - provide the Clerk with a copy of relevant correspondence *in the public domain* to the Councillors on Local Council business;
 - advise the Local Council when relevant local and strategic matters of interest are to be considered by the Principal Council in public session;
 - make an annual report to the Annual Parish Meeting.

Consultation and Collaboration

11. Principal Councillors should seek to ensure that the Council Charter is applied, and, in particular ensure that:
 - liaison between the three tiers of local government is improved;
 - Local Councils are advised when opportunities occur for collaboration with the other tiers;
 - Principal Councils consult Local Councils on relevant local and strategic matters.

Appendix B

[Local financial arrangements for parish and town councils in accordance with paragraph 21 above]

ARRANGEMENTS FOR DELEGATION OF FUNCTIONS AND SERVICE PROVISION TO QUALITY PARISH AND TOWN COUNCILS

Litter Collection and Litter Control Measures

Adoptive provisions are available that allow spot fines to be imposed for litter-dropping offences. The District Council will remain responsible for making the Designation Orders, which bring these provisions into effect, but will consult with Quality Parish Councils as to where these Orders should be made and will take their wishes into account.

Where a Designation Order has been made, the District Council is willing to delegate the powers of enforcement to Neighbourhood Wardens employed by Quality Parish Councils, whose remit could be extended to the prevention of dog fouling, graffiti and other anti-social issues. In some areas, in order to make a scheme viable, Quality Parish Councils may wish to make joint appointments of Neighbourhood Wardens, i.e. one Warden to cover 2/3 parishes.

The District Council is also willing to assist Quality Parish Councils in taking a greater role in organising local community litter picks, in conjunction with the Environmental Strategy Unit.

Street Naming

Responsibility for street naming and the associated administrative work will be delegated to Quality Parish Councils.

Allotments

Some Parish Councils in the District already own and operate their own allotment sites. Of the 9 sites operated by the District Council, most are within the urban (unparished) area, but a small number are within Parish Council areas. There is scope for Parish Councils to help promote sites more effectively and to work with the District Council in dealing with site management issues.

In view of the fact that allotments are already a Parish Council function and their management is already carried out successfully by a number of Parish Councils, the management of any of the District Council's allotments to a Parish Council which wishes to do this in their area would be considered.

Parks and Open Spaces, including Play Areas

In the past, the District Council has involved certain Parish Councils in the management of open spaces and play areas which are owned by the District Council. This has usually been done by leasing the land concerned to a Parish Council at a nominal rent, but there would be alternative ways of achieving this, e.g. by service level agreement. However, in recent years,

due to increased health and safety requirements and increased costs associated with the effects of anti-social behaviour (resulting in an increase in the number of complaints received from the public and in the amount of time spent on site management issues), there has been a tendency for Parish Councils to release site responsibilities back to the District Council.

Apart from direct site management by Parish Councils, there are a number of ways in which the District Council can work with Parish Councils in respect of open space provision, including joint approaches towards the formation of consultative groups (Parks Friends Groups), the provision of advisory information on how to deal with social issues or how to provide new facilities, joint arrangements for annual risk assessments and the training of Parish Council appointees with responsibility for inspecting play areas. Much of this is already taking place.

The District Council would be prepared to consider the delegation of any of its functions in respect of open space provision or management on this or similar basis.

BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL

EXECUTIVE CABINET

13TH October 2004

MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL PLAN

Responsible Portfolio Holder	Councillor Roger Hollingworth
Responsible Head of Service	Corporate Director (Resources)

1. Summary

- 1.1. To request approval of the proposed budget timetable and process to be followed in order to establish the Council's revenue and capital budgets for 2005/06 and medium-term financial plan to 2007/08.

2. Recommendation

- 2.1. It is recommended that the Executive Cabinet agrees the approach for deciding the 2005/06 budgets and medium-term financial plan to 2007/08

3. Background

- 3.1. The Council needs to compile a three-year budget for revenue and capital – this report seeks to provide an overview of the process and timetable to be followed that will enable this to be achieved by March 2005.
- 3.2. The Council's priorities must drive its budget and not the other way round as has traditionally been the case in a lot of local authorities. In order to do this the Council needs to set some clear priorities – these are normally set in the Corporate Plan however this is unlikely to be agreed before December 2004. Members will need therefore outside of the corporate plan process to give, some detailed indication as to their priorities and indeed some indication of which are the most important in order to enable the preparation of the budget. This issue is being addressed separately.

4. The Process

- 4.1. The process will focus on two main elements:
- Budget holders will be asked to critically review the budget for the current financial year (2004/05) in order to establish a revised estimate.
 - Budget holders will be asked to compile the budget for the next three years (2005/06 to 2007/08)

Budget holders will be asked to ensure that they involve the appropriate portfolio holder in their consideration of the budget.

Revenue Budget

- 4.2. The review of the current year will require managers to identify possible savings within their respective areas. This is essential to help maximise the resources available in order to sustain the longer term financial position of the Council.
- 4.3. For the period 2005/06 to 2007/08 managers will be asked to base their expectations on how much it will cost to continue to provide the current level of service. To assist with this the Accountancy Section will roll forward the original estimate for 2004/05 to 2005/06, 2006/07 and 2007/08. No inflation will be applied at this stage as this will be done following meetings with the budget holders.
- 4.4. A zero based budgeting exercise has been considered however it is not believed at present that there is the capacity or indeed the capability within the council to undertake this. We will look, however, to ensure that there is greater clarity around what is and what isn't included in the budgets.
- 4.5. Any increased resource requirements that are needed to improve performance or introduce new initiatives i.e., any changes planned over the period, would normally be included within the appropriate management plan and a separate business case submitted. This should include any additional resource requirements that are needed to address the Council's priorities.
- 4.6. Managers will need to ensure that their accountant is fully involved in the costing of any proposals that have financial implications regardless of whether they originate within management plans or priority plans.
- 4.7. Revised guidance on the format and content of management plans and business cases has been issued to managers.
- 4.8. All budget holders will be expected to maximise income as part of the budget strategy. If additional income has been used in the current financial year to fund additional expenditure this only applies to this financial year. Where managers wish to use additional income, identified within future years' budgets, to fund additional spending a suitable business case will be needed.
- 4.9. In addition it is expected as part of the review that all budget holders will critically review their budgets to identify any potential savings within their service area. An option for change form has been developed that all budget holders will be expected to complete. This will seek to provide further detail on how each element of the budget contributes to the Council's objectives and priorities and the effect that a reduction may have on performance.
- 4.10. The proposed timetable is attached at Appendix A. Members will note that work has already started – this was necessary in order to ensure that the time needed to develop the budget was maximised.

Capital Budget

- 4.11. The timetable for consideration of the capital budget will be in line with that for the revenue budget. Other points of note are as follows:
 - The estimated level of capital receipts for the period 2004/05 to 2007/8 will be reviewed – it is expected that this work will be undertaken by the Capital Assets Projects Group (CAPG) for completion by 19 November 2004.

- During October / November Officers and Members to review capital expenditure requirements to ascertain whether the current capital provisions are sufficient – this may include a full review of the existing capital program. This will be overseen by CAPG.
- The IEG budget requirements will be assessed by the proposed E-Government Team and included within the proposed capital programme.

5. Financial Implications

5.1. None.

6. Legal Implications

6.1. None.

7. Other Considerations

6.1 The report has also considered the following implications:-

Personnel Implications	None
Governance/Performance Management Considerations	None
Community Safety Considerations	None
Risk Management Considerations	None
Policy Considerations	None
Environmental Considerations	None
Equalities Implications	None

Background Papers

None

Contact officer

Name: Kevin Dicks, Corporate Director (Resources)
 E Mail: k.dicks@bromsgrove.gov.uk
 Tel: (01527) 881487

Timetable

The timetable and process for the budget review is as follows:

- 20 Sept A hard copy of the budget spreadsheets (also sent electronically) to be sent out to all budget holders. The spreadsheet will detail actual expenditure 2003/04, latest estimate 2004/05 and the base budgets for each of the years 2005/06, 2006/07, 2007/08 for each cost centre for which they are responsible.
- 27 Sept Guidance and documentation to be issued on business cases, management plans and options for change.
- 27 Sept A copy of the relevant payroll estimates for each of the years 2005/06 to 2007/08 will be sent to each budget holder.

It is the responsibility of the budget holder to ensure that all posts/personnel/scale points and fixed term contract details are correct.

- 27 Sept Support Service recharges - Accountancy Services to issue a "Charging Form" to Budget Holders asking them to provide a split of staff time (for each post in the structure) over the various services. Separate information will be required for the current financial year, as opposed to future years. At the same time non-staff related data such as estimated number of debtor invoices, creditor invoices etc. will be requested. In completing the charging forms budget holders should have regard to what staff will be doing in the future rather than what they are doing now, they should also identify a split for each year. For the majority of staff this will be the same from year to year however for some staff they will be involved in project work that will alter the split of their time.

Note: In the near future Accountancy Services will be undertaking a separate project to develop the recharge system further. Part of this project will be a request for staff time to be split over functions – this is not required at this stage.

In addition we will critically examine the number and usage of the Internal Business Units, and how they are shown in the budget, as it is felt that they do not aid peoples understanding.

- 27 Sept to 5 Nov Budget holders to meet with their accountant to discuss any changes to the existing budgets (contained within the papers sent out on 20 September). The only changes that will be permitted to the existing base budgets will be by way of virement (however please refer to earlier note on the use of additional income), plus identification of any savings. Any bids for increased resources will be dealt with as part of the identification of Council priorities during October and November (Please see below).

Inflation and profiling of budgets will also be discussed at the meetings.

Note: In order to improve the robustness of our budget process we need to improve the way that we calculate the budgets for major items of income – planning fees, land charges, building control, car parking charges. We need to calculate the likely level of income based on usage and level of fees rather than simply rolling forward the budget – we also need to assess the risks associated with these levels of income.

27 Sep to 5 Nov Accountancy Services to undertake work on different scenarios with regard to major elements of expenditure e.g. different levels of pay award and the impact on budgets.

27 Sep to 5 Nov Budget holders to give consideration to fees and charges and submit to Accountancy Services the proposals.

13 Oct Executive Cabinet preliminary approval to Council priorities 2005/06 to 2007/08.

29 Oct Asset Management Plan and Capital Strategy reviewed and updated to assist with formulation of budget strategy.

5 Nov Return of Charging form by budget holders to Accountancy Services.

5 Nov Return of all other budget information and draft management plans.

Note: Ideally, in accordance with my report on “What constitutes a typical financial year” management plans should be completed by the end of September however due to the work required for the recovery plan it is felt that this can’t be achieved until 5 November.

23 Nov Council preliminary approval to Council priorities 2005/06 to 2007/08.

3 Dec First draft base budgets available (including recharges and capital charges).

3 Dec Officers / Members to have identified specific work / projects required to achieve Council priorities. Budget holders must ensure that Accountancy Services are involved in “costing up” of proposals.

Mid Dec Calculation of base budget requirement (variety of scenarios), together with cost of priorities, and including Government Grant indications, to be completed.

Dec Presentations to Scrutiny Committees on the budget process and draft bas budget.

15 Dec Executive Cabinet to consider base budget, cost of priorities and the process to be followed for consideration of the budget.

Mid Dec to 3 Feb	Officers to identify budget reductions (if they are required) in order to balance the budget.
Jan / Feb	Consideration by Scrutiny Committees of detailed budget for each area and proposed budget reductions (if required).
15 Feb	NNDR consultation
19 Jan	Consideration by Executive Cabinet of overall budget.
Jan/Feb	Undertake consultation with public on proposed budgets (note full year effect may not happen in 2005/06)
16 Feb	Consideration by Executive Cabinet of budget for 2005/06 and budget strategy to 2007/08.
1 Mar	Approval by Council of budget for 2005/06 and budget strategy to 2007/08.
By 31 Mar	Issue of budget books.

This timescale is very tight and will require everyone to adhere to the deadlines to ensure its completion.

BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL

EXECUTIVE CABINET

13th OCTOBER 2004

MONITORING OF THE REVISED CAPITAL PROGRAMME 2004-05

Responsible Portfolio Holder	Councillor Roger Hollingworth
Responsible Head of Service	Corporate Director (Resources)

1. SUMMARY

- 1.1. The purpose of this report is to inform Executive Cabinet of the progress made on capital schemes and to present the capital monitoring statements with the variances against all capital schemes as at the end of August 2004. Expenditure has been compared to the revised Capital Programme for 2004/05 as approved by Executive Cabinet on 21st July 2004.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 It is recommended that Executive Cabinet note:

2.1.1 the underspend of £1.057m at August 2004 and the forecast underspend of £0.390m at the end of financial year 2004/05;

2.1.2 the progress made on capital schemes to date.

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 On 2nd March 2004 Council approved the original Capital Programme for 2004/05 totalling £7.893m and on 21st July 2004 Executive Cabinet approved the revised Capital Programme for 2004/05 totalling £9.272m, which included approved slippage from the 2003/04 financial year and incorporated the latest resource requirements for each capital scheme.
- 3.2 It is now proposed to produce capital monitoring statements on a monthly basis for budget holders to show the progress on each scheme which will include the budget holder's forecast of the expenditure for the year. This will therefore provide a monthly projection as to the likely year-end position for Council as a whole and allow any corrective action which may be required to bring the programme back onto track to be taken.
- 3.3 It is also proposed that Executive Cabinet be informed on a quarterly basis of the latest monitoring position on the 2004/05 Capital Programme.

4. CAPITAL MONITORING POSITION AT AUGUST 2004

- 4.1 Discussions have taken place with all budget holders and the financial position at the end of August 2004 shows an underspend of £1.057m for the year to date and a projected underspend of £0.390m at the year-end. The scheme variances at August have been calculated by comparing actual expenditure with the proportion of each budget which was planned to have been spent at the end of August 2004. An analysis by Scrutiny Committee can also be seen at Table 1 below and full details for each scheme can be seen at Appendix 1.
- 4.2 At August there are underspends of £176k and £166k showing against the profiled budgets for the purchase of green and grey wheelie bins for the new refuse service. Part of the reason for this has been the slippage caused by the temporary hold up to the roll out of the new service, and the resulting delay in making payments. This should however rectify itself now that roll out is to re-commence for completion by 31st March 2005 and the forecast at this stage for the year end is that the budgets should be fully spent. Further information will be included on future monitoring statements as it becomes available.
- 4.3 At this early stage of the financial year it has been assumed for the forecast that some budgets will be fully spent at the year end, but whether this actually happens or not will depend on when other actions required by Executive Cabinet take place. Such schemes include the £500k Vehicles and Plant budget which requires approval of a renewal schedule before procurement can commence, and the £160k and £75k budgets for Mill Lane Town Centre Access and Shopmobility where a report on a more cost effective scheme is required. In such circumstances accurate forecasts of future expenditure will only be possible as the year progresses and more information becomes known.
- 4.4 Many schemes are still at the planning stage or just starting and progress to date on each scheme can be seen at Appendix 1.

Table 1

SCRUTINY COMMITTEE	ORIGINAL CAPITAL BUDGET £ 000	REVISED CAPITAL BUDGET £ 000	PROFILED BUDGETED PAYMENTS TO DATE £ 000	ACTUAL PAYMENTS TO AUGUST 2004 £ 000	VARIATION TO DATE £ 000	PROJECTED YEAR END EXPENDITURE £ 000	PROJECTED YEAR END VARIATION £ 000
Policy & Strategy	1,142	1,221	266	159	(107)	1,191	(30)
Housing & Planning Policy	2,545	2,565	832	178	(654)	2,206	(359)
Health & Leisure	4,206	5,486	1,738	1,442	(296)	5,485	(1)
TOTALS	7,893	9,272	2,836	1,779	(1,057)	8,882	(390)

5. MAJOR VARIATIONS AT AUGUST

- 5.1 Listed below in Table 2 are the major budget variations at August exceeding +/- £50k with comments from budget holders:-

Table 2

Capital Scheme	Variation to Date £ 000	Budget Holder Comments
Implementing Electronic Government – Unallocated Budget	(88)	Government Grant which is currently unallocated to projects but it is anticipated that this will be spent by the end of the financial year.
Strategic & Enabling Housing – Purchase & Repair Scheme	(148)	One property purchase is imminent and others are in the pipeline. The delay has been caused by the lack of suitable properties on the market but at the stage it is anticipated that the budget will be fully spent.
New Affordable Schemes – Purchase & Repair Scheme	(141)	An underspend is expected because no further commitments will be entered into against this scheme until further Section 106 monies for affordable housing have been received. A year end underspend of £250k is therefore projected.
Mandatory Disabled Facilities Grants	(153)	Slippage is expected against this budget due to a shortage of builders to complete grant work, and in addition to the nature of Disabled Facilities Grant work itself, applicants are given 12 months to complete the work following approval.
Housing – Window Replacements	(117)	The negative expenditure figure relates to the reversal of a sundry creditor in year 2003/04 for payment in 2004/05. The final payment is due to be made in October.
Green Wheelie Bins	(176)	Budget profile issue because of the irregular spending pattern and temporary hold up in the roll out programme. Roll out will now re-commence on week commencing 1st November for completion by March 2005 and the year end forecast is therefore that the budgets will be fully spent.
Grey Wheelie Bins	(166)	As Green Wheelie Bins above.
Arts Centre	54	Project ongoing. Currently showing an overspend against budget profile but the final spend is on budget.
Other Scheme Variations	(122)	Various over & underspends.
TOTAL VARIANCE AT AUGUST	(1,057)	UNDERSPEND

6. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 There is an underspend of £1.057m at August and a forecast underspend of £0.390m at the year end as described above.

7. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

7.1 None.

8. OTHER SUB HEADINGS

8.1 None

Personnel Implications
Governance/Performance Management Considerations
Community Safety Considerations
Risk Management Considerations
Policy Considerations
Environmental Considerations
Equalities Implications

Background Papers

Report to Executive Cabinet 21st July 2004 – Revised Capital Budget 2004/05.

Contact officer

Name: Ken Whitehouse, Principal Accountant (Capital)

E Mail: k.whitehouse@bromsgrove.gov.uk

Tel: (01527 881290)

BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL

CAPITAL BUDGET MONITORING STATEMENT - 2004/05 ACCOUNTING PERIOD 5 - AUGUST 2004 (ACCRUAL BASIS)

SUMMARY

(1)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)	(10)
MONITORED AGAINST THE 2004/05 JULY REVISED CAPITAL BUDGET	APPROVED CAPITAL BUDGET 2004/05	PROFILED BUDGETED PAYMENTS TO DATE	ACTUAL PAYMENTS TO DATE	VARIATION TO DATE (7 - 6)	PROJECTED YEAR END SPENDING	PROJECTED YEAR END VARIATION (9 - 5)
	£' 000	£' 000	£' 000	£' 000	£' 000	£' 000
<u>SCRUTINY COMMITTEE</u>						
Policy & Strategy	1,221	266	159	(107)	1,191	(30)
Housing & Planning Policy	2,565	832	178	(654)	2,206	(359)
Health & Leisure (Environmental Health Only)	2,618	1,118	767	(351)	2,617	(1)
Health & Leisure (Leisure Services Only)	2,868	620	675	55	2,868	0
GRAND TOTALS	9,272	2,836	1,779	(1,057)	8,882	(390)

Note Underspends are shown as negative figures.

BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL

CAPITAL BUDGET MONITORING STATEMENT - 2004/05 ACCOUNTING PERIOD 5 - AUGUST 2004 (ACCRUAL BASIS)

GENERAL FUND - POLICY & STRATEGY SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

(1) MONITORED AGAINST THE 2004/05 JULY REVISED CAPITAL BUDGET		(3) BUDGET HOLDER	(5) APPROVED CAPITAL BUDGET 2004/05 £' 000	(6) PROFILED BUDGETED PAYMENTS TO DATE £' 000	(7) ACTUAL PAYMENTS TO DATE £' 000	(8) VARIATION TO DATE (7 - 6) £' 000	(9) PROJECTED YEAR END SPENDING £' 000	(10) PROJECTED YEAR END VARIATION (9 - 5) £' 000	(11) BUDGET HOLDER COMMENTS
Capital Code	2004/05 Schemes								
	Technical Services:-								
GC1040	Community Safety Grants	J Moody	15	0	0	0	15	0	
-	Energy Performance (inc 2003/04)	J Moody	30	0	0	0	30	0	The grant application has now been submitted to the Energy Trust for £15k partnership funding. Expected that scheme will be completed in February 2005.
GC042	Disabled Discrimination Act Improvements (2003/04 Scheme)	J Moody	26	11	15	4	26	0	Improvements will be ongoing throughout the year.
GC1005	Council House Parking/C.C.T.V./Frontage - Revised Scheme	J Moody	0	0	2	2	2	2	The capital budget for this scheme was removed at the July budget revision but some costs had already been incurred.
-	Stoney Hill & East Rd/West Rd Traffic Calming	J Moody	42	0	0	0	42	0	The project should be complete by the end of September and the invoice paid in October.
GC1022	Council House Internal Lighting Imps (Health & Safety)	J Moody	20	8	1	(7)	20	0	The work is continuous throughout the year on an ad-hoc basis.
-	C.C.T.V Station Sites (2003/04 Scheme)	J Moody	60	0	0	0	60	0	Cost estimates have now been received but are higher than expected. An additional £10k of external funding has already been secured and negotiations for further funding are ongoing. At this stage uncertainty over when scheme will commence but the forecast assumes full spend of the budget.
GC074	C.C.T.V. Control Room - Computer Software (2003/04 Scheme)	J Moody	2	1	0	(1)	2	0	Minor works carried forward from 2003/04 are still ongoing
GC072	C.C.T.V. Rubery Scheme - Community Safety (2003/04 Scheme) (Gov't Grant)	J Moody	7	7	7	0	7	0	Project is now complete.
-	Building Safer Communities (Gov't Funded)	J Moody	30	0	0	0	0	(30)	This scheme is revenue in nature and will be transferred to revenue at the next budget revision.
GC1021	Council House - changes to office accommodation (post LSVT)	J Moody	50	21	18	(3)	50	0	Work is ongoing throughout the year.

BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL

CAPITAL BUDGET MONITORING STATEMENT - 2004/05 ACCOUNTING PERIOD 5 - AUGUST 2004 (ACCRUAL BASIS)

GENERAL FUND - POLICY & STRATEGY SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

(1)	(3)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)	(10)	(11)
MONITORED AGAINST THE 2004/05 JULY REVISED CAPITAL BUDGET	BUDGET HOLDER	APPROVED CAPITAL BUDGET 2004/05 £' 000	PROFILED BUDGETED PAYMENTS TO DATE £' 000	ACTUAL PAYMENTS TO DATE £' 000	VARIATION TO DATE (7 - 6) £' 000	PROJECTED YEAR END SPENDING £' 000	PROJECTED YEAR END VARIATION (9 - 5) £' 000	BUDGET HOLDER COMMENTS
GC075	Cofton Hackett Traffic Calming/Speed Cameras (Grant)	0	0	(10)	(10)	0	0	Sundry creditor from year 2003/04 for work undertaken by Worcestershie County Council which remains unpaid.
	Financial Services:-							
GC040	Upgrade to IT Payroll System (2003/04 Scheme)	3	3	3	0	3	0	Scheme now complete.
	Information & Communications Technology:-							
	Implementing Electronic Government (I.E.G. Net) (£350k Gov't Grant Budget) See projects below:-							
GC1030	- Gazetteer Linkage (IEG Gov't Grant 2004/05)	20	8	2	(6)	20	0	This project has only just commenced.
GC1031	- Web Based Templates (IEG Gov't Grant 2004/05)	25	10	0	(10)	25	0	This project is for the ongoing development of the Council website.
GC1032	- E-GIF Compliance / Security (IEG Gov't Grant 2004/05)	23	10	10	0	23	0	This project is ongoing.
GC1033	- Content Management (Ph II) / Intranet (IEG Gov't Grant 2004/05)	25	0	0	0	25	0	These projects are still in their planning stages and have yet to start. At this stage the forecast assumes full spend of the budget.
GC1034	- Active Directory / MS Exchange (IEG Gov't Grant 2004/05)	30	0	0	0	30	0	
GC1035	- Intranet GIS & Internet (IEG Gov't Grant 2004/05)	15	0	0	0	15	0	
-	- Currently unallocated (IEG Gov't Grant 2004/05)	212	88	0	(88)	212	0	Government Grant which is currently unallocated to projects but it is anticipated that this will be spent by the end of the financial year.
GC465	Implementing Electronic Government (I.E.G. Net) (£111k Budget) (2003/04 Projects) See projects below:-	0	0	0	0	0	0	
GC465	-LLPG/Planning (funded from capital receipts)	3	3	0	(3)	0	(3)	This project is now complete.
GC465	-Land Charges (funded from IEG Gov't Grant)	33	33	35	2	35	2	This project is now complete.

BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL

CAPITAL BUDGET MONITORING STATEMENT - 2004/05 ACCOUNTING PERIOD 5 - AUGUST 2004 (ACCRUAL BASIS)

GENERAL FUND - POLICY & STRATEGY SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

(1) MONITORED AGAINST THE 2004/05 JULY REVISED CAPITAL BUDGET		(3) BUDGET HOLDER	(5) APPROVED CAPITAL BUDGET 2004/05 £' 000	(6) PROFILED BUDGETED PAYMENTS TO DATE £' 000	(7) ACTUAL PAYMENTS TO DATE £' 000	(8) VARIATION TO DATE (7 - 6) £' 000	(9) PROJECTED YEAR END SPENDING £' 000	(10) PROJECTED YEAR END VARIATION (9 - 5) £' 000	(11) BUDGET HOLDER COMMENTS
GC465	-Members on-line (funded from IEG Gov't Grant)	N Macleod	50	0	0	0	50	0	The business case is currently being drawn up for this project. The forecast assumes the project receives approval and the budget is fully spent.
GC465	-e-payments/ATP/Webb (funded from IEG Gov't Grant)	N Macleod	2	2	2	0	2	0	This project is now complete.
GC465	-e-procurement/e-tending (funded from IEG Gov't Grant)	N Macleod	23	0	2	2	23	0	Potential solutions are still being examined for this project.
GC1023	Provision of Service Centre - BDC Share (I.E.G) (funded from capital receipts)	N Macleod	350	0	0	0	350	0	Completion of the Service Centre is required by 31/12/2004. The forecast is based on the Council's 50% share of the building contract, with an allowance for additional related costs.
	Corporate IT Equipment & Upgrades (£122k Budget) See below:-								
GC1008	- Provision of new IT equipment (Financial Services)	J Pickering	10	4	0	(4)	5	(5)	The new PC's have been ordered as planned but the invoice is outstanding. However future plans remain uncertain until the office moves are complete. There could be a small saving to budget.
GC1010	- New HR Software Package	L Morris	30	0	0	0	30	0	Discussions are under way with Worcestershire County Council about linking into their HR system which should produce a saving against budget. Things are at an early stage and more information should be available early in 2005. Until then the forecast is for the full budget to be spent.
GC1001	- Contaminated Land - Land Use/Geological Mapping Data Set (Environmental Health)	D Williams	3	1	2	1	3	0	The scheme is on going and the budget will be fully spent.
GC1002	- Contaminated Land - Historical Mapping Equipment (Environmental Health)	D Williams	12	12	14	2	14	2	The scheme is on going and the budget will be fully spent.
GC1003	- Contaminated Land - Historical Mapping IT Software (Environmental Health)	D Williams	7	3	5	2	7	0	The scheme is on going and the budget will be fully spent.
GC1013	- GIS/IT Server Upgrading (Planning Services)	M Griffiths	15	15	12	(3)	15	0	Budget has been fully committed.
GC1014	- Presentational Equipment for Council Chamber (Planning Services)	M Griffiths	10	10	9	(1)	10	0	Scheme is largely complete.

BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL

CAPITAL BUDGET MONITORING STATEMENT - 2004/05 ACCOUNTING PERIOD 5 - AUGUST 2004 (ACCRUAL BASIS)

GENERAL FUND - POLICY & STRATEGY SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

(1)	(3)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)	(10)	(11)
MONITORED AGAINST THE 2004/05 JULY REVISED CAPITAL BUDGET	BUDGET HOLDER	APPROVED CAPITAL BUDGET 2004/05 £' 000	PROFILED BUDGETED PAYMENTS TO DATE £' 000	ACTUAL PAYMENTS TO DATE £' 000	VARIATION TO DATE (7 - 6) £' 000	PROJECTED YEAR END SPENDING £' 000	PROJECTED YEAR END VARIATION (9 - 5) £' 000	BUDGET HOLDER COMMENTS
GC1017	- Consultancy to further develop current performance management software (Audit/Best Value)	35	15	27	12	35	0	Following the initial phase with heads of service, further consultancy services will be required.
	Planning Services:-							
GC122	Small Business Grants	0	0	1	1	1	1	This budget was removed at the July capital budget revision but some grants had already been paid.
	Miscellaneous:-							
GC476	Flex Time Machine (2002/03 Scheme)	3	1	1	0	3	0	This budget is for additional software licences for new staff and will be spent.
GC461	Computer Upgrade - Finance IT (2003/04 Scheme)	0	0	1	1	1	1	Expenditure relates to minor slippage from 2003/04.
	GRAND TOTALS	1,221	266	159	(107)	1,191	(30)	

Note: Underspends are shown as negative figures.

BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL

CAPITAL BUDGET MONITORING STATEMENT - 2004/05
ACCOUNTING PERIOD 5 - AUGUST 2004 (ACCRUAL BASIS)

GENERAL FUND - HOUSING & PLANNING POLICY SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

(1) MONITORED AGAINST THE 2004/05 JULY REVISED CAPITAL BUDGET		(3) BUDGET HOLDER	(5) APPROVED CAPITAL BUDGET 2004/05 £' 000	(6) PROFILED BUDGETED PAYMENTS TO DATE £' 000	(7) ACTUAL PAYMENTS TO DATE £' 000	(8) VARIATION TO DATE (7 - 6) £' 000	(9) PROJECTED YEAR END SPENDING £' 000	(10) PROJECTED YEAR END VARIATION (9 - 5) £' 000	(11) BUDGET HOLDER COMMENTS
Capital Code	2004/05 Schemes								
	Technical Services:-								
GC045	Car Parks: Signs	J Moody	0	0	1	1	0	0	The capital budget was removed at the July revision. Expenditure is to be transferred to revenue and funded from revenue savings which are still to be identified.
GC462	Car Parks: New Sites Initiatives (2003/04 Scheme)	J Moody	43	0	0	0	43	0	This is the balance on the money owed to Asda for the new car park at Churchfields. A 12 month check is due to be carried out in November 2004 and the balance is expected to be billed then.
GC066	Crown Close Lights (2003/04 Scheme)	J Moody	25	10	9	(1)	25	0	The equipment has been purchased and work is due for completion by October
GC052	Green Lane Drainage Phase II (2003/04 Scheme)	J Moody	6	0	(3)	(3)	6	0	Landscapes work to be completed in the autumn.
GC053	Wythall Drainage Scheme	J Moody	0	0	(2)	(2)	(2)	(2)	The small negative expenditure balance has arisen because the actual cost of completing this scheme is less than the sundry creditor which was raised in year 2003/04.
-	Shopmobility - Provision & Equipment	J Moody	75	0	0	0	75	0	
GC1018	Mill Lane Town Centre Access Improvement (Pending feasibility study)	J Moody	160	0	3	3	160	0	These two schemes are seen as being interdependent on each other and need to progress together. Report to be prepared for Executive Cabinet on a more cost effective revised scheme to provide a building for shopmobility before schemes can progress to tender stage. Three proposals have been received with an indication that the cost of the Mill Lane scheme will be approx £210K. Further refinement and public consultation is to take place and WCC likely to provide additional funding. Until the position is clearer the projected year end expenditure remains at the level of the budget but this may change.
GC012 GC016 GC1004	Litter Bins/Highway Furniture/shelters/lighting/signs	J Moody	0	0	6	6	0	0	The capital budget was removed at the July revision. Expenditure is to be transferred to revenue and funded from revenue savings which are still to be identified.

BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL

CAPITAL BUDGET MONITORING STATEMENT - 2004/05 ACCOUNTING PERIOD 5 - AUGUST 2004 (ACCRUAL BASIS)

GENERAL FUND - HOUSING & PLANNING POLICY SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

(1)	(3)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)	(10)	(11)	
MONITORED AGAINST THE 2004/05 JULY REVISED CAPITAL BUDGET	BUDGET HOLDER	APPROVED CAPITAL BUDGET 2004/05 £' 000	PROFILED BUDGETED PAYMENTS TO DATE £' 000	ACTUAL PAYMENTS TO DATE £' 000	VARIATION TO DATE (7 - 6) £' 000	PROJECTED YEAR END SPENDING £' 000	PROJECTED YEAR END VARIATION (9 - 5) £' 000	BUDGET HOLDER COMMENTS	
Strategic & Enabling Housing Schemes:-									
GC1036	4 Houses on garage sites (Grafton, Foxwalks) (includes 2003/04 slippage)	M Griffiths	160	67	64	(3)	160	0	Allowances for construction of dwellings totalling £64k have been paid to date on this scheme and a further £64k will be payable on commencement of the build contracts. A additional £32k will be due on completion. At this stage completion in 2004/05 is assumed.
GC1038	Purchase and Repair Scheme (2003/04 Projects - for homeless families)	M Griffiths	400	167	19	(148)	400	0	One property purchase is imminent and others are in the pipeline. The delay has been caused by the lack of suitable properties on the market but at the stage it is anticipated that the budget will be fully spent.
GC078	345/347 Birmingham Road - Refurbishment/5 Year Lease (2003/04 Scheme)	M Griffiths	40	32	32	0	40	0	A final invoice for £8k is still to be received
New Affordable Schemes:-									
GC1037	Grants to RSL - York Rd, & Hollywood La/Houndsfield Cl (includes 2003/04 slippage)	M Griffiths	90	0	2	2	90	0	Budget to be spent in the last quarter of the year
-	Grants to RSL - Flat over shops High St. (includes 2003/04 slippage)	M Griffiths	120	0	0	0	120	0	Budget to be spent in the last quarter of the year
GC057 GC077 GC1029	Grants to RSL's - Purchase & Repair Scheme (includes 2003/04 slippage)	M Griffiths	575	240	99	(141)	325	(250)	An underspend is expected because no further commitments will be entered into against this scheme until further Section 106 monies for affordable housing have been received. A year end underspend of £250 is therefore projected.
Retained Housing Works:-									
-	- Door & window replacements - amenity blocks	M Griffiths	16	0	0	0	16	0	Work has not yet started and is expected to be carried out in the last quarter of the year. Paul Lowe (BDHT) is co-ordinating
Private Sector Renewal:-									

BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL

CAPITAL BUDGET MONITORING STATEMENT - 2004/05 ACCOUNTING PERIOD 5 - AUGUST 2004 (ACCRUAL BASIS)

GENERAL FUND - HOUSING & PLANNING POLICY SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

(1)		(3)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)	(10)	(11)
MONITORED AGAINST THE 2004/05 JULY REVISED CAPITAL BUDGET		BUDGET HOLDER	APPROVED CAPITAL BUDGET 2004/05 £' 000	PROFILED BUDGETED PAYMENTS TO DATE £' 000	ACTUAL PAYMENTS TO DATE £' 000	VARIATION TO DATE (7 - 6) £' 000	PROJECTED YEAR END SPENDING £' 000	PROJECTED YEAR END VARIATION (9 - 5) £' 000	BUDGET HOLDER COMMENTS
GC411 GC412 GC416	Mandatory Disabled Facilities Grants (DFG's) (Private & BDHT Grants) (includes 2003/04 slippage)	D Williams	717	299	146	(153)	600	(117)	Slippage is expected against this budget due to a shortage of builders to complete grant work, and in addition to the nature of Disabled Facilities Grant work itself, applicants are given 12 months to complete the work following approval.
-	Discretionary Home Repair Assistance & Housing Renewal Grants	D Williams	75	0	0	0	75	0	Expenditure is dependant upon the start date of The North Worcestershire Care & Repair Agency (expected to be Nov 2004). At this stage a full spend of the budget is anticipated. A report has been submitted to Executive Cabinet on the process for giving these discretionary grants.
	Planning Services:-								
GC064	GIS/Digital Mapping	M Griffiths	20	0	0	0	20	0	Meeting shortly to take place with supplier and budget will be spent by new year.
GC240	Historic Building Refurbishment (2003/04 Scheme)	M Griffiths	12	5	3	(2)	12	0	Claims for refurbishment schemes from 2003/04 are still outstanding but should be paid by end of year.
GC468	Geographical Information System (2003/04 Scheme)	M Griffiths	1	0	0	(0)	1	0	There will be an evaluation of the system before budget is spent.
	Housing Programme:-								
HC552	Central Heating - contract retentions from prior years.	A Coel	8	3	0	(3)	8	0	Current presumption is that the contract retentions will be claimed in 2004/05 although nothing has been paid to date.
HC552	Central heating - electrical (2003-04 Scheme)	A Coel	0	0	(45)	(45)	0	0	The negative expenditure figure relates to the reversal of a sundry creditor in year 2003/04 for payment in 2004/05. The final payment (excluding retention) is due to be paid in October.
HC554	Window Replacements - contract retentions from prior years.	A Coel	7	3	0	(3)	7	0	Current presumption is that the contract retentions will be claimed in 2004/05 although nothing has been paid to date.
HC554	Window replacements (2003/04 Scheme)	A Coel	0	0	(117)	(117)	0	0	The negative expenditure figure relates to the reversal of a sundry creditor in year 2003/04 for payment in 2004/05. The final payment is due to be made in October.

BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL

CAPITAL BUDGET MONITORING STATEMENT - 2004/05 ACCOUNTING PERIOD 5 - AUGUST 2004 (ACCRUAL BASIS)

GENERAL FUND - HOUSING & PLANNING POLICY SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

(1) MONITORED AGAINST THE 2004/05 JULY REVISED CAPITAL BUDGET		(3) BUDGET HOLDER	(5) APPROVED CAPITAL BUDGET 2004/05 £' 000	(6) PROFILED BUDGETED PAYMENTS TO DATE £' 000	(7) ACTUAL PAYMENTS TO DATE £' 000	(8) VARIATION TO DATE (7 - 6) £' 000	(9) PROJECTED YEAR END SPENDING £' 000	(10) PROJECTED YEAR END VARIATION (9 - 5) £' 000	(11) BUDGET HOLDER COMMENTS
HC555	Door Replacements - contract retentions from prior years.	A Coel	5	2	0	(2)	5	0	Current presumption is that the contract retentions will be claimed in 2004/05 although nothing has been paid to date.
HC555	Replacement/upgrading of doors (2003/04 Scheme)	A Coel	0	0	(36)	(36)	0	0	This scheme included a sundry creditor in year 2003/04 for payment in 2004/05. The contractor's account has not yet been received.
-	Contingency for various old contract retentions from prior years.	A Coel	10	4	0	(4)	10	0	Current presumption is that the contract retentions will be claimed in 2004/05 although nothing has been paid to date.
HC557	Kitchen renewals (2003-04 Scheme)	A Coel	0	0	(3)	(3)	0	0	The negative expenditure figure relates to a sundry creditor from 2003/04 which currently remains unpaid.
HC561	Upgrade of fire precautions (2003-04 Scheme)	A Coel	0	0	(5)	(5)	0	0	The negative expenditure figure relates to a sundry creditor from 2003/04 which currently remains unpaid.
HC562	OAP decorations (2003-04 Scheme)	A Coel	0	0	1	1	1	1	Payments relate to work undertaken in year 2003/04.
HC508	Tenant participation works (2002-03 Scheme)	A Coel	0	0	(5)	(5)	0	0	The negative expenditure figure relates to a sundry creditor from 2003/04 which currently remains unpaid.
HC504	Resurface roads etc (2001/02 Scheme)	A Coel	0	0	1	1	1	1	Payments relate to work undertaken in year 2003/04.
HC522	Garage replacement/repairs (2002-03 Scheme)	A Coel	0	0	7	7	7	7	Payments relate to work undertaken in year 2003/04.
HC521	Major structural works (2002-03 Scheme)	A Coel	0	0	1	1	1	1	Payments relate to work undertaken in year 2003/04.
GRAND TOTALS			2,565	832	178	(654)	2,206	(359)	

Note: Underspends are shown as negative figures.

BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL									
CAPITAL BUDGET MONITORING STATEMENT - 2004/05									
ACCOUNTING PERIOD 5 - AUGUST 2004 (ACCRUAL BASIS)									
GENERAL FUND - HEALTH & LEISURE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE (ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH ONLY)									
(1)	(3)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)	(10)	(11)	
MONITORED AGAINST THE 2004/05 JULY REVISED CAPITAL BUDGET	BUDGET HOLDER	APPROVED CAPITAL BUDGET 2004/05	PROFILED BUDGETED PAYMENTS TO DATE	ACTUAL PAYMENTS TO DATE	VARIATION TO DATE (7 - 6)	PROJECTED YEAR END SPENDING	PROJECTED YEAR END VARIATION (9 - 5)	BUDGET HOLDER COMMENTS	
		£' 000	£' 000	£' 000	£' 000	£' 000	£' 000		
Capital Code	2004/05 Schemes								
	Environmental Health:-								
GC380 GC068	Contaminated Land - Urgent Measures (2003/04 Scheme)	D Williams	1	1	2	1	1	0	Coding correction required. Costs to be transferred to revenue expenditure in September
	Environmental Health - Refuse Collection & Waste Management:-								
GC1020	4 x Refuse Freighters - Sidepress X524 Hawkchange (BDC Funded) (2003/04 Scheme)	D Williams	505	379	375	(4)	505	0	Three vehicles have been purchased to date and the final freighter should be purchased in late September/October.
GC019	Green Wheelie Bins - Balance 31,900 (DEFRA Grant & BDC Funded)	D Williams	687	286	110	(176)	687	0	Budget profile issue because of the irregular spending pattern and temporary hold up in the roll out programme. Roll out will now re-commence on week commencing 1st November for completion by March 2005 and the year end forecast is therefore that the budgets will be fully spent.
GC019	Grey Wheelie Bins - Balance 30,700 (BDC Funded)	D Williams	662	276	110	(166)	662	0	
GC019	Red Lidded Boxes - Balance 32,300 (DEFRA Funded)	D Williams	80	33	31	(2)	80	0	
GC019	Blue Unlidded Boxes - Balance 32,300 (DEFRA Funded)	D Williams	68	28	23	(5)	68	0	
GC1006 GC1019	7 x Second-hand Refuse Freighters	D Williams	115	115	114	(1)	114	(1)	All the vehicles have now been purchased
	Environmental Health - Depot:-								
GC1039	Vehicles and General Plant (includes 2003/04 slippage)	S Bedford	500	0	2	2	500	0	A comprehensive renewal schedule is required for approval by Executive Cabinet before procurement can commence and work on this has begun. In the meantime a new parks trailer costing £2k has been purchased as an emergency measure to avoid incurring rental costs of £100 per week. The year end forecast currently assumes full spend of this budget until firm plans have been prepared and approved.
	GRAND TOTALS		2,618	1,118	767	(351)	2,617	(1)	

Note: Underspends are shown as negative figures.

BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL

CAPITAL BUDGET MONITORING STATEMENT - 2004/05 ACCOUNTING PERIOD 5 - AUGUST 2004 (ACCRUAL BASIS)

GENERAL FUND - HEALTH & LEISURE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE (LEISURE SERVICES ONLY)

(1) MONITORED AGAINST THE 2004/05 JULY REVISED CAPITAL BUDGET		(3) BUDGET HOLDER	(5) APPROVED CAPITAL BUDGET 2004/05 £' 000	(6) PROFILED BUDGETED PAYMENTS TO DATE £' 000	(7) ACTUAL PAYMENTS TO DATE £' 000	(8) VARIATION TO DATE (7 - 6) £' 000	(9) PROJECTED YEAR END SPENDING £' 000	(10) PROJECTED YEAR END VARIATION (9 - 5) £' 000	(11) BUDGET HOLDER COMMENTS
Capital Code	2004/05 Schemes								
	Leisure Services:-								
GC423	Arts Centre (Joint With College) (includes 2003/04 slippage)	R Hazlehurst	1,477	615	669	54	1,477	0	Project ongoing. Currently showing an overspend against budget profile but the final spend is on budget
-	Catshill Community Project (b/f from 02/03)	R Hazlehurst	35	0	0	0	35	0	Expenditure is dependant on Catshill20/20 group making successful external funding bids but forecast assumes full spend at this stage.
-	Community Grant - Waseley Hills School (2003/04 Scheme)	R Hazlehurst	25	0	0	0	25	0	Report to Executive Cabinet in October for the release of funds.
	Dolphin Centre:-								
GC352	- Upgrade (b/f from 2002/03) (includes 2003/04 slippage)	R Hazlehurst	773	0	2	2	773	0	Work has now commenced. Completion by March 2005
-	- Replace Main Pool tiling	R Hazlehurst	50	0	0	0	50	0	Work has now commenced. Completion by March 2005
-	- Renew/repair roof coverings (as per Condition Survey)	R Hazlehurst	42	0	0	0	42	0	Ongoing scheme, report to Members in Oct/Nov.
-	- New CHP Unit & Heating Controls in Pool Areas	R Hazlehurst	80	0	0	0	80	0	Work has now commenced. Completion by March 2005
-	- Sports Hall Inflatable	R Hazlehurst	8	0	0	0	8	0	A report to Executive Cabinet to prove the business case is required before this project can be implemented.
-	Landscaping Recreation Grounds (inc ASDA & slippage from 2002/03)	R Hazlehurst	15	0	0	0	15	0	This is the balance on the money owed to Asda for BDC's contribution towards the new play area next to Asda. A 12 month check is due to be carried out in November and the balance is expected to be billed then.
GC1025	Improvements to Sanders Park (Funded from Government Liveability Fund & BDC)	R Hazlehurst	155	5	4	(1)	155	0	Consultations have been carried out and a management plan developed. Project to commence in the near future.
GC1026	Improvements to Rubery Park (Funded from Government Liveability Fund)	R Hazlehurst	160	0	0	0	160	0	Consultation exercises are underway and workshops are ongoing with young people. Project to commence in the near future.
GC1027	New park at Barnsley Hall (Funded from Government Liveability Fund & BDC)	R Hazlehurst	25	0	0	0	25	0	Meetings have been held with Highways and local plans section. Project planning continues.

BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL

CAPITAL BUDGET MONITORING STATEMENT - 2004/05 ACCOUNTING PERIOD 5 - AUGUST 2004 (ACCRUAL BASIS)

GENERAL FUND - HEALTH & LEISURE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE (LEISURE SERVICES ONLY)

(1) MONITORED AGAINST THE 2004/05 JULY REVISED CAPITAL BUDGET		(3) BUDGET HOLDER	(5) APPROVED CAPITAL BUDGET 2004/05 £' 000	(6) PROFILED BUDGETED PAYMENTS TO DATE £' 000	(7) ACTUAL PAYMENTS TO DATE £' 000	(8) VARIATION TO DATE (7 - 6) £' 000	(9) PROJECTED YEAR END SPENDING £' 000	(10) PROJECTED YEAR END VARIATION (9 - 5) £' 000	(11) BUDGET HOLDER COMMENTS
GC1028	Regeneration of two allotment sites (Funded from Government Liveability Fund)	R Hazlehurst	16	0	0	0	16	0	Work is ongoing on the recycling bay at Watt Close allotments. An allotment tenants survey is underway. Project will start in due course.
GC043	Tree Survey (Scheme b/f 2002/03)	R Hazlehurst	7	0	0	0	7	0	Evaluation of IT equipment is on going. A purchase is expected in the next three months.
GRAND TOTALS			2,868	620	675	55	2,868	0	

Note: Underspends are shown as negative figures.

BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL

EXECUTIVE CABINET

13TH OCTOBER 2004

VOLUNTARY ENGAGEMENT - MONITORING BOARD ARRANGEMENTS

Responsible Cabinet Member	Councillor D. C. Norton - Leader of the Council
Responsible Officer	Sue Nixon - Chief Executive

1. SUMMARY

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to inform Members of the Minister's letter in response to the Lead Official's report on Bromsgrove District Council as part of the Voluntary Engagement process and to note the Government's Monitoring Board arrangements. The report also seeks to hold a Special Executive Cabinet and a Special Council Meeting on 27th October 2004 to receive and discuss the draft Recovery Plan for submission to the Minister.

2. RECOMMENDATION

- 2.1 Executive Cabinet is asked to:-

- (i) Note the Minister's letter received on 7th September 2004 and to agree to address the points raised as part of Bromsgrove's Recovery Plan.
- (ii) Note the Members of the Monitoring Board set out in paragraph 5.3 and the Terms of Reference set out in Appendix 2 and agree Council's representatives set out in paragraph 5.5.
- (iii) Approve calling a Special Executive Cabinet Meeting and a Special Council Meeting on 27th October 2004 to receive and discuss the draft Recovery Plan for submission to the Minister by 29th October 2004.

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 As Members are aware, following the Council's request for Voluntary Engagement with the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM) the Government appointed Mr. Stan Baldwin as Lead Official to oversee Bromsgrove's recovery process.
- 3.2 The Lead Official submitted to the Parliamentary Under Secretary of State his confidential "stock-take" report on the Council's commitment, ability and wherewithal to plan and deliver its own recovery.
- 3.3 The Council is now required to draw together an initial draft Recovery Plan for submission to the Minister by 29th October 2004.

4. CURRENT SITUATION

- 4.1 A copy of the Minister's letter to the Leader of the Council is attached as "Appendix 1" in which some of the expected elements of the Recovery Plan are set out.

- 4.2 Work is currently underway to shape and put the plan together in order to provide an honest assessment of the current situation and the challenges to be addressed, including the capacity, time and resources required to deliver the recovery.
- 4.3 The Council will need to identify a clear focus on areas of specific priority and for concentrated attention in the first stages of recovery, and to set out a programme and effective performance management arrangements so that improvements are assured on a continuous basis.
- 4.4 At the time of writing, "feedback sessions" have been arranged for 11th and 12th October 2004 for staff, Councillors and those members of the public, partner and stakeholder workshops who contributed to developing the Recovery Plan.
- 4.5 It is proposed to take the draft Recovery Plan to a Special Executive Cabinet Meeting and a Special Council Meeting on 27th October 2004 so the Minister can receive the document by 29th October 2004 as requested. It should be emphasised at this stage, the Government will regard the Recovery Plan as a draft document as the Minister reserves the right to make comments through the Lead Official and the Monitoring Board.

5. **MONITORING BOARD ARRANGEMENTS**

- 5.1 Good governance in a Local Authority embraces upholding good monitoring and performance management responsibilities. As part of the Voluntary Engagement process the Government exercises extensive monitoring and review through a Monitoring Board established by the Lead Official (this does not replace the monitoring responsibilities of the Council).
- 5.2 The Monitoring Board's main task is to assess the Council's progress across a range of areas including both corporate and front line services, and to co-ordinate and co-operate with representatives of the Audit Commission and other Government departments to provide ongoing advice, action and pressure to ensure the Council maintains wholesale improvement in its performance. The Terms of Reference for the Monitoring Board for Bromsgrove District Council are set out in "Appendix 2".
- 5.3 The Monitoring Board Members for Bromsgrove are:-
- Mr. Stan Baldwin (Chair and ODPM Lead Official)
 - Ms. Sue Todd, Mr. Paul Stratford (Government Office of the West Midlands)
 - Ms. Kristine Goodman (Audit Commission)
 - Mr. John Fitzpatrick (Benefits Fraud Inspectorate)
 - Mr. Robin Hooper (Chief Executive, Shrewsbury and Atcham B.C.)
 - Mr. John Gorrie (KPMG Auditors)
- 5.4 The Lead Official will Chair the Monitoring Board meetings which will take place on a regular basis and will consider reports from the Council to enable the provision of regular feedback to the Minister on Bromsgrove's progress.
- 5.5 The Lead Official has set the first Monitoring Board Meeting and asked the Council to report to the Board on 9th November 2004 and to be represented by the Leader, Deputy Leader and an Opposition Councillor and the three Senior Officers of the Council (the Chief Executive and both Corporate Directors). It is proposed that the "Leader of the Opposition" attends the first meeting, after which a representative of one of the larger Groups on the Council - Labour and Independent, attends to represent the views of all the Opposition in rotation for the second and third meeting.

5.6 The Lead Official has stressed Government guidance states the Board meetings are to operate under “Chatham House Rules” in order to encourage an honest exchange. The Lead Official will produce a set of “key messages” after each meeting which can then be circulated to Members and staff. It will be important to ensure a wide communication of those key messages. Any press releases, however, are to be cleared with the Lead Official to ensure the Government’s view is reflected accurately.

6 FINANCIAL, LEGAL AND EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES IMPLICATIONS

6.1 At this stage there are no detailed implications to raise in connection with this report other than to note the Recovery Plan will include a review of the Council’s main procedures as part of the process of evaluation and improvement.

Background Papers:

None.

Contact officer

Name Sue Nixon - Chief Executive
E Mail: s.nixon@bromsgrove.gov.uk
Tel: (01527) 881400

BROMSGROVE DC MONITORING BOARD: TERMS OF REFERENCE

Context

Bromsgrove District Council has opted for voluntary engagement and deferred Comprehensive Performance Assessment. Accepting a notional assessment as 'poor', council members and officers have worked to develop a recovery plan, which is due for submission to Government by 29 October 2004.

Purpose

The purpose of monitoring progress of poorly performing councils is to:

- provide ongoing assessment by Government of the progress in performing key functions
- consider options for Government action, including statutory intervention, in response to the council's progress
- maintain continued external pressure on the Council to improve its performance
- co-ordinate Government actions in relation to the Council's recovery.

Objectives

The objectives of the Monitoring Board meetings are:

- to co-ordinate the response of Government Departments and provide a forum for ensuring coherence between programmes and actions from different agencies aimed at recovery and improvement of Council performance.
- to review the Council's progress towards recovery, both since the previous meeting and overall
- to consider any changes to the Recovery Plan proposed by the Council, and any requests for additional capacity support
- to assist the Lead Official in considering whether to recommend to Ministers any additional action that Government might need to take
- in due course to identify the exit strategy.

4. The Role of the Board

The Board will act as a tier of recovery monitoring in addition to and distinct from that of the Inspectorates and Audit Commission. It will, however, cooperate closely with these bodies, whose work will provide a prime source of information on the Council's progress. A key aim of the Board is to ensure a co-ordinated approach to assisting the Council's recovery across Whitehall. It will facilitate the careful and systematic co-ordination at all stages of Government Departments that have an interest in Bromsgrove Council. It is not intended for the Board to have a separate public profile, but it will produce a set of "key messages" as a record of its proceedings from time to time.

5. Status of the Board

The Board has no statutory authority. Those bodies represented on the Board, including the Council, Government Departments and other agencies, will individually continue to exercise their statutory functions as before. The Board is intended to assist all participants in exercising their statutory functions, not to subsume those statutory functions. For this reason ODPM intends that the Board will operate so far as possible with the agreement of all parties involved.

There will continue to be regular, in-depth contact between the Council and the Lead Official between meetings, in addition to continued relationships between the various parties contributing to Board proceedings. Developments in those relationships should be reported to the Board at the earliest opportunity eg machinery of Government changes.

6. Membership of the Board

This Monitoring Board is a Government body led by a Government Official and its members are mainly Government officials. The Board may call upon other parties with knowledge of the authority or local government to form its view, which then informs Ministers. The Inspection Agencies clearly have a major role to play in this activity.

The membership consists of:

Lead Official ODPM

Representatives of all Government Departments with a direct interest in the Council's recovery.

Invitation to attend is extended to all Inspection Agencies with an interest in the Council namely:

The Audit Commission

The Housing Inspectorate

The Social Services Inspectorate

Ofsted

Benefit Fraud Inspection Service

In addition representatives of any other body considered to be of relevance eg consultants working with the authority including IDeA.

6b. Deputising

Clearly Members may need to send deputies from time to time. The membership list, when finally agreed, will include named deputies where possible. Deputies should be properly briefed and empowered so that meetings can proceed productively whoever the representative might be. Where Government representatives are unable to attend it is part of their

shared responsibility to keep in touch with and support the work of the Board by other appropriate means.

6c. Chairing and Secretariat

The Lead Official will Chair in the first instance, and arrange the Secretariat.

Role of the Parties

7a. The Council

The Council's role is to present evidence of action towards recovery, present the case for any modifications to the Recovery Plan and answer questions asked by representatives of Government Departments and Inspection Agencies.

7b. Inspection Agencies

The Inspection Agencies attend to present and share evidence of progress on recovery planning at the authority and to assist the Lead Official in validating the material.

7c. Government Departments

The representatives of Government Departments attend to present and share evidence of progress on recovery planning at the authority, to assist the Lead Official in validating the material and in reaching a view as to the pace and nature of recovery.

8. Frequency and Location of Meetings

The Board will meet monthly at first; meetings will normally be held at Bromsgrove DC offices. The Board is expected to meet throughout the period covered by the recovery plan. Upon the determination of an exit strategy and meeting the criteria set in such a strategy, it is expected that the Board will dissolve.

9. Evidence Collection and Presentation

9a. Regulators

At least one week prior to each meeting any party that is presenting evidence will ensure that a written report is sent to the Lead Official for circulation to the Board. At each meeting contributors will be given the opportunity to present the material to the Board.

9b. Receiving Evidence from the Council

Representatives from the Council will be asked to attend to present progress on the steps the Council is taking for recovery as well as present written material at least one week prior to the meeting.

10. Forming Opinions Regarding Recovery

The Board meetings are for the purpose of reviewing, questioning and discussing evidence with a view to the Lead Official (with all members' help) forming an opinion about the Council's recovery.

11. Advising the Minister

Following each meeting of the Board the Lead Official will ask for any validation of evidence thought necessary. Ongoing advice to the Minister will be provided by means of 'status' and 'stocktake' reports.

BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL

EXECUTIVE CABINET

13th OCTOBER 2004

PERFORMANCE INFORMATION 2004-2005

Responsible Portfolio Holder	All
Responsible Head of Service	Corporate Director of Resources

1. SUMMARY

- 1.1 This report provides the information relating to the Council's performance for the 1st Quarter of 2004-05 on service provision and includes both national performance indicators and where in existence, local indicator detail.

2. RECOMMENDATION

- 2.1 Members are asked to note the report.

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 The Council is required to deliver sustained improvements in the delivery of local services. All effective organisations need to know how well they are performing and what their strengths and weaknesses are.
- 3.2 The Government equally must ensure that high level priorities are being delivered and that standards are being met across the range of public services.
- 3.3 The Best Value Performance Indicators provide valuable information on the key services delivered locally and enable the Council to assess where we are and to set meaningful targets for further performance improvements.
- 3.4 The attached information (see appendix) has been prepared in full consultation with directors and heads of service who have provided such explanations as necessary on indicators where there is under performance against target.

4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 Any financial implications can only be identified when failing indicators have been fully analysed and appropriate improvement action plans have been developed. There is no existing budget provision defined.

5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 National BVPI's (Best Value Performance Indicators) are audited annually by the external auditor, KPMG, and the results are published.

6. Corporate Governance

- 6.1 Good performance management requires the availability of accurate and timely performance data. This Council is committed to addressing the changes required to exhibit good corporate governance and therefore is committed to putting into place an effective and efficient performance management framework. This information is therefore essential and should be used appropriately, re-defining its content as change is identified and thus ensuring that it remains relevant and useful.

Background Papers




Detailed performance information is attached.

Contact officer

Name Mrs. B. Haswell
E Mail: b.haswell@bromsgrove.gov.uk
Tel: (01527) 881289

SERVICE PERFORMANCE MONITORING

1st Quarter
April - June 2004

ABV- Audit, Best Value & Performance PIs								
	Actual 03/04	Target 04/05	Target for Period	Top Quartile	Qtr 1	Performance to Target (Period)	Perf to Top Quartile	Comments
+ BV001 Does the authority have a Community Strategy developed in collaboration with the Local Strategic Partnership, for improving the economic, social and environmental well being in a way that is sustainable? Yes represented by 100. No represented by 0.	100.00	100.00	100.00	N/A	100.00		N/A	The Community Plan was produced in December 2003, therefore the targets for PI 1b & 1c set for 12 months from that date. The targets have been set as a numeric figure and the result will be entered as 100 when fully complied.
+ BV001b When will a full review of the Community Strategy be completed? Yes represented by 100. No represented by 0	0.00	100.00	0.00	N/A	0.00		N/A	Review date by December 2004
+ BV001c When will the authority report progress towards implementing the Community Strategy to the wider community? Yes represented by 100. No represented by 0	0.00	100.00	0.00	N/A	0.00		N/A	Report of progress by December 2004

Star = Performance exceeding target

Circle = Performance on target

Triangle = Performance below target

Question Mark = data unavailable



Exclamation Mark = No target to measure performance against

N/A = Not applicable

Performance tolerance level is set at ± 10% target

BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL
SERVICE PERFORMANCE MONITORING

1st Quarter
April - June 2004

AS - Administrative Services PIs								
	Actual 03/04	Target 04/05	Target for Period	Top Quartile	Qtr 1	Performance to Target (Period)	Perf to Top Quartile	Comments
+ BV179 % Standard searches carried out in 10 working days.	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00			Excellent Performance

Star = Performance exceeding target

Circle = Performance on target

Triangle = Performance below target

Question Mark = data unavailable

Exclamation Mark = No target to measure performance against

N/A = Not applicable

Performance tolerance level is set at ± 10% target

SERVICE PERFORMANCE MONITORING

1st Quarter
April - June 2004

CSE - Community Safety & Engineering PIs								
	Actual 03/04	Target 04/05	Target for Period	Top Quartile	Qtr 1	Performance to Target (Period)	Perf to Top Quartile	Comments
± BV126a Domestic burglaries per 1,000 households	21.30	15.20	3.80	8.00	3.37			Encouraging results
± BV126b % Domestic Burglaries Detected	30.80	22.00	22.00	N/A	35.94		N/A	Good performance, targeting hotspots.
± BV127 Violent crimes per 1,000 population and % detected broken down to show:	18.01 62.96	17.4 62.8	4.35 62.8	N/A	4.26 62.8	 	N/A	On target
± BV127a Violent crimes committed by a stranger per 1000 population	1.32	1.22	0.31	2.00	0.25			Targets that have been set have yet to be agreed with West Mercia Police and may be subject to alteration. Actual number of crimes committed for the 1st quarter is 22.
± BV127b Violent crimes committed in a public space per 1000 population	1.49	1.49	0.37	4.00	0.5			Targets that have been set have yet to be agreed with West Mercia Police and may be subject to alteration. Actual number of crimes committed for the 1st quarter is 39.
± BV127c Violent crimes committed in connection with licensed premises per 1000 population	0.36	0.36	0.09	1.00	0.1			Targets that have been set have yet to be agreed with West Mercia Police and may be subject to alteration. Actual number of crimes committed for the 1st quarter is 7.
± BV127d Violent crimes committed under the influence per 1000 population	1.00	1.00	0.25	1.00	0.25			Targets that have been set have yet to be agreed with West Mercia Police and may be subject to alteration. Actual number of crimes committed for the 1st quarter is 19
± BV128 Vehicle crimes per 1000 population	14.38	13.20	3.33	9.00	3.05			Pleased with progress
± BV128b % Vehicle Crimes Detected	17.58	12.80	12.80	N/A	14.93		N/A	Pleased with progress
± BV156 % of authority buildings open to the public in which all public areas are suitable for and accessible to disabled people.	63.00	75.00	66.00	60.00	65.00			On programme to achieve end of year target.

Star = Performance exceeding target

Circle = Performance on target

Triangle = Performance below target

Question Mark = data unavailable

Exclamation Mark = No target to measure performance against

N/A = Not applicable

Performance tolerance level is set at ± 10% target

BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL

SERVICE PERFORMANCE MONITORING

1st Quarter
April - June 2004

CSE - Community Safety & Engineering PIs								
	Actual 03/04	Target 04/05	Target for Period	Top Quartile	Qtr 1	Performance to Target (Period)	Perf to Top Quartile	Comments
⊕ BV174 Number of racial incidents recorded by the authority per 100,000 population.	0.00	0	0	0.00	0.00	☐ _x	☐ _x	No target set because of very low incidence. No recorded incidence in 03/04 and none as yet in 04/05.
⊕ BV175 % of racial incidents that resulted in further action.	0.00	0	0	100.00	0.00	☐ _x	N/A	As above
⊕ BV180a The energy consumption/m ² (kwh) of local authority operational property, compared with comparable buildings in the UK as a whole (expressed as %). Target is a reduction of 9% on previous energy consumption.	N/A	55.00	55.00	83.00	Unavail	☐ _x	☐ _x	Improvement scheme to be executed 04/05 in conjunction with Energy Savings Trust. This is an annually assessed target.

Star = Performance exceeding target

Circle = Performance on target

Triangle = Performance below target

Question Mark = data unavailable

Exclamation Mark = No target to measure performance against

N/A = Not applicable

Performance tolerance level is set at ± 10% target

SERVICE PERFORMANCE MONITORING

1st Quarter
April - June 2004

ES - Environmental Services Pls & Tasks									
	Actual 03/04	Target 04/05	Target for Period	Top Quartile	Qtr 1	Performance to Target (Period)	Perf to Top Quartile	Comments	
+	BV062 The proportion of unfit private sector dwellings made fit/demolished as a direct result of action by the authority as a %.	4.48	5.00	5.00	4.00	4.00			2 properties have been made fit, out of a district-wide total of 46. The target for the year is three (5%). Therefore likely to achieve end of year target. Due to the many months it takes to bring about renovation works, it is not practicable to set quarterly targets.
+	BV082a % of the total tonnage of household waste arisings which have been recycled.	10.88	22.00	13.00	14.00	13.75			Target for the 1st quarter achieved. Targets set for the 2nd, 3rd and 4th quarters are 16, 19 and 22% respectively
+	BV082b % of the total tonnage of household waste arisings which have been sent for composting or for treatment by anaerobic digestion.	0.40	4.50	4.50	2.20	5.66			1st quarter target achieved.
+	BV084 Number of kilograms of household waste collected per head.	346.70	392.00	98.00	367.00	65.00			1st Qtr target exceeded. Accumulative target. Targets set for 2nd, 3rd and 4th quarter are 196, 294 and 392 respectively.
	BV086 Cost of waste collection per household (£)	Unavailable	Not set. See comments	Not set. See comments	29.64	Unavail			Figures awaited. Major service modernisation programme underway, therefore for the current year it was considered inappropriate to set a performance target which sought to compare the Council's performance with other authorities.
+	BV091 % Population served by a kerbside collection of recyclables.	14.12	100.00	13.00	100.00	13.29			A very encouraging start has been made in seeking to achieve the end of year target, in that up to September 2004, the performance level has reached 28.72%. The original 2nd quarter target was 49.42%. Quarterly target revision will be dependent upon the date the roll-out programme recommences. The service roll-out programme is being revised to cater for the much higher than predicted service participation rate.

Star = Performance exceeding target

Circle = Performance on target

Triangle = Performance below target

Question Mark = data unavailable




Exclamation Mark = No target to measure performance against

N/A = Not applicable

Performance tolerance level is set at ± 10% target

SERVICE PERFORMANCE MONITORING

1st Quarter
April - June 2004

ES - Environmental Services Pls & Tasks								
	Actual 03/04	Target 04/05	Target for Period	Top Quartile	Qtr 1	Performance to Target (Period)	Perf to Top Quartile	Comments
<p>+</p> <p>BV166a % Score against a checklist of enforcement best practice for environmental health/trading standards.</p>	70.00	80.00	80.00	84.00	70.00			Performance is measured against nationally set service quality criteria. Each of the 10 criteria are allocated a score of 1 point (presented as a %age - 10%). The criteria cover the provision & implementation of service policies & procedures, inspection, sampling & education programmes & performance monitoring arrangements. A comprehensive service review was completed in August & proposals for programmed service improvements aimed at achieving a score of 100% will be submitted for consideration during the budget determination programme.
<p>+</p> <p>BV199 Local street and environmental cleanliness - the % of relevant land that is assessed as having combined deposits of litter and detritus</p>	34.00	30	30	N/A	0		N/A	Whilst service capacity problems resulted in the temporary cessation of monitoring work, a recovery plan has been developed and site monitoring will recommence from 1st Nov.204. Inappropriate to set quarterly targets, due to seasonal variations caused by the prevailing weather conditions.

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BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL

SERVICE PERFORMANCE MONITORING

1st Quarter
April - June 2004

FS - Financial Services PIs								
	Actual 03/04	Target 04/05	Target for Period	Top Quartile	Qtr 1	Performance to Target (Period)	Perf to Top Quartile	Comments
BV008 % of Invoices for commercial goods and services that were paid by the authority within 30 days of receipt of invoice.	92.05	100.00	100.00	96.00	98.57			Significant improvement on 2003/04 due to the new system.
BV009 % of Council Tax collected	98.30	98.50	36.00	98.00	30.33		N/A	Annualised collection rate 98.76% Aug 04. In the absence of the Revenues Mgr the qtrly target has been set at a slight increase on the actual for the same qtr last year. These targets may be amended on his return. (Top quartile figures are only available for year end results)
BV010 % of NNDR collected	98.30	98.60	30.00	99.00	27.80		N/A	Annualised collection rate 99.38% Aug 04. In the absence of the Revenues Mgr the qtrly target has been set at a slight increase on the actual for the same qtr last year. These targets may be amended on his return. (Top quartile figures are only available for year end results)
BV076a Number of claimants visited per 1000 caseload.	237.00	230.00	230.00	N/A	44.86		N/A	Will reach target set for 04/05
BV076b Number of fraud investigators employed per 1000 caseload.	0.18	0.36	0.36	N/A	0.27		N/A	Above target
BV076c Number of fraud investigations per 1000 caseload	67.63	70.00	70.00	N/A	14.59		N/A	Only one investigator in post
BV076d Number of prosecutions and sanctions per 1000 caseload.	6.72	6.50	6.50	N/A	1.35		N/A	Only one investigator in post.
BV078a Average time for processing new claims. (days)	49.66	40.00	40.00	30.00	64.68			Annual billing problem together with LSVT transfer caused delays in processing new claims for benefits Aug 04 - 50.67 days
BV078b Average time for processing notifications of changes of circumstance. (days)	18.94	10.00	10.00	7.00	113.86			Annual billing problem together with LSVT transfer caused delays in processing changes Aug 04 - 20.16 days.
BV079a % of benefit cases processed correctly	98.13	99.00	99.00	99.00	96.80			Quality checks need to be carried out, this will form part of restructure of the service.
BV079b % of recovery of overpaid benefit.	41.38	70.00	70.00	61.00	7.68			Processes will be reviewed in Oct 04

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Triangle = Performance below target

BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL

SERVICE PERFORMANCE MONITORING

1st Quarter
April - June 2004

IT - Information Tech. Services PIs								
	Actual 03/04	Target 04/05	Target for Period	Top Quartile	Qtr 1	Performance to Target (Period)	Perf to Top Quartile	Comments
BV157 The number of types of interactions that are enabled for electronic delivery as a % of the types of interactions that are legally permissible for electronic delivery.	51.00	75.00	75.00	56.00	51.00			As the website is developed for electronic transactions, e.g. electronic payments (scheduled for Nov 2004), the percentage will increase. E-forms, being developed as part of e-Worcestershire Hub, will also increase the number of electronic interactions. This will give the ability of requesting service through the website, it is hoped to complete this development by end of Dec 2004. The implementation of 'e-shop' (Customer Relationship Manager system) as part of the service centre will also increase the number of electronic interactions. Service centre is due for live running in February 2005.

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BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL

SERVICE PERFORMANCE MONITORING

1st Quarter
April - June 2004

LGL - Legal Services PIs								
	Actual 03/04	Target 04/05	Target for Period	Top Quartile	Qtr 1	Performance to Target (Period)	Perf to Top Quartile	Comments
BV002 CRE level to which the authority conforms	2.00	3.00	3.00	1.00	2.00			An Equality 3-year plan for Impact Assessments has been in place but not due for completion until 2007. Therefore Level 3 only attainable in 2007.
BV002a % CRE Scorecard - The duty to promote race equality.	42.00	47.00	47.00	N/A	42.00		N/A	Impact assessments are timetabled for the next 12 mths & these will identify improvements that can be made.
BV011a % of top 5% of earners that are women.	21.43	21.43	21.43	25.00	24.00			BDC will continue to ensure Equality of Opportunity in applying for top positions. Little current opportunity to reach Top Quartile as no vacancies.
BV011b % of top 5% of earners from black & minority ethnic communities	3.57	3.57	3.57	0.00	0.00			As BVPI 11a
BV012 Number of working days/shifts lost due to sick absence	11.33	8.60	8.60	8.00	2.24			Figures are a significant improvement last year, continued by re-inforcement of strong absence management training, revised Policy and focus on hot-spots.
BV014 % of Early retirements (exc. Ill health) as % of total work force	0.18	0.18	0.18	0.00	0.00			There will be continued close monitoring of staff health offering specialist support through PTH (external Occupational Health Consultants). Final decision of ill health retirement lies outside of the Council's control (independent medical decision).
BV015 % of employees retiring on grounds of ill health as % of total workforce.	0.00	0	0	0.10	0.00			As BVPI 14
BV016a % Staff with disabilities as % of total work force	0.36	2	2	3.80	0.43			BDC will continue to ensure Equality of Opportunity in applying for positions. Fuller access discussed through Equalities Working Group.
BV016b % of economically active people with disabilities in the area	11.03	11.03	11.03	15.00	11.03			This figure is obtained from Census 2001.

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BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL

SERVICE PERFORMANCE MONITORING

1st Quarter
April - June 2004

LGL - Legal Services PIs								
	Actual 03/04	Target 04/05	Target for Period	Top Quartile	Qtr 1	Performance to Target (Period)	Perf to Top Quartile	Comments
± BV017a % employees from minority ethnic communities	1.16	1.16	1.16	2.10	0.86	☐ △	☐ △	As BVPI 16a
± BV017b % of economically active ethnic minority in the area	Unavailable	1.16	1.16	3.00	Unavail	☐ △	☐ △	This figure is currently being sought from the Office of National Statistics and will be reported annually.
± BV177 % of authority expenditure on legal and advice services which is spent on services that have been awarded the Quality Mark and meet legal needs identified in the Community Legal Service Partnership strategic plan.	87.50	79.65	79.65	100.00	79.65	☐ △	☐ △	This is reported by information from the Finance department regarding the grants paid by the Council each quarter. Out of the total amount of grants paid, we identify which are paid to legal and advice services which commonly includes the CAB, Relate, Age Concern, etc. Out of that smaller pool, we calculate what percentage of recipients have the Quality Mark (awarded by the Community Legal Service, ie successor to the Legal Aid Board.) Only the grant paid to the CAB qualifies. The grant applications are handled by Finance and reported to the Cabinet who decide which recipient gets which grant. "Performance" against the indicator is therefore dependent upon which applications the Cabinet approves since each grant paid to a body or person providing legal & advice services, but who is not Quality Marked, reduces the percentage score.

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BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL
SERVICE PERFORMANCE MONITORING

1st Quarter
April - June 2004

LEI - Leisure Services PI's								
	Actual 03/04	Target 04/05	Target for Period	Top Quartile	Qtr 1	Performance to Target (Period)	Perf to Top Quartile	Comments
+								
BV170a Number of visits to/usage's of museums per 1000 population.	19.90	25	5	697.00	5.64			Although Qtr1 performance is ahead of targets it should be noted that the Top Quartile targets are unrealistic for Bromsgrove Museum. Even Avoncroft Museum which attracts c35000 visitors p.a. would only achieve 399 (vs 506)
+ BV170b Number of visits to museum that were in person per 1000 population	19.48	24	4.8	506.00	5.47			see above
+ BV170c Number of pupils visiting museums in organised school groups.	448.00	750	220	N/A	238.00		N/A	see above

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BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL

SERVICE PERFORMANCE MONITORING

1st Quarter
April - June 2004

PLG - Planning Services BV PIs								
	Actual 03/04	Target 04/05	Target for Period	Top Quartile	Qtr 1	Performance to Target (Period)	Perf to Top Quartile	Comments
± BV106 % of new homes built on previously developed land.	80.88	90.00	90.00	82.00	N/A	☐ ₊	☐ ₊	Annual assessment only.
± BV109a 60% of major applications within 13 weeks	60.00	70.00	70.00	56.00	22.00	☐ ₋	☐ ₋	Of the 7 applications that went overtime, 3 related to complicated residential schemes that were negotiated to approval, 3 were schemes that involved considerable additional information and the last required a Unilateral Undertaking from the applicants.
± BV109b 65% of minor applications in 8 weeks	69.00	75.00	75.00	64.00	86.00	☐ ₋	☐ ₋	Excellent performance, well in excess of Government target.
± BV109c 80% of other applications in 8 weeks	85.00	87.00	87.00	82.00	92.00	☐ ₋	☐ ₋	Excellent performance, well in excess of Government target.
± BV200a Dev.Plan adopted in Last 5 yrs. Yes represented by 100. No represented by 0	100	100	100	N/A	100	☐ ₋	N/A	Target Achieved
± BV204 % of appeals allowed against the authority's decision to refuse on planning applications.	0.00	40.00	40.00	New BVPI	21.00	☐ ₋	N/A	Excellent Performance
± BV205 Quality of service checklist (Planning). Shown as %	0.00	72.00	72.00	New BVPI	67.00	☐ ₋	N/A	A new indicator comprising advice, guidance and e-govt. Aiming to improve electronic delivery of service and expert design advice to meet target.

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SERVICE PERFORMANCE MONITORING

1st Quarter
April - June 2004

PLG - Planning Services Local PIs									
	Actual 03/04	Target 04/05	Target for Period	Top Quartile	Qtr 1	Performance to Target (Period)	Perf to Top Quartile	Comments	
P01 % of Planning applications in 8 weeks	80.00	82.00	82.00	74.00	80.00			Achieved former Govt Target	
P02 % of Bldg regs applications registered on day of receipt.	99.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	99.50			On target	
P03 % of Bldg regs checked & notified in 10 Days	96.50	85.00	85.00	85.00	69.00			Performance trend worsening due to staff reduction in 2001 and increasing work loads i.e. up 16% 2003/04. Additional Trainee Technical Officer now appointed to help address this. However a current vacancy exists for a Building Control Officer post. Any significant time lag in filling this post may further affect performance.	
P04 % of Completion certs generated within 5 days of completion	98.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	91.00			As P03	
P05 % of Building inspection on same day requested by applicant.	99.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	95.00			As P03	
P06 % of Active sites inspected at least every 3 months	35.00	85.00	85.00	85.00	43.00			As P03	
P07 Bldg Control charges to be within ± 10% national scales suggested by LGA.	±10.00	±10.00	±10.00	±10.00	±10.00			On target	
P08 No. of Small Business Start-Ups	34.00	30.00	8.00	N/A	1.00		N/A	Promotion of current availability will ensure targets are met.	
P09 No. of Farmers' Markets	13.00	16.00	4.00	N/A	4.00		N/A	Monthly in Bromsgrove. Quarterly in Hagley. Well received by Farmers and the public	
P10 - % Satisfaction - Plg Applications	69.00	75.00	75.00	N/A	N/A		N/A	Annual survey	

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SERVICE PERFORMANCE MONITORING

1st Quarter
April - June 2004

SH - Strategic Housing Services National PIs								
	Actual 03/04	Target 04/05	Target for Period	Top Quartile	Qtr 1	Performance to Target (Period)	Perf to Top Quartile	Comments
⊘ BV064 Number of private sector vacant dwellings returned into occupation or demolished during 2004/05 as direct result of action by the local authority	3.00	3.00	3.00	N/A	0.00	⊘	N/A	Two formerly unfit dwellings at 345/347 B'ham Rd due to be occupied during 2nd qtr.
⊘ BV176 Domestic violence refuge places per 10,000 population, which are provided or supported by the authority.	0.06	0.06	0.06	0.65	0.05	⊘	⊘	Figure represents the proportion of DV places per 10k population provided by LA - BDC grant. Annual grant & increases are preset, therefore dependent upon outcome of Refuge annual costs (due Sept)
⊘ BV183a Average length of stay (weeks) in B&B accommodation of households which include dependent children or a pregnant woman.	0.00	3.00	3.00	1.00	0.00	⊘	⊘	Homelessness Act 2002 restricts use of B & B for this client group, therefore B & B use for this client group not used except in emergency
⊘ BV183b Length of stay (weeks) in hostel accom'n of households which include dependent children or a pregnant woman.	9.28	5.00	5.00	0.00	8.00	⊘	⊘	Restricted use of B & B under BV 183a increases use of hostel accommodation. Performance governed by demand and availability of move on accommodation.
⊘ BV202 Number of people sleeping rough on a single night within the area.	N/A	0.00	0.00	NEW	0.00	⊘	N/A	New BVPI. Counted as zero if under 10 - no evidence of problem.
⊘ BV203 % change in the average number of families, which include independent children or a pregnant woman, placed in temporary accommodation under the homelessness legislation compared with the average from the previous year.	N/A	-12.00	-12.00	NEW	-3.00	⊘	N/A	New BVPI. Performance governed by demand from homeless. Increases in homelessness & limited move on or permanent housing affects performance.

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BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL

EXECUTIVE CABINET

13TH OCTOBER 2004

**PRIVATE SECTOR HOUSING RENEWAL STRATEGY AND GRANT ASSISTANCE
POLICY**

Responsible Portfolio Holder	Councillor. P. Whittaker
Responsible Head of Service	Head of Strategic Housing

1. SUMMARY

- 1.1 The report sets out a revised Private Sector Housing Strategy Statement and Housing Assistance Policy relating to the implementation of new services designed to improve housing quality, energy efficiency and health and social wellbeing by improving poor standard, unfit or empty dwellings and by enabling people to remain in their own homes.
- 1.2 Under the requirements of the Regulatory Reform (Housing Assistance) (England & Wales) Order 2002 a policy has to be approved and published before the full range of assistance can be made available to the community.
- 1.3 Section 4 of the report sets out a number of options relating to the way in which grant assistance can be given and the conditions under which it is recovered when the improved dwelling is sold.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 That the draft Private Sector Housing Renewal Strategy set out at Appendix I be approved.
- 2.2 That the Draft Private Sector Housing Assistance Policy set out at Appendix II of the report be approved on the basis of it incorporating the method of grant allocation and recovery set out under Option 4b as detailed in section 4 of this report.

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 This report follows the Council's decision to strengthen its Private Sector Housing Renewal Strategy by introducing enhanced advice and support services through the partnership development of the North Worcestershire Home Improvement Agency and introduction of discretionary grants.
- 3.2 The Regulatory Reform (Housing Assistance)(England & Wales) Order 2002 provides authorities with a greater degree of flexibility in devising a policy to deal with housing conditions, to work in partnership with others and an opportunity to contribute towards tackling poverty and social exclusion, health inequalities and avert neighbourhood decline.

3.3 The Order states that before powers contained within it can be used, the authority must publish a policy upon how it intends to use them. Government guidance advises that the policy should be developed as an integral part of the Council's overall housing strategy.

3.4 Attached to this report (Appendix I) is a revised statement that amends the existing housing renewal strategy that sits within the Council's overall Housing Strategy (which itself is due for review in 2005). The statement builds on the existing work being carried out to address private sector housing conditions, introducing the services to be provided through the North Worcestershire Home Improvement Agency and the availability (subject to funding continuing to be available) of the following discretionary grants:

Discretionary Home Repair Grants

Discretionary Renovation Grants

Discretionary Home Move Grants

Discretionary Empty Homes Grants

3.5 Also attached (Appendix II) to this report is a Housing Assistance Policy document that sets out how the Council's general powers to give assistance will be used identifying the key priorities and resources currently available. The policy provides the criteria by which eligibility to apply for assistance will be assessed and the conditions that will be applicable to the allocation of grants.

4. CONSIDERATION OF THE OPTIONS AND CONDITIONS UNDER WHICH THE GRANTS SET OUT IN THE POLICY COULD BE ALLOCATED

4.1 This section of my report reviews the options that are available to the local authority under the Regulatory Reform Order 2002 relating to grants and loans for private sector renewal. The options set out below provide members with an opportunity of considering the various methods of allocating grants for private sector renewal that offer the Council differing levels of ability to recycle grant resources to assist future sustainability of an assistance scheme.

In considering the options, Members are asked to give consideration to the following factors:

(a) The introduction of private sector renewal grants is the first step in developing a strategy to assist the private sector after a lengthy period of non-assistance. One of the objectives of the developing North Worcestershire Home Improvement Agency will be to investigate alternative loan and equity release methods of assistance.

(b) The size of grants payable will be small, the majority being between £200 and £5,000.

(c) The sustainability of the NW Home Improvement Agency is dependent upon fee income generated from grant work to be undertaken. Any reluctance by potential clients in taking up grants as a result of too stringent conditions being applied will

impact upon the funding available to contribute towards the running of the Home Improvement Agency and delay or seriously hamper its inception. This would negate the wider benefits that the HIA service will have and its ability to access funding for clients from alternative sources.

- (d) The report sets out a number of optional schemes. The officers consider that where a condition is imposed making a grant repayable at any time in the future when a property is sold (e.g. Options 7 – 9), the grant becomes a loan. Once a grant scheme becomes a loan or an equity release scheme, the work of the local authority in administering it becomes significantly more complex. The LA is then expected to make a fuller assessment of the financial position of the applicant, be aware of all aspects of the Consumer Credit Regulations and guidance and must adhere to key principles of mortgage regulation. Increased expertise and staff resources would be required to operate a loan scheme (Options 7 –9) and may not be cost effective in relation to the size of the grants being allocated and the length of time that will pass before a return is achieved.
- (e) Attention is drawn to the cost of fees for independent valuations that would be necessary to operate a scheme that linked grant recovery with the rise in the value of the property (Options 5 & 6). The likely cost of two valuations (at allocation of grant and on sale of a dwelling) would be in the region of £300, which may be disproportionate or even exceed the size of many grants allocated.
- (f) The long term objective of recycling grant funding to support the long term sustainability of the scheme is enshrined in the objectives of the Home Improvement Agency. An objective of the HIA is to research and develop other sources of funding through joint working with other authorities and organisations that have the appropriate expertise such as 'Houseproud', developing on good practice as it evolves.

4.2 There are 9 options set out below (Full details included at Appendix 3):

Option 1 - **Grant** repayable in full to Council should property be sold within 5 years.

Option 2 - **Grant** repayable in full to the Council should property be sold within a 10-year period.

Option 3 - **Grant** repayable in full to the Council should the property be sold within a 5-year period, repayment to include:

- a) compound interest (based upon average annual bank base rate) on value of grant, or
- b) interest over the period calculated using the Land Registry Residential Property Price Report based on the increase / reduction in value over the period since the grant was given.

Option 4 - **Grant** repayable in full to the Council should property be sold within a 10-year period, repayment to include:

- a) compound interest (based upon average annual bank base rate) on value of grant, or
- b) interest over the period calculated using the Land Registry Residential Property Price Report based on the increase / reduction in value over the period since the grant was given.

Option 5 - **Grant** repayable in full to the Council should property be sold within a 5 year period, repayment to include the Council taking a share in the appreciation in value of the property over the period between the grant being made and the property being sold by calculating the repayment as a % of the value of the property when allocated and recovered at the same % of the future value of the property when sold. property.

Option 6 - **Grant** repayable in full to the Council should property be sold within a 10-year period, repayment to include the Council taking a share in the appreciation in value of the property over the period between the grant being made and the property being sold by calculating the grant as a % of the value of the property when allocated and recovered at the same % of the future value of the property when sold. property.

Option 7 - **Interest free loan** repayable in full to the Council should property be sold at any time in the future.

Option 8 - **Loan** repayable in full to the Council should property be sold at any time in the future, repayment to include compound interest (based upon average annual bank base rate) on value of grant.

Option 9 - **Equity release scheme loan** repayable in full to the Council should property be sold at any time in the future, repayment to include the council taking a share in the appreciation in value of the property over the period between the grant being made and the property being sold by calculating the grant as a % of the value of the property when allocated and recovered at the same % of the future value of the property when sold.

4.3 The Regulatory Reform Order enables local authorities to expand their range of policy tools for housing renewal by giving broad freedoms to arrange and provide loans.

Authorities have the option of delivering loans:

- Directly,
- Through a specialist intermediary or special purpose vehicle.
- They also have choices regarding the types of loans that they make available.

LGA Guidance upon Loans and Equity Release for Private Sector Renewal, recommends that the following basic principles should be considered when developing policy on using direct local authority loans to provide assistance:

- Loans on their own are not a substitute for grant aid
- They are not an answer to a lack of private sector renewal resources
- Often it will be more suitable if they are provided by organisations other than the local authority
- They are difficult to use effectively in low value or negative equity situations
- Unless protections are built in, they can carry a risk to the individual and to the lender

The new powers present local authorities with opportunities to undertake lending activity that they have not done previously. It is essential that all authorities seek proper, comprehensive, legal and financial advice before deciding to give home improvement loans.

Local authorities must be aware of and comply with all aspects of consumer credit regulation and guidance.

- 4.4 The administration of a scheme involving an uplift based upon the increase in property value would involve the Council in higher administration costs and valuation fees that would be out of proportion with (and in some cases exceed) the value of grant work carried out. (Options 5 & 6)

The introduction of conditions that make the financial assistance provided repayable **at any time in the future** on sale, would transform the assistance into **a loan**. This would then incur the Council in a process of having to provide customers with extensive financial advice to comply with Consumer Credit legislation and accordingly have major staffing implications. The considerable period of time to implement such a scheme and the likelihood of discouraging vulnerable clients would impact on fee income and the viability of the Home Improvement Agency.

In this early stage of strengthening the Council's Housing Strategy, it is recommended that the Council only introduce grants at this stage, as set out in the proposed Private Sector Policy based on a 'claw back' period of 10 years with interest linked to the increase in property value is considered to be a reasonable approach for customers whilst protecting the Council's ability to recycle funding to assist the future sustainability of the scheme. The scheme would be manageable without any significant staffing impact. (Options 4b)

This approach is supported by the views of the representative of Foundations (the Government appointed agency to advise local authorities on HIA and private sector issues) who advise us that their observations are that most local authorities, in developing their housing strategies have kept to giving grants in some cases extending the 'claw back' provision to 10 years, as clients are seen to be looking for smaller grants rather than major renovation. They are not aware of any local authorities who offer loan products from their own capital resources alone. They recognise that there are a small number of pilot schemes in the country where local authorities (unitary with surrounding DC's)) are working in partnership to provide loan products through resources accessed via the Regional Housing Board. Foundations view is that the Worcestershire authorities should work together through the Home Improvement Agency to research and carry out extensive consultation on the options best suited to the needs of Worcestershire.

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 The financial implications, both capital and revenue, have already been addressed by the Council over previous months when approval was given to the capital budget made available for the provision of discretionary grants and a revenue contribution towards the running of the North Worcestershire Home Improvement Agency.
- 5.2 Reference is made within the Housing Assistance Policy (Appendix II) to the overall resources currently available and within the criteria (Appendix II B) the minimum and maximum amounts available under each type of grant.
- 5.3 Both the Strategy and Policy documents make reference to availability of grants being subject to the continuing availability of funding.

- 5.4 In deciding upon the option / method by which grant assistance will be made available, members are advised that the options 7 - 9 that require a grant to be made repayable at any time when the property is sold in the future, renders the grant a loan. Where a local authority allocates a loan, the LA is then expected to make a fuller assessment of the financial position of the applicant, be aware of all aspects of the Consumer Credit Regulations and guidance and must adhere to key principles of mortgage regulation.

6. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 The Regulatory Reform (Housing Assistance)(England & Wales) Order 2002 provides Local Housing Authorities with the power to provide assistance:

Sect 3. – (4) Assistance may be unconditional or subject to conditions, including conditions as to the repayment of the assistance or of its value (in whole or part), or the making of a contribution towards the assisted work;

Sect 3. – (6) A Local housing authority may take any form of security in respect of the whole or part of any assistance.

Sect 3. – (7) Where any such security is taken in the form of a charge on any property, the local housing authority may at any time reduce the priority of the charge or secure its removal.

7. PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 Options 1 & 2 workable within the Council without any impact upon Financial Staffing resources.

Options 3 - 6 have small Finance Department implications that are manageable within the organisation, but Options 5 & 6 also would have external valuation fee implications.

Options 7 – 9 cross the boundary from being grants to becoming loans or equity release. Accordingly to conform with the requirements of the Consumer Credit legislation, they incur the Council in a process of providing customers with extensive financial advice that would require a considerable extension to the staffing and expertise currently available within the Finance Department.

8. CONSULTATION

- 4.1 A broad range of consultees have been invited to comment upon the proposed draft Strategy and Housing Assistance Policy and a summary of comments received is attached at Appendix IV.
- 5.2 The private sector housing renewal strategy and assistance policy will continue to be subject to further review and consultation as part of the process of reviewing the overall Council's Housing Strategy Statement during 2005.

9. BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 4.2 The Regulatory Reform (Housing Assistance)(England and Wales) Order 2002

4.3 ODPM Circular 05/2003 – Housing Renewal

10. CONTACT OFFICER

A.M. Coel
Head of Strategic Housing
a.coel@bromsgrove.gov.uk
(01527) 881270

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BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL

DRAFT

PRIVATE SECTOR HOUSING RENEWAL STRATEGY 2004

INTRODUCTION

Bromsgrove District Council has developed an overall vision to provide a co-ordinated approach to improving the quality of life for everyone in the District through the aims and objectives identified in the Community Plan. Providing for the housing needs of the District is an important factor in meeting the priority areas, which are:

Consider Your Environment
Develop and Prosper
Feel Safe
Health and Social Well-Being
Learn and Grow

The Bromsgrove Community Plan 2003 – 2013 identifies the development of the North Worcestershire Home Improvement Agency as a key aim in improving social care, health and social wellbeing within the District.

The development and implementation of a balanced private sector housing strategy by local authorities has become increasingly important as poor quality housing can have an impact on the health of occupants and on the quality of life in an area. The Council's Housing Strategy recognises the importance of improving housing quality in all tenures, improving energy efficiency, eliminating fuel poverty, renovating unfit houses and bringing empty property back into use.

The responsibility for maintaining privately owned homes rests first and foremost with owners. Where owners can afford to carry out repairs and maintenance from their own resources they should be encouraged to do so. However there are good reasons for Councils to assist lower income homeowners with repairs especially where this benefits health or allows people to remain in their own home.

The aim of this Private Sector Renewal Strategy is to improve the standard of housing accommodation, enable people to stay in their homes as they get older and provide disabled persons with maximum mobility around their homes. Action taken to support and enable owner occupiers to live in their own home environment reduces the pressure on alternative sources of affordable and supported housing and has cross cutting benefits to other services and agencies.

The Council recognises that there is a need to address the problem of people on low

incomes who cannot afford to maintain their properties in good repair and this strategy and assistance policy (Appendix II) sets out to provide a balanced programme of support to occupants of private sector housing within the resources that it has available.

GOVERNMENT HOUSING AGENDA AND LINKS WITH OTHER STRATEGIES

The strategy recognises that the improvement of the private sector housing stock is key to a broad range of government policies and strategies:

The Housing Green Paper – A Decent Home for All (2000) - introduced a number of government priorities including: sustainable home ownership, promotion of the private rented sector and raising the standard of accommodation across all tenures and a new Housing Health and Safety Rating System is to replace the current fitness standards.

Supporting People, the government initiative that introduced centralised funding and multi agency strategic planning and commissioning of support services to vulnerable people with special needs is designed to promote peoples independence and ability to remain living in their own homes in the community. The Worcestershire Supporting People Draft Strategy identifies the importance of the development of a Home Improvement Agency as a vehicle for the delivery of low level housing support to older and vulnerable clients.

The National Framework for Older People and Integrated Services for Older People rely on support to assist older people to live safely and healthily in their own homes.

The Housing and Health Agenda highlights the high cost to the health service of delayed discharge of patients from hospital often due to the condition of their home or the urgent need for adaptations.

Under Energy Efficiency and Affordable Warmth, the Government targets the eradication of fuel poverty in all UK homes by 2016 where 10% or more of income is used to heat the home.

Sustainable Communities: Building For the Future Plan (Feb 2003) introduces the governments new approach to maintaining and encouraging thriving communities where people want to live and have access to decent, affordable homes.

The Regulatory Reform (Housing Assistance)(England and Wales) Order (2002) - encourages a more innovative approach and gives local authorities more local control over how they work to meet local housing condition needs.

The Councils Housing Strategy Statement, recognises that whilst the overall condition of the housing stock is better than the national average, there is a need to address the problem of people on low incomes who cannot afford to maintain their properties in good repair.

LINKING IN WITH THE REGIONAL HOUSING STRATEGY

One of the key aims of the West Midlands Regional Housing Strategy that has been formulated by the Regional Housing Board who are tasked with the allocation of housing funding is to address issues of house condition through action to ensure that dwellings meet Decent Homes standard.

BALANCING HOUSING MARKETS

The Council has recently commissioned a house condition and housing needs survey (2004) to increase its understanding of the housing markets in operation in the Bromsgrove District and outside influences with the aim of ensuring that housing markets operate in a way that meets the needs of the community.

This strategy sets out what the housing needs of the private sector are and what proposals and initiatives the Council is using and developing to address housing need within the private sector. The associated Assistance Policy (Appendix II) sets out a criteria for Council intervention in the private sector and takes into consideration the powers contained within the Regulatory Reform Order.

IDENTIFICATION OF HOUSING CONDITIONS AND NEEDS

INFORMATION HELD UPON THE CONDITION OF PRIVATE SECTOR HOUSING

In 1999, the Council having recognised that information relating to the condition of the private sector stock was limited and that a Housing Condition Survey was vital to ascertain an accurate assessment of housing need and set more meaningful objectives, commissioned a private and public housing condition survey. The survey provided structural and socio-economic information from a review of 4% of private and Council owned dwellings across the District to provide a rational basis for future investment strategy.

The survey aimed to determine the extent and severity of disrepair of dwellings, unfitness for human habitation, bad internal arrangement compromising safety of occupants, especially the elderly and disabled, evidence of shared occupation, poor energy conservation and the existence of asbestos. In addition, the survey identified the cost of remedying the substandard conditions and considers the socio-economic element and energy efficiency. Special attention was given to all HMO's in the District, which underwent assessment as part of the survey. The findings of the survey have been used to develop a prioritised action programme to bring HMO's up to a satisfactory standard.

KEY SURVEY FINDINGS

1. The rate of unfitness within the district was found to be 2.1% (749) dwellings. None of the public sector dwellings were found to be unfit. Unfitness is concentrated within the older housing, and is very low compared to the

average national level identified from the English House Condition Survey of 1996, which is 7.5%.

2. The percentage of unfit dwellings within the private rented sector was found to be 8.8%, which again is lower than the national level of 19.3%.
3. 16.3% (122) of unfit housing is occupied by households aged over 65 and on low incomes, illustrating that people with less disposable incomes occupy the worst housing conditions.
4. 4.2% (1,513) of dwellings were found to be in substantial disrepair, comprising 4.2% (1379) in the private sector and 3.8% (134) in the public sector.
5. 25% (8,079) of private sector dwellings are occupied by person's aged 65 and over, and 58% (4865) of those households needed immediate repair works carrying out to their homes.

From the survey findings, it has been estimated that 17% (6,070) of households contain at least one disabled person. The average SAP (energy efficiency) rating for the dwellings in Bromsgrove District Council is 45.2.

The recommendations made in the light of the survey were broad ranging and included issues relating to the condition of Council's own housing stock which is since being addressed through Large Scale Voluntary Transfer.

The recommendations recognised the need for discretionary grant assistance to be introduced and targeted at those in greatest need and vulnerable households to address levels of unfitness, improve housing in the ownership of older and less able people and to bring back into use vacant houses and vacant space above shops.

The demographic evidence and information on house conditions suggested that the demand for Home Repairs Assistance and Disabled Facilities Grants will increase and that the authority should consider the introduction of a Home Improvement Agency, to assist with targeting help to the elderly, disabled, and vulnerable people to repair and improve their homes.

The final recommendation that the Council should undertake a further House Condition and Energy Survey in five years time, and every five years thereafter has been adopted and a New House Condition and Housing Needs Survey is currently being carried out (2004).

THE GROWTH OF HOME OWNERSHIP

Nationally, the level of home ownership is high compared with the rest of Europe. The ratio of rented to privately owned housing is changing. The Right To Buy scheme has had a significant influence on the increase of private sector housing and in Bromsgrove this has and continues to be very active with over 3,000 Council dwelling

having been sold since 1980 and an ongoing demand under the scheme up to March 2004 of approximately 100 sales taking place annually.

The responsibility for the maintenance of these dwellings now falls upon the owner-occupiers. Making sure owner-occupiers are living in decent homes will be the next big challenge for the housing sector. Figures released by the ODPM reveal that 12% of homeowners aged 70 or over (and 7 % of 60 – 69), would not be able to pay for major repairs to their homes. The government is now addressing the requirement to make housing last to maximise the housing needs that exist.

NEEDS ANALYSIS (2004)

	Bromsgrove D C	Redditch B C	Wyre Forest D C	Worcester C C	Wychavon D C	Malvern Hills D C
Population	87,837	78,807	96,981	93,353	112,957	72,172
Percentage of population privately renting	6.08%	6.46%	9.04%	11.07%	8.7%	10.72%
Percentage of population in owner occupation	83.36%	70.88%	76.13%	73.55%	76.42%	75.52%
Rank of deprivation out of 354 nationally; (higher the number the lower the rank of deprivation)						
Employment	274	228	198	210	247	299
Income	305	206	190	194	244	295

Population of 65+ living on income related benefits (national average = 28.6 and 376 in ranking with lowest number being most deprived)	21.7% 309	37.1% 64	30.0% 135	30.0% 134	23.5% 271	19.4 376
Population over the age of 75 years (national average = 7.58%)	7035 (8.01%)	4482 (5.7%)	7648 (7.9%)	6386 (6.8%)	9241 (8.2%)	7481 (10.36%)
Population over the age of 65 years (national average = 15.97%)	15142 (17.2%)	9639 (12.2%)	16092 (16.6%)	13389 (14.3%)	19817 (17.5%)	15045 (20.8%)
People 65+ with a limiting long term illness	7519 (49.6%)	5037 (52.25%)	7925 (49.24%)	6642 (49.6%)	9185 (46.63%)	7005 (46.56%)
Other local circumstances;						
BME households	2.45%	5.16%	1.84%	3.45%	1.19%	1.44%
% BME HIA clients	N/A	15%	N/A	N/A	NIL	N/A
Average salary income	£34,700	£29,900	£27,000	£28,900	£32,400	£29,600
	2,600	3,000	4,500	3,300	3,800	2,500
			12/14			

	5.0% working population	6.1% working populatio n	7.5% working populatio n	5.4% working populatio n	5.6% working populatio n	5.8% working populatio n
Claimants of sickness and disability benefits – working age	2.1%	6.5%	2.8%	4%	4%	4%
Percentage of unfitness	4.2%	N/K	10.1%	N/K	N/K	N/K
% Disrepair	45.2	46.3	48.3	46.7	44.3	48.9
Average SAP rating private sector compared to national average.	10	7	7	9	15	10
% SAP under 30						

UPDATING AND REVIEWING HOUSING CONDITIONS AND NEEDS

The Council acknowledges the importance of keeping the data held upon housing needs and housing conditions up to date.

In January 2004 a new Housing Needs Survey and Property Condition survey was commissioned with Fordham Research to update and replace the information currently available from the work carried out in 1999 / 2000. Details of the results of the new survey work is scheduled to become available in the autumn 2004. Methods by which data can be kept up to date between future surveys and options for phased annual survey work are currently under consideration.

ADDRESSING THE NEEDS

THE REGULATORY REFORM ORDER

The Council was historically empowered to give housing grants including Disabled Facility Grants, Home Repair Assistance Grants and Renovation Grants under the Housing Grants, Construction and Regeneration Act 1996. The Regulatory Reform (Housing Assistance)(England and Wales)Order 2002 makes the following significant changes;

- a) It introduces a new general power enabling local housing authorities to Provide assistance for housing renewal.
- b) It repeals the detailed legislative provisions in the Housing Grants, Construction and Regeneration Act 1996.
- c) It amends the provisions in the 1985 Housing Act relating to loans given by local housing authorities for housing renewal.
- d) It makes minor changes to the provisions in relation to Disabled Facilities Grants (DFGs), but the system for providing mandatory Disabled Facility Grants remains largely unchanged.

Article 3 of the Regulatory Reform Order contains the new general power to provide assistance for housing renewal as follows:

- a) Assistance may be provided for repair, improvement and adaptation of housing. The Regulatory Reform Order enables local authorities to expand their range of policy tools by giving broad freedoms to arrange and provide loans, such as repayment loans, interest only loans or equity release loans.
- b) Assistance may also be given for the demolition of a dwelling and to help with rebuilding costs.
- c) Assistance may be given to provide alternative accommodation where this represents a better alternative compared to repairing improving or adapting the existing property.

The new power enables the Council to give assistance directly, or to provide assistance through a third party such as a Home Improvement Agency, specialist financial intermediary or other special purpose vehicle. Assistance can be given to pay for any fees and charges associated with the assisted works.

Subject to funding continuing to be available the Council is introducing the availability of a limited number of discretionary grants to assist private sector renewal and is widening the advice and assistance that it or other organisations can provide for local householders through the introduction of a **Home Improvement Agency for North Worcestershire** in partnership with Redditch BC and Wyre Forest DC. Home Improvement Agencies assist vulnerable homeowners or private sector tenants who tend to be older, disabled or on a low income. The core tasks will be to enable and encourage the repair, improvement, maintenance and adaptation of homes. However the Home Improvement Agency will provide many other services to support independent living and assist in achieving cross cutting community aims such as improving the health and wellbeing of older and vulnerable people and assisting in issues such as improving the rate of hospital discharge. The Home Improvement

Agency will be an appropriate vehicle to work with other agencies and the voluntary sector in accessing services and forms of assistance, and with specialist organisations in aiming to deliver the new options, such as loans or equity release schemes that are envisaged by the Regulatory Reform (Housing Assistance) England and Wales Order 2002.

FORMS OF ASSISTANCE TO BE MADE AVAILABLE

The following outlines the assistance available (subject to funding continuing to be available) under the Regulatory Reform Order in Bromsgrove District Council taking effect from 1st November 2004.

Discretionary Home Repair Assistance Grants

To assist elderly and vulnerable people living in the district who wish to 'stay put' and feel safe in their homes, a maximum grant of £5,000 (Subject to funding continuing to be available and the criteria set out in the Housing Assistance Policy 2004) may be applied for towards minor repairs, improvement or adaptation to enable an occupant to remain in their own home. This might include rewiring a premises where the wiring is dangerous, gas safety work, roof repair where the roof is leaking or damp-proofing work.

This assistance is targeted at those least able to help themselves, including those over 60 on an income related benefit. Where the house is rented, the tenant must have the repair responsibility in order to qualify for a grant. In the majority of cases the repairs responsibility for rented accommodation falls to the landlord.

Discretionary Renovation Grants

A maximum Housing Renewal Grant of £10,000 (subject to funding continuing to be available and subject to the criteria set out in the Housing Assistance Policy 2004) has been introduced to assist the funding of essential major works due to a property being deemed unfit for human habitation. This assistance is to be targeted at low income clients on income related benefit only.

Energy Efficiency Grants

Warm Front grants are available to residents who comply within the set criteria for help with energy efficiency in the home. Bromsgrove District Council promotes the uptake of Warm Front grants with assistance from WEEAC (Warwickshire & Worcestershire Energy Advice Centre). These grants are a government funded initiative and offer a potential £2,500 to those who qualify.

Discretionary Home Move Grants

Where an owner/occupier or tenant qualifies for assistance but their existing home is unsuitable and a move to different accommodation would be a better option to adaptation or repair, then financial assistance may be awarded.

Some homes are physically unsuitable for adaptation. Sometimes owners would be unable to afford the maintenance and running costs of their home, even after improvement. In such cases it would be more cost effective to help a willing person to move to more suitable accommodation.

Subject to funding continuing to be available, grants of up to £2,500 will be considered in accordance with the criteria set out in the Housing Assistance Policy 2004.

Discretionary Empty Homes Grants

There is a shortfall in the number of new dwellings being provided each year for people in housing need. Subject to funding continuing to be available, grant assistance of up to £5,000 towards the cost of bringing empty properties back into use for letting may be made available for appropriate dwellings, subject to the Council having nomination rights. Applications will be considered and assessed based upon the lettable of the accommodation, location, size and suitability. The approval of grant assistance is subject to an agreement for the property to be let at an affordable rent to a Council nominated tenant for a minimum period of 5 years.

Mandatory Disabled Facilities Grants

Disabled Facilities Grants are available (subject to the continuing availability of funding) as a mandatory duty of the Local Authority. They will continue to be based on the referral mechanism currently in place. The maximum grant is £25,000 and it is a means tested grant, the means test regulations being laid down by Government Office.

The detailed criteria and summary of the Private Sector Housing Assistance Policy is detailed in Appendix 1.

PRIVATE RENTED SECTOR

The Authority recognises the role it has to play in maximising the potential of the private sector in meeting demand for good quality rented housing. In addition to its traditional enforcement role the authority wishes to encourage and thus increase the availability of good quality privately rented accommodation in the District.

The **Bromsgrove Private Landlords Forum** was established in October 1998 to develop a closer working relationship with the private sector. All known private

landlords are contacted by newsletter and consulted on their training, support and information requirements. The Forum assists private landlords to build up a catalogue of guidance and training to raise the standard and supply of accommodation. The Forum meets half yearly when speakers are arranged upon a variety of subjects including, Benefits, Health and Safety, Gas Servicing and Energy Efficiency etc.

The forum operates with the close co-operation of Bromsgrove and District CAB, who contribute to the training programme for landlords, and Centrepoint and Bromsgrove Youth Homelessness Service who are developing a rent deposit scheme.

In 1999 the Council set out a strategy to comprehensively and systematically address the public health concerns that can be associated with **Houses In Multiple Occupation** such as inadequate means of escape in case of fire, sanitary facilities and overcrowding. In recognition of the contribution that HMO'S make towards relieving housing needs, the Council is committed to supporting the use of such properties in suitable locations, provided that they are well maintained, are operated with all necessary consents and are acceptable in terms of: -

- the comfort and safety of occupants,
- their effect on the amenity of neighbouring properties and the general character and appearance of an area, and
- the effect of parking on the standards of highway safety.

The Council proposes to introduce a voluntary registration scheme for HMO's, with registration being dependent upon compliance with all relevant legislation.

A register of all HMO's in the District is maintained and the Council has developed a risk based inspection programme of all HMO's that commenced in January 2003.

A risk based inspection programme of **Mobile Home and Caravan Sites** has been developed to achieve model conditions on sites within the District.

An **Empty Homes Strategy** has been developed with the view to developing a more proactive approach to encouraging owners to bring properties back into use.

Although empty homes do not present a significant problem in the District, the 2000 House Condition survey identifies potential for bringing back into use homes in the District that are empty and requiring major works. The authority has developed a multi departmental approach to identifying empty properties and the Head of Strategic Housing acts as Empty Homes contact officer working closely with Housing and Environmental Health, Planning and Legal Officers in encouraging the re-use of empty homes

An Empty Homes Information Pack is sent to owners of identified empty properties offering advice and assistance upon bringing their dwelling back into use. The authority utilises funding achieved through Sect 106 planning powers to assist in

encouraging the refurbishment and reletting of dwellings in partnership with RSL's and is introducing Empty Homes Grants to encourage potential landlords to make dwellings suitable for letting to Council nominated tenants.

PARTNERSHIP WORKING

The Council is currently working with partners on the following initiatives:

- a) Working with Redditch BC and Wyre Forest DC on a **Home Improvement Agency for North Worcestershire**. With the Primary Care Trust and Social Services we plan to develop a rapid hospital discharge scheme to help people who are in hospital and cannot be discharged until adaptations are carried out at their dwelling.
- b) We work in partnership with **Age Concern** who are able to assist with the installation of Community Alarm Service connections for older and vulnerable people through the Age Concern Handyman Service. The service also offers valuable assistance to older people assisting with minor works and adaptations.
- c) **Builders** – An updated approved builders list and protocol for builders working on site will become available through the developing North Worcestershire HIA.
- d) **Landlords** – We hold twice yearly Private Landlords Forums providing advice, assistance and training on a broad range of subjects covering home safety, management of tenancies, rent and housing benefit issues and housing renewal. We will use the Forum as a vehicle to engage landlords in the policy making process and plan to develop a landlords guidance handbook.
- e) Through partnership with Bromsgrove & District CAB, the Council funds the provision of a Housing Advice Service that provides advice and information in respect of all housing sectors and tenures.

In addition to those mentioned above, we will continue to work closely with the Worcestershire local authorities, Social Services, Occupational Health Team, the Supporting People Team, financial organisations and charities. The development of the local Community Plan under the Local Strategic Partnership is an important system through which private sector housing initiatives can be delivered with partner organisations.

ENERGY EFFICIENCY

The Council is working with partners to reduce fuel poverty in the District and also to improve energy efficiency in homes. BDC is required to implement a 30%

improvement in energy efficiency in the period 1995 – 2010. Already BDC has shown an improvement of 18.4% and is progressing well towards the required target. Much has already been done to help owner-occupiers and tenants to improve energy efficiency in the District and Bromsgrove DC has played an integral part and signed up to the ‘Worcestershire Affordable Warmth Strategy’.

Currently, fuel poverty in Bromsgrove stands at 10.2%, with the least deprived ward being rated at 7.2%. The countywide fuel poverty figure stands at 13%.

Fuel poverty is caused by a combination of factors:

- Poor energy efficiency in the home
- Inefficient or expensive heating systems and high fuel costs
- Low household income and high hours of occupancy

Bromsgrove District Council aims to further reduce the extent to which fuel poverty occurs by targeting relevant support to those who occupy low SAP rated properties. The main tool with which to carry out this is through Warm Front Grants.

FUTURE OPTIONS

Private Finance and Loans

Many home owners can reasonably be expected to fund works themselves. Some people already do so, often via the many existing lenders. Others cannot or prefer not to borrow for a variety of reasons and accordingly the repairs or improvements needed fail to get done and homes deteriorate further. Through the Home Improvement Agency the Council will work with outside partners to lever in finance and facilitate affordable borrowing for such people, rather than the Council offering loans or grants themselves. The ways in which this can be fully facilitated is still under consideration. Options are under consideration that include cross authority working with organisations such as ‘House Proud’, a specialist organisation appropriately equipped to provide loan and equity release advice to clients.

The new Housing Assistance proposals place the emphasis on borrowing for home improvement wherever possible, rather than the Council paying for works from public funds. However the guidance points out that for some households, particularly vulnerable people and those on low incomes, borrowing is not an option and in such circumstances the award of grants will still be appropriate.

Energy Efficiency

There have been a number of shortcomings identified through the Warm Front grant scheme whereby residents who are in fuel poverty do not qualify for such a grant to improve or remedy their situation. **The Green Loan Scheme** is an initiative, which Bromsgrove District Council has the opportunity to take part in to tackle fuel poverty in the future. The Energy Efficiency Advice Centre (WEEAC) recommends that all

local authorities who do not currently offer such a facility should support this proposal and they would co-ordinate and promote the service under existing SLA terms.

Green Loans would give customers access to low cost loans (regardless of income) with repayment over a 2-year period. Loans would be up to a maximum of £1,000 for insulation or appliances or £1,500 for a boiler.

CONSULTATION

A broad range of consultees have been approached in developing this strategy and policy including members of the Community Panel, representatives of Worcestershire local authorities, Primary Care Trust, SAFFA, Age Concern, CAB, Fuel Poverty Steering group and Supporting People Team

Further consultation is planned during 2005 when the private sector renewal strategy and policy will receive further consideration as part of the Council's overall Housing Strategy review. Consultation will take place to reflect any future changes that are proposed to reflect the housing needs and conditions identified when the 2004 surveys are analysed and in response to any future government policy or changes in the resources that are available to the Council.

Bromsgrove District Council

DRAFT

Housing Assistance Policy 2004

To be read in conjunction with Bromsgrove District Council's Private Sector Housing Strategy.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 This policy is designed to contribute towards the Council's strategic aims and objectives by assisting:

- a) The improvement of housing quality in all tenures.
- b) Improving energy efficiency and eliminating fuel poverty.
- c) Renovating unfit houses and bringing empty houses back into use.
- d) Enabling people to stay in their homes as they get older and provide disabled persons with maximum mobility around their homes.
- e) Improving social care, health and social wellbeing (Bromsgrove Community Plan 2003 – 2013 identifies the development of the North Worcestershire Home Improvement Agency as a vehicle for meeting this key aim).

2. KEY PRIORITIES

2.1 The Council's Housing Strategy recognises that there is a need to address the problem of people on low incomes who cannot afford to maintain their properties in good repair.

3. RESOURCES AVAILABLE

3.1 This policy sets out to provide a balanced programme of support to occupants of private sector housing within the resources that it has available (currently £150,000 pa – subject to continuing availability of funding) to supplement the wider resources that are to be accessed by the work of the Home Improvement Agency.

4. Purpose of Housing Assistance

4.1 Housing Assistance **may** be offered (subject to financial resources being available) by Bromsgrove District Council ('the Council') in accordance with this policy, to assist with the cost of the following:

- a) the improvement, repair or adaptation of a home including houseboats and mobile homes,
- b) home energy efficiency,
- c) home security and safety,
- d) 'home move',
- e) loans through suitable partner organisations.

4.2 The assistance may be in any form including but not restricted to grants, provision of materials, carrying out works, loans or loan guarantees.

4.3 The Council may specify in detail in their Housing Assistance Scheme the purposes for which applications for assistance are to be invited and may specify different purposes from time to time to reflect current priorities and budgetary constraints.

5. Persons eligible to apply for Housing Assistance

5.1 Any person who makes an application for assistance must: -

- a) live in the dwelling as his or her only or main residence (except where the applicant is a landlord), and
- b) have an owner's interest in the dwelling or be the tenant or licensee of the dwelling either alone or jointly with others, and have the power or duty to carry out the works or have the owners consent to do so in writing, and
- c) satisfy such test(s) of financial resources as the Council may impose from time to time, more specifically explained in the Housing Assistance Scheme.

6. Applications for Assistance

6.1 All applications must be in a form prescribed by the Council and shall include the following:-

- a) full details of the proposed works including plans and specifications of the works for which the assistance is sought ('the assisted works').

- b) at least two estimates from different contractors for the proposed works, unless the Council otherwise direct in a particular case.
- c) particulars of any professional fees and other charges which relate to the preparation for and the carrying out of the proposed works.
- d) proof that the applicant is an owner or a tenant of the dwelling, unless the Council otherwise direct.
- e) consent in writing from all owners of the dwelling to the carrying out of the proposed works, unless the Council otherwise direct.
- f) if the applicant is the owner of the dwelling, an undertaking to repay the grant in the circumstances described at paragraph 15 of this policy.
- g) if the applicant is a landlord, an undertaking to let the dwelling(s) as a residence to persons nominated by the Council throughout the period of five years following the date of completion of works or such other period of time as may be agreed in writing between the applicant and the Council.

7. Prior qualifying period

- 7.1 Applicants for Home Repair Assistance for houseboats or mobile homes and for major works grants must have owned the residence for not less than 3 years.

8. Amount of Housing Assistance

When dealing with applications where a means test is required the Council will use the Test of Resources currently in use for mandatory disabled facilities grants.

9. Exclusion of works already carried out

- 9.1 The Council will not approve an application for assistance if the assisted works have been carried out before the application is approved, except
- a) Where the relevant works have been begun but have not been completed, the application may be approved if they are satisfied that there were good reasons for beginning the works before the application was approved.
 - b) Where the Council decide to approve an application in accordance with b above they may treat the application as varied so that the assisted works do not include any that are completed.

10. Decision and notification

- 10.1 An application will be processed and the applicant advised as soon as possible, whether the application is approved or refused. The Council will notify the applicant in writing no later than 6 months after receipt of the completed application.
- 10.2 If the application is approved the notification will also specify the works which are eligible for assistance and the form that the assistance will take.
- 10.3 If the application is refused, the Council will at the same time explain the reasons for refusal and provide details of how to make an appeal against the decision. The grounds for appeal are detailed in Appendix A.
- 10.4 Where the cost of works either increases or decreases or additional works are required the Council may alter the amount of assistance and will inform the applicant in writing.

11. Supervision of Works

- 11.1 The Council will not accept any responsibility, under any circumstances, for omissions by the contractor or defective workmanship. A claim form confirming that the works are complete and that the applicant is satisfied with the work carried out must be submitted before final payment is made.

12. Payment of assistance: conditions as to carrying out the works

- 12.1 The assistance will only be paid if;
 - a) the assisted works are completed within 12 months of the date of approval or such further period allowed by the Council
 - b) the assisted works are carried out in accordance with such specifications as the Council determine
 - c) the assisted works are carried out to the satisfaction of the Council
 - d) the Council are provided with an acceptable invoice, demand or receipt for payment for the works and any professional fees and other charges. For this purpose an invoice, demand or receipt is acceptable if it satisfies the Council and is not given by the applicant or a member of his family.

13. Payment of assistance

- 13.1 The Council will normally pay the assistance direct to the contractor and will be either to the full amount, on completion of the works, or in instalments as work progresses.

- 13.2 Where assistance is payable, but the assisted works have not been executed to the satisfaction of the applicant, the Council may at the applicant's request and if they consider it appropriate to do so withhold payment from the contractor. If they do so, they may make the payment to the applicant instead.

14. Repayment where applicant not entitled to assistance

- 14.1 If an application for assistance is approved but it subsequently appears to the Council that the applicant (or in the case of a joint application, any of the applicants) was not, at the time the application was approved, entitled to assistance of that description no payment shall be made or, as the case may be, no further instalments shall be paid, and the Council may demand that any payments that have already been made be repaid forthwith, together with interest from the date on which they were paid until repayment is made, at such reasonable rate as the Council may determine.

15. Conditions for Repayment of Assistance

- 15.1 If an owner of the dwelling to which the application relates ceases to be the owner before the works are completed he shall repay to the Council on demand the amount of any assistance that has been paid.
- 15.2 If an owner of the dwelling(s) to which the application relates ceases to be the owner within 10 years from the date the works were completed he shall repay to the Council on demand the amount of assistance that has been paid plus interest over the period calculated using the Land Registry Residential Property Price Report based on the increase / reduction in value over the period since the grant was given.
- 15.3 If an owner of the dwelling(s) to which the application relates, having undertaken to let the dwelling(s), ceases to let the dwelling(s) in accordance with his undertaking, within 5 years from the date the works were completed, he shall repay to the Council on demand the amount of assistance that has been paid.
- 15.4 Where the Council has a right to demand repayment but there are extenuating circumstances they may determine not to demand repayment or to demand a lesser amount.

16. Additional Conditions

- 16.1 Where the Council approve an application for assistance they may impose additional conditions with the consent of the applicant:

16.2 The additional conditions may include but are not restricted to the following:

- a) Applicant to make a contribution towards the proposed work
- b) Right of the Council to recover specialised equipment when no longer needed

17. Security of Assistance

17.1 Any condition above, which creates a liability to repay the assistance, shall be registered as a charge against the property at the Land Registry

17.2 The liability to repay any assistance may be discharged at any time by payment to the Council a sum equal to the amount of assistance or such lesser sum as the Council may agree.

18. Proposals/Loan Fund

18.1 It is proposed to consider the introduction of a Home Improvement Agency via the Supporting People fund initiative.

18.2.1 As part of this initiative, the introduction of more extended loans/equity release schemes will be investigated.

19. How to apply for Assistance

19.1 The qualifying criteria for each type of grant are listed in Appendix B (Housing Assistance Scheme). In order for your name to be registered for assistance, the following options are available:

- a) By phoning the Environmental Health Officer (Housing) on 01527 881439, who will take your details and deal with them, or forward them on to the relevant agency.
- b) By going onto the Bromsgrove District Council website, www.bromsgrove.gov.uk and addressing your enquiry to the Environmental Health Officer (Housing), you can e-mail an enquiry – give your name, address and contact telephone number.
- c) You can fax us with an enquiry on 01527 881433. Please give your name, address and contact number.

19.2 In each case an acknowledgement of your enquiry will be sent out.

20. Complaints about the Strategy/ Policy and it's Implementation

- 20.1 Should you wish to make any comments or complaints regarding this Strategy/ Policy, please write to Mr. A Coel, Head of Strategic Housing, The Council House, Bromsgrove, Worcs. B60 1AA. Tel 01527 881270 or Fax to: 01527 881433.
- 20.2 Alternatively, you may go onto the Bromsgrove District Council Website www.bromsgrove.gov.uk and you can e-mail your complaint. Please give your name, address and contact number.
- 20.3.1 All complaints/comments will be considered and The Strategy/ Policy adapted as deemed necessary. A written reply will be sent to the complainant.

21. Performance information

- 21.1 The grant regime will be monitored in accordance with the management information system as supplied by the National Network Co-ordinator for Home Improvement Agencies (Foundations).
- 21.2 We aim to achieve a 2% per year improvement in the energy efficiency of the local housing stock.
- 21.3 We aim to inspect a minimum of 12 properties per year as part of the Council's HMO risk based inspection programme.
- 21.4 The proportion of unfit private sector houses to be made fit or demolished as a result of local authority action is 5% for 2004/5 (Best Value Performance Indicator 62).
- 21.5 The number of private sector vacant dwellings to be returned into occupation or demolished as a result of action by the local authority is 3 for 2004/5 (Best Value Performance Indicator 64).
- 21.6 We aim to inspect a minimum of 4 caravan sites per year as part of the Council's caravan sites risk based inspection programme.

22. Commencement Date

- 22.1 This Strategy/Policy will commence 1st November 2004 and be subject to an annual review.

BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL
ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH SERVICES
GRANT ASSISTANCE
APPEALS

THE FOLLOWING ARE THE CRITERIA FOR A SUCCESSFUL APPEAL (subject to available resources)

Applicants must be able to demonstrate special circumstances for example:

- failure to carry out works may place the applicant and/or the family's health and safety at immediate risk; (and/or)
- the applicant or a member of his/her family has a specific and serious medical condition which would be worsened by the condition of the property; (and/or)
- the condition of the property poses a threat to the ability of the existing family to continue to live together; (and/or)
- the condition of the property is likely to lead to the intervention of other statutory services (i.e. statutory re-housing, children being taken into care under the Children Act 1989; (and/or)
- the work would be of wider benefit than to the applicant and his/her family, e.g. where other properties are affected;

AND IN ALL THE ABOVE CASES

- the applicant has no other means by which he or she could reasonably be expected to fund the work - either privately or with Department of Social Security assistance.

In deciding the case the Appeal Panel will consider whether the circumstances are so severe that the case should be considered as an exception to normal policies.

N.B.

Medical evidence will be required if medical or health related circumstances are cited.

APPEALS PANEL

- The appeals panel will be made up by members of the Council.

Appendix B

BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL DRAFT HOUSING ASSISTANCE SCHEME

Criteria for the award of Discretionary Home Repair Assistance Grants.

Eligible applicants	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Owners or private sector tenants who have a duty or power to carry out works.• Applicants must be 60 years old or over, and must be in receipt of one of the following benefits: Income support / job seekers allowance / Working tax credit / Housing benefit / Disability working allowance / Council tax benefit / Pension credit.• Disabled persons who are in receipt of Attendance allowance or Disability Living allowance and have savings of less than £6,000.00
Qualifying criteria	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Property in need of essential repairs and improvements in order to make the property healthy, safe, wind and weatherproof. Assistance will be offered to qualifying people whose homes are unfit, or whose health and well-being is detrimentally affected by the housing conditions under which they are living.
Conditions	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Will only consider grant applications up to a maximum of £5,000 within any 3-year period.• Grant repayable in full (plus interest over the period calculated using Land Registry Residential Property Price Report based on increase / reduction in value of property) to the Council should the property be disposed of within a 10 year period and registered as a land charge against the property.
Minimum grant	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• £200.00
Maximum grant	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• £5,000.00
Implementation date	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 1st October 2004

Outcome. Based on a yearly allocation of £115,000 and an average grant of £2,500.00 this will enable 46 households each year to remain independent within a safe and secure home.

Notes. This is a discretionary grant subject to available resources.

Criteria for the award of Discretionary Renovation Grants.

Renovation grants are to assist the funding of essential major works due to the property being deemed unfit for human habitation.

<u>Eligible applicants</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Owner/Occupiers
Qualifying criteria	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Applicant has owned the house for a period of not less than 3 years. • Applicant must be in receipt of one of the following benefits: Income support / job seekers allowance / Working tax credit / Housing benefit / Disability working allowance / Council tax benefit / Pension credit. • Disabled persons who are in receipt of Attendance allowance or Disability Living allowance and have savings of less than £6,000.00 • Existing home is deemed to be unfit for human habitation.
Conditions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Grant repayable in full (plus interest over the period calculated using Land Registry Residential Property Price Report based on increase / reduction in value of property) to the Council should property be disposed of within a 10-year period. Registered as a land charge against the property.
Maximum grant	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • £10, 000.00
Implementation date	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1st October 2004

Outcome. Based on a yearly allocation (2004/5) of £20,000 this will reduce the number of unfit properties within the district by 2.

Notes. This is a discretionary grant subject to available resources. This work will continue to help Bromsgrove District Council contribute towards Best Value Performance Indicator BV62, relating to the reduction of unfitness of dwellings in the district.

Criteria for the award of Discretionary Empty Homes Grants.

The Council has produced an Empty Homes Strategy to tackle this issue and a range of initiatives has been developed to encourage re-occupation. However, in terms of this policy the issue of grants offered by the Council are detailed below. The options will be tailored to specific needs taking into account the condition and location of the empty property, the potential for letting and the securing of an affordable rent

<u>Eligible applicants</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Owners
Qualifying criteria	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Planning permission (if necessary) for any works prior to application. • Subject to financial assessment.
Conditions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Grant repayable (plus interest over the period calculated using Land Registry Residential Property Price Report based on increase / reduction in value of property) to the Council if property disposed of within a 10-year period. Registered as a land charge against the property. • For tenanted property subject to nomination rights being vested in the District Council for a period of 3years
Maximum grant	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • £5,000.00
Implementation date	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1st October 2004

Outcome. Based on a yearly allocation of £10,000 this will enable 2 properties to be brought back into use.

Notes. This is a discretionary grant subject to available resources. This work will continue to help Bromsgrove District Council contribute towards Best Value Performance Indicator BV64, relating to the reoccupation of empty dwellings in the district.

Criteria for the award of a Discretionary 'Home Move' Grant.

Where an owner/occupier or tenant qualifies for assistance but their existing home is unsuitable and a move to different accommodation would be a better option to adaptation or repair, then financial assistance may be awarded.

Some homes are physically unsuitable for adaptation. Sometimes owners would be unable to afford the maintenance and running costs of their home, even after improvement. In such cases it would be more cost effective to help a willing person to move to more suitable accommodation

<u>Eligible applicants</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Owner/occupiers and private tenants.
Qualifying criteria	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Existing home is unsuitable for improvement, or adaptation and a move is the most cost effective and practical option. • Evidence of new property and inspection by Grants Officer and Occupational Therapist. • Subject to financial assessment.
Conditions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Subject to written approval. • Only one grant allocation every 5 years. • Grant repayable (plus interest over the period calculated using Land Registry Residential Property Price Report based on increase / reduction in value of property) in full to the Council should property be disposed of within a 10-year period. Registered as a land charge against the property. • Grant to be spent at the discretion of the Council e.g. legal costs, removal costs, estate agents fees etc.
Maximum grant	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • £2,500.00
Implementation date	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1st October 2004

Outcome. Based on a yearly allocation of £5,000 this will enable 2 applicants to move to alternative premises.

Notes. This is a discretionary grant subject to available resources.

Criteria for the award of Mandatory Disabled Facilities Grants.

Mandatory Disabled Facilities Grants will continue to be awarded for prescribed works as per the Housing Grants, Construction and Regeneration Act 1996.

The Regulatory Reform Order extends the eligibility to those living in park homes and houseboats.

These grants are awarded so applicants have access to and around their homes, or to use essential facilities in the home to enable them to live independently.

<u>Eligible applicants</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Any applicant registered or capable of being registered under the Chronically Sick and Disabled Persons Act 1970 and• Requires adaptations to be provided.
Qualifying criteria	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Referral from the Occupational Therapist via Social Services confirming that the works are 'necessary and appropriate'.• Works must be 'reasonable and practical'.
Conditions	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Subject to a financial assessment of resources (prescribed by statute)• Proof of title required.
Maximum grant	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• £25,000.00
Implementation date	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• On going

Outcome. With an annual budget (2004/5) of £600,000 this will improve the suitability of homes for over 100 disabled households each year.

Notes. This is a mandatory grant and the Council receives 60% subsidy from the Government up to a specified amount. As demand outstrips the budget a prioritised waiting list has been developed.

APPENDIX III

1. GRANTS REPAYABLE IN FULL TO THE COUNCIL SHOULD THE PROPERTY BE SOLD WITHIN A 5-YEAR PERIOD.

(REGISTERED AS CHARGE AGAINST THE PROPERTY)

Example

If a grant of £5,000 had been paid out in Dec 1999 and the property sold before 31st Nov 2004 the grant recovered would be - £5,000.

ADVANTAGES

- simple scheme to operate and police.
- Understandable to clients.
- Low staffing implications as can be handled by existing EHO/Finance and Local Land Charges staff.
- Recover period follows past legislative guidelines.
- Falls within overall concept of grant provision.
- Will be an attractive scheme to vulnerable and needy clients and thus support the development of the HIA.

DISADVANTAGES

- Council will only recoup the grant money originally paid out if dwelling sold within first 5 years.
- No uplift for inflation or value increase of clients property.

2. GRANTS REPAYABLE IN FULL TO THE COUNCIL SHOULD PROPERTY BE SOLD WITHIN A 10-YEAR PERIOD.

(REGISTERED AS CHARGE AGAINST THE PROPERTY)

Example

If a grant of £5,000 had been paid out in Dec 1999 and the property sold before 31st Nov 2009 the grant recovered would be - £5,000.

ADVANTAGES

- simple scheme to operate and police.
- Understandable to clients.
- Low staffing implications as can be handled by existing EHO/Finance and Local Land Charges staff.
- Recover period follows past legislative guidelines.
- Falls within overall concept of grant provision.
- A longer opportunity for the Council to claw back the grant allocated.
- Enables Council to be more prudent with management of resources.
- Will still be an attractive scheme to vulnerable and needy clients and thus support the development of the HIA.

DISADVANTAGES

- Council will only recoup the grant money originally paid out if dwelling sold within first 5 years.
- No uplift for inflation or value increase of clients property.
- Council will only recoup the grant money originally paid out within first 10 years.

3. GRANTS REPAYABLE IN FULL TO THE COUNCIL SHOULD THE PROPERTY BE SOLD WITHIN A 5-YEAR PERIOD.

REPAYMENT TO INCLUDE:

- A) COMPOUND INTEREST (BASED UPON AVERAGE ANNUAL BANK BASE RATE) ON VALUE OF GRANT, OR**
- B) INTEREST OVER THE PERIOD CALCULATED USING THE LAND REGISTRY RESIDENTIAL PROPERTY PRICE REPORT BASED ON THE INCREASE / REDUCTION IN VALUE OVER THE PERIOD SINCE THE GRANT WAS GIVEN.**

(REGISTERED AS CHARGE AGAINST THE PROPERTY)

Example

If a grant of £5,000 had been paid out in Dec 1999 and the property sold on 31st Nov 2004 the grant recovered would be - £6,584.17

Under a) - £6,584.17

Under b) - ££9,749.32

ADVANTAGES

- Still a scheme that is capable of being operated and policed within current organisation.
- Low staffing implications as can be handled by existing EHO/Finance and Local Land Charges staff.
- Recovery period follows past legislative guidelines.
- Falls within overall concept of grant provision.
- A longer opportunity for the Council to claw back the grant allocated.
- Enables Council to be more prudent with management of resources.
- Uplift in grant repayable to current day value.

DISADVANTAGES

- Council will only recoup the grant money (plus interest) originally paid out if dwelling sold within first 5 years.
- More likely to be perceived as a further barrier to the uptake of grants by vulnerable and needy clients.
- Would have some staffing implications for Finance Department in calculation of interest.

4. GRANTS REPAYABLE IN FULL TO THE COUNCIL SHOULD PROPERTY BE SOLD WITHIN A 10-YEAR PERIOD.

REPAYMENT TO INCLUDE :

- A) COMPOUND INTEREST (BASED UPON AVERAGE ANNUAL BANK BASE RATE) ON VALUE OF GRANT, OR**
- B) INTEREST OVER THE PERIOD CALCULATED USING THE LAND REGISTRY RESIDENTIAL PROPERTY PRICE REPORT BASED ON THE INCREASE / REDUCTION IN VALUE OVER THE PERIOD SINCE THE GRANT WAS GIVEN.**

(REGISTERED AS CHARGE AGAINST THE PROPERTY)

Example

If a grant of £5,000 had been paid out in Dec 1999 and the property sold on 31st Nov 2009 the grant recovered would be:

Under a) - £8,283.90

Under b) - £15,707.48 (assuming an annual increase in property values over next five years of 10%)

ADVANTAGES

- Still a scheme that is capable of being operated and policed within current organisation.
- Low staffing implications as can be handled by existing EHO/Finance and Land Charges staff.
- Recovery period follows past legislative guidelines.
- Falls within overall concept of grant provision.
- A longer opportunity for the Council to claw back the grant allocated.
- Enables Council to be more prudent with management of resources.
- Uplift in grant repayable to current day value.

DISADVANTAGES

- Council will only recoup the grant money (plus interest) originally paid out if dwelling sold within first 10 years.
- Even more likely to be perceived as a further barrier to the uptake of grants by vulnerable and needy clients.
- Would have some staffing implications for Finance Department in calculation of interest.

5. GRANTS REPAYABLE IN FULL TO THE COUNCIL SHOULD PROPERTY BE SOLD WITHIN A 5-YEAR PERIOD.

REPAYMENT TO INCLUDE THE COUNCIL TAKING A SHARE IN THE APPRECIATION IN VALUE OF THE PROPERTY OVER THE PERIOD BETWEEN THE GRANT BEING COMPLETED AND THE PROPERTY BEING SOLD. THIS IS BY CALCULATING THE REPAYMENT OF A % OF THE VALUE OF THE PROPERTY WHEN GRANT COMPLETED AND RECOVERED AT THE SAME % OF THE FUTURE VALUE OF THE PROPERTY WHEN SOLD.

(REGISTERED AS CHARGE AGAINST THE PROPERTY)

Example

If a grant of £5,000 had been paid back in Dec 1999 on a property then worth £100,000 and the property sold on 31st Nov 2004 the grant recovered would be - £8,500.

Based on actual 70% increase in house prices in the West Midlands since 1999 to 2004 (Source: In Neighbourhoods – Growth and Regeneration) and an estimated 40% increase in house prices over the next 5 years.

ADVANTAGES

- Recovery period follows past legislative guidelines.
- Falls within overall concept of grant provision.
- Opportunity for the Council to claw back the grant allocated.
- Enables Council to be more prudent with management of resources.
- Uplift in grant repayable to reflect current day value of property.

DISADVANTAGES

- Council will only recoup the grant money (plus proportionate increase in property value) originally paid out if dwelling sold within first 5 years.
- Highly likely to be perceived as a further barrier to the uptake of grants by vulnerable and needy clients.
- A highly complicated and staff intensive scheme to operate and police and could not be operated without a significant staff resource implication as could not be handled by existing EHO/Finance and Land Charges staff.
- Difficult for clients to understand.
- Would require a valuation of property at time grant allocated (approx £150) and a further valuation at time of grant being recovered (£150 plus inflation) thus diminishing the pool of grant resources available for improving dwellings.
- Is this cost effective? Cost of implementation starts to be out of kilter with grants that could be as little as £200 up to max £5,000.
- Would be open to criticism by clients especially if property value increases exceed bank base rates and RPI.
- Clients may question whether the grant improved the value of the dwelling, or claim that the value of the improvement had been devalued by time grant reclaimed (e.g. life of a CH boiler is 15years so may need replacing again by time property is sold)

6. GRANTS REPAYABLE IN FULL TO THE COUNCIL SHOULD PROPERTY BE SOLD WITHIN A 10-YEAR PERIOD.

REPAYMENT TO INCLUDE THE COUNCIL TAKING A SHARE IN THE APPRECIATION IN VALUE OF THE PROPERTY OVER THE PERIOD BETWEEN THE GRANT BEING COMPLETED AND THE PROPERTY BEING SOLD. THIS IS BY CALCULATING THE GRANT AS A % OF THE VALUE OF THE PROPERTY WHEN GRANT COMPLETED AND RECOVERED AT THE SAME % OF THE FUTURE VALUE OF THE PROPERTY WHEN SOLD.

(REGISTERED AS CHARGE AGAINST THE PROPERTY)

Example

If a grant of £5,000 had been paid back in Dec 1999 on a property then worth £100,000 and the property sold on 31st Nov 2009 the grant recovered would be - £11,900.

Based on actual 70% increase in house prices in the West Midlands since 1999 to 2004 (Source: In Neighbourhoods – Growth and Regeneration) and an estimated 40% increase in house prices over the next 5 years.

ADVANTAGES

- Recovery period follows past legislative guidelines.
- Falls within overall concept of grant provision.
- Opportunity for the Council to claw back the grant allocated.
- Enables Council to be more prudent with management of resources.
- Uplift in grant repayable to reflect current day value of property.

DISADVANTAGES

- Council will only recoup the grant money (plus proportionate increase in property value) originally paid out if dwelling sold within first 5 years.
- Highly likely to be perceived as a further barrier to the uptake of grants by vulnerable and needy clients.
- A highly complicated and staff intensive scheme to operate and police and could not be operated without a significant staff resource implication as could not be handled by existing EHO/Finance and Land Charges staff.
- Difficult for clients to understand.
- Would require a valuation of property at time grant allocated (approx £150) and a further valuation at time of grant being recovered (£150 plus inflation) thus diminishing the pool of grant resources available for improving dwellings.
- Is this cost effective? Cost of implementation starts to be out of kilter with grants that could be as little as £200 up to max £5,000.
- Would be open to criticism by clients especially if property value increases exceed bank base rates and RPI.
- Clients may question whether the grant improved the value of the dwelling, or claim that the value of the improvement had been devalued by time grant reclaimed (e.g. life of a CH boiler is 15years so may need replacing again by time property is sold)

7. INTEREST FREE LOAN REPAYABLE IN FULL TO THE COUNCIL SHOULD PROPERTY BE SOLD AT ANY TIME IN THE FUTURE.

(REGISTERED AS CHARGE AGAINST THE PROPERTY)

Example

If an interest free loan of £5,000 plus £150 admin fee has been paid out in Dec 1999 on the property and the property is sold at any time, the interest free loan recovered would be £5,150.

ADVANTAGES

- Fully extended 'clawback' to when property sold at anytime in the future.
- Opens up the loan option for low-income homeowners.
- Provides value for money but will take many years for funding to be re-cycled.

DISADVANTAGES

- Does not fall within the overall concept of grant provision as will always be fully repayable and thus becomes an interest free loan.
- Would have extensive staff resource implications – RRO ODPM Circular 05/2003 3. *Local authorities must be aware of all aspects of consumer credit regulation and guidance.* Therefore requires specialised financial expertise.
- LA staff would not be able to advise on full range of financial products as under 3.25 – *Any financial service providers including LA's may give advice about their own financial products but must not offer financial advice on other financial products.*
- Loans on their own are not a substitute for grant aid and are not the answer to lack of private sector resources.(LGA Guidance 9.4.03)
- Would only be applicable to owner-occupiers and not private tenants.
- Would be far less attractive for some potential clients to take up.

NB. One of the remits of the Home Improvement Agency is to research and develop equity release/ loan alternatives for the private sector market, and work jointly with other authorities and organisations with appropriate expertise in the field, developing on good practice as it emerges.

8. LOAN REPAYABLE IN FULL TO THE COUNCIL SHOULD PROPERTY BE SOLD AT ANY TIME IN THE FUTURE.

REPAYMENT TO INCLUDE COMPOUND INTEREST (BASED UPON AVERAGE ANNUAL BANK BASE RATE) ON VALUE OF GRANT.

(REGISTERED AS CHARGE AGAINST THE PROPERTY)

Example

If a loan of £5,000 plus £450 admin and valuations fees had been paid out in Dec 1999 and the property sold on the 31st Nov 2009, the loan repayable would be £9,029.45.

ADVANTAGES

- Fully extended 'clawback' to when property sold at anytime in the future.
- Opens up the loan option for low income homeowners.
- Provides value for money but will take many years for funding to be re-cycled.

DISADVANTAGES

- Does not fall within the overall concept of grant provision as will always be fully repayable and thus becomes an interest free loan.
- Would have extensive staff resource implications – RRO ODPM Circular 05/2003 3. *Local authorities must be aware of all aspects of consumer credit regulation and guidance.* Therefore requires specialised financial expertise.
- LA staff would not be able to advise on full range of financial products as under 3.25 – *Any financial service providers including LA's may give advice about their own financial products but must not offer financial advice on other financial products.*
- Loans on their own are not a substitute for grant aid and are not the answer to lack of private sector resources.(LGA Guidance 9.4.03)
- Would only be applicable to owner-occupiers and not private tenants.
- Would be far less attractive for some potential clients to take up.

NB. One of the remits of the Home Improvement Agency is to research and develop equity release/ loan alternatives for the private sector market, and work jointly with other authorities and organisations with appropriate expertise in the field, developing on good practice as it emerges.

9. EQUITY RELEASE SCHEME LOAN REPAYABLE IN FULL TO THE COUNCIL SHOULD PROPERTY BE SOLD AT ANY TIME IN THE FUTURE.

REPAYMENT TO INCLUDE THE COUNCIL TAKING A SHARE IN THE APPRECIATION IN VALUE OF THE PROPERTY OVER THE PERIOD BETWEEN THE GRANT BEING MADE AND THE PROPERTY BEING SOLD BY CALCULATING THE GRANT AS A % OF THE VALUE OF THE PROPERTY WHEN ALLOCATED AND RECOVERED AT THE SAME % OF THE FUTURE VALUE OF THE PROPERTY WHEN SOLD. PROPERTY.

(REGISTERED AS CHARGE AGAINST THE PROPERTY)

Example

If an Equity Release Scheme Loan of £5,000 plus £450 admin and valuation fees had been paid out in Dec 1999 and the property sold on the 31st Nov 2009, the loan repayable would be £12,971.

Based on actual 70% increase in house prices in the West Midlands since 1999 to 2004 (Source: In Neighbourhoods – Growth and Regeneration) and an estimated 40% increase in house prices over the next 5 years.

ADVANTAGES

- Fully extended 'clawback' to when property sold at anytime in the future.
- Opens up the loan option for low income homeowners.
- Provides value for money but will take many years for funding to be re-cycled.

DISADVANTAGES

- Does not fall within the overall concept of grant provision as will always be fully repayable and thus becomes an interest free loan.
- Would have extensive staff resource implications – RRO ODPM Circular 05/2003 3. *Local authorities must be aware of all aspects of consumer credit regulation and guidance.* Therefore requires specialised financial expertise.
- LA staff would not be able to advise on full range of financial products as under 3.25 – *Any financial service providers including LA's may give advice about their own financial products but must not offer financial advice on other financial products.*
- Loans on their own are not a substitute for grant aid and are not the answer to lack of private sector resources.(LGA Guidance 9.4.03)
- Would only be applicable to owner-occupiers and not private tenants.
- Would be far less attractive for some potential clients to take up.
- Would require a valuation of property at time grant allocated (approx £150) and a further valuation at time of grant being recovered (£150 plus inflation) thus diminishing the pool of grant resources available for improving dwellings.
- Is this cost effective? Cost of implementation starts to be out of kilter with grants that could be as little as £200 up to max £5,000.
- Would be open to criticism by clients especially if property value increases exceed bank base rates and RPI.
- Clients may question whether the grant improved the value of the dwelling, or claim that the value of the improvement had been devalued by time grant reclaimed (e.g. life of a CH boiler is 15years so may need replacing again by time property is sold)

NB. One of the remits of the Home Improvement Agency is to research and develop equity release/ loan alternatives for the private sector market, and work jointly with other authorities and organisations with appropriate expertise in the field, developing on good practice as it emerges.

**PRIVATE SECTOR HOUSING ASSISTANCE STRATEGY AND POLICY
CONSULTATION EXERCISE**

Methodology

An important part of the development of the Private Sector Housing Assistance Strategy and Policy has been to seek other peoples opinions and ideas and to this end, 148 private landlords, a selection of customer panel members, partners and other agencies were consulted.

To date, 18 responses have been received and a summary of their comments are set out below. Everyone who responded was sent an acknowledgement and thanked for their efforts.

A Vote of Confidence

All 18 of the consultees who responded welcomed and supported the draft strategy and policy in principal.

West Midlands Regional Assembly commented, *“The private sector renewal strategy and policy is **welcomed and supported** as consistent with the Regional Housing Strategy 2003. The development of policy based upon the Regulatory Reform Order 2002 to address priority need is welcome.”*

Shelter responded *“The partnership with Wyre Forest DC and Redditch on a ‘Home Improvement Agency’ is an **excellent** idea”*
and
“Overall, the strategy and policy look to have good ideas in them to help owner occupiers.”

Age Concern responded *“Both documents read very well and present a strategy proposal that has our **full support.**”*

Accessibility

Two respondents asked how we will make sure that older people understand which grants to apply for and also whether we would offer help to vulnerable people who need assistance in completing application forms.

Appeals

One of the respondents expressed concern that there was no independent member of the appeals panel especially for older, more vulnerable applicants.

Assessments

Two respondents highlighted the need for applications to be assessed more quickly than six months as *'Applicants, particularly the elderly will leave an application until the last moment eg leaking roof.'* And *'six months seems an overly long time for a response to a grant request particularly if safety is an issue or an individual is disabled. Why not 1 month?'*

Also two respondents asked how will priorities for funding be assessed? Is someone more likely to be successful at the beginning of the financial year? Is it likely that more people will reach eligibility than the budget can support?

One respondent commented on the Policy paragraph 21.3 Inspection of 12 properties per annum seems low – why not 50?

CAB commented that future options to consider are *"Private Finance and Loans could be given higher priority to catch vulnerable people who are just above means level, but with limited resources."*

Contractors Quotes

One respondent suggested, with regard to 6.1 b) of the policy, that a minimum of 3 quotes be obtained as contractors quotes can vary widely.

Disabled Facilities Grant

One respondent commented that the disabled facilities grant should be given priority because if help is given early enough it will help alleviate problems later on.

Discretionary Empty Homes Grants

One respondent thought that the criteria for the award of Discretionary Empty Homes Grants with a target outcome of 2 properties per annum was disappointing; why not 10 or 20.

Health and Safety

With regard to the Policy section 9.1 a) one respondent pointed out that there may be safety reasons why work has commenced before a grant is approved.

Independent Contractors versus In House Teams

One respondent asked whether there is any merit in suggesting an efficient task force employed by the District Council to decorate and repair houses rather than a system of grants for independent builders to do the work, or has this been shown to be less cost effective?

Another respondent commented that *“Discretionary Home Repair Assistance Grants and Discretionary Renovation Grants would work best in conjunction with lists of approved work force.”*

Partnership Working

Age Concern Bromsgrove and District responded that they *‘would be very keen to work with the Home Improvement Agency particularly where there are small jobs outside the scope of the grant structure.’*

‘Age Concern Bromsgrove and District are also able through our ‘Handyman’ service, to fit minor aids (grab rails etc) on behalf of the Occupational Therapist service. Indeed we currently do so. Age Concern Bromsgrove and District also run a ‘Traders Register’ of local traders who are recommended to us by existing satisfied older clients. We then check insurance cover, take up references and monitor work completed (through a customer satisfaction form) on behalf of clients to whom we have passed the traders particulars.’

CAB commented that *“Warm Front have very long waiting lists of people approved but waiting for work to be done.”*

Plain English

Two respondents criticised the use of acronyms. (ie HMO’s BME’s)

Raising Awareness

Two respondents asked how we were proposing to publicise the availability of grants and ensure that owners are aware of their existence particularly amongst hard to reach groups.

Responsibility for Improvements

One respondent commented that whilst they supported the policy to improve ‘run down’ properties in general *“but this must be the prime objective and cost to the owner, only assistance from Councils”*.

Targets

One respondent said *“The low rate of target outcomes leads to the question of*

whether this sectors housing conditions are going to improve overall, overtime, or whether the rate of deterioration is going to worsen the incidence of 'unfitness', if remedial resources are inadequate to keep pace.

Tax Implications

One respondent asked '*would this not put the cost (value) of a house up further and find possibly that it has jumped into another band of taxation? (Council/Inheritance Tax) So if it did, the extra cost should come off that banding.*'

Other Comments

"I strongly support bringing back empty properties into use"

"An excellent strategy"

"Excellent proposals, easy to understand and I fully agree with the Strategy proposals – JOB WELL DONE."

"There is a lack of houses for young people, as tradition goes the young look after the old. This will not happen and the problem in the future could be very costly looking after the old. Houses in the villages are urgently needed for the young people for obvious reasons in the strategy policy."

"Very pleased that so much hard work is going in to addressing the local housing needs issue and I hope that it will not be wasted by insufficient funding or insensitive interpretations of the funding rules."

"I am pleased to note that permanent mobile homes have been included in this policy."

"BYHF has a worker in place who is working with private landlords in order to set up a rent in advance/deposit scheme which, depending on their response, we expect to have up and running shortly."

BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL

EXECUTIVE CABINET

13TH OCTOBER 2004

**ARRANGEMENTS FOR THE REVIEW OF DECISIONS UPON HOMELESSNESS OR
NON-ACCEPTANCE ON THE COUNCIL'S HOUSING REGISTER**

Responsible Portfolio Holder	Councillor P J Whittaker
Responsible Heads of Service	Head of Strategic Housing & Head of Administrative Services

1. SUMMARY

- 1.1 The report sets out proposals for a revision to the membership of the Council's Appeals Committee to include a representative of Bromsgrove District Housing Trust (BDHT), when it is considering a matter connected with homelessness or non-acceptance of an applicant to the Council's Housing Register.
- 1.2 The proposal is intended to assist in maintaining a continuing good working relationship with BDT who are now the main provider of accommodation for homeless applicants to whom the Council has a duty to re-house.

2. RECOMMENDATION

- 2.2 That when the Appeals Committee is considering a matter connected with homelessness or non-acceptance of an applicant to the Council's Housing Register, a representative of the Bromsgrove District Housing Trust should be co-opted on to its membership.

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 With the reduction in Council housing as a result of the Tenants' Right To Buy and the development of Registered Social Landlords (RSLs) as major providers of social housing, the Council has become increasingly dependent upon RSLs to provide permanent housing solutions for the homeless to whom the authority has duty to re-house. Since the recent Large Scale Voluntary Transfer of the Council's housing stock, BDHT has become the Council's primary RSL partner and provider of housing for the homeless.
- 3.2 Although the Council has nomination rights with its RSL partners, they remain independent organisations they have a right to exclude unsatisfactory applicants from their tenancies. In certain circumstances, RSLs may therefore be reluctant

to allocate a tenancy to prospective tenants who have a past history of extreme anti social behaviour or serious rent arrears.

- 3.3 Concerns can therefore be raised by an RSL where they are being asked to re-house a homeless applicant who has lost their previous home as a result of serious poor performance. Normally, in such circumstances the homeless applicant applying for re-housing is likely to be declared as having made themselves 'intentionally homeless' and as such would not be entitled to a permanent tenancy.
- 3.4 However, homeless applicants who are declared as intentionally homeless have a right of appeal. If the appeal overturns the original decision (that the applicant has made himself/herself homeless intentionally) the Council would then have a duty to re-house the applicant through a nomination right to a partner RSL. In such circumstances, it is important that the RSL partner is fully confident of the decision made by the Appeals Panel because the (the RSL landlord) will carry the risk in re-housing the tenant should they perform badly in the future and incur rent arrears or cause annoyance and nuisance to other tenants or neighbours.
- 3.5 Therefore, to assist the operation of the new arrangements for the re-housing of clients since LSVT, it is proposed that a representative or BDHT (as the Council's largest RSL partner) be invited to participate in the review process and become a member of the Appeals Committee, when cases relating to homelessness or non-acceptance to the Housing Register are being considered. The membership of each Panel would therefore consist of three Council representatives (drawn from the Appeals Committee's total membership of eight on the present rotational system) and one representative of BDHT. Any BDHT officer involved in the initial decision on the same case would be automatically excluded from being the BDHT representative.
- 3.6 The Committee would continue to meet at the Council House and be supported by the officers of the Council's Legal and Administrative departments.

4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 There are no financial implications to the proposals.

5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 Article 6 of the European Convention on Human Rights (which was incorporated into the Human Rights Act 1998) provides that "everyone is entitled to a fair and public hearing within a reasonable time by an independent and impartial tribunal established by law". No-one who was involved in the original decision may be involved in the determination of the appeal. Section 102 of the Local Government Act 1972 allows the Council to co-opt someone on to one of its Committees, who is not a member of the Council.

5.2 The procedures to be followed by local housing authorities in carrying out reviews under Part 7 of the Housing Act 1996 (which relate to homelessness) is set out in The Allocation of Housing and Homelessness (Review Procedures) Regulations 1999 (SI 1999 No. 71.) A review must be carried out by the housing authority itself or by someone acting as an agent of the housing authority. The regulations provide that where the review is to be carried out by an officer, the officer must be senior to the officer who took that decision.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

Homelessness Code of Guidance for Local Authorities (ODPM July 2002)
Housing Act 1996 Homelessness Act 2002

Contact Officers

A Coel Head of Strategic Housing Email a.coel@bromsgrove.gov.uk Tel 01527 881 270
V Harrison Head of Administrative Services Email v.harrison@bromsgrove.gov.uk Tel 01527 881 419

BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL

EXECUTIVE CABINET

13TH OCTOBER 2004

CAR PARKING SERVICE – INTRODUCTION OF KEYPADS

Responsible Portfolio Holder	Cllr P Whittaker
Responsible Head of Service	Head of Community Safety & Engineering

1. SUMMARY

This report looks at the proposed introduction of keypads for the entry of registration numbers on pay and display machines in car parks operated by the Council.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

1. That Executive Cabinet agree to the introduction of keypads for the entry of registration numbers on pay and display machines operated by the Council with immediate effect.
2. That full Council be requested to release the necessary funds from usable capital receipts.

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 Enforcement against non-payers on the car parks is carried out as a measure to persuade drivers to pay for their parking. The issue of excess charge notices has a significant beneficial effect on the level of compliance, and if no enforcement was carried admission charge income would drop, probably by a significant amount, and would continue to drop as more people became aware that there was no enforcement. Therefore the enforcement of the car parking pay and display system is a necessary and integrated part of the whole operation, and only targets those drivers who have failed to pay for their parking or parked incorrectly. If the Council did not enforce against those who commit offences it would be intrinsically unfair for those drivers who pay for their parking and park correctly.
- 3.2 Members will recall that 10% of excess charge notices were cancelled during the previous financial year because the offender produced a valid ticket after the event. Officers believe that a number of excess charge appeals are made using tickets that were appropriated by the offender from another driver after the excess charge notice was issued. Officers and attendants are also aware that there is a considerable amount of ticket swapping occurring where a driver who is leaving the car park who has a ticket which has yet to expire offers the ticket to a driver who is entering the car park and has not purchased a ticket.
- 3.3 The sole purpose of these keypads is to stop the swapping of tickets. It is currently Council policy to challenge drivers if they are seen swapping tickets rather than issue an excess charge notice, so it is rare for an excess charge notice to be issued for this offence by itself. The number of drivers who would take a risk and rely on obtaining a ticket after parking without payment would be expected to fall, and therefore the number of excess charge notices issued for not displaying a valid ticket would also fall. Officers

believe, and experience from other operators has shown, that this decrease would not be overly significant. The number of excess charges issued for displaying an expired ticket and parking in a non-prescribed position would be expected to remain unaffected by the introduction of keypads.

- 3.4 Officers have approached a number of other operators for information on the effect of the introduction of these keypads. Worcester City Council were the only operator to respond who have recently introduced keypads, and they have advised that there will be two likely changes. The first is that the number of tickets sold will increase. The second is that the number of appeals against excess charges will fall, and the number paid without being contested will rise. In summary, both admission charge and excess charge revenue would be expected to rise. There is a risk, however, that there may be a decrease in the number of excess charges issued as a result of improved compliance.
- 3.5 Evidence from Worcester City Council showed a rise of 22% in admission charge revenue after the introduction of keypads on the Corn Market and Copenhagen Street surface car parks, and their officers believe that the compliance rating is now around 99%. Administration relating to excess charge appeals was also significantly reduced, but there are no figures available to reflect this.

4. Financial Implications

- 4.1 The cost of installing the keypads would be £10 800, which is a one-off capital outlay with no further expense. The figures used in the following calculations are based on the projected net income for car parks admission charges and excess charge admission charges from the first four and five months respectively of the financial year 2004/2005. Three scenarios have been calculated based upon revenue increases of 2.5%, 5%, and 10% respectively and reductions in excess charge revenue of 5%, 2.5% and 0% respectively. In the best case the predicted net revenue would be £28K in the medium case it would be £18K and in the worst case the predicted revenue would be £7.5K, the figures are from 1.11.04 to 31.03.05.
- 4.2 Using the above information, officers would predict that the effect on net revenue for both admission charges and excess charge revenue from 1st November to the end of the year would range from a best case of £28 068 to a worst case of £7 668. Similarly, the effect on net revenue for the next financial year would be from a best case of £67 363 to a worst case of £18 404. Given this information, officers can estimate that the minimum length of time taken for this equipment to pay for itself would be 2 months, whilst the maximum length of time would be just over 7 months.
- 4.3 Officers would estimate that the effect on excess charge revenue would fall into the medium case scenario with a 2.5% reduction in the number issued. The effect on admission charge revenue would be estimated to be an increase of 5%. Therefore, officers would predict that the keypads would pay for themselves within 3 months of introduction, and then carry on to bring in an additional £30K per annum thereafter.
- 4.4 There is no provision in the current capital programme for this equipment. However, officers believe that the above information shows that the revenue generated would far outweigh the capital cost, and that these special circumstances would represent a case for "spend to save". Officers, believe, therefore, that the funds required to implement this equipment should be released from capital receipts

5. Legal Implications

5.1 None

6. Personnel Implications

6.1 None

7 Risk Management Considerations

7.1 None.

Background Papers

None

Contact officer

Name: Steve Martin
E Mail: steve.martin@bromsgrove.gov.uk
Tel: (01527) 881457

BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL

EXECUTIVE CABINET

13TH OCTOBER 2004

REQUEST FROM WYRE FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL FOR CCTV MONITORING SERVICE

Responsible Portfolio Holder	Councillor P Whittaker
Responsible Head of Service	Head of Community Service & Engineering

1 Summary

- 1.1 This report considers the approach from Wyre Forest District Council for the monitoring of CCTV cameras in their town centre.

2 Recommendation

- 2.1 That members approve the proposal from Wyre Forest in line with the terms set out in the report.
- 2.2 That the Head of Community Safety in conjunction with the Head of Legal Services conclude the formal service level agreement.

3 Background

- 3.1 Members will recall receiving a previous report dated 10th September 2003 regarding an approach from Wyre Forest District Council for Bromsgrove District Council to provide a monitoring service for a proposed Kidderminster Town Centre CCTV Scheme. Members requested that officers report back on the feasibility of such a partnership together with costings and management implications (Minute 86/93 refers).
- 3.2 The original request from Wyre Forest was to consider proposals for up to sixty cameras; however since then events have moved on and they are now requesting seven cameras to be monitored on an 18 hour/365 day basis.

4 Current Situation

- 4.1 The current situation within the control room is that a maximum of 122 cameras can be accommodated.
- 4.2 We currently operate 84 cameras throughout the district monitored within the facility on a 24 hour/365 days basis; we have a capacity within the present Control Room for a further 38 cameras.
- 4.3 Within the Capital Programme 2004/05 is £60K to provide cameras, in partnership with Central Trains on Wythall and Alvechurch railway stations (two cameras at Alvechurch and one at Wythall).
- 4.4 The Community Safety Team are currently seeking partnership funding for a further two cameras in Hagley to monitor a particular problem area.
- 4.5 The residue capacity we have is therefore 33 cameras.

5 Proposed Future Demands

5.1 Members will recall the proposed “Villages Bid” for additional cameras comprised the following:

- | | | |
|----|---|------------|
| a) | Drakes Cross, Hollywood and Wythall – | 5 cameras |
| b) | Charford, Sidemoor and Catshill – | 14 cameras |
| c) | Bromsgrove (to cover All Saints to Charford Road) – | 9 cameras |
| d) | Cofton Hackett and Lickey – | 14 cameras |

42 cameras

5.2 Wyre Forest Provision 12 cameras

Total 54 cameras

5.3 Minor alterations within the control room can increase capacity from 122 to 150 cameras thus giving an additional capacity of 28 cameras. This additional capacity would cost approximately £12K and would not be required until the financial year 2006/7.

5.4 Thereafter any further camera provision whether internal or external partnership will need a major extension to the control room.

5.5 When considering this matter Members should note that Wyre Forest were recommended to approach the District Council by Government Office West Midlands in line with the Government’s Shared Policy facility.

5.6 The business case for this project is the extra revenue income of £10,500 per annum to the District Council thereafter increasing with inflation.

5.7 Wyre Forest will meet all installation and equipment costs including transmission and future maintenance costs. An SLA provision for 12 cameras is required and any subsequent provision to include a clause stipulating that additional monitoring would only be accommodated providing a proportional contribution was made towards the capital costs of enlarging the control room.

6 Financial Implications

6.1 The current budget for the CCTV control room provides for the operation of the existing 84 cameras.

6.2 The proposed additional 7 cameras for Wyre Forest can be accommodated at no extra cost either to the infrastructure or the day to day management.

6.3 The proposed charge of £1,500 per camera per annum (£10,500 per annum) will be made for this monitoring provision, this in total is based on the current commercial rate for this activity.

6.4 The proposed SLA is for an initial 3 years therefore providing a minimum of £31,500 (inflation will be added to years 2 and 3 payments).

6.5 The proposed SLA does provide for the monitoring of up to 12 cameras. For each additional camera beyond 7 they will pay £1,500 per annum plus inflation for monitoring services.

6.6 The total income per annum assuming 12 cameras are utilised will be £18,000 per annum plus any relevant inflation factor.

- 6.7 Therefore the minimum revenue over 3 years will be £31,500 plus any inflation factor.
- 6.8 The absolute maximum revenue over 3 years will be £54,000 plus any inflation factor.
- 6.9 The provision of 7 cameras or 12 cameras for Wyre Forest with the existing commitment of an additional 5 cameras for BDT will take the total operation of cameras in the control room to either 96 or 101 cameras.
- 6.10 Members are advised that when the threshold band of 100 – 110 operational cameras is breached consideration for additional staffing, particularly at peak periods, will need to be addressed.
- 6.11 The provision of an extra person to cover these periods will cost at current rates approximately £18,000 per annum.
- 6.12 It is proposed that any costs associated with future expansions of the CCTV scheme will be met by the income generated from service agreements.

7 Legal Implications

- 7.1 There are no adverse legal implications relating to this proposal.
- 7.2 There will be a need to enter into a formal SLA agreement with Wyre Forest which will include for all current legislation e.g., Data Protection Act, The Regulatory & Investigatory Powers Act.

8 Equal Opportunities

- 8.1 There are no equal opportunities within this proposal.

9 Background Papers

- 9.1 None

10 Contact Officer: John Moody E-mail: j.moody@bromsgrove.gov.uk Tel: 01527 881 356

BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL

EXECUTIVE CABINET

13th OCTOBER 2004

HOUSING CAPACITY STUDY

Responsible Portfolio Holder	Councillor Mrs M Taylor
Responsible Head of Service	Malcolm Griffiths, Director of Planning Services

1. SUMMARY

- 1.1 The Council is now at the final stage of producing its Urban Capacity Study. Local Planning Authorities are required to produce an Urban Capacity Study in order to establish how much housing can be accommodated within their urban areas. A draft version of the District Council's Study went out for consultation in early 2004. This report presents the results of the consultation exercise, changes made and seeks Members approval for adoption of the Study.
- 1.2 Copies of the Study have been placed in the Member's room and it can also be downloaded from the Council's website.

2. RECOMMENDATION

- a) That Members agree the contents of the Housing Capacity Study and its adoption as the District's Urban Capacity Study.
- b) That Member agree to delegated powers to enable Officers to update the site details and housing figures on an annual basis using data from the Housing Land Availability Study.

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 To protect the rural character of the district and to contribute towards sustainable development it is important for the local planning authority to establish how much additional housing can be accommodated within existing urban areas before looking at the release of greenfield sites. Apart from assessing housing capacity the study will help in developing future policies and proposals.
- 3.2 It is a requirement for local authorities to undertake an Urban Capacity Study. As PPG3 states; *"In order to establish how much additional housing can be*

accommodated within urban areas and therefore how much greenfield land may be needed for development, all local planning authorities should undertake urban capacity studies”, (PPG3, para 24).

- 3.3 The title of the study has been amended to reflect the need to investigate the total ‘housing capacity’ of the district from all existing sources that fall within the scope of current policy planning guidance. The results of this study will inform and where appropriate feed into the housing land strategy for the Local Development Framework.
- 3.4 A report on the proposed methodology for a Housing Capacity Study for the District was considered at a Cabinet meeting in March 2002. A consultation exercise on the methodology and the collection of data for the subsequent study was undertaken. A draft copy of the Housing Capacity Study for the District, was then presented to Members’ in September 2003. This was used for consultation purposes in early 2004. The purpose of this report is to present to Members the results of this consultation exercise and seek approval to adopt the Study
- 3.5 Once adopted copies will be sent to all those who commented on the study, all local libraries and a copy placed on the Council’s website.

4. SUMMARY OF THE CONSULTATION EXERCISE

- 4.1 A total of 66 individuals and organisations were consulted on the draft study. A total of 13 responses were received. Of these responses 6 were from Parish Councils, 5 from Planning Consultants, 1 from the House Builders Federation and 1 from a local resident. None objected to the undertaking of the study.
- 4.2 The Council’s approach to undertaking an Urban Capacity Study of the District has on the whole been supported. The majority of responses received relate to objections to individual sites or the approach taken when discounting from the unconstrained figure to the anticipated yield. The discounting process is inherently judgemental, as such there will always be differing views on the inclusion and availability of sites. The Council have used the best evidence available at the time of the study to assess each site’s availability. Where evidence has been provided about a site and its availability the study has been changed to reflect this. A summary of all responses received and the Council’s response is attached as an appendix to this report.

5. AMENDED SUMMARY OF RESULTS

- 5.1 Below is an amended summary table showing the results of the Housing Capacity Study. This table is taken directly from the Study and incorporates changes made as a result of the consultation exercise, including new sites that the Council have become aware of since the publication of the draft study and the deletion of sites that have gained planning permission.
- 5.2 The Study revealed a healthy potential housing capacity in the urban areas of the District. The results are summarised below.

5.3 **Unconstrained yield** is the theoretical total number of dwellings that could result from each source.

Constrained yield is the number of dwellings, based mostly on past trends, that would be expected to come forward before 2011 if the moratorium on housing was not in place.

Table 1 - Summary of the results of the Housing Capacity Study

Source	Unconstrained Yield (Gross)	Anticipated Constrained Yield to 2011 (Gross)
Subdivision of Existing Housing (Conversions)	1690	42
Flats over Shops (In Bromsgrove Town Centre)	300	14
Empty Homes (Reoccupying of empty homes)	785	27
Redevelopment of Existing Poor Quality Housing Areas	0	0
Redevelopment of Car Parks (In Bromsgrove Town Centre)	0	0
Review of Employment Areas (Resulting from low demand)	15	15
Review of Existing Housing Allocations (Oakalls)	60	60
Other Local Plan Designations or Allocations (Areas of Development Restraint)	4,734	0
Infill Development within Category 4 Settlements (Within village envelopes)	35	35
Development within Category 5 Settlements (Green Belt villages)	0	0
Unidentified Green Belt Development (Barn conversions)	123	123
Comprehensive Area Study (Newly identified sites)	1948	410
Intensification (Backland development)	924	532
Total (Including ADR allocations)	10614	1258
Total (Without ADR allocations)	5880	1258

- 5.4 The housing supply situation in the District at April 2004 is shown in the table below. This incorporates the significant number of new applications for housing that were submitted and approved since the Council adopted the moratorium on new housing. The next Housing Land Availability Study of the District will be undertaken in early October 2004.

Table 2 - Housing Supply in Bromsgrove District

Structure Plan Target to 2011	3950
Completions 1996 to April 2003	3189
Dwellings Under Construction	289
Dwellings Outstanding	873
Sites subject to 106	64
Remaining housing allocation (HAG1)	15
Identified oversupply to 2011	480
Potential new dwellings identified in the Housing Capacity study to 2011	1231*
Potential oversupply without SPG10	1711

* This does not include supply from the reuse of empty homes as supply from this source would not count towards the District's housing supply target.
(Total to 2011 = 1258 - 27 (Empty homes) = 1231)

6. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

None

7. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

None

BACKGROUND PAPERS

None

Contact officer

Name P Crysell
E Mail: pcrysell@bromsgrove.gov.uk
Tel: (01527) 881318

Appendix 1

Summary of Representations Received

The table below details each objection or comment received and the Council's response to it.

Objection / Comment	Council's Response
The study includes sites in Alvechurch that are part of the fabric of the village and difficult to develop.	The developability of the site is reflected in its grading (A, B or C). All land was considered that was not already in residential use.
Brickworks and school sites in Alvechurch are not included.	The Brickworks site is in the Green Belt and was not considered to be a major developed site. The school has now been included in the study.
No reference to Village Design Statements.	Any proposal to develop a site would have to take account of the design principles contained in the Village Design Statement.
Land to rear of BT exchange in Barnt Green should not be included as it should be used for parking.	Part of the site could be used as car parking. However, due to the land values involved it is more likely that at least part of the site will be developed.
Pub car park in Barnt Green is used by shoppers and visitors to the doctors.	The comments have been amended. The Council acknowledges that only a small part of the car park could be developed and this is reflected in the site area.

Support for the identifying of brownfield sites which will enable greenfield sites to remain in the Green Belt.	Support noted.
Object to site H3 (Access strip at Newfield Rd) being in study. Inspector refused appeal on garden land in area and would affect Green Belt.	Reference to development of garden land has been removed. This is a very small infill site and its development would actually reduce access to Green Belt land behind the existing houses.
One dwelling empty in Clent for 12 years.	Details will be passed onto Environmental Health to check against their records.
General approach in line with Government guidance.	Support noted.
Reliance on density multipliers undermines overall approach, diminishing the robustness and transparency of the assessment. Investing in a design led approach would lead to a more robust study.	Agree that a design led approach would be a more detailed and comprehensive approach. However due to resource, time constraints, SPG10 and the number of sites identified it was not at this stage considered feasible. Any subsequent review of the study could incorporate a design led assessment of sites.
Support the approach but lack of market testing means conclusions drawn may not be realisable. As a result land supply would be reduced.	Support noted. The Consultation exercise was seen as a way of obtaining the markets view on the sites identified. Where appropriate the study has been modified to reflect market comments.
Do not agree all sites are suitable for residential development. Policy constraints would restrict the potential of many sites.	The developability of the site is reflected in the grading of the sites into A, B and C (see paragraph 20.3 of the Study).

Question whether AL3, AL7, AL22, B76, BG10, CH10 and RU21 could be developed for housing.	Comments noted in tables at back of study.
Policy constraints and previous negative DC decisions are identified in the text but this analysis appears to have no influence on the potential level of dwellings on each site. For instance, AL26, B68, CH8, H1, RU2, RU5, W17 and W25.	Policy constraints and previous negative DC decisions have been acknowledged when the site has been graded A, B, C. Also the discounted figure takes account of any obvious site constraints.
Study should use market analysis to more fully assess the discounting undertaken by the LPA.	The Consultation exercise was seen as a way of obtaining the market's view on the sites identified. Where appropriate the study has been modified to reflect market comments.
No need for more housing and the survey operates on a false premise that housing land is needed.	Government guidance contained in PPG3 requires local authorities undertake an Urban Capacity Study. Work on the study was begun prior to the adoption of SPG10.
BDC shouldn't be putting effort into finding sites but should concentrate efforts on identifying "objective and robust" criteria for its housing policy once SPG10 is lifted.	Work has already begun on policies to replace those in the existing Local Plan and also SPG10. Please read the Council's recently published 'Local Development Scheme' for more information.
The study goes beyond what is necessary and should not go further than development in the category 1 settlement of Bromsgrove.	The study has assessed all possible sites that could come forward within the existing Local Plan policy context. The first place to look if new housing is needed would be sites within the main urban areas.
Identifying small sites under 10 dwellings is double counting as these would also come under the intensification bracket.	Intensification is development on existing residential land. Small sites are those that do not currently appear to be in residential use.

<p>Now that a green corridor has been designated between Bromsgrove and Catshill, Catshill and Marlbrook should be category 2 settlements.</p>	<p>The Adopted Local Plan classifies Catshill, Marlbrook and Lickey End settlements as being within the Bromsgrove urban area and not separate locations for growth.</p>
<p>Category 2 should be entitled 'Large Villages (non- Greenbelt), Category 3 should be entitled 'Other Villages (non-Greenbelt).</p>	<p>Not all the settlements within categories 2 and 3 could be classified as villages so more general terms were used to highlight their place in the districts settlement structure.</p>
<p>Excluded land types should also include, Listed buildings and their curtilage, SSSI, and Nature reserves.</p>	<p>These factors have been taken into account when the site has been graded. However non of the sites identified are within SSSI's. Listed buildings can were appropriate be converted to residential use.</p>
<p>The yield from subdivision of existing dwellings is meaningless as it would mean converting large upper class housing to roads full of multiple occupation.</p>	<p>The actual potential for subdivision is reflected in the anticipated yield. The unconstrained yield is a theoretical figure.</p>
<p>The methodology concerned with flats over shops is unrealistic, as there are many constraints involved in the release of these properties.</p>	<p>Agree that there are many constraints and this is reflected in the anticipated yield figure.</p>
<p>Anticipated yield from existing housing allocations should be reduced to 10 as BDC has granted PP for two windfall sites that share the access to HAG1.</p>	<p>The yield for the remaining part of HAG1 is anticipated to be a minimum of 15 dwellings.</p>
<p>The potential housing site at Hagley Middle School is likely to be somewhat smaller than shown as this land will be needed as playing field for the new expanded Hagley Primary School.</p>	<p>Only a small amount of the playing field has been included in the site. The discounted figure also reflects this.</p>

<p>There is a triangular parcel of land between the site (H14), and Kidderminster Road which should be included in the study.</p>	<p>The site appears to have a dense covering of trees so at present would be unsuitable for any kind of development. A more detailed assessment will undertaken when the study is reviewed.</p>
<p>A considerable number of sites could be significantly enlarged to incorporate rear gardens, these areas should be identified for planned intensification.</p>	<p>The development of existing garden land is covered by the Intensification source.</p>
<p>Site H1 held by Hagley parish council, statutory requirement to provide allotments, alternative land would have to be found within the built up area for allotments if this land were to be released.</p>	<p>Allotments could also be provided outside of the urban area. A detailed assessment of all allotment land in the district needs to be undertaken to assess it use. This will be undertaken as part of the Local Development Framework.</p>
<p>Sites H5 and H16 not likely to become available.</p>	<p>Comments have been noted in the report and the availability of H16 has been changed.</p>
<p>Site H3 in Clent parish and too small to warrant appearing in the study.</p>	<p>Comments have been noted in the report. The site is large enough to contain at least one new dwelling.</p>
<p>BG7 and BG11 should be used as park and ride sites for Barnt Green station.</p>	<p>Comments have been noted in the report. This is dependent on land ownership. It is more likely that part of BG7 will be released for car parking. This has been reflected in the discounted figure.</p>
<p>Sites B14, B87, W1 and W12, have desirable current uses and therefore should not be used for housing.</p>	<p>Comments have been noted in the report. The current use of the sites would not necessarily prevent redevelopment of it. The availability of the site has been reflected by its grading.</p>

<p>There is a moratorium on house building therefore the urban capacity study is an academic exercise.</p>	<p>The study was begun before the moratorium was introduced. It will also inform the future direction of housing policies. PPG3 also requires local authorities to undertake an urban capacity study.</p>
<p>It is not clear that settlements in categories 4 & 5 are excluded from the search area until the appendices.</p>	<p>Section 17 deals with any potential capacity from Category 4 settlements and Section 18 with any potential capacity from Category 5 settlements. While little or no capacity exists due to policy constraints, it is important that they are assessed and reasons for omission documented. The title of Section 17 has been changed to reflect that it is assessing capacity from Category 4 settlements. It is clear from Section 20 that only the first three categories of settlement have been used when looking for sites.</p>
<p>Subdivision of Existing Housing - the contribution from subdivision is likely to be very low.</p>	<p>This has been reflected in the discounted figure.</p>
<p>Flats over Shops - the contribution is likely to be very low unless initiatives to encourage landowners to use upper floors is introduced.</p>	<p>Agree that there are many constraints and this is reflected in the anticipated yield figure. Further research on living over the shop will be done as part of the Local Development Framework.</p>
<p>The proportion of vacant dwellings is so low contribution from this source should be nil, in any event this contribution is usually taken into account when the strategic authority sets the housing provision in the structure plan.</p>	<p>While the supply from empty homes is low it is a source identified by Tapping the Potential that should be assessed. The housing supply tables do not take account of any supply from re-occupying empty homes.</p>

Redevelopment of existing poor quality housing areas - unconstrained capacity minimal therefore no yield is expected from this source.	The study is clear that the Council does not expect any yield from this source.
Redevelopment of Car Parks - identifies capacity but discounts all potential capacity consequently the yield from this source is nil.	The study is clear that the Council does not expect any yield from this source.
Review of Existing Housing Allocations. Scope for increasing densities on the two sites is limited.	Agree, capacity exists only on land not already developed.
Infill Development within Green Belt Village Boundaries - falls into the category of intensification however the settlements included are not those which are subject of the UCS. It is not appropriate to include these as a potential source of capacity despite the fact the contribution from this source is expected to be small.	The Council recognise that these villages are not part of the urban area of the District. However the Council wanted to collect information on all possible new housing that could come forward within the policy context at the time of the study (excluding guidance contained in SPG10).
Development within Category 5 Settlements - not considered a potential source therefore should not be included.	Possible development within Category 5 settlements has not been included as it would be contrary to policies contained in the Local Plan.
Unidentified Green Belt Development - not considered in Tapping the Potential (TTP), PPG3 states no allowance should be made for Green Belt windfalls. It is considered that no allowance should be made for barn conversions or the reuse of other rural buildings, it is not appropriate to include these sources in this section.	The Council recognise that PPG3 states no allowance should be made for Green Belt windfalls. Any future projections would not take account of rural windfalls. However the Council wanted to collect information on all possible new housing that could come forward within the policy context at the time of the study (excluding guidance contained in SPG10).

<p>Comprehensive area study - could be elements of double counting in this category. Potential yield is considerable and important that potential capacity has not been over estimated as a result of a) double counting sites in this and other categories b) counting the same sites in the HCS and as commitments in the housing land supply figures.</p>	<p>The Council have been careful to avoid any double counting. Any sites which have obtained planning permission have been removed from the study. Also sites identified does not include sites resulting from the development of garden land as this is covered by the intensification category.</p>
<p>Study does not follow guidance in TTP as it includes sources additional to those listed in TTP resulting in likely double counting. In addition, unconstrained and constrained capacity may have been over stated.</p>	<p>The Council have been careful to avoid any double counting. The Council recognise that some sources are not from the urban areas of the district. However the Council wanted to collect information on all possible new housing that could come forward within the policy context at the time of the study (excluding guidance contained in SPG10).</p>
<p>Study is not clear in terms of moving from unconstrained to constrained capacity and the assumptions that underlie the discounting process. The council has not followed advice in section 5 of TTP.</p>	<p>The process is inherently judgemental and the Council has made their best assessment using both internal and external evidence of a sites availability for development. Each section on the potential sources contains information on the evidence used to obtain the discounted figure.</p>
<p>Object to sites BL1,2,6,7,8, BG4,17, CH8, B45,65,84, C3,8, RU8</p>	<p>Objections and comments have been incorporated into the study. The availability of some of the sites has been changed or the site omitted. A further assessment of each site will be undertaken as part of a review of the study.</p>

<p>The supply of new houses from the subdivision of existing houses gross average annual rate is 6 over 12 years, net is 4. If discount rates set out in TTP are applied the gross provision is between 3 and 4 dwellings per year and the net provision is under 3.</p>	<p>The Council have used past rates as a guide for future provision. Evidence shows that these rates have not changed significantly over the past years. The applying of a standard discounting rate could lead to an underestimation of supply. If required discount rates could be applied to the final figures from all sources.</p>
<p>It is also incorrect for table 11 to identify a gross figure for subdivision as this includes dwelling losses.</p>	<p>A gross figure has been applied as that is how many dwellings could exist on the site after development.</p>
<p>Suggested yield from the flats above shops is also excessive it is unlikely that more than 4 dwellings will be provided.</p>	<p>The Council have only accounted for 2 per year to 2011. This will be reviewed when further evidence comes forward on the potential for living over the shop.</p>
<p>The yield from intensification is unrealistic yield is more likely to be 150 dwellings when diminishing resource and SPG10 is taken into account, as well as the discounting suggested in TTP.</p>	<p>The Council believe that the figures are realistic and it is clearly stated that they do not take account of guidance contained in SPG10 as this guidance has placed a moratorium on all new housing regardless of source (apart from a few limited exceptions).</p>
<p>Omission of Mill Farm, Alvechurch Should be recognised as a large site in Appendix 3.</p>	<p>This site is in the Green Belt and is not considered to be a major developed site in the Green Belt. Therefore it falls outside of the scope of the study.</p>
<p>Insufficient space to develop on land adjacent to 14 Rea Avenue, Rubery and site will not be released.</p>	<p>This site has been removed from the study.</p>

<p>Infill development in villages and development of brownfield sites for housing should be allowed.</p>	<p>Infill development is allowed in larger villages in the district and the development of brownfield sites for housing is encouraged in sustainable locations subject to guidance contained in SPG10.</p>
<p>SP1 the parish council is currently having discussions with BDC regarding proposals to develop the site as a community centre.</p>	<p>Comments noted.</p>
<p>SP7 the car parking area is very important to the residents in Coriander Close. The site is unsuitable for two houses and will leave residents with nowhere to park.</p>	<p>Comments noted. This is reflected in the sites availability.</p>
<p>Study does not provide a realistic basis to test the sustainability credentials of potential sites in settlements at different levels of the hierarchy. It cannot be right that a Cat A site in a Cat 3 Settlement is preferable to a Cat B or C site in a Cat 2 Settlement.</p>	<p>The preference would be the development of sites in the main urban areas first. However certain sites in other settlements may also have good sustainability credentials. It also depends were there is an identified housing need.</p>
<p>The HCS makes no allowance for any anticipated yield from ADR sites, the approach being adopted in the HCS with regard to ADRs is misguided as opportunities are being lost to accommodate new development in sustainable locations in accordance with the settlement hierarchy.</p>	<p>The Local Plan is clear that ADR sites will only be released through the review of the plan. The successor documents to the Local Plan will take account of the results of this study, housing need throughout the district and sustainability criteria when determining the location of future housing growth.</p>
<p>As the 600th dwelling has been completed the land previously allocated as the local centre is now available for private housing development and therefore should be included in the HCS as a site of 0.75ha with a capacity of 30 dwellings (i.e. 0.75ha at 40 dwellings per hectare).</p>	<p>Land reserved for the Local Centre has now been incorporated into the study.</p>

Bromsgrove Housing Capacity

September 2004

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Note: Aerial photography supplied by www.ukperspectives.com

1. Introduction

- 1.1 This paper sets out Bromsgrove District Council's approach to undertaking an Urban Capacity Study (UCS) and the subsequent results of this study. This report closely follows the Government's guidance outlined in 'Tapping the Potential – Assessing urban housing capacity: towards better practice' (December 2000).
- 1.2 It is important that housing requirements of the district are kept under regular review in order to establish how much land will need to be allocated for the future housing needs of the district. Due to the rural Green Belt nature of the district, land outside the green belt suitable for housing development is a finite resource. To protect the rural character of the district and to contribute towards sustainable development it is important to establish how much additional housing can be accommodated within existing urban areas before looking at Greenfield sites.
- 
- 1.3 Urban Capacity studies are a key component in formulating a portfolio of proposals and policies and identifying what has to be done to realise 'urban potential', identifying possible sources of housing, their yield and the application of techniques for estimating potential on individual sites. It is also important that there is a relationship between initial opportunities and actual potential based on a realistic interpretation of how the market works.
- 1.4 This study follows the Draft Urban Capacity Study (Methodology) which was the subject of public consultation in 2002 and a draft version of this document which was subject of public consultation in early 2004. The section on intensification has been modified due to time and resource constraints.

2. Basis for Study

- 2.1 The 'plan, monitor and manage' approach to the delivery of housing introduced by the revised version of PPG3, published in March 2000, sets out a new policy direction for the delivery of housing through the planning system. Government advice contained in PPG3 requires local authorities to prepare an urban capacity study in advance of undertaking a local plan review. As PPG3 states;
- "In order to establish how much additional housing can be accommodated within urban areas and therefore how much Greenfield land may be needed for development, all local planning authorities should undertake urban capacity studies", (PPG3, para 24).*
- 2.2 The Urban Capacity Study is considered to be at; *"the heart of the planning process, and form the basis for both the sequential approach and the managed release of sites", (Tapping the potential, p.5).*
- 2.3 Tapping the Potential says that while each local authority will be responsible for evaluating the capacity of their area, *"Regional Planning Bodies (RPBs) should, 'coordinate the programme of capacity studies undertaken by constituent local authorities and maintain consistency of approach by agreeing standards to be applied', (Tapping the Potential, p.6).* The RPG 'Review of Housing Land and Urban Capacity Study (November 2001)' included a detailed set of definitions and criteria for districts to use in assessing their urban capacity. To ensure continuity these will be incorporated into this study and are detailed in Appendix 1.
- 2.4 Tapping the Potential states that you should consider not just vacant sites or underused sites or buildings but also those currently in use. While it is quite easy to place a figure on the amount of vacant land in the District it is more difficult to assess the reuse of existing employment or retail sites that are currently in 'productive' use (i.e. not underused sites). There could be two ways to approach the assessment of these sites The first way is to assess all non-residential sites within the district for possible conversion to residential, the second is to assess only those that the Council is aware of.

- 2.5 The Council decided to assess all non-residential sites in the urban areas. This is an approach advocated by Tapping the Potential. However, the Council has not assessed urban open space in community use, playing fields and green space consistent with guidance in PPG17.

3. Time Span of Study

- 3.1 The GVA Grimley Urban Capacity Study for Worcestershire only included sites that would be available for development within the current Structure Plan Period (1996-2011). It is important to note that the GVA Grimley study was undertaken before the publication of the revised PPG3 and the subsequent guidance on Urban Capacity Studies (Tapping the Potential). Tapping the Potential gives no definitive time span for a study but does say that they should be undertaken (or reviewed) at least as frequently as plans are prepared and rolled forward. For an Urban Capacity Study to continue to be relevant then it needs to be in a form that enables easy updating using information gained from existing monitoring, including NLUD and land availability studies. This will be even more important within the new Local Development Framework system as action plans are produced and reviewed on a regular basis. For further details on monitoring see Paragraph 23.

4. Consultation and Partnership

- 4.1 The Council will follow the approach advocated in Tapping the Potential. *“Many different parties will draw from the information in the studies, so it is crucial that all aspects of the process of assessment are readily understandable, transparent and rigorous. Inevitably professional judgement will be brought to bear at different stages in the process.”*, (Tapping the Potential, p.7).
- 4.2 The consultation process involved the circulating of the methodology and draft UCS to all parties with an interest in the development of housing in Bromsgrove. This included local consultants, The House Builders Federation and national house builders with an interest in the District. Interested parties were also invited to contribute to the supply of information on available land in the district and comment on the study's output.

Scope of Study

5. Introduction

- 5.1 The study is split into 6 distinct stages each of equal importance in the process of assessing housing capacity. The approach adopted by the Council has closely followed that advocated by Tapping the Potential.
- 5.2 Stages 1 and 2 began with the assessment of both the areas to be covered and the likely housing capacity sources from these areas.
- 5.3 Stages 3 and 4 involved the identification of sites within the urban areas and the yield from possible future sources of housing in the district.
- 5.4 Stage 5 involved the discounting of the gross yield to give a more realistic medium term housing capacity figure.
- 5.5 Stage 6 is ongoing and involves the regular testing of the study including monitoring the progress of identified sites and windfall development.

6 Stage 1 – Identify

6.1 “The first step in assessing urban housing capacity is to consider which places are to be considered in the study, in other words, where are the search area boundaries to be drawn”, (Tapping the Potential, p.9).

6.2 Tapping the Potential, p.9, states that, “A useful rule of thumb is to include in the capacity study all settlements that may be considered for housing development”...“Therefore, in considering the areas in which to search for housing capacity local authorities could assume that ‘urban’ embraces all settlements that can contribute to sustainable patterns of development”. Typically these would (or have scope to) contain shops and services, be accessible by public transport and be capable of having a sensible settlement ‘envelope’ drawn around them.”

6.3 The precise boundaries of the settlements identified for the purpose of this study have been defined using the settlement boundaries identified in the Bromsgrove District Local Plan January 2004 Proposals Map and the village envelope boundaries identified on the inset maps.

6.4 It was important to categorise settlements in relation to their sustainability and ability to accommodate future housing growth. Policies DS3, DS4 and DS5 of the Bromsgrove District Local Plan, January 2004, established a hierarchy of settlements in relation to the achievement of sustainability.

6.5 The hierarchy also reflects the Sustainable Development Framework advocated by the adopted Worcestershire County Structure Plan (WCSP) 1996-2011 and Policy CF2 ‘Housing beyond the Major Urban Areas’, of the West Midlands Regional Planning Guidance (June 2004). Policy SD.6 of the WSP states that; “The majority of the outstanding development needs of the County to be met within the Structure Plan period will take place within or adjacent to the principal urban areas within the central crescent, namely Bromsgrove....Elsewhere in the Central Crescent development would be appropriate at other urban settlements if the criteria in Policies SD.4 and SD.5 can be satisfied.”, (WCSP, 1996-2011).

6.6 The hierarchy in Bromsgrove can be summarised as follows:

- The urban area of Bromsgrove Town and adjacent urban areas.
- Other settlements excluded from the Green Belt.
- Village Envelope Settlements in the Green Belt.
- Other settlements in the Green Belt (with no defined village envelope).

6.7 This would result in the following categorisation of settlements in the district, (for definitions see Appendix 1):

Category 1 – Main urban areas

Bromsgrove
Catshill, Marlbrook and Lickey End

Category 2 – Local urban areas

Alvechurch	Rubery
Barnt Green	Wythall (Drakes Cross, Hollywood and Grimes Hill)
Hagley	

Category 3 – Local settlements

Blackwell	Majors Green
Cofton Hackett	Stoke Prior

Category 4 – *Defined Green Belt settlements (as defined by a village envelope)*

Adams Hill	Finstall
Belbroughton	Holy Cross
Beoley (Holt End)	Hopwood
Bournheath	Lower Clent
Burcot	Romsley
Clent	Rowney Green
Fairfield	

Category 5 – *Undefined Green Belt settlements*

Please refer to Appendix 3 of the Bromsgrove District Local Plan for a list of the settlements included within this category.

6.8 While it is important to assess all possible capacity sources it is also important to exclude areas of insurmountable constraints from the search so as to target limited resources to areas that would have an unconstrained yield. Areas to be excluded may include all of or part of the following;

- Flood plains (Identified by the Environment Agency)
- Historic Parkland
- Ancient monuments

7. Stage 2 – Sources of Capacity

7.1 *“It is important that appraisals should consider as many sources of capacity as possible, no matter how unlikely some sources and locations may initially appear in terms of the current housing market”, (Tapping the Potential, p.10).* This study has attempted to identify all possible sources of capacity and then using guidelines contained in Tapping the Potential identified a survey methodology for each source. Appendix 2 contains a summary table of all the sources identified and the methodology used.

8. Discounting

8.1 The following of the procedures detailed in the previous sections would lead to an ‘unconstrained’ capacity figure for the district. As Tapping the Potential (p.29) stresses, *“The unconstrained housing capacity of an area is the theoretical total number of dwellings that it could accommodate if all of the potential capacity was developed optimally”*.

8.2 The Council has been rigorous and transparent throughout the discounting process, highlighting with every source what is being discounted, by how much and why. The Council consulted on the results of the study including the discounting process prior to publication of the study. As a starting point each site had an unconstrained capacity then using information from a site assessment a constrained capacity was obtained. Using local and market knowledge the probability of the site coming forward was then estimated.

9. Source – Subdivision of Existing Housing

9.1 This involves the conversion of single residential properties, including garages, to two or more residential units.

Methodology

9.2 A trend based analysis approach has been adopted using completions data from the Council's Housing Land Availability (HLA) studies. Trends since 1991 have been used as a base and projected forward. Assumptions were based upon net flows, taking account of gains and losses to the stock. Information from the 2001 Census and the Valuation Office was used to find a total unconstrained capacity.

Results

9.3 The figures in the table below are taken from the biannual Bromsgrove Housing Land Availability Study. The figures show the number of units created through the conversion of existing dwellings. The gross figure is the total number of units created on the site and the net figure is the number of new units created in addition to those existing prior to conversion.

Table 1 - Residential units created through the sub-division of existing housing (91-04)

Year (April to April)	91-92	92-93	93-94	94-95	95-96	96-97	97-98
New Residential Units (Gross)	11	2	6	4	2	2	4
New Residential Units (Net)	7	1	3	2	1	1	3
Year (April to April)	98-99	99-00	00-01	01-02	02-03	03-04	
New Residential Units (Gross)	4	2	10	16	10	12	
New Residential Units (Net)	2	1	5	10	7	8	

9.4 The average number of new units created each year from 1991 to 2004 was 4 (net) and 6.5 (gross). In respect of net additions to the housing stock, if this average figure was projected forward then by April 2006 (2 years) 8 new dwellings will have been created, and by April 2011 (the end of the Structure Plan Period) 28 new dwellings will have been created. This does not take account of the moratorium on new housing (SPG10) adopted by the Council in July 2003.

9.5 At April 2004 a total of 7 dwellings (net) have planning permission but have not yet been started and 2 dwellings (net) are under construction. This gives a future supply of 9 units. At current average completion rates this would give a supply of over 2¼ years if no other permissions were granted for conversions.

9.6 The Valuation Office holds information on the band of each property in the District. There are 5637 large properties in Band F and above. Of all the properties in the District 24% are occupied by only one person, the majority of which are occupied by a single pensioner (Census, 2001). If half this figure is applied to large properties (12%) then this would mean that approximately 676 large properties in the District are under-occupied.

Analysis

9.7 While the last couple of years have seen an increase in the number of conversions, this mirrors the general increase in windfall completions. It is not anticipated that the number of conversions will increase significantly. However the latest Census data released in July 2003 shows that while in 2001 the average household size in Bromsgrove was 2.4, the same as the national average, the number of rooms per household was greater at 6 compared to a national average of 5.3. As such capacity does exist for dwelling subdivision in the District.



- 9.8** Where redevelopment of dwellings and plots does occur the preference in Bromsgrove seems to be for the replacement of large single dwellings and garden with new build flat or cul-de-sac development. Conversions are counted as gross in respect of fulfilling the Structure Plan Target which has a built in allowance for replacements and demolitions.

Conclusions

- 9.9** Using information from the Valuation Office it appears that the District has an unconstrained capacity of approximately 676 dwellings which when subdivided, assuming 2.5 dwellings per house, would result in a minimum of 1690 new dwellings (Gross).
- 9.10** Using past trends as a guide the maximum capacity per year appears to be 16 Units (Gross) or 10 Units (Net). However while the analysis reveals that there is potential for subdivision in the district, little appears to be occurring. It is concluded therefore that the discounted housing capacity from the subdivision of existing housing would be 4 p.a. (net) and 6 p.a. (gross) up to 2011.

10. Source – Flats Over Shops

10.1 This is defined as the residential use of floors above A1, A2 or A3 uses as defined within The Town and Country Planning (Use Classes) Order 1987 (as amended).

Methodology

10.2 While the yield is likely to be small there may be scope for increased use of vacant space over retail premises to be used to accommodate an element of housing growth. This will depend upon the nature of retail development, amount of residential accommodation over shops at present, and the appropriateness for accommodating residential units. Some of the existing space may also be used for storage or offices.

10.3 Government guidance, (e.g. revised PPG3 and PPG13), favours mixed use development particularly the use of upper floors of commercial units for residential. Therefore, there may have been a suppressed demand thus leading to an increase in units becoming available.

10.4 For the purposes of this study a dual approach was adopted, first past HLA returns were studied to identify Change of Uses since 1991, but as many would not have required permission then a full survey was undertaken of Bromsgrove Town Centre, the main retail centre within the district, to identify the number of existing units and possible future capacity. Stand-alone shops within predominantly residential neighbourhoods were assessed as part of the comprehensive survey of each area of the district (see section 20).



Results

10.5 Data collected in September 2002 for a retail study of the district indicates that there were 222 units with upper floors that had a A1, A2 or A3 use on the ground floor within or adjacent to Bromsgrove Town Centre. Of these, 17 units were vacant on the ground floor.

10.6 A total of 48 shops had an existing residential use above. 20 of these had 1 flat above, 27, had 2 floors and 1 had 3 floors of residential use. The study identified 16 shops with either a vacant 1st or 2nd floor, resulting in 23 vacant floors in total. Of these units with vacant floors, 5 had an identified separate access. A number of shops had no identified upper floor use, of these 7 had separate access. In total there were 13 floors with no use identified, or vacant, with separate access. The other main use for upper floors was storage, usually in connection with the ground floor retail use.

10.7 The figures in the table below are taken from the biannual Bromsgrove Housing Land Availability Study. The figures show the number of new units created through the change of use of upper floors of retail units in Bromsgrove Town Centre to residential use. This does not take account of existing redundant or vacant residential units brought back into use over this period.

Table 2 – Units created through the change of use of upper floors to residential (1991-2004)

Year (April to April)	91-92	92-93	93-94	94-95	95-96	96-97	97-98
New Residential Units (Net)	0	0	0	0	0	1	1
Year (April to April)	98-99	99-00	00-01	01-02	02-03	03-04	
New Residential Units (Net)	1	0	1	3	1	7	

- 10.8** The figures for 2003-2004 show a marked increase in this category this is due to the completion of one scheme, for the conversion of 3 upper floors into 7 flats. At April 2004 there were outstanding applications for 4 flats above shops in Bromsgrove town centre.

Analysis

- 10.9** The research undertaken appears to show that while a number of floors above retail units are either underused or vacant little conversion to residential has actually occurred. Further research is needed on the barriers preventing an increase in living over shop developments in the town centre. This could be undertaken as part of the intended retail study of the district or as separate research.

- 10.10** The small rise in completions over the last few years is in line with the overall increase in windfall completions throughout the district. While the outstanding scheme for 7 flats now completed has provided a short term increase in completions it does not seem to indicate a longer term increase in living over the shop developments in the town centre. Unless assistance is provided, either through guidance or monetary, then it is unlikely that the rate of completions until 2011 would increase above 1 per year within Bromsgrove Town Centre.



Conclusions

- 10.11** The results show that there are 174 units in the Town Centre with no residential use above. The majority of units have two upper floors so there could be an unconstrained capacity of approximately 300 new units in the town centre. This unconstrained figure does not take account of existing use of upper floors, access issues, ownership, policy constraints etc.

Conclusions

- 10.12** The analysis reveals that while there is potential for living over the shop in the town centre, there appears to be little new development coming forward. It is concluded therefore that without new research or incentives the discounted housing capacity from living over the shop, taking account of past rates and schemes outstanding, would be 2 per annum up to 2011.

11. Source – Empty Homes

11.1 This category is defined as residential properties that have been vacant for more than 6 months.

Methodology

11.2 The Housing Investment Programme 2001, Housing Strategy 2001 and the Empty Property Database 2002 provide information on the number of vacant dwellings owned by the Council, registered social landlords, other public sector bodies and also empty private housing. Past trends of the levels of vacant properties and their take up has been identified including whether there are any programmes in progress or schemes to be implemented to bring vacant properties back into use. Any identified capacity will during the discounting process be assessed against Structure Plan assumptions.

Results

11.3 An Empty Property Database is maintained by the Environmental Health department at the Council. It was last updated in late 2002. The database identified the location of empty properties, reason for being empty and current situation. The table below is a summary of this database showing the number of empty properties in each settlement, or rural if in the Green Belt, average time empty and a summary of the main reasons why the properties are empty

11.4 All the dwellings in the table are privately owned and have been vacant for more than 6 months. The Council's 2001 Housing Strategy highlighted 25 empty public sector dwellings but none of these had been vacant for more than 6 months. The owners of nearly half of the dwellings identified above have indicated to the Council that they intend to occupy or let the property with one year. It is also important to note that only half of the empty properties are in an urban settlement.

Table 3 – Empty properties in the District at December 2002

Settlement	No of dwellings	Average time property has been empty	Main reasons for properties being empty
Bromsgrove	15	2 years 6 months	Repairs, can't find buyer or tenant
Catshill	1	Not Known	Repairs
Alvechurch	2	8 years	Financial, property abandoned
Barnt Green	3	12 years 3 months	Not Known
Hagley	2	1 year 3 months	Repairs (unfit for human habitation)
Rubery	1	10 months	Repairs (unfit for human habitation)
Wythall	3	3 years 7 months	Repairs
Blackwell	0	-	-
Cofton Hackett	0	-	-
Majors Green	0	-	-
Stoke Prior	0	-	-
Rural location	27	7 years 7 months	Repairs (unfit for human habitation)
Total	54		

11.5 The Housing Strategy identified other key reasons for property vacancies, apart from those identified above. These were, occupier moved into care, family break-up, bankruptcy, imprisonment, temporary move, eviction, death, awaiting new owner or tenant, low demand, purchased for speculative reasons and owner reluctant to rent.

- 11.6** The 2001 Census identified 755 vacant dwellings in the District. Many of these may have been vacant for only a few days if being sold or let. At only 2.1% of the total number of dwellings in the District, Bromsgrove has the lowest number of vacant properties in Worcestershire. The Housing Flows Reconciliation Return identified a total housing stock at April 2004 of 37396. This means that at April 2004 approximately 785 dwellings were vacant.

Analysis

- 11.7** It is very difficult to predict the likely capacity from the re-use of empty homes as this aspect is not monitored. The results above show that at present only a very small number of properties in the district remain empty for more than six months. In terms of market trends, the strength of the local housing market is likely to continue to keep vacancy levels low for the foreseeable future. This is reinforced by the fact that half of the owners intended to re-occupy the property within one year.
- 11.8** Using data from the Empty Property Database and the above assumptions then the number of empty properties in the district will decline over the next few years. As such more dwellings will be reoccupied than become empty leading to an increase in housing land supply. SPG10 Managing Housing Supply which has been introduced because of an oversupply, could lead to developers seeking empty properties, especially those in need of repair, to renovate or demolish and replace with a new dwelling. This again would lead to a reduction in the number of empty properties and an increase in supply from this source.



Conclusions

- 11.9** Using the above evidence and assumptions as a guide from responses received from the owners of empty dwellings, 27 dwellings are due to become available in the next few years. Furthermore restrictions on new build could lead to further empty dwellings coming forward in addition to those already identified.

12. Source – Redevelopment of Existing Poor Quality Housing Areas

12.1 This category relates to poor quality housing areas, where there is a high vacancy rate.

Methodology

12.2 Information from the Housing Investment Programme 2001 was used to assess the vacancy rates across the district and highlight any possible areas of high vacancy rates that could in future be demolished and then redeveloped. Due to the nature of the District it is likely that few if any areas will be identified for demolition and that little or no additional capacity will be achieved. It is important though that every identified source is investigated. If the site involves the removal of occupied or vacant properties than any figures derived from this source will be calculated as net. This approach is an acknowledgement of guidance contained in Tapping the Potential.



Results

12.3 Data from the Empty Property Database shows that there appears to be an even spread of properties empty for more than 6 months throughout the district. All of these were private sector properties. A number of properties (2% of the total housing stock in the district) were vacant for less than 6 months, however this could indicate a slow turnover in tenants if rented, renovation of a property if privately owned, occupier moved into care or hospital or low demand in that area. The Housing Investment Programme 1991 indicates that only 2% of private properties and 0.04% of social housing are unfit for human habitation (though probably still lived in). This is very low compared to the average national level identified from the English House Condition Survey 1996, which is 7.5%. However, the local authority did not deem it necessary in the previous year to take any direct action ordering the demolition or renovation of any of these properties.

Analysis

12.4 The Housing Condition Survey for Bromsgrove (1999) concluded that the overall condition of housing stock in Bromsgrove is better than the national average. It also did identify that there is a need to address the problem of people on low incomes who cannot afford to maintain their properties in good repair. Help could be provided by the Council through discretionary renovation grants.

12.5 Due to the geographical spread of vacant and unfit properties, and from observations made when undertaking the urban capacity site search, it appears that areas of poor quality housing are few and far between. Unfit housing tended to be associated with private households comprising those aged over 65 and on low incomes. No areas of poor Public Sector owned housing exists. The Council is on target to transfer ownership of its housing stock to a non profit making company so enabling repairs and renovations to the housing stock to be done within a shorter time span.

Conclusions

12.6 Due to the general good condition of the housing stock in the district the Council does not expect any new yield from this source to come forward before 2011.

13. Source – Redevelopment of Car Parks

13.1 Where there is an over provision of parking or where there are poor quality surface car parks which have a negative impact on the surrounding area there may be some potential to reuse them for housing development. This study considers all surface car parks in or adjacent to the town centre both Council and privately owned that are accessible to the general public.

Methodology

13.2 Tapping the Potential states there is a need to consider all surface car parks and in particular temporary car parks including both Council and privately owned.



Only car parks available for public use will be assessed. Car parks associated with existing residential development (blocks of flats) and car parks attached to commercial (including retail) uses will be assessed under the intensification and reuse of existing employment or commercial uses respectively. Potential sources of data on existing and proposed use of public car parks has been obtained from the Housing and Employment Land Availability Returns, Highways Partnership, The Local Transport Plan and the District Valuation Officer. Public car parks will only be redeveloped

where it can be demonstrated that reuse would not harm the viability and vitality of the Town Centre.

Results

13.3 The majority of public car parking spaces are situated within Bromsgrove town centre. As such potential reuse has only been assessed in respect of town centre car parks. Any other car parking within the district has been assessed as part of a comprehensive study of each settlement.

13.4 There are nine District Council owned public car parks within or adjacent to the town centre and one privately owned.

Table 4 – Public car parks within or adjacent to Bromsgrove Town Centre

Car Park Name	Size (ha)	No of Spaces	Ownership	Type
Recreation Road North	0.14	45	Public	Pay & Display
Recreation Road South	0.91	310	Public	Pay & Display
Churchfields	0.40	167	Public	Pay & Display
Parkside	0.25	117	Public	Pay & Display
Stourbridge Road	0.35	84	Public	Pay & Display
School Drive	0.43	133	Public	Pay & Display
Windsor Street	0.15	74	Public	Pay & Display
New Road	0.13	62	Public	Pay & Display
Hanover Street	0.44	140	Public	Pay & Display
Retail Park	0.61	163	Private	Free for customers

13.5 An assessment was undertaken of usage of all Council owned car parks in the town centre in late 2001. This assessment was in response to a tariff increase and the extending of charged car parking hours.

- 13.6** In summary the results of the survey showed a significant increase in income and a spread of usage over a longer time period, especially at the Recreation Road South Car Park. The Council owned car parks in the town centre were seen to be well used, with some having a 80% to 90% occupancy rate during the day. The pressure on car parking was most intense during early Thursday and Friday evenings at the car parks close to Asda supermarket and at all car parks on Saturday. Apart from the car parks adjacent to Asda the car parks were least used on a Sunday. This was due to the majority of shops in the town centre, apart from the main superstores, being closed.
- 13.7** The redevelopment of the Churchfields car park from a surface car park to a multi-storey car park has increased the number of available spaces in the town centre.
- 13.8** Limited parking exists at the southern end of the town centre, with Hanover Street being the only large car park at this end of town. The majority of the car parking is situated on the northern approaches to the town centre. To improve this situation new car parking would need to be provided in the Worcester Road area. However at present land is unavailable.

Analysis

- 13.9** To ease pressure on car parking in the town centre the Council is looking to increase car parking facilities rather than release car parking land for redevelopment. While promoting the increase of car usage is being discouraged by the government in favour of public transport there are few opportunities in Bromsgrove to further increase access to the town centre via public transport. The railway station is situated outside the town centre and can be only accessed via a linked bus journey and the bus station has little room for further expansion unless it is relocated. Any reduction in parking without significant improvements to public transport access could harm the vitality and viability of the town centre.
- 13.10** The Council bought land off New Road (now New Road car park) to enable a bypass to be built linking New Road with Market Place so enabling the whole of the High Street to be pedestrianised. This scheme is now unlikely to proceed and does not form part of the Local Transport Plan to 2005. If redeveloped the majority of the car park would be used for the bypass, leading to a loss in car parking provision, with only very limited land available for other uses.
- 13.11** In respect of the single privately owned car park, this was provided in connection with planning permission for the retail units and can only be used by those visiting units on the retail park. However in practice it is still used by those visiting the town centre as well as the retail units on the site. From daily observations the car park appears to be well used, with little scope for reduction. The only area of the car park that appears to be underused is that to the northeast of Sommerfield supermarket. However, the primary use of this piece of land is to enable servicing vehicles to access the rear of the retail units. As such it would be an unsuitable location for new residential development.

Conclusions

- 13.12** From the research undertaken and its analysis above it can be concluded that unless significant improvements are made to public transport access to the town centre then there is little scope for the redevelopment of existing car parks in the town centre. Moreover there is demand for increased parking, especially on the southern approaches to the town centre, rather than an oversupply.

14. Source – Review of Employment Areas

14.1 The Local Plan includes a number of employment allocations and commitments. All designated employment areas have been assessed in respect of any future potential reuse for residential.

Methodology

14.2 It is important to ensure a balanced portfolio of employment land exists to provide for the employment needs of the district and to satisfy Structure Plan requirements. This issue must be paramount when assessing the reuse of existing employment land for housing. Any potential for the purposes of this study focuses solely on the capacity from employment allocations in the Bromsgrove District Local Plan. All other potential sources that could derive from allocations in the Plan have been considered through the comprehensive survey of each area of the district. A thorough assessment of each site has been undertaken with consideration given to local demand, future viability, land value and market potential. The potential for these allocations to be released for housing has been considered in line with advice in Tapping the Potential.

Results

14.3 Areas of employment land zoning shown on the Local Plan Proposals Map include the following;

- Buntsford Hill (Phase 3), Bromsgrove (BROM 8A)
- Ravensbank Business Park, Redditch
- Land off Groveley Land, Cofton Hackett
- Wythall Green Business Park, Wythall
- Rubery Industrial Estate, The Avenue, Rubery
- Factory Lane, Bromsgrove
- Manor Works, Worcester Road, Bromsgrove
- Bayer Works, Stoke Works

14.4 *BROM6*

The only large remaining area of BROM6 that has not received planning permission for housing or is not in employment use is land to the rear of the Bayer factory. This land has been reserved by Bayer for future expansion needs and is 6.8ha in size. It is heavily contaminated due to salt dumping and is situated between two employment areas and bounded by the canal and railway line. Due to its location in the centre of the employment zone it would be an inappropriate location for residential development. An area of approximately 1.8ha also exists adjacent to the Bayer plant on the south eastern edge of the employment zone. The Bayer Works are not within the allocated area as it is a long standing employment site. This area largely comprises a brine reservoir. Due to the existing ground conditions and the proximity of the chemical plant, housing would be an inappropriate use for this site. As such it is very unlikely that any part of BROM6 could be reused for residential purposes.

14.5 *Buntsford Hill (Phase 3)*

This area of land has a recent outline planning permission for a business park. Various reserved matters applications have been received for various plots with buildings at the entrance to the site completed and other under construction. No scope exists at present for residential use on the site.

14.6 *Ravensbank Business Park*

This employment area was allowed on appeal in 1992. It has only been part developed but planning applications are still coming forward for the remainder of the site. This provision of employment land within Bromsgrove District has been allocated to meet the employment needs of Redditch District. As such a comprehensive assessment of the employment needs of Redditch must be undertaken before any land within this zone could be used for other purposes. No immediate prospect for residential use exists on the site.

14.7 *Land off Groveley Lane*

This land is owned by MG Rover and a large part of the site is used for open car storage in connection with the nearby MG Rover car production plant. Rover are proposing to sell off part of their existing plant for redevelopment, concentrating production on the main plant adjacent to Groveley Lane (within Birmingham City). As such demand could increase for land at Groveley Lane to store cars and for staff car parking. A surface car park adjacent to Powertrain with access from Parsonage Drive appears underused, demand could increase once other parts of the Rover site are redeveloped. No immediate scope for residential use on the site but should be kept under review.

14.8 *Wythall Green*

Wythall Green was formerly used by MG Rover, but since moving to Groveley Lane, Wythall Green employment zone has become home to the headquarters of Britannic Assurance. Land adjacent to Britannic (11.8ha) is to be developed as Wythall Green Business Park. Outline permission was granted in May 2000 and at April 2004 no reserved matters applications had been received. The site is surrounded by Green Belt and outside an urban area. As such there are no local facilities close by and there is poor access to public transport. In respect of its sustainability it is an inappropriate location for future housing growth. No scope for residential use on the site.



14.9 *Rubery Industrial Estate, The Avenue*

This is a long established employment area in Rubery. It is surrounded by residential development and is not easily accessible. While most of the units are occupied due to the location of the estate within a predominantly residential area it is difficult to have any other use but B1 (Offices, Research). This obviously limits the businesses that are attracted to the estate. Two buildings at the entrance to the estate were at April 2003 unoccupied and on the market. If these buildings remain unoccupied and it is proved that tenants cannot be found then residential use could be a reuse for these two sites. The residential yield of the sites (total area of 0.31ha), when developed at a density of 50 dwellings to the hectare, (recommended Structure Plan density for urban locations) would be 15 dwellings.

14.10 *Factory Lane*

This is an established complex of small commercial units off Worcester Road, all the units appear to be occupied and well used. It provides smaller units than those normally be found on the larger employment areas. As such the site contributes towards the portfolio of sites that each district is required to provide as part of the RPG and adopted Structure Plan. While Worcester Road can get congested at peak times the site is close to the town centre and on a main road linking Bromsgrove with the M5 so is in an accessible location. There appears to be no immediate scope for residential reuse of the site.

14.11 *Manor Works*

This former employment site has now been redeveloped into housing. This site will be changed to a residential zoning in the next version of the Local Plan.

Analysis

14.12 Only one area has been identified as having potential for redevelopment in the immediate term, the land at The Avenue, Rubery. An application has been approved by the Council for the redevelopment of land at the former UEF site consisting of 500 new dwellings (BROM 7). To avoid double counting, this has been removed from this study. The redevelopment of the former UEF site is underway with the first dwellings already completed.

14.13 While there has been no pre-application discussion regarding land at The Avenue due to its setting and apparent problems with letting the units then there is a possibility that some of the employment zoning could be redeveloped for housing before 2011 providing there is a need to find further housing land.

Conclusions

14.14 The results and analysis above indicate that the potential housing capacity resulting from the reuse for residential purposes of existing employment allocations and zoning is about 15 dwellings within the study area over the period to 2011. This comprises 15 at The Avenue, Rubery. The redevelopment of BROM7 (Garrington's/UEF) has not been counted as planning permission has been granted and at April 2004 the site was under construction.

15. Source – Review of Existing Housing Allocations

15.1 This source is the potential extra housing capacity that could be provided through increasing density of development on sites allocated for housing in the Bromsgrove District Local Plan January 2004.

Methodology

15.2 The two remaining housing allocations are not yet completed and have been assessed in respect of any future potential reuse for residential, further to that already with planning permission.

15.3 Results

The remaining housing allocations outstanding at April 2004 were;

- The Oakalls (BROM1), Stratford Road, Bromsgrove
- Hagley Sewerage Works (HAG1), Cavendish Drive, Hagley

15.4 The Oakalls development is nearing completion with all residential areas of the site completed. An application for retail facilities and flats on the part of the site reserved for the Local Centre was at first refused. A revised application was submitted and has been approved. This scheme will provide an additional 2 dwellings. Further to this an application was received to develop the remainder of the Local Centre for housing. This application was withdrawn by the applicant. A further application to develop 60 dwellings on the whole of the area reserved for a local centre was pending at April 2004.



15.5 Planning permission exists for the redevelopment of the majority of the former Hagley Sewerage Works. The Inspector at the recent Inquiry into the Local Plan recommended that the remaining part of the site also be included within the Local Plan as a housing allocation. The remaining area of HAG1 has now been incorporated into the Local Plan (January 2004)

Analysis

15.6 Little capacity exists within existing housing allocations that has not already been accounted for within the housing supply figure produced as part of the biannual Housing Land Availability Study. The only remaining capacity could be on the area reserved for a local centre at the Oakalls.

Conclusions

15.7 The results and analysis indicates that this source could contribute up to 60 further dwellings on existing or proposed housing allocations to 2011 other than that identified in the Local Plan and Housing Land Availability Study.

16. Source – Other Local Plan Designations or Allocations

- 16.1** The other main designations affecting housing numbers and growth in the district are the proposed Areas of Development Restraint.

Methodology

- 16.2** While these sites are not specifically intended for any particular use, the existing adequate supply of employment land, the large area of Green Belt and the pressure for new housing development in the district would in all likelihood mean that the majority of them would be developed for housing. Except for BROM5A all the sites are within either confirmed or interim Green Belt prior to designation as ADRs. While an ADR has been excluded from the Green Belt the areas are still subject to full Green Belt restrictions until a local plan review proposes their development. Due to this policy restriction, the rural nature of the land and the prospect that the sites will at the very earliest be released post 2011 then these areas have not been considered within this study. The primary purpose of this study is to identify and consider housing capacity in addition to that already known. All other potential sources that could derive from allocations in the plan, have been considered through the comprehensive survey of each area of the district.

Results

- 16.3** ADR sites will only be released for development through a review of the Local Plan. The Council has already produced within its Local Development Scheme a timetable detailing when new plan documents will be produced to replace the Local Plan. Due to the current land supply situation it is unlikely that sites will be needed before 2011. As such no allowance has been made within this study for supply from ADR designations.

Analysis

- 16.4** The strength of the housing market in Bromsgrove and the large amount of Green Belt land places pressure on existing urban areas and those areas allocated for the future development needs of the district. It is expected that the strength of the ADR designations and the Council's control over their release will be tested on appeal by developers, especially if the Council decides in its review of the plan not to release any ADRs pre-2011.

Conclusions

- 16.5** No allowance will be made within this study to 2011 for supply resulting from the development of Areas of Development Restraint. However they could provide an unconstrained yield of approximately 4734 dwellings if they were all developed at an average density of 30 dwellings to the hectare.

17. Source – Infill Development within Category 4 Settlements

17.1 Previously developed land in villages could provide a housing opportunity, which in turn could help sustain local shops, services and public transport.

Methodology

17.2 Tapping the Potential (p.9) states in-respect of which settlements to include in the study that;
“Typically these would (or have scope to) contain shops and services, be accessible by public transport and be capable of having a sensible settlement ‘envelope’ drawn around them. In many instances the envelope would already have been identified in a local plan”.

17.3 The Local Plan identifies 13 village settlements that are an appropriate form, capable of accommodating additional infill development. Development within these villages is restricted only to limited infill (a maximum of two dwellings). The settlements identified in the Bromsgrove District Local Plan have provided a source of housing capacity over several years and provide a capacity source that needs to be considered.

17.4 The emergence of such sites is difficult to predict, but over a period of time a trend can be determined for each settlement. A trend-based analysis of windfall developments within each settlement can therefore be identified from the HLA reports. Given the finite nature of vacant land in these settlements it is likely that the number of such windfalls would reduce over time. However, planning policy currently requires that the best use is made of potential land, which will generally require new housing to be built at higher densities than previously.



Results

17.5 Using information taken from the Bromsgrove Land Availability Report (April 2004) the following number of new dwellings were completed within each village envelope from April 1996 to April 2004.

Table 6 – Completions within village envelopes from 1996 to 2004

Village	96-97	97-98	98-99	99-00	00-01	01-02	02-03	03-04	Total
Belbroughton	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	2	4
Beoley	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2
Bournheath	0	0	0	2	1	0	0	0	3
Burcot	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Clent*	0	0	0	0	0	2	1	0	3
Fairfield	0	0	0	0	0	6	2	0	8
Finstall	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1
Holy Cross	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	2
Hopwood	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	2
Romsley	2	1	1	0	0	1	3	0	8
Rowney Green	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1
Total per year	4	1	1	2	4	10	6	6	34
Average number of dwellings completed per year within village envelopes from April 1996 to April 2004 (to the nearest whole figure)									4

*Clent includes the Adams Hill, Clent and Lower Clent village envelopes.

Analysis

- 17.6** The Results show that using past rates as a guide then very few dwellings are completed within the village envelopes each year. This could be due to a number of factors including limited available land within villages, tightly drawn boundaries, the limiting criteria of the policy and the general presumption against new development in the green belt.
- 17.7** While the amount of land within the villages is finite, without the moratorium on new dwellings, development would have been expected to continue for a number of years at the above rates. The slow release of sites could be due to a number of factors including changing land ownership, the closure of small rural businesses and other changes within the rural economy. Due to the limited number of dwellings from this source it is not viable to conduct a detailed investigation of the capacity of each village.
- 17.8** At April 2004 5 new dwellings were under construction within village envelopes and planning permission exists for 13 new dwellings that have yet to be started. At the above average completion rate then there is 4.5 years of housing supply with planning permission.

Conclusions

- 17.9** Using the information above it is anticipated that on average at least 4-5 new dwellings will be completed each year within village envelopes until 2011.

18. Source – Development within Category 5 Settlements

- 18.1** This source is settlements in the Green Belt identified in Appendix 3 of the Local Plan that have not had a village envelope drawn around them. The main reason for non-designation of a village envelope is the inadequate size, the form of any settlement and scale of the existing development and local facilities. Minor additional residential development would be detrimental to the principles of Green Belt policy reinforcing, for example, an unacceptable pattern of ribbon development.

Methodology

- 18.2** Development in category five settlements would be in addition to any identified capacity as it relates to land that would not normally be released for housing. Thus to comply with guidance contained in Tapping the Potential this source of capacity should therefore not be counted.

Conclusions

- 18.3** While some development may occur through the replacement of existing dwellings or the conversion of existing buildings leading to the creation of additional units, this capacity relates to development on land that would not normally be released for housing. As such for the purposes of this study it is assumed that no capacity exists within Category 5 settlements.

19. Source – Unidentified Green Belt Development

19.1 There is a general presumption against development in the Green Belt especially when not identified within the Local Plan. However potential capacity can exist and in certain circumstances is compatible with existing policy. Categories identified within this source are those that are not included within any other category.

Methodology

19.2 Three categories of potential capacity that will not be considered elsewhere exist. These are;

- Re-use of rural buildings.
- Major Developed sites within the Green Belt that have the potential for redevelopment.
- In a similar manner to Category 5 settlements 'rural exception sites' are in addition to any identified capacity and any housing development would relate to land that would not normally be released for housing. As such any capacity arising from this source will not be considered as forming part of the identified housing capacity of the district.

Results

19.3 The re-use of rural buildings, especially former agricultural barns, is a potential source of new dwellings. Due to the district being 90% Green Belt and predominantly rural in nature then a significant number of buildings exist in the countryside that in the past have been used for agriculture. The intensification of farming has led to many smaller farms becoming redundant or needing to diversify. The conversion of existing unused barns to residential or employment is one way that farmers have been diversifying so maintaining their income.



19.4 Using information taken from the Bromsgrove Land Availability Report (April 2003) the following approximate number of residential barn conversions were completed from April 1996 to April 2004.

Table 7 – Barn conversions completed in the District from 1996 to 2004

96-97	97-98	98-99	99-00	00-01	01-02	02-03	03-04	Total
15	23	23	14	10	30	22	33	170
Average number of dwellings completed through the conversion of agricultural buildings from April 1996 to April 2004 (to the nearest whole figure)								21

19.5 The Council have not identified or are not aware of any major sites in the Green Belt that have the potential for redevelopment.

Analysis

19.6 As shown in the table above the re-use of rural buildings, especially former agricultural barns, is a potential source of new dwellings. While there are only a finite number of rural buildings that could be converted there appears to have been a steady release of buildings for redevelopment since 1996.

19.7 At April 2004 28 dwellings were under construction and 27 outstanding giving a total supply of 55 dwellings. If projected forward this would give over 2½ years supply at current completion rates.

Conclusions

19.8 Not allowing for guidance contained in SPG10, if permissions drop off up to 2011 and resulting completions also drop off after 3 years from 21 to 15 per year then this would still result in this source contributing 123 dwellings in total to the housing supply of the district up to 2011.

20 Source – Comprehensive Area Study

20.1 This source covers all land with redevelopment potential within each settlement outside the Green Belt and not covered by any of the previous sources i.e, previously-developed vacant land, derelict land and buildings, land and buildings in use and vacant land not previously developed.

Methodology

20.2 A comprehensive foot survey of each identified settlement was undertaken. These urban areas were graded 1, 2 or 3 in relation to their suitability for future sustainable housing growth (see para 6.7). While some studies have limited their search to sites over 0.4ha in size, for this search the Council identified all sites, regardless of size. This is an approach recommended by Tapping the Potential (p.17). A full list of definitions is contained in Appendix 1. Development on existing residential garden land has been covered by the intensification area study. While some garage blocks have been identified within the comprehensive area study these have been identified by the Council as suitable locations for affordable housing. Further garage blocks could be developed in the future that have not as yet been identified.



Results

20.3 The results of this search are summarised below and also in Appendices 3 and 4. The tables in Appendices 3 and 4 detail each site by settlement category then settlement. Information on each site includes, site name, location, site area (using PPG3 net definition), potential number of dwellings on site (not discounted, using Structure Plan density requirements), realistic number of dwellings (discounted figure using density of surrounding development as a guide and site constraints) and relevant comments from both the local authority and development industry (after the consultation period). Sites fall into one of three categories, 'A', 'B' or 'C'. 'A' being the most likely to be developed and with least constraints. Sites identified as being in Category 'B' are those that may be released in the medium term (to 2011) and while those in Category 'C' are in an area suitable for housing they have significant policy, environmental or other constraints. For a comprehensive list of definitions used in this study see Appendix 1.

20.4 The tables of results in Appendices 3 and 4 provide detailed information on the potential number of sites and dwellings. Below is a summary table of these tables.

Table 8 – Summary table of all sites identified within the urban areas of the District

Category 1	Category A Dwellings (sites)	Category B Dwellings (sites)	Category C Dwellings (sites)	Total Yield (sites)
Bromsgrove	127 (3)	292 (26)	345 (25)	764 (54)
Catshill & Marlbrook	34 (1)	88 (10)	12 (1)	134 (12)
Category 2				
Alvechurch	119 (1)	41 (6)	58 (6)	218 (13)
Barnt Green	0	48 (4)	43 (6)	91 (10)
Hagley	87 (1)	17 (2)	59 (2)	163 (5)
Rubery	15 (1)	25 (2)	154 (7)	194 (10)
Wythall	78 (2)	65 (9)	81 (3)	224 (14)
Category 3				
Blackwell	0	16 (3)	45 (2)	61 (5)
Cofton Hackett	28 (2)	24 (2)	43 (2)	95 (6)
Majors Green	0	0	0	0
Stoke Prior	0	2 (1)	2 (1)	4 (2)
Total Sites	502 (13)	604 (63)	844 (56)	1948 (131)

20.5 The tables of results in Appendix 3 show the number of large sites identified and the resulting number of dwellings. Below is a summary of these tables.

*Table 9 – Summary table of sites with a potential capacity of over 10 or more dwellings**

Category 1	Category A Dwellings (sites)	Category B Dwellings (sites)	Category C Dwellings (sites)	Total Yield (sites)
Bromsgrove	230 (5)	100 (4)	286 (10)	616 (19)
Catshill & Marlbrook	34 (1)	52 (4)	12 (1)	98 (6)
Category 2				
Alvechurch	119 (1)	19 (1)	51 (3)	189 (5)
Barnt Green	0	39 (2)	29 (2)	68 (4)
Hagley	87 (1)	12 (1)	55 (1)	154 (3)
Rubery	15 (1)	25 (2)	139 (4)	179 (7)
Wythall	61 (1)	25 (1)	81 (3)	167 (5)
Category 3				
Blackwell	0	0	42 (1)	42 (1)
Cofton Hackett	28 (2)	13 (1)	54 (3)	95 (6)
Majors Green	0	0	0	0
Stoke Prior	0	0	0	0
Total Dwellings (Sites)	574 (12)	285 (16)	749 (28)	1608 (56)

*Based on Structure Plan recommended densities

Analysis

20.6 The majority of available sites were identified in Bromsgrove Town. This information was updated after the consultation period and the publication of the April 2004 Housing Land Availability Study.

Conclusions

20.7 This is a major source of capacity. However few large sites exist within the district especially outside of Bromsgrove Town. The majority of sites are small being capable of accommodating under 10 dwellings, which has implications for future section 106 agreements, especially contributions towards affordable housing.

20.8 The adoption of a moratorium on new housing proposals (SPG10) on 22nd July 2003 led to an influx of applications proposing new dwellings. A number of sites have now received planning permission. As such they have been removed from this study and become part of the identified housing supply for the district.



21. Source – Intensification

21.1 After all possible sites for development within the urban areas have been identified then each residential area will be assessed in respect of development on existing residential land.

Methodology

21.2 As with other sources the assessment of the likely contribution that intensification would make to the housing supply of the district has been made by assessing past rates of development.

21.3 Initially to provide a different approach individual areas were going to be assessed in respect of their capacity for infill development on existing residential land. The boundaries for these areas would have been based on an areas' character, Green Belt boundaries and the boundaries of established housing estates. To avoid double counting individual sites identified as part of the intensification study would have been highlighted within the study area and then discounted. This approach would have mirrored the typical urban area studies approach advocated by Tapping the Potential (p.21).



21.4 Prior to the introduction at the end of July 2003 of a moratorium on new housing applications a significant number of applications proposing the intensification of existing residential plots were submitted. Due this influx of applications and pressure on staff and resources the detailed assessment of areas in respect of future intensification, as detailed above, was not seen as being feasible in the short term. The assessment of character areas as proposed in the Draft Methodology may be undertaken during a review of this study.

Results

21.5 The table below details the number of dwellings completed on existing residential land during the last 8 years. This includes intensification of residential plots, conversion of residential properties, development of garage courts and replacement dwellings.

Table 10 – New dwellings resulting from residential intensification (1996 to 2004)

96-97	97-98	98-99	99-00	00-01	01-02	02-03	03-04	Total
55	59	83	69	57	132	48	107	610
Average annual yield due to intensification from 1996 to 2004 was 76 dwellings								

21.6 At April 2004 there were 96 dwellings under construction and 251 dwellings outstanding on residential land. As such at April 2004 a total supply of 347 dwellings existed which if completed at the above rate of 76 per year would provide just over 4.5 years supply.

Analysis

21.7 The intensification of residential land remained until recently a largely untapped reserve of land for new housing. PPG3 (2000) encouraged better use of existing previously developed land and the accepting of tandem development as a viable form of development in urban areas. The influence of guidance in PPG3 has also seen sites being developed at increasing densities so increasing the number of units that will in future come forward due to the intensification of existing large residential plots.

Conclusions

- 21.9** This is seen as a largely untapped capacity which could under new guidance contained in PPG3 and with no policy constraints deliver a significant number of new housing units. However due to the recent adoption of the moratorium on new housing this capacity in the short term will be limited to what comes forward through applications currently pending and the existing supply of approved permissions. Once the impact of the influx of applications prior to the adoption of SPG10 has been assessed a future review of this Study will incorporate a design-led assessment of the impact of intensification on housing supply.



- 21.10** Using past rates as a guide then a minimum of 76 dwellings are expected to come forward each year. This would give, without the influence of SPG10 and using past rates as a guide a minimum of 532 dwellings from 2004 to the end of the Plan period.
- 21.11** Without a more detailed assessment it is difficult to assess the unconstrained yield from this potential. As a guide the maximum number of dwellings achieved in a year, that is 132, has also been projected forward to 2011.

22. Summary of the Results

22.1 The unconstrained figure includes all sites that would be suitable in principle for new housing but that are either not currently available to the market, would be more suitable for an alternative use or have a physical constraint which would prevent their development. The anticipated yield is development that would have been expected to come forward before 2011 without the influence of SPG10. In respect of the Comprehensive Area Study this is all sites in Category A.

Table 11 – Summary of the results of the Housing Capacity Study

Source	Unconstrained Yield (Gross)	Anticipated Yield to 2011 (Gross)*
Subdivision of Existing Housing	1690	42
Flats over Shops	300	14
Empty Homes	785	27
Redevelopment of Existing Poor Quality Housing Areas	0	0
Redevelopment of Car Parks	0	0
Review of Employment Areas	15	15
Review of Existing Housing Allocations	60	60
Other Local Plan Designations or Allocations	4,734	0
Infill Development within Category 4 Settlements	35	35
Development within Category 5 Settlements	0	0
Unidentified Green Belt Development	123	123
Comprehensive Area Study	1,948	410***
Intensification	924**	532
Total (Including ADR allocations)	10,614	1,258
Total (without ADR allocations)	5,880	1,258

* From April 2004 without the moratorium on housing (7 years)

** Estimate and only assessed up to 2011.

*** This is the discounted total of all Category A sites.

23. Monitoring and managing the Capacity

- 23.1** The study will be tested yearly by reassessing the realistic availability of identified land within the stated time period. This could be done through the monitoring of planning permissions granted, market fluctuations and changes in policy emphasis at the local, regional and national levels. Assumptions may need to be changed and the discounting process revisited to assess any changes in 'unconstrained' and 'constrained' supply on an annual basis. Further to this the Council intends to fully review the study, including where required modify the methodology, at least every 5 years.
- 23.2** The Council will promote the use of brownfield sites identified through this study for housing (subject to guidance contained in SPG10) or where appropriate other uses. They will also use the results of the study to guide the future release of land for housing.

24. Conclusions

- 24.1** As the above table shows a significant unconstrained amount of supply exists in the district which at current required rates of completion (current Structure Plan requirements projected forward) would provide at least 24 years of housing supply for the District. Even without the contribution from the reoccupying of empty homes a 21 year supply has been identified.
- 24.2** The table below summarises the housing land supply situation in Bromsgrove District at April 2004.

Table 11 – Housing Supply in Bromsgrove District

Structure Plan Target to 2011	3950
Completions 1996 to April 2004	3189
Dwellings Under Construction	289
Dwellings Outstanding	873
Sites approved by the Council but subject to the signing of a S106 agreement	64
Remaining housing allocation (Area of Sewerage Works, Hagley without Planning Permission)	15
Identified oversupply at 2011 (Approved schemes)	480
Anticipated yield identified in the Housing Capacity study to 2011 *	1231*
Potential oversupply without SPG10	1711

* This does not include supply from the reuse of empty homes as supply from this source would not count towards the District's housing supply target.

Appendix 1 - Definitions

<i>Comprehensive Survey</i>	Mapping and recording exercise of potential sites. Includes studying aerial photographs, site visits and reviewing NLUD data.
<i>Defined Green Belt Settlements</i>	None or very infrequent public transport, within Green Belt but has a defined settlement boundary with a local facility at the centre, may have a local shop.
<i>Local Settlements</i>	A settlement with only a few local facilities (has a church/or public house) and limited public transport. Areas outside the Green Belt, so suitable for infill development.
<i>Local Urban Areas</i>	Sufficient services to meet the daily needs of the local population and serve as a local centre for the surrounding rural area. Has a regular bus or train service through the settlement.
<i>Main Urban Areas</i>	The most sustainable location(s) with facilities and services that serve the whole district.
<i>Net Density</i>	The Use of Density in Urban Planning (para 8.19-8.27) and PPG3 Annex C.
<i>Previously Developed vacant Land</i>	Land previously developed but no longer in use. Includes defence buildings and land used for mineral extraction and waste disposal where provision for restoration has not been made through development control procedures. The definition excludes land and buildings that are currently in use for agricultural or forestry purposes, and land in built up areas which has not been developed previously (e.g. parks and allotments). Also excluded is land that was previously developed but where the remains of any structure or activity have blended into the landscape in the process of time.
<i>Trend based analysis</i>	The use of existing trends to predict future yields.
<i>Undefined Green Belt Settlements</i>	No defined centre. Little more than a grouping of houses with little or no nearby local facilities. An unsustainable location.
<i>Windfalls</i>	Sites which have not been individually identified within a local plan but have come forward and form an important component of the housing land supply.
<i>Small sites</i>	Sites with a Structure Plan density capacity of 9 or less dwellings.
<i>Large sites</i>	Sites with a Structure Plan density capacity of 10 or more dwellings.
<i>Gross</i>	The total number of dwellings, including replacement dwellings.
<i>Category A site</i>	Sites available for development or sites that have few constraints. Likely to be developed pre-2006.
<i>Category B site</i>	Sites with potential for development but have constraints that could limit development. Possibly available pre-2011.

<i>Category C site</i>	Sites In an area suitable for residential development but have significant policy, environmental or other constraints. If developed then unlikely pre-2011.
<i>Vacant buildings</i>	Unoccupied buildings, that are Structurally sound and in a reasonable state of repair (i.e. capable or being occupied in their present state).
<i>Derelict land and buildings</i>	Land so damaged by previous industrial or other development that it is incapable of beneficial use without treatment. Treatment includes demolition and levelling.
<i>Vacant land not previously developed</i>	Greenfield land within the urban area that has not been developed (e.g. parks and allotments).
<i>Land and buildings in use</i>	Previously developed land or buildings currently in use. Site could be underused.
<i>Completions</i>	Dwellings that have been completed and are ready for occupation. On many recent sites landscaping work may not have been fully completed.
<i>Under Construction</i>	Dwellings that were under construction at the time of the survey.
<i>Outstanding</i>	Dwellings with planning permission on which no construction work had begun at the time of the survey. Other dwellings on the site may have been completed or were under construction at the time of the survey.

Appendix 2 – Summary Table of Sources

Source	Survey approach
Subdivision of existing housing	Trend based analysis using data from the Housing Land Availability (HLA) returns. Information was also used from the 2001 Census and the Valuation Office.
Flats over shops	Used HLA study to determine past trends and a foot survey of the existing use of upper floors in the town centre to ascertain scope for future yield.
Empty Homes	Only considered properties vacant for more than 6 months. Use information from Housing Investment Programme 2000, Housing Strategy 2001 and the Empty Property Database 2002 to determine capacity and take up of properties.
Redevelopment of existing housing areas	Used Housing Investment Programme 2001 to determine areas of high vacancy rates.
Redevelopment of car parks	Used information gained from the Local Transport Plan, Housing and Employment Land Availability Studies, and a study of usage of car parks in the town centre.
Review of employment areas	Comprehensively assessed each area zoned for employment in the BDLP (January 2004).
Review of existing housing allocations	Comprehensively assessed each outstanding housing allocation in the BDLP (January 2004).
Other local plan designations	Assess other major designations and their potential housing capacity.
Infill development within Green Belt villages	Establish a trend based figure from past HLA studies for windfalls and project forward.
Development within Category 5 settlements	Discounted as contrary to national, county and local planning policy.

Appendix 3

Urban Capacity Site Details

Large Sites with a potential capacity of 10 or more dwellings (Using recommended Structure Plan densities)

Category 1 – Bromsgrove

Ref	Site name	Location	Area (ha)	Dwellings Structure Plan	Dwellings Discounted	Category	Local Authority Comments	Consultation Comments
B3	Land behind No.3	3 Alcester Road, Lickey End	0.20	10	5	C	Land close to the M42 motorway to the rear of No.3. Appears to be used for storage of vehicles and building materials. Could be drainage problems.	
B5	Land at and adj to No.5	5 Alcester Road, Lickey End	0.44	22	15	B	Single dwelling within large plot containing a number of timber dwellings, vegetable plot and grassed areas. Also includes land to rear of No.7. Could be drainage problems on site.	
B14	Children's Nursery and land to rear	19 Stoke Road, Aston Fields	0.22	15	15	C	Popular children's nursery. Former Gatx office building. Pending application for land fronting New Road at rear of nursery (03/577).	HCS31 – Desirable current use should not be used for housing
B32	Open space	Area of open space bounded by Lyttleton Avenue and Salwarpe Road, Charford	0.30	15	10	C	Council owned awkward area of open space bounded by two roads. Level grassed area with a small amount of parking at one end.	
B33	Parking and garage area	End of Villiers Road, Charford	0.22	11	10	B	Area looks unused, also includes a small area of open recreation space.	

B43	Playing fields	Off Market Street, Sidemoor	0.35	24	15	C	Playing fields used by Parkside County Middle School. A large area of playing fields would remain.	
B44	Playing fields	Off Stourbridge Road, Sidemoor	0.61	42	25	B	Grassed area raised above the rest of the playing fields, appears little used and is furthest away from school. Bounded by footpath but no existing car access. Access could be taken off Stourbridge Road.	
B55	Land at Princess of Wales hospital	Land off Exmoor Drive, Lowes Hill	0.45	22	10	C	Grassed area of land within the grounds of the hospital with likely access off Exmoor Drive, could only sustain a small amount of development without impacting on hospital.	
B70	Regal Garage	Worcester Road, Whitford	0.54	27	40	A	Unlikely to relocate in the short term, possible in long term. Site appears cramped for existing use. Application refused for redevelopment of site (03/0708).	
B79	Overgrown allotments	Crabtree Lane, Sidemoor	0.26	13	10	C	Allotment land adjacent to childrens play area. Appears unused, Council owned.	HCS31 – Other land would have to be provided if this land is released for development
B85	Scout and Guide HQ and adj land	Kidderminster Road, Town Centre (West)	0.53	26	15	C	Buildings and land in use. Owned by local authority, unlikely to consider reuse at present.	
B87	Allotments	Stourbridge Road, Lowes Hill	0.89	44	30	C	In full uses as allotments. Subject to restrictive covenant limiting use to allotments, unless the consent of the Secretary of State to an alternative use can be obtained.	HCS31 – Other land would have to be provided if this land is released for development HCS31 – Desirable current use should not be used.

B88	Allotments	Land adj to 23 New Road, Sidemoor	0.37	25	20	B	Remaining allotment land, appears little used already part developed for childrens play area.	HCS31 – Other land would have to be provided if this land is released for development
B89	Allotments	Land off Rigby Lane and Drummond Road, Stoney Hill	2.1	105	105	C	No need at present for housing on site but could be developed in the future. Large sloping piece of allotment land with substantial road frontage to Rigby Land and Drummond Road.	
B100	Former quarry land	Quarry Lane, Whitford	0.24	12	5	C	Former quarry, land around it has been redeveloped into housing. Unsure about stability of land.	
B101	Former Gatx oil depot	Station Approach, Aston Fields	1.36	95	75	A	Application received (02/0967) but not determined for redevelopment of the site for residential. High clean up cost.	
B107	Meadows First School	Stourbridge Road, Sidemoor	0.87	43	43	B	In use, but part of County restructuring of schools. Due to be relocated and combined with Parkside.	
B108	Parkside Middle School	Stourbridge Road, Sidemoor	0.89	44	44	B	In use, but part of County restructuring of schools. Due to be relocated on northern part of existing site.	
B109	Sidemoor First School	Broad Street, Sidemoor	0.42	21	21	B	In use, but part of County restructuring of schools. Due to be relocated.	
Totals for Bromsgrove			11.26 (ha)	616 (Plan)	513 (Discounted)			

Category 1 – Catshill

Ref	Site name	Location	Area (ha)	Dwellings Structure Plan	Dwellings Discounted	Category	Local Authority Comments	Consultation Comments
C11	Overflow car park at Crown Inn	Meadow Road, Catshill	0.20	10	5	B	Appears to be an overflow car park for the pub and restaurant.. Access from the pub is over a small bridge over the stream. Access is also available off Meadow Road.	
C12	Catshill Club	Meadow Road, Catshill	0.30	15	3	B	Working mans club with large car park fronting Meadow Road. Could be scope for part redevelopment of car park.	
C13	Garages and vacant land	Cobnall Road, Catshill	0.26	13	5	B	Part garage block, part vacant un-kept land. Council owned. Could be used for public open space and a play area. Vehicular and foot access off Cobnall Road. Would need new access through the demolition of a property on Cobnall Rd or Woodrow Lane.	
C18	Storage land at rear	Rear of 2, 4, 6 and 8 Mayfield Close, Catshill	0.28	14	10	B	Appears to be used to store vehicles, large surrounding gardens could also be used. Narrow existing access off Mayfield Close, may need access of Wildmoor Lane.	
C20	Garage block and land	Off Oak Road, Catshill	0.24	12	5	C	Garage block in use with possibility for residential use subject to widening the access or demolishing property to create access.	

C25	Oak Road Phase 2	Land off Acorn Road, Catshill	0.68	34	25	A	Back garden land being assembled by the Council for affordable housing. An extension of existing housing development off Oak Road.	
Totals for Catshill			1.96 (ha)	98 (Plan)	53 (Discounted)			

Category 2 – Alvechurch

Ref	Site name	Location	Area (ha)	Dwellings Structure Plan	Dwellings Discounted	Category	Local Authority Comments	Consultation Comments
AL10	Public car park	Tanyard Lane, Alvechurch	0.16	8	5	C	Public car park in good use, used by visitors to the shops. Includes public toilets and recycling facility.	
AL19	Club and car park	Radford Road, Alvechurch	0.33	16	10	C	Social Club in use and large private/public car park. Could be scope for development on part of car park.	
AL21	Grazing Land	Rear of Withybed Close, Alvechurch	0.38	19	10	B	Area of sloping grazing land with access off Withybed Close. Restrictive covenant prevents development on the site for housing. Stream flows along boundary at bottom of site. Permission for flat development was refused (03/0992).	
AL22	Home for the Elderly	School Lane, Alvechurch	0.54	27	27	C	Area of special character, building in good use with few other local care homes. Possible conversion if use ceases and building becomes redundant.	HCS26 – Question if site could be brought forward for residential development.

AL31	Alvechurch Middle and Crown Meadow Schools site.	Tanyard Lane, Alvechurch	2.38	119	119	A	In use, but part of County restructuring of schools. Due to be relocated.	
Totals for Alvechurch			3.79 (ha)	189 (Plan)	171 (Discounted)			

Category 2 – Barnt Green

Ref	Site name	Location	Area (ha)	Dwellings Structure Plan	Dwellings Discounted	Category	Local Authority Comments	Consultation Comments
BG1	Industrial units adj to station	Off Hewell Lane, Barnt Green	0.26	18	10	C	Land wedged between railway lines. Noise issues. Loss of employment land. Application for additional unit.	HCS31 – Site could include rear gardens and should be identified for planned intensification
BG7	Land to rear of BT exchange	Station Approach, Barnt Green	0.3	21	14	B	Rough area of ground, Policy BG2 in BDLP (April 2003) supports reuse including an extension to the station car park. Part reuse for residential or employment possible.	HCS5 – should not be included as hoped will become additional parking for shoppers. HCS31 – Should be used as a park and ride site
BG8	Barnt Green Social Club	1 Blackwell Road, Barnt Green	0.26	18	10	B	Community club/facility in use.	HCS31 – site could include rear gardens and should be identified for planned intensification
BG11	Land rear of Willow Tree Drive	Station Approach, Barnt Green	0.16	11	5	C	Land raised up behind existing housing development. Topography limitations and proximity to railway line.	HCS31 – Should be used as a park and ride site
Totals for Barnt Green			0.98 (ha)	68 (Plan)	39 (Discounted)			

Category 2 – Hagley

Ref	Site name	Location	Area (ha)	Dwellings Structure Plan	Dwellings Discounted	Category	Local Authority Comments	Consultation Comments
H11	Allotment	Summervale Road, Hagley	0.78	55	25	C	Allotment owned by the Parish Council, designated as Open Space in the Local Plan.	HCS26 – Policy constraints. HCS31 – Allotments held by the council other land would have to be provided if this land is released for development.
H14	Hagley Middle School	Park Road	1.25	87	50	A	Middle school adjacent to first school. County Council plans to demolish middle school as part of educational restructuring in Hagley.	HCS31 – potential site will be smaller as land is needed for playing field for the now enlarged Primary School. Site could also include triangular parcel of land to the south of current site.
H16	Former Audi car sales garage	96 Kidderminster Road	0.17	12	8	B	Former car sales garage now vacant.	HCS31 – Site not likely to become available
Totals for Hagley			2.2 (ha)	154 (Plan)	83 (Discounted)			

Category 2 – Rubery

Ref	Site name	Location	Area (ha)	Dwellings Structure Plan	Dwellings Discounted	Category	Local Authority Comments	Consultation Comments
RU1	Wood to rear of Beaconside School	Whetty Lane, Rubery	1.3	91	30	C	Land owned by County Council, Whetty Coppice TPO covers all of site, used by School as a nature area. Important wooded area in Rubery.	

RU2	Royal Legion Club	58 – 64 New Road, Rubery	0.20	14	14	C	Building in use as a Royal British Legion club. Late 60's building of little architectural merit. Site could be redeveloped.	HCS26 – Potential Policy constraints
RU5	Social Club	59 Rednall Hill Lane, Rubery	0.23	16	8	C	Hawthorns Social Club in use. 60s/70s building of little apparent architectural merit, situated in established residential area.	HCS26 – Potential Policy constraints
RU6	Land adjacent to Callow Brook	New Road, Rubery	0.27	18	10	C	Land behind 141 to 159 New Road and between rear of properties and A38. Noise and flooding issues. Site difficult to access.	
RU15	Landscaping adj to A38	Holywell Lane, Rubery	0.28	14	5	B	Very close to A38 Rubery bypass so noise issues. Strip of land left between rear of properties on Holywell Lane and the A38. Could also use garden of No.1.	
RU19	Vacant office and warehouse buildings	The Avenue, Rubery	0.31	15	10	A	Vacant hard to let commercial buildings at entrance to employment zone. Within an established residential area.	
RU21	Garage site and land	Eachway, Rubery	0.16	11	5	B	Garage site with area of private land to the north. Access difficulties.	HCS26 – Question if site could be brought forward for residential development.
Totals for Rubery			2.75 (ha)	179 (Plan)	82 (Discounted)			

Category 2 – Wythall

Ref	Site name	Location	Area (ha)	Dwellings Structure Plan	Dwellings Discounted	Category	Local Authority Comments	Consultation Comments
W1	Meadow Green School	Land fronting Station Road, Grimes Hill	0.29	14	12	C	County Council owned school playing fields.	HCS31 – Desirable current use should not be used for housing
W4	Manor Farm and adjacent buildings	163 - 169 Station Road, Grimes Hill	0.51	25	12	B	Farm house and various buildings mostly outside of the Green Belt fronting Station Road between existing residential properties.	
W12	Open space and nature area	Beaudesert Road, Drakes Cross	0.73	51	20	C	Area of open space behind library, also designated as a nature reserve would need to alter plan designation. Important open space within the urban area with stream running alongside site. Can flood in places.	HCS31 – Desirable current use should not be used for housing.
W17	Grassed open space area	35 to 37 Falstaff Avenue, Drakes Cross	0.24	16	10	C	Designated as an informal open space area in the Local Plan, would need to change designation before release. Within an established residential area.	HCS26 – Potential Policy constraints
W18	Warehouse	190 to 192 Alcester Road, Drakes Cross	1.22	61	50	A	Warehouse and packaging plant with ancillary buildings in use on edge of Green Belt, set back behind existing housing.	
Totals for Wythall			2.99 (ha)	167 (Plan)	104 (Discounted)			

Category 3 – Blackwell

Ref	Site name	Location	Area (ha)	Dwellings Structure Plan	Dwellings Discounted	Category	Local Authority Comments	Consultation Comments
BL2	Rear of the Glen	Linthurst Newtown, Blackwell	0.84	42	18	C	Previous application for residential development refused on tree issues (00/0907). Application 02/0848 was withdrawn.	HCS40 – Should not include as an application for housing was refused and upheld on appeal.
Totals for Blackwell			0.84 (ha)	42 (Plan)	18 (Discounted)			

Category 3 – Cofton Hackett

Ref	Site name	Location	Area (ha)	Dwellings Structure Plan	Dwellings Discounted	Category	Local Authority Comments	Consultation Comments
CH1	Car park and car storage area	Off Lickey Road, Cofton Hackett	0.27	13	10	C	Appears to be used for customer parking and car storage (repairs and new) by Clarks.	
CH2	Amusement centre and buildings/land to rear and side.	444 to 448 Lickey Road, Cofton Hackett	0.26	13	10	B	Amusement arcade closed and buildings to side appear underused. Building materials stored on land at rear (Application Pending 03/1048).	
CH4	Car park	Off Lickey Road, Cofton Hackett	0.60	30	20	C	Used for public parking and for users of the Public House/Restaurant.	
CH7	Amusement Centre and buildings/land to rear and side	488 to 498 Lickey Road, Cofton Hackett	0.27	13	10	A	Application withdrawn for residential use of land (03/0884).	
CH8	Wooded plot	Adjacent to 528 Groveley Lane, Cofton Hackett	0.23	11	2	C	Applications submitted for two dwellings (03/0100) and one dwelling (03/0621), both refused. Woodland TPO has been placed on site.	HCS26 – Potential Policy constraints. HCS40 – TPO on site, problems with flooding
CH10	Land adj to Elliot Gardens	Off Lickey Road, Cofton Hackett	0.30	15	8	A	Permission for 8 old persons bungalows on site has lapsed. Established residential use.	HCS26 – Question if site could be brought forward for residential development.
Totals for Cofton Hackett			1.93 (ha)	95 (Plan)	60 (Discounted)			

Category 3 – Majors Green

No sites identified

Category 3 – Stoke Prior

No sites identified

Totals for all large sites in identified non-Green Belt settlements in the District	28.70 (ha)	1608 (Plan)	1123 (Discounted)
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Appendix 4

Urban Capacity Site Details

Small Sites with a potential capacity of under 10 dwellings (Using recommended Structure Plan densities)

Category 1 – Bromsgrove

Ref	Site name	Location	Area (ha)	Dwellings Structure Plan	Dwellings Discounted	Category	Local Authority Comments	Consultation Comments
B4	Church car park	1 Alcester Road, Lickey End	0.05	2	2	C	Rough piece of land used as a car park for Methodist church opposite (4 Alcester Road) as church has no off street parking. Loss would cause parking on street. Very close to motorway junction.	
B9	Infill plot	Land at 10 Marlborough Avenue, Stoney Hill	0.10	7	1	B	Grassed area of land between 8 and 12 Marlborough Avenue. No public access fence with locked gate fronting road. Tree in centre of site.	
B10	Allotment garage block	Rigby Lane, Stoney Hill	0.05	2	2	C	Garage block adjacent to allotment, security issues due to location out of public view, hard to let units. Could be developed as part of allotment site.	
B13	Aston Fields garage	148a New Road, Aston Fields	0.04	2	2	C	Popular small local car repair business. Within local shopping area so any conversion or redevelopment would need to have an element of A1, A2 or A3. Outline application for retail and office use granted (03/1261).	

B16	Land rear of No.4	4 South Road, Charford	0.04	2	1	C	Land used as material store or construction yard, backs onto County Council car park.	
B17	Car Park at the Fininstall Centre	51 Stoke Road, Charford	0.13	9	5	B	The rear part of the large car park appears underused. Narrow access down side of Fininstall Centre. Difficult location to access from Stoke Road. Backs onto Garringtons re-development site.	
B28	Small area of open space	Land at 21 to 23 Shepherds Walk, Charford	0.05	2	1	C	Small area of land left over after development of estate. Large mature tree (protected) situated within the centre of the site. Could not be developed with tree on site.	
B40	Car repair garage	2 Stratford Road, Bromsgrove Town Centre	0.06	4	4	B	Former ambulance station now car repair garage. Large building within town centre zone. Architecturally not important.	
B42	Upper floors of Strand Centre	2 to 4 The Strand, Bromsgrove Town Centre	0.04	2	2	B	Upper floors currently used as small retail units.	
B45	TA Centre	Corner of Market Street, Bromsgrove Town Centre	0.10	7	7	B	Former TA centre now used in part by Barry Beard electricians. Building appears in poor state of repair, could be renovated.	HCS40 – Should be renovated as gives poor impression to visitors
B47	Land rear of High Street shops	Rear of 83 to 95 High Street, Bromsgrove Town Centre	0.08	5	3	C	Land backing onto Bus Station, appears to be used for general parking and access to rear of shops. Difficult piece of land to develop for residential. Could be developed for mixed use. Proposal for retail units refused on site.	

B48	Land to side and rear of Jewellers	Rear of 67 to 71 High Street, Bromsgrove Town Centre	0.04	2	1	C	Land used for car parking and access to rear of shops. Precedent of developing on land to rear of shops established by jewellers.
B49	Land to rear of High Street Shops	Rear of 15 to 31 High Street, Bromsgrove Town Centre	0.06	4	2	C	Land used for car parking and access to rear of shops. Difficult piece of land to develop for residential. Could be developed for mixed use.
B50	Private car park	Land off Hanover Street, Bromsgrove Town Centre	0.06	4	3	C	Land to rear of 52 to 60 High Street used as a private car park and storage area. Appears well used as a private car park.
B51	Gap in frontage	57 to 59 Worcester Road, Bromsgrove Town Centre	0.05	3	2	B	Gap in frontage on secondary shopping street on edge of Town Centre. Used as a private car parking area probably by adjoining businesses. Land rises steeply at back of site.
B52	Derelict building	14 The Strand, Bromsgrove Town Centre	0.02	1	1	C	Has permission for redevelopment as office and restaurant. Could include an element of housing on the site. Within town centre zone.
B53	Tyre market and vacant land	Station Street, Bromsgrove Town Centre	0.12	8	5	B	Car repair and tyre garage with vacant land adjacent. Road rises up sharply, any development on land would be visible from Worcester Road. Ideal mixed use site.

B54	Renault car repair garage	Station Street, Bromsgrove Town Centre	0.12	8	5	B	Large car repair building. Was originally connected to a car showroom that fronted Worcester Road but that has been redeveloped to retail. Ideal mixed use site.	
B56	Land adjacent to Local shop	153 Stourbridge Road, Sidemoor	0.02	1	1	B	Gap in street frontage. Land used as off street parking for shop. Appears little used with most customers parking on street. Fence partitions land with parking also behind fence.	
B57	Social Club	Bewell Head, Sidemoor	0.17	8	5	C	Social club in use set within residential estate. Architecturally unimportant . Narrow road access.	HCS31 – site could include rear gardens and should be identified for planned intensification
B59	Car park at rear of Merlin Pub	189 Stourbridge Road, Sidemoor	0.09	4	3	B	Car park at rear of pub. Parking facilities also available on forecourt of pub. Could also involve the development of rear gardens. Would need to ascertain that the car park was no longer needed.	
B60	Car park for playing fields	King George Close, Sidemoor	0.19	9	6	C	A gap in the street frontage consisting of a car park for people using the playing fields. Unsure about usage of car park. Could be relocated further into playing fields behind new housing. Plenty of on-street parking.	
B61	Grassed area adjacent to road	Land adj to 2 Lincoln Road, Sidemoor	0.02	1	1	B	Could be part of garden of 15 York Road but separated by hedge. Could accommodate a small bungalow or house. Could also be used to provide access to garage court at rear so opening up a larger site with B64.	

B62	Overgrown land adj to vacant building	Land adjacent to 169 Broad Street, Sidemoor	0.03	1	1	B	169 has permission for conversion to residential, this land could be used as part garden and part developed.	HCS31 – site could include rear gardens and should be identified for planned intensification
B64	Garage site	Off York Road, Sidemoor	0.14	7	5	B	Could be part redeveloped using back garden access and site B61. Identified by Council as a possible affordable housing site. Awkward shape site to develop.	
B65	Building and DIY yard	216 Birmingham Road, Lickey End	0.14	7	3	B	DIY and building yard within residential frontage fronting a main road, little on site parking. Alternative premises would need to be found before redevelopment.	HCS65 – relocation into the green belt has already been tried after pressure from local residents.
B68	Land adjacent to the brook	Brook Road, Whitford	0.11	5	2	C	Land within a flood plain currently used as garaging and storage with a residential dwelling in the centre of the site.	HCS26 – Potential Policy constraints
B72	Car park at rear of public house	30 Rock Hill, Whitford	0.05	2	2	B	Possible to reuse part of existing car park for residential.	
B73	Former garage site	32 Rock Hill, Whitford	0.11	5	12	A	Derelict former garage site suitable for residential development. Application submitted for site and adjoining property for car sales (03/0713) application for residential is pending (03/1004).	
B76	St George Public House	83 Broad Street, Sidemoor	0.07	3	3	C	Pub with flat over, only a small car parking area. Pub still trading with no indication that it will close.	HCS26 – Question if site could be brought forward for residential development.

B77	Former DIY outlet	45 and 47 Broad Street, Sidemoor	0.07	3	3	B	45 Broad Street is currently occupied as a printers. The upper floors of both properties also appear to be occupied as residential. Yard to rear of shop was formally used as a storage area for materials. Whole site could be redeveloped or the vacant part on its own.	
B78	Land and garages adjacent to shops	2 to 4 Providence Road, Sidemoor	0.02	1	1	B	Garages and land to side of existing shops, shops and flats above in use, garages used by flats. Could be a small infill plot.	
B82	Car repair and sales garage	252 to 262 Birmingham Road, Lickey End	0.16	8	5	B	Car sales and repair garage in use adjacent to petrol station fronting main road. Sites appears cramped for existing use.	HCS31 – site could include rear gardens and should be identified for planned intensification
B84	Temporary car park adj to Council House	Burcot Lane, Town Centre (North)	0.17	8	2	C	Rough area of land used as a staff car park for employees of the Council. Would need to ensure that adequate parking remains before redevelopment. Adjacent to Social Housing development.	HCS40 – sensible to make this better, the building which this rough ground serves as a car park could be put to better use.
B104	Small garage site	Villiers Road, Charford	0.03	1	2	B	Small garage site capable of accommodating two small houses.	
Totals for Bromsgrove			2.8 (ha)	148 (Plan)	106 (Discounted)			

Category 1 – Catshill

Ref	Site name	Location	Area (ha)	Dwellings Structure Plan	Dwellings Discounted	Category	Local Authority Comments	Consultation Comments
C2	Orchard	Cottage Farm Lane, Marlbrook	0.05	2	2	B	Land to the north of No. 4 Cottage Farm Lane on the edge of the Green Belt, Appears to be an orchard attached to No.4, does not appear to be part of the garden.	
C5	Car sales and repair garages	404 to 206 Birmingham Road, Catshill	0.09	4	4	B	Car sales and repair garages adjacent to Marlgrove Motel fronting Birmingham Road. Site does not include 402. Application 03/0597 proposes development of adjoining café into residential.	
C7	Clearway coach hire and depot	56 Meadow Road, Catshill	0.17	8	8	B	Local coach hire, repairs and storage, large open site. Could be part redeveloped or merged with adjoining coach depot. Within Worcestershire Urban Capacity Study 1999. Site size could be increased by demolishing 52 and 54 (houses within large plots).	
C8	Harris coach travel	60 Meadow Road, Catshill	0.18	9	9	B	Coach hire and travel office, repairs and storage, large open site. Could be part redeveloped or merged with adjoining coach depot. Within WUCS. Site size could be increased by demolishing 58 and 62.	HCS40 – Again no open spaces!!
C15	Tool hire depot	121 to 127 Golden Cross Lane, Catshill	0.12	6	4	B	Existing tool hire premises and office/shop. Within local shopping. Residential development close by. Local road is sometime congested due to on street parking.	

C17	Vacant wooded strip of land	Chadcote Way, Catshill	0.15	7	2	B	Piece of land with frontages on Chadcote Way and Wildmoor Lane. Wooded un-kept strip of land.	
Totals for Catshill			0.76 (ha)	36 (Plan)	29 (Discounted)			

Category 2 – Alvechurch

Ref	Site name	Location	Area (ha)	Dwellings Structure Plan	Dwellings Discounted	Category	Local Authority Comments	Consultation Comments
AL1	Derelict garages	Rear of Latimer Road, Alvechurch	0.04	2	1	C	Small and difficult plot to access. Comprises private garages, narrow access off Latimer Road.	
AL2	Private garages and access way	Dellow Grove and Latimer Road, Alvechurch	0.03	2	1	C	Garages fronting Dellow Grove with access off Dellow Grove and a narrow access off Latimer Road.	
AL3	Garage block and open space	End of Tranter Avenue, Alvechurch	0.1	7	3	B	Local authority owned land and garage block. Garages could be relocated further up Tranter Avenue.	HCS26 – Question if site could be brought forward for residential development.
AL4	Footpath	Latimer Road, Alvechurch	0.05	3	1	C	Footpath provides access from Latimer Road to Robins Hill Drive. Narrow infill plot if footpath closed.	
AL7	Commercial premises	1 Snake Lane, Alvechurch	0.02	1	1	B	Home to AA Brown and Sons. Site wedged between new and existing housing. Would need to relocate to release site.	HCS26 – Question if site could be brought forward for residential development.
AL17	Motor Sales Garage	22 Red Lion Street, Alvechurch	0.12	7	3	B	Car sales garage in use, site appears cramped for use.	HCS31 – site could include rear gardens and should be identified for planned intensification
AL26	Farm/Commercial buildings	School Lane, Alvechurch	0.07	5	1	B	Within Area of Special Character, on edge of Green Belt, buildings appear well maintained, unsure of actual use.	HCS26 – Potential Policy constraints

AL29	Land at Cotswold Cottage	School Lane, Alvechurch	0.05	2	1	B	Grassed area in front of cottage fronting School Lane, adjacent land forms part of new infill dwelling garden.	
Totals for Alvechurch			0.48 (ha)	29 (Plan)	12 (Discounted)			

Category 2 – Barnt Green

Ref	Site name	Location	Area (ha)	Dwellings Structure Plan	Dwellings Discounted	Category	Local Authority Comments	Consultation Comments
BG2	Guide/Scout Hut	Hewell Lane, Barnt Green	0.05	3	1	C	Wooden building needing repairs. Adjacent to railway line so noise issues. New premises needed for Guide group or merge with Lickey. Loss of community facility.	HCS31 – site could include rear gardens and should be identified for planned intensification
BG3	Former telephone exchange	Hewell Road, Barnt Green	0.05	3	1	C	Loss of employment land, offices in productive use.	
BG4	Part of Victoria Public House car park	Sandhills Lane, Barnt Green	0.08	5	2	B	Private car park for patrons of the pub.	HCS – 5 should not be included as is used by shoppers and patients of Doctors and Dentists surgeries HCS40 – “Rarely Full” when was visit carried out
BG10	Former public toilets	Hewell Road, Barnt Green	0.06	4	1	C	Single storey building used as store by adjacent pub, close to railway line, appears unused. Noise implications due to proximity to railway line and public house.	HCS26 – Question if site could be brought forward for residential development.

BG14	Friends meeting house	Sandhills Road, Barnt Green	0.10	7	3	C	Religious and community facility in use, would need relocating. Little scope on site, retired bungalows to rear of site.	
BG17	Lickey Guide Hall	Old Birmingham Road, Lickey	0.06	1	1	C	Community facility in use, part or adjacent building already converted to a flat. Conversion possible.	HCS40 – Adjoining building house not flat, there could be a case for listing.
Totals for Barnt Green			0.4 (ha)	23 (Plan)	9 (Discounted)			

Category 2 – Hagley

Ref	Site name	Location	Area (ha)	Dwellings Structure Plan	Dwellings Discounted	Category	Local Authority Comments	Consultation Comments
H3	Access strip	Newfield Road, Hagley	0.09	4	1	C	Would restrict access to land at the rear but could be part redeveloped with garden land.	HCS17 – Site within Clent, strong objection inspector refused similar site, affect on green belt HCS 31 – Site in Clent to small to be included
H5	Car sales garage	5 Worcester Road, Hagley	0.08	5	2	B	Car sales premises in use with limited storage, fronting very busy road, house to rear.	HCS31 – Site not likely to become available
Totals for Hagley			0.17 (ha)	9 (Plan)	3 (Discounted)			

Category 2 – Rubery

Ref	Site name	Location	Area (ha)	Dwellings Structure Plan	Dwellings Discounted	Category	Local Authority Comments	Consultation Comments
RU4	Commercial units	7, 9 and 11 Whetty Lane, Rubery	0.11	7	3	C	Vehicle repair workshops within a predominantly residential street. Large tree at front of number 11.	
RU8	Pub Car park	New Road, Rubery	0.05	3	3	C	Rose and Crown car park appears little used. So as adequate parking is retained only end part of car park could be reused. Backs onto A38 bypass road.	HCS40 – When was the survey carried out, of course the car park will not be full when the premises is not open for business.
RU12	Residential Land	Callowbrook Lane, Rubery	0.08	5	2	C	Land adjacent to boundary with Birmingham City and Callowbrook Lane. Thin strip of verge, only very limited development could be accommodated.	
Totals for Rubery			0.24 (ha)	15 (Plan)	8 (Discounted)			

Category 2 – Wythall

Ref	Site name	Location	Area (ha)	Dwellings Structure Plan	Dwellings Discounted	Category	Local Authority Comments	Consultation Comments
W2	Former Post Office	403 Alcester Road, Grimes Hill	0.10	5	2	A	Vacant fire damaged former Post Office building.	
W3	Bleakhouse Farm access	146 to 154 Station Road, Grimes Hill	0.10	5	2	B	Infill plot in existing street frontage. Access track for Bleakhouse Farm. A new access would need to be constructed before site is redeveloped.	

W5	Land adjacent to shops	205 to 211 Station Road, Grimes Hill	0.07	4	1	B	Land appears to be undeveloped and covered by bushes and trees.	
W13	Part garage block	May Farm Close, Drakes Cross	0.04	2	2	B	Large garage block at the end of May Farm close, well used, only part of the block could be redeveloped due to parking requirements. New housing could front Oakwood Road.	
W14	Factory	Rear of 183 Alcester Road, Drakes Cross	0.09	5	2	B	Industrial unit in residential area with access of both Alcester Road and Oakwood Road.	
W22	Grassed and tree covered area	Rear of 189 to 197 Shawhurst Lane, Hollywood	0.14	7	3	B	Green area to the rear of properties with access track off Shawhurst Lane. Does not appear to be part of any residential garden. Would need to demolish a property to gain access.	
W25	James House	4b Truemans Heath Lane, Hollywood	0.14	7	4	A	James House is an office building set back from the main road behind 4a and 5 Truemans Heath Lane. Within an established semi-rural residential area. Application 03/0982 for residential was refused.	HCS26 – Potential Policy constraints
W26	Repair garages, store and workshops	Rear of 6 Dark Lane, Hollywood	0.10	5	5	B	Site was split into 6 units in 2000 the majority of which are auto repair garages. Site in productive use. Site within existing residential area.	

W29	Petrol station and land adjacent	Truemans Heath Lane, Hollywood	0.10	5	5	A	Petrol station with small shop in use and vacant land to side fronting Truemans Heath Lane. Site could be split with housing developed on vacant land and petrol station remaining.	
W31	Garage Block	The Close, Drakes Cross	0.10	5	4	B	Council owned garage block with potential for residential reuse.	
W33	Grassed open space area	End of Mayhurst Close, Drakes Cross	0.14	7	7	B	Not designated as open space in the Local Plan. Access could be taken from either the end of Mayhurst Close or Wythwood Grove. Could be planning conditions relating to its retention as open space.	
Totals for Wythall			1.12 (ha)	57 (Plan)	37 (Discounted)			

Category 3 – Blackwell

Ref	Site name	Location	Area (ha)	Dwellings Structure Plan	Dwellings Discounted	Category	Local Authority Comments	Consultation Comments
BL1	Blackwell Club	84 Linthurst Newtown, Blackwell	0.17	8	4	B	Outline application (02/0606) for 8 2 bed apartments was withdrawn.	HCS40 – The remarks regarding the Blackwell club are outdated.
BL6	Rear of Holy Trinity	Greenhill, Blackwell	0.13	6	3	B	Sites includes play area and informal open space. Site adjacent to Listed Building.	HCS40 – Why include this site?

BL7	Former Holy Trinity Church	Greenhill, Blackwell	0.07	3	2	C	Church now in commercial use. Listed Building.	HCS40 – Why include this site?
BL8	Church Hall	Greenhill, Blackwell	0.04	2	1	B	Currently used as a Crèche. Adjacent to Listed Building.	HCS40 – Why include this site?
Totals for Blackwell			0.41 (ha)	19 (Plan)	10 (Discounted)			

Category 3 – Cofton Hackett

No sites identified

Category 3 – Majors Green

No sites identified

Category 3 – Stoke Prior

Ref	Site name	Location	Area (ha)	Dwellings Structure Plan	Dwellings Discounted	Category	Local Authority Comments	Consultation Comments
SP1	Scout Hut and land	Ryefields Road, Stoke Prior	0.05	2	2	B	Land owned by the Council, part of land leased by Scouts for Scout Hut. Proposals by Council to develop adjoining garages has been approved (03/0216).	HCS66 – the parish council is currently having discussions with BDC regarding proposal to develop the site.

SP7	Car parking area	Coriander Close, Stoke Works	0.05	2	2	C	Parking area for housing development adjacent to railway line.	HCS66 – the car parking area is very important therefore the parish council is opposed to any attempts to develop this land.
Totals for Stoke Prior			0.10 (ha)	4 (Plan)	4 (Discounted)			

Totals for all small sites in identified non-Green Belt settlements in the District			6.46 (ha)	350 (Plan)	222 (Discounted)
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